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Total Corbion PLA starts-up its 75,000 tons per year bioplastics plant
03 Dec 2018

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Total Corbion PLA, a 50/50 joint venture between Total and Corbion, announces the start-up of its 75,000 tons per year PLA (Poly Lactic Acid) bioplastics plant in Rayong, Thailand. The plant has successfully produced Luminy® PLA resins. This bioplastic provides a valuable contribution towards the circular economy being biobased and biodegradable and offering multiple environmentally-friendly waste solutions.

The new facility will produce a broad range of Luminy® PLA resins from renewable, non-GMO sugarcane sourced locally in Thailand: from standard PLA to innovative, high heat PLA and PDLA with unique properties. The products will meet customers' needs in a wide range of markets notably packaging, consumer goods, 3D printing, fibers and automotive and are specifically optimized for extrusion, thermoforming, injection molding and fiber spinning processes.

At the end of their useful life, PLA products can be mechanically or chemically recycled, or in some cases composted and returned to the

Biobased, circular car created using Luminy from Total Corbion PLA

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Total Corbion PLA will leverage on the integration with its Lactide plant, the monomer required for the production of PLA, that has simultaneously been expanded to 100,000 tons per year production capacity. Furthermore, the 1,000 tons per year PLA pilot plant, which has been operational since the end of 2017, is located on the same site and will be used for product development.

The start-up marks a major milestone for both the joint venture and the bioplastics market. With this additional 75,000 tons per year facility, the global production of PLA bioplastics will increase by almost 50%, to 240,000 tons per year. PLA is a fast-growing polymer market with an estimated annual growth rate of 10% to 15%.

"The start-up of this state-of-the-art plant establishes Total Corbion PLA as a world-scale PLA bioplastic producer, ideally located to serve growing markets from Asia Pacific to Europe and the Americas" says Stephane Dion, CEO of the company. "The subsequent increase in global PLA capacity will enable manufacturers and brand owners to move into the circular economy and produce biobased products with lower carbon footprints and multiple end of life options."

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"I'm very pleased that the joint venture has started-up the second-largest PLA bioplastics plant in the world. This achievement is fully in line with our strategy, to expand in petrochemicals and, at the same time, innovate in low-carbon solutions. Bioplastics are a great complement to our more traditional petrochemicals products to meet the rising demand for polymers while contributing towards reducing end-of-life concerns" says Bernard Pinatel, President Refining & Chemicals at Total.

Corbion, that supplies the lactic acid to this fully integrated plant, is happy with the news: *"The successful start-up of this state-of-the-art PLA plant is the result of impressive team work by many. This is good news for consumers and producers who want to make a conscious choice to improve their carbon footprint and make their contribution to a circular economy. A world of innovation and business opportunities has opened up while contributing to a better world"* says Tjerk de Ruiter, CEO at Corbion.

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Panoramic view of Total Corbion PLA's new facility in Rayong, Thailand



Total Corbion PLA's new 75,000 tons per year PLA plant in Rayong, Thailand

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Total Corbion PLA's new 75,000 tons per year PLA plant in Rayong, Thailand, operating 24/7

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The quality laboratory at Total Corbion PLA's new PLA plant in Rayong, Thailand

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Quality control of Luminy® PLA in Rayong, Thailand

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Quality Assurance Manager at Total Corbion PLA, Nittaya Khamma, explains the Luminy portfolio



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