

M-PLAS 2009, the 4th International plastics and rubber trade fair for Malaysia concluded on 7 November on an upbeat note. Brisk sales reported on show floor and exhibitors gave a thumbs up for quality of visitors and promising sales leads. **APN** reports



M-PLAS 2009 concludes on a highly positive note

The trade fair attracted some 200 exhibiting companies from 20 countries including Austria, India, Italy, Malaysia and Singapore. Having garnered a high reputation as a leading international trade fair for the Malaysian plastics and rubber industries since its inception in 2000, M-PLAS has strengthened its unique advantages by providing a definitive platform for processors from across Malaysia to discover the best in technology, innovations, state-of-the-art machinery and processing solutions for plastics and rubber. The four-day trade fair attracted 4,610 top notch trade visitors and buyers from 49 countries -- 88% of these visitors came from Malaysia. Brisk sales were reported from exhibiting companies such as Borghi SpA, Enge Plas Automation, LS Mtron, Machines Boucherie India and WY Machinery Trading KL.

M-PLAS 2009 was officially opened by YB Dato' Jacob Dungau Sagan, Malaysian Deputy Minister of International Trade and Industry who commented, "The plastics industry is constantly undergoing transformation and innovation in the manufacturing and market processes, products as well as customer services." He added, "The plastics manufacturers must therefore keep abreast with the latest developments and innovations; adapt to changes and initiate and spearhead the innovation and creativity through collaborative efforts." In the same speech, the Deputy Minister reported that the plastics industry registered a growth of 5.2% in sales in 2008 and exports grew by 4.6% in the same year. In the areas of rubber, the rubber products industry contributed RM10.5 billion (US\$3.1 billion) to the Malaysia's export earnings in 2008 - 4% up from 2007.

Show organiser, Messe Düsseldorf Asia's Managing Director, Gernot Ringling observed, "As most economies and manufacturing sectors are preparing for the economic upturn, vendors of high-end processing machinery and materials will again see an increase demand for their products. This underlies the importance of a prominent presence at and visit to M-PLAS 2009." Ringling also pointed out that ASEAN is a noteworthy market of over 570 million consumers with a combined GDP of over US\$ 1 trillion. He commented, "The outlook for the plastic and rubber industries in this region looks extremely promising as it offers a tremendous scope for businesses from this region to diversify into new growth areas."

M-PLAS has proven to attract top notch trade visitor and buyers, and over the years it has become the most successful platform for

exhibiting companies to showcase their latest innovations, state-of-the-art machinery and cost effective processing solutions to processors from across Malaysia. This was once again evident at the 2009 edition with many exhibitors giving the thumbs up on the quality of visitors and sales leads generated at the trade fair.

Positive feedback from highly satisfied exhibitors

S M Murali, manager, Marketing South and Southeast Asia, Machines Boucherie India: "As the market leaders in producing brush making machines, we felt that M-PLAS 2009 was a good opportunity to show and demonstrate the advantage of Boucherie Machines to existing brush makers. This has generated a lot of interest in our machines which will be useful for future business. The exhibition is also good for all technical personal and for people involved in the production side to see and understand our technology."

Chua Hock Keng, managing director, Enge Plas Automation: "We are satisfied with the exhibition and met good quality visitors. We even met some interested investors that require our services. Our purpose in participation was to make our market presence felt and we achieved that with M-PLAS 2009. The exhibition gave us the opportunity to meet with existing customers and to also connect with new potentials for more business."

Charles F von Claparede, market specialist, Gala Industries: "M-PLAS 2009 was better than anticipated for us and overall it was a good show with good turnover. The visitors were of a superior quality and our participation generated good leads. We were able to show visitors that we can provide the perfect



sales experience and are well equipped to serve customers in the region because we have a presence in Asia."

Tee Guan Huat, sales manager, SML Far East Regional Office: "We felt that it was important for us to take part in M-PLAS 2009 to reinforce our presence in the market. It

was also necessary to show the capabilities of our recently launched products to our existing customers and capture the interest of new potentials. These objectives are important for generating future business and we are happy with our participation because they were met."



In his opening address at yesterday's seminar on Life Cycle Assessment for the Petrochemical and Plastics Industry, Malaysian Plastics Manufacturers Association (MPMA) President Lim Kok Boon emphasised the increased awareness of environmental protection and the necessity for the industry to focus on green technologies. He noted that the petrochemical and plastics industries will need to keep pace with the latest environmental and safety regulations. "As a way to remain competitive, our members would have to adopt several strategies to ensure that we carry on doing business in a sustainable manner," Lim said.

A speech delivered by YB Dato' Jacob Dungau Sagan, Deputy Minister of International Trade and Industry

It is an honour to be here this morning to address this gathering of leading business people from the plastics and rubber industry in conjunction with the opening of M-PLAS 2009. First of all, I wish to extend a warm welcome to the participating companies from 20 countries, including exhibitors from Austria, India, Italy and Singapore who are here to showcase the latest technology in plastics and rubber processing.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Malaysian Plastics Manufacturers Association (MPMA) for the support given to make M-PLAS 2009 possible. I hope MPMA, as a key partner in M-PLAS, will continue to provide the conduit for collaboration to share and exchange information regarding the plastics and rubber industry.

The plastic industry has strong interlinkages with other industries, such as the electronics, automotive, food and beverages sector. In 2008, sales for the plastics industry in Malaysia registered a growth of 5.2%, valued at RM16.3 billion (US\$4.75 billion), compared to RM15.4 billion in 2007. Total trade of Malaysia's manufacturers of plastics increased by 1.0 percent to RM20.4 billion compared to RM20.2 billion in 2007. Exports increased by 4.6% to RM9.9 billion compared with RM9.5 billion in 2007. Meanwhile, imports decreased by 2.4% to RM10.4 billion from RM10.6 billion in 2007.

The plastics industry is constantly undergoing transformation and innovation in the manufacturing and market processes, products as well as customer services. The plastics manufacturers must therefore keep abreast with the latest developments and innovations; adapt to changes and initiate and spearhead the innovation and creativity through collaborative efforts.

The Malaysian plastics manufacturers in the global market are being challenged by competition from newly-emerging economies. The plastics industry must strive for global competitiveness so as to avoid being marginalised. In order to stimulate new demands and realise economic growth, product innovation is vital.

In line with the Malaysian government's efforts to move the industry up the value chain, a total of 60 projects with investments of RM653.8 million were approved in 2008. Projects approved included the manufacture of plastic injection moulded components and sub-assemblies for the E&E industry, the manufacture of plastic bags and films, and polymeric calcium carbonate masterbatches used in the formulation of raw materials in various applications, and the manufacture of fiberglass reinforced polyester (FRP) sectional panels and plasticised polyvinylchloride



Striving for global competitiveness

(UPVC) roofing sheets.

I am also happy to note that despite the threatening global economic scenario which we are currently facing, the rubber products industry is still performing well. Last year the rubber products industry contributed RM10.5 billion to the country's export earning compared with RM10.1 billion in 2007. Until June, Malaysia exported RM5.1 billion of rubber products, largely contributed by latex products (80% of the total value), catheters and latex thread.

Presently, there are more than 500 companies in operation, employing over 68,000 persons. Small and medium industries assume an important role in growth of the industry. Although the rubber products industry has not been affected much from the global crisis, there is a need for more efforts to facilitate the smaller manufacturers that currently facing stiff competition and higher operational costs given the volatile latex prices over the past two years. Focus on innovation and initiative to produce high value added products could help Malaysia companies to stand strong in the global arena.

In the last decades, companies in Malaysia

have become too dependent on cheap and low-skilled foreign labours, particularly in the manufacturing and services sectors. This trend is not to be prolonged if the industry wants to stay relevant and meet the challenges of a competitive and innovative world. To be more competitive, we have to encourage more Malaysian companies to adopt new ideas, technologies and know-how and to look at new ways of doing things and reinvent their business models.

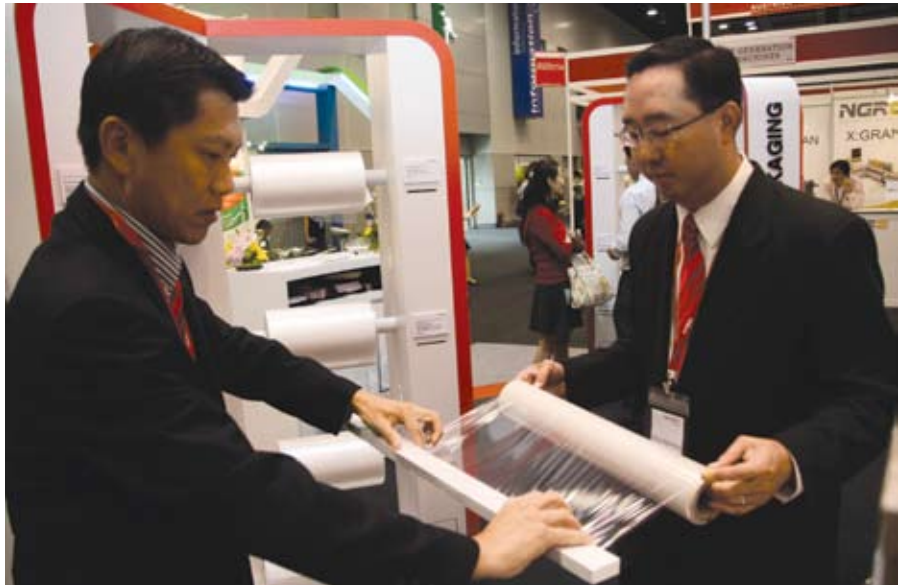
Malaysia is also competing with other ASEAN members for the same market and producing almost identical plastic and rubber products. The M-PLAS exhibition is therefore timely, in that, it provides industries an insight into the latest innovations, technologies and the global trends currently available on plastic and rubber machinery, equipment, products and services that is needed for industries to move to a higher level. I hope the plastics and rubber manufacturing companies will take this opportunity to learn more about the latest technology and processing solutions in order to move up the value chain for the industry. I wish M-PLAS will achieve a great success.

Stretching performance limits

ExxonMobil Chemical is demonstrating at M-PLAS 2009 the benefits of its latest range of customised film formulations designed for high performance thin-gauged cast stretch hand wrap film applications.

This latest product innovation from ExxonMobil features three flagship products in its polyolefin-based materials platform: the two high-performance Exceed and Enable metallocene polyethylene (mPE) resin brands; as well as the Vistamaxx propylene-based elastomer, for better cling performance optimised according to applications.

The latest generation Enable mPE resins allow for downgauging of up to 20% without sacrificing critical mechanical properties – the downgauging potential helps both converters and end users to address market demands for reduced film thickness in order to achieve the lowering of working capital through material savings and lower inventory. ExxonMobil's latest Enable metallocene



ExxonMobil Chemical PE market development planner Harvey Yap (left) and polyolefins sales development manager Choy Wai Kong, conducting the demonstration



technology brings new improvements to processability.

The three-layer film structure ExxonMobil is featuring at M-PLAS for stretch hand wrap film applications – a formulation that contains Enable mPE 20-10CB, Exceed mPE 3518CB and Vistamaxx 6102 resin, at a 12µm film thickness – display mechanical performances that are superior to that of a thicker conventional stretch film. Key advantages of the film formulation include a significant improvement in tear resistance, higher

toughness for stiff hand wrapping that eliminates the need for multiple wraps, and enhanced holding strength – all factors that result in achieving better load integrity and lead to increased opportunities to wrap more demanding loads.

The ease of the manual hand wrapping process itself is also showcased, as ExxonMobil's film formulation allows for an improvement in terms of ergonomics and safety considerations for plant operators.





All smiles at the Boucherie booth, as a brush making machine was sold to Malaysian firm Dragon Pathway

Optimised brush making machines



Belgian firm GB Boucherie is the leading manufacturer of brush making machines, with sales and service centres in Asia including India, China, Japan, and South Korea – the Indian office is taking charge of the South East Asian market.

Boucherie has developed different types of machines specifically catered to produce household brush, industrial brush, toothbrush, and mascara brush, as well as established

mouldmaking capabilities for a wide range of brush making operations, and others.

At M-PLAS 2009, the firm aims to demonstrate the processing benefits of Boucherie machines to existing brush makers in Malaysia. The exhibition also presents a great opportunity for Boucherie to showcase the equipment to technicians and plant personnel in order for them to have a better understanding of brush making technologies.

Increased demand for cost effective, highly efficient processes

Indian machine manufacturer Rajoo Engineers has expanded its range of product lines to fit the requirements of the Malaysian packaging market, particularly in the areas of rPET sheet lines and XPS processing machines for making disposable packaging containers.

In Malaysia, Rajoo has observed that film and sheet converters are also increasingly looking to achieve reduced energy cost, higher levels of automation for controlling quality and the lowering of material wastage, as well as the flexibility to process a wide range of polymers. Some of the key market segments in Malaysia include foodstuff, milk and edible oil packaging, lamination film, as well as stretch films.

From Rajoo's experience, Malaysian converters and processors have shifted focus to more "economical sources" for machines developed and manufactured in Asia - at the same time, these firms are looking to establish high standard of production at its plant operations and improve production capacities to achieve economies of scale. This trend is visible in several Asian markets including Malaysia, Thailand, China and India.

Deven Mehta, Rajoo Engineers territory manager, said: "Malaysian processors have

always established high standards of flexible packaging processing, and they demand technologies that are basically on par with European standards. As such, the flexibility we can bring to customers is a major plus point. For example, we have installed film processing systems that offer a high level of energy efficiency and a level of automation that is optimised to our customers' needs."

The increasing use of recycled materials in packaging items is also a key trend in the South East Asian region that Rajoo aims to lev-

erage on for growth. "Cost savings and environmental friendly attributes are the key advantages for the increased use of recycled materials in sheet processing," Mehta explains. "In a typical three-layer PET sheet structure for disposable packaging, up to 80 percent recycled PET can be used, in the middle layer between two layers made of virgin PET materials. For non-food packaging applications, we have developed the know-how to enable the use of 100 percent recycled PET materials as well."



Deven Mehta (centre), territory manager of Rajoo Engineers, is confident that the Indian machine firm is able to meet the processing requirements of Malaysian converters

SML stretch film line sold prior to M-PLAS!

Austrian machine manufacturer SML Maschinen GmbH, with headquarter and machine manufacturing in Lenzing, Austria, sold a Stretch film line to Malaysian company Evermal Industry Sdn Bhd. Evermal, based in Johor state, is a well known stretch film producer with production facilities in Senai and Pontian.

The line concept offers high flexibility, especially with regard to the wide film thickness range of 10 - 23 microns, in connection with maximum line speed up to 650 m/min. The new high-speed-extruder 90 mm allows output rates above 1000 kg/h.

Drastically reduced energy consumption is another of the key advantages of this new extruder generation. Total net output of the line exceeds 9,120 tonnes per year. Fully automatic film thickness control offers lowest thickness deviation. The edge trim will be inline-repelletized in a recoSTAR-recycling machine from the Austrian plastic



machinery manufacturer Starlinger & Co. GmbH.

Gerald Ausweger, chief representative Asia Pacific, SML Far East

The line includes the newest version of the turret winder type: 4000, which offers due to the solid design high winding speeds with best winding quality.