

Expansion of production capacity for hydrogenated styrenic thermoplastic elastomer

July 10, 2015

Asahi Kasei Chemicals Corp.

Asahi Kasei Chemicals will increase annual production capacity for hydrogenated styrenic thermoplastic elastomer (SEBS)* by 30% at its Kawasaki Works in Kanagawa, Japan, with start-up scheduled for June 2016.

The expansion of performance polymer operations is a key element in the strategy of Asahi Kasei Chemicals to develop as a high-earnings chemical company. The company's synthetic rubber and elastomer business is positioned as a competitively superior area, with proactive expansion focused on high-function and high-value added products. In particular, Tuftec™ and S.O.E.™ SEBS are high-performance and high-value added elastomers featuring excellent weatherability, heat resistance, and anti-abrasion properties made possible by the original catalyst and polymerization process technologies of Asahi Kasei Chemicals. They are used in a wide range of applications including plastic modification and adhesives, earning high regard from customers around the world.

SEBS is used as a modifier that enables polypropylene to be made flexible while maintaining transparency, and there are growing needs for flexible material as a substitute for polyvinyl chloride, especially in medical applications. Demand growth for this particular application has been centered in Europe and China in recent years. To meet growing demand, Asahi Kasei Chemicals increased production capacity for SEBS at its Kawasaki Works by 20% this spring. As continued demand growth is forecasted, the company decided to further increase production capacity by 30%.

By enhancing its production infrastructure through these capacity increases, Asahi Kasei Chemicals will reinforce its ability to provide customers with a swift and reliable supply even as the market for polyvinyl chloride substitute materials continues to expand. The company will continue to enhance its supply system while further heightening product quality to ensure that diversifying customer needs are met.

Outline of the capacity expansion

Location:	Kawasaki Works of Asahi Kasei Chemicals (Kanagawa, Japan)
Capacity:	Increase by 30% per year (following 20% increase completed this spring)
Start-up:	June 2016 (scheduled)

* Thermoplastic elastomers have elasticity approaching that of rubber but are also easy to mold by thermoplastic processes. SEBS is a type of hydrogenated elastomer. It is used as a plastic modifier which imparts various performance characteristics to plastics in which it is blended.

[Press Releases](#)