

PROCESS AND PRODUCT QUALITY DIVISION CHANGES CONFERENCE LINEUP

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A CHANGE IN FORMAT IN THE WEEK-LONG CONFERENCE PROVED BENEFICIAL TO COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND CONFERENCE REGISTRANTS ALIKE.

THE PROCESS AND PRODUCT QUALITY DIVISION HELD its 1996 Fall Conference and Trade Fair in October at the Omni Netherlands Plaza, Cincinnati, OH. In past conferences, the Division committee meetings were held on Monday, with the conference sessions starting on Tuesday. This year a new format was adopted by the Division Steering Committee. The new format spread the committee meetings between Monday and Tuesday afternoons. Thus, the conference started with the keynote session on Monday morning and continued on Tuesday morning and all day Wednesday and Thursday. This change in format proved to be very beneficial to committee members and conference registrants alike. The conference attracted more than 200 registrants from eight countries.

After the conference's technical sections on Monday and Tuesday mornings, many of the registrants chose to participate in the afternoon Division committee meetings. As a result, the committee chairmen reported record attendances at their meetings, with several new members joining the committees.

In addition to the committee meetings of the Process and Product Quality Division, several Working Groups from ISO/TC 6 met during the conference week. All of these Working Group meetings were held in open session, permitting observers to attend the meetings and add comments into the group discussions. This afforded many members of TAPPI's Test Method development committees the opportunity to compare the procedures of TAPPI and ISO. In addition, committee meetings were held for the ASTM D06.92 Test Methods Subcommittee and the CPPA-TS Physical and Chemical Standards Committee.

Conference registrants had two bonus sessions, which were workshops added to the Division's regular program format. The first workshop on "Interlaboratory testing—a viable quality assurance tool for mill personnel" was added to Monday evening's program. The workshop was coordinated by C.J. Leete and C.J. Czyryca from Collaborative Testing Services. The second workshop was held Friday morning, the last day of the conference. Many of the conference registrants stayed on an extra day to attend this presentation, titled "Optical properties workshop: what the numbers really mean," given by M. T. Popson of Technidyne Corp. Both workshops were well attended and received high marks from those in attendance.

The conference started with the presentation of awards and the keynote speech by Gary Baum. The 1996 recipient for the P&PQ Division Technical Award was Roger Van Eperen, who recently retired as principal associate technologist at the Institute of Paper Science and Technology (IPST) in Atlanta, GA. The added bonus to Van Eperen for receiving the Division Technical Award was the Richard S. Hunter prize in the amount of US\$ 1000. Van Eperen is still very active on several of the Division's committees dealing with Test Method development, as well as the QSMC—Test Methods Subcommittee and the Corrugated Container Division's Fiberboard Shipping Container Testing Committee.

In his keynote address, Baum discussed the "Changing patterns of industry research" as a trend that is affecting the industry. Other trends he identified were:

1. Globalization and consolidation
2. Environmental issues
3. Changes in fiber supply

4. Societal changes/Information Age
5. Technology.

The major theme of Baum's keynote address outlined the trends in research taking place in the industry and the significance that these trends will have on future development. According to Baum, research has suffered a decline, as many mills are reducing the level of their technical staff and relying more heavily on supplier and academic research programs. The research funding figures presented during the talk showed that in 1990, 0.75% of the industry's sales dollars went into research; 1995 estimates showed that this amount had been reduced to 0.62% of sales.

To counter this trend, the Agenda 2020 Task Force has been formed as a consortium of industry, industrial organizations, suppliers, academia, and government to coordinate and focus research efforts for the benefit of all. In this way, the high-priority needs of the industry can be identified and cost-effective solutions sought through coordinated efforts. This coordination of effort through a single entity, in combination with good project management, will ultimately facilitate technology transfer between groups, permitting everyone to benefit.

The conference technical sessions were all well attended, an indication that the technical content was timely and directed to the needs of TAPPI and Division members alike. The conference program achieved a balanced content, with excellent papers on subjects such as recycled fiber quality and testing, quality management topics, and laboratory management issues. A whole day of the conference was devoted to papers on printability, formation, and surface roughness of paper.

The Supplier Showcase, where presenters are allowed 10 minutes to give both a technical and commercial presentation on their new services or instruments, attracted nearly a full house. This session attracted 16 vendor presentations. With the Trade Fair lunch that follows, this showcase always stimulates interest in new testing instruments or quality services. A repeat of this session is already on the program for next year's fall conference. However, due to high demand for space in the Supplier Showcase, next year the presenter slots will be assigned with preference given to the Trade Fair exhibitors. The Division feels that this will attract even more interest in both the Supplier Showcase and the Trade Fair exhibition.

The 1997 Fall Process and Product Quality Division conference will be held at the Omni Jacksonville Hotel in Jacksonville, FL, from Sept. 29-Oct. 3. Conference sessions are already being planned, with papers being sought in the areas of mill closure and product quality, electronic information management, linerboard quality testing, and stickies analysis techniques. In addition to individual presentations, a panel is being developed to discuss on-line vs. off-line quality analysis methods. For more information on presenting a paper at one of the technical sessions or exhibiting at the Trade Fair, contact TAPPI Exhibits Department at +1 770 209-7271, +1 770 209-7245, +1 770 209-7292 or the TAPPI Service Line at 1-800-332-8686. **TJ**

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