



Olympic role for tyre-derived products?

Crumb and powdered rubber gleaned from used tyres is well placed to make significant inroads into the playground and sports surfaces markets.

Indeed, discussions were due to be held to evaluate the use of these materials in some of the facilities being developed for the 2012 Olympic Games in Beijing, the BIR Tyres Committee was informed by its Chairman Barend Ten Bruggencate of The Netherlands.

The speaker went on to describe as "unbelievable" a recent Dutch newspaper article which suggested rubber granulate was carcinogenic. Following laboratory tests, the Dutch environment ministry had gone on record as saying that granulate was not a cause of cancer, he pointed out.

He also noted that energy recovery applications had absorbed 31% of used tyres in 2004 compared to 11% in 1994. Scrap tyres had excellent calorific value and represented "a good replacement for fossil fuels". One tonne of tyres was equivalent to "one tonne of good-quality coal," he added.



Guest speaker Jiang Zhiyun, President of the China Tyre Retreading, Repairing & Recycling Association (left) and Tyres Committee Chairman Barend Ten Bruggencate.

According to Tyres Committee guest speaker Jiang Zhiyun, President of the China Tyre Retreading, Repairing & Recycling Association, approximately 120 million scrap tyres were generated in China last year, of which some 9 million were retreaded. Meanwhile, production of reclaimed rubber from tyres amounted to around 1.2 million tonnes.

Growing Chinese appetite for plastics scrap

Chinese demand for secondary plastics already runs into millions of tonnes per annum and "will become bigger and bigger" in the years ahead, the BIR Plastics Committee meeting in Beijing was assured by guest speaker David Wong of Hong Kong-based CB Holdings. Indeed, figures from China's State Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) reveal that, by volume, plastics scrap accounted for 13% of the country's imports of recyclables in 2005.

China imported more than 8 million tonnes of plastics scrap and recycled plastics last year. Around half of the total came from the EU while a further 3 million tonnes was sourced from the USA, delegates learned. China's plastics recycling facilities were located mainly in the provinces of Canton, Fujian, Jijian and Tianjian, although the western province of Zhijuan 'will become more and more important in the future', commented Mr Wong.

On the downside, the speaker identified 'serious' problems confronting traders and merchants because of their responsibilities for quality control of imported material. Plastics scrap was subjected to pre-shipment CCIC control procedures but these did not entail a full inspection of the physical properties of the material. 'The trader and merchant are taking care of this issue,' said Mr Wong. The main point of concern was not price but how to 'establish trust between the overseas supplier and the import trader/merchant'. The guest speaker called for both parties to state clearly their own liabilities with regard to the transaction of goods, while sales contracts should describe the material in as much detail as possible - to the point of sending pictures of the consignment. Suppliers and importers should also organise visits to achieve an understanding of each other's operations and should establish contact as soon as any quality problems came to light. He summarised: 'To keep the relationship between one good supplier and one good buyer is always better than looking for 100 or more new sources in the market every day.'

According to Mr Wong, plastics price fluctuations within China were linked mainly to import taxes, cur-



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rency exchange rates, seasonal demand patterns, local stock holdings, and policy or regulatory issues.

In his report on the Indian market, Surendra Borad of Belgium-based Gemini Corporation pointed out that LDPE accounted for the bulk of India's plastics scrap imports before noting: 'PET scrap is also being imported but the market is very weak. There is absolutely no market for PP, PVC or HDPE in India.' India had not imported any electronic scrap, he added.

Each year, around 2.5 million tonnes of scrap plastic is reprocessed at some 8000 units across India, with the recycled product accounting for some 40% of a total plastics consumption which is growing at 14% per annum. Domestic demand for recycled plastics was

"very promising", not least because irrigation projects were likely to boost orders for pipes and other products made from reprocessed material.

From Europe, BIR Plastics Committee Chairman Peter Daalder of Daly Plastics BV in The Netherlands claimed that the German market had become more open following the end of the DSD monopoly. Many reproducers had struggled to source sufficient supplies via the DSD system last year but more offers were now available, he told delegates. □



From left: Jacques Musa of Soulier-Onyx, Guest Speaker David Wong of CB Holdings and BIR Plastics Committee Chairman Peter Daalder.