

July 13, 2004

Polylactic Acid Approved by Japanese Industry Association for Food Packaging Applications

Polylactic acid (PLA), a plastic resin derived from renewable resources such as plants, has been approved for food packaging applications by the Japanese industry association concerned, American plant-based plastics maker Cargill Dow LLC and its partner as well as Japan's leading chemicals manufacturer Mitsui Chemicals, Inc. said in a joint announcement today.

The decision to issue the approval this time was made by Japan Hygienic Olefin and Styrene Plastics Association, at its executive meeting in June this year. At the same time, PLA was officially registered with the association as the 28th new resin. As a result, PLA is now usable in the same way as other general-purpose plastic resins in food packaging applications.

The "green" plastic PLA is held in much expectation for its important role as a basic material in a sustainable economic society, owing to its being an environmental load-reducing material contributing to conservation of fossil fuel consumption and lowering of greenhouse gas emissions.

Being already approved for use in food packaging applications in the U.S. and Europe under U.S. Food and Drug Administration approval and EU Directive, respectively, PLA as films and sheets already has much actual achievements to show in food container applications.

In Japan, development work on PLA has customarily been focused on fibers as well as packaging material in non-food applications. However, PLA's registration with the association this time is expected to elicit the acceleration of various technical and applications development activities relating to a whole range of food packagings, and thereby serve to further expand the use of PLA.

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<Japan Hygienic Olefin and Styrene Plastics Association>

An industry association established in order to promote usage and popular acceptance of appropriate plastic materials in order to assure, as the olefin and styrene plastics industry as a whole, the hygienic integrity and safety of plastics used in food packaging applications.