CHEMICALS

HENKEL OUTLINES AZELAIC ACID INVESTMENT

Henkel Corporation is to carry out a multi-million dollar debottlenecking project to increase process efficiency, as well as production capacity, of azelaic acid.

The debottlenecking project, which is scheduled to come onstream at Henkel’s Cincinnati, Ohio facility during 1999, follows the recent completion of an US$88 million purification plant at the same facility, which doubled production capacity of Henkel’s polymer-grade azelaic acid, EMEROX® 1144.

BASE, SOLVAY TO FORM PVC JV

BASF AG, Ludwigshafen, Germany, and Solvay SA, Brussels, Belgium, are to form a joint venture incorporating the European operations of the two companies’ polyvinyl chloride (PVC) and polyvinylidene chloride (PVDC) businesses.

The agreement also covers dichloroethane, vinyl chloride (VC) and vinylidene chloride (VDC), and the chloralkali electrolysis plants operated by the two companies in Belgium. With headquarters in Brussels, the new joint venture will be managed by Solvay.

BAYER CHOOSES BAYTOWN

Bayer is to build a new facility to manufacture toluene diisocyanate (TDI) at its Baytown, Texas site.

The US$150 million project brings the total investment in the expansion of Bayer’s Baytown site to about US$1.3 billion. This latest investment adds 220 million pounds of capacity, all of which will be exported, and is tentatively scheduled for completion in 2000. After the expansion is completed, Bayer’s total TDI capacity in the USA will be about 504 million pounds.

Bayer recently completed a US$140 million facility for the manufacture of diphenylmethane diisocyanate (MDI) and an US$80 million polycarbonate resin capacity increase at Baytown. Bayer will create about 40 new jobs related to the TDI expansion.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS AT FMC

FMC Corporation has reached agreement with the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Justice on environmental improvements at its phospha resins plant near Pocatello, Idaho. FMC will spend approximately US$93 million over the next four years, including US$43 million of capital costs for waste treatment and other compliance projects. The company will also spend approximately US$65 million over the next four years to conduct a number of supplemental environmental projects. US$63 million will be spent on air quality improvements.

PULP AND PAPER

PCC SATELLITE PLANT PLANNED FOR CHINA

Specialty Minerals Inc, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Minerals Technologies Inc, has entered into a joint venture agreement with Asia Pulp & Paper Company (China) Pte Ltd to build China’s first precipitated calcium carbonate (PCC) satellite plant.

The satellite plant will be located at a new paper mill in Dangang, China, and will serve Jiangsu Gold Coast East Paper Company, a subsidiary of Asia Pulp and Paper Company (China) Pte Ltd. The joint venture, which will be known as APP China Specialty Minerals Pte Ltd, will own, construct and operate the plant to produce filling grade PCC. The satellite plant is expected to be in operation by the first quarter of 2000.

FCC CHEMICALS

FINA CHEMICAL AWARDS POLYPROPYLENE CONTRACT TO JACOB

Fina Chemical has awarded Jacobs Serete (Paris) an engineering contract for the basic engineering on a 380 000 ton per year polypropylene production line at Fina’s Feluy, Belgium plant.

This project represents the third polypropylene line at the Feluy site and the third consecutive polypropylene project Fina has awarded Jacobs.

The contract value was not disclosed. The new unit should be ready at the end of 2000. Fina’s polypropylene operations produce polypropylene pellets for sale to the plastics industry for further processing into durable and consumer goods. Jacobs will use virtual office capabilities between its Paris, France and Houston, Texas offices to perform the work.

HEAVY CRUDE OIL PROCESSING VENTURE FOR VENEZUELA

Sincor CA, a joint venture company composed of Total Venezuela, Petroles de Venezuela SA (PDVSA) and StatOil Sincor AS, has awarded a US$750 million contract to Contrina to design and build, on a turnkey basis, extra heavy crude oil facilities and associated utilities and offsites at Jose, Venezuela.

Contrina is a joint venture company created for the Venezuelan heavy oil upgrader programs, and includes Technip of France, Brown & Root and Parsons of the USA, as well as two Venezuelan firms. The project includes a crude/vacuum distillation unit, a mild hydrocracker, a naphtha distillate hydrotreater, sulfur handling facilities, and associated utilities and offsites.

Under the terms of the contract, Contrina will be responsible for design finalisation, detail engineering, procurement, construction, precommissioning, commissioning and the handover of the facilities.

MARINE

ARCO BUILDS 3RD MILLENNIUM CLASS CRUDE OIL TANKER

Arco Marine Inc is planning a third Millennium Class state-of-the-art crude oil tanker.

The latest addition to Arco’s fleet will be delivered from Avondale Industries’ New Orleans shipyard in the first quarter of 2001. These Millennium class next generation tankers are designed specifically for round-trip transport of crude oil from Valdez, Alaska to Cherry Point, Washington and the port of Long Beach.