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## **Mitsui Chemicals to Launch New Propylene-based High-performance Elastomer Series**

Already widely engaged in the manufacture and sale of elastomers, Japan's leading chemical company Mitsui Chemicals, Inc. (MCI) has decided to launch a new series of propylene-based high-performance elastomers made using metallocene catalysts under the trade name TAFMER™ XM, the company announced today. A family of soft polymeric materials, elastomers are used for applications such as automotive and electric appliance parts as well as food packaging materials.

To be manufactured at one of the existing TAFMER™ plants with its capacity of 30,000-ton/yr, TAFMER™ XM Series will become commercially available in April this year, after minor modifications of the plant. The plant is located at the company's Ichihara Works east of Tokyo. The new series is projected to achieve sales of at least ¥1 billion by Fiscal 2006.

Unlike the company's existing propylene-based TAFMER™ produced by using conventional Ziegler catalysts, the epoch-making TAFMER™ XM Series high-performance polymers made under MCI's proprietary metallocene catalyst technology are expected to find extensive applications as resin modifiers for various resins owing to their extremely high homogeneity in terms of molecular structures.

For instance, when used as blends with polypropylene (PP) for the heat-sealing layer of PP films, the new series will allow heat sealing at a temperature 20°C lower as compared to the existing propylene-based TAFMER™, to significantly raise the efficiency of the food packaging process. Also, the excellent anti-blocking properties of TAFMER™ XM Series will prevent film from blocking, or sticking together, during storage and transportation. Furthermore, TAFMER™ XM Series is expected to find inroads into a wide variety of applications in addition to resin modifiers.

In the background of the launch of the TAFMER™ XM Series this time is MCI's strategic focus on further expansion and growth in the Performance Materials sector under the company's latest Medium-term Business Plan for Fiscal 2004 through 2007. As a core business of MCI's Performance Materials sector, the Elastomers unit is actively developing novel products such as new types of elastomers taking advantage of nanostructure control technology and new liquid elastomers, in addition to the soon-to-be-launched TAFMER™ XM Series fully

leveraging the company's metallocene catalyst technology.

Thus, MCI intends to further accelerate its new products and applications development in order to expand and grow the Performance Materials sector.

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