

PHARMA-BIO TRANSPORT

SUPPLY-CHAIN IDEAS FOR HEALTHCARE



Product Protection

with the Earth in Mind
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Doubling Up for a Greener Solution

Two companies work together to double the amount of recycled content in EPS packaging.

ACH Foam Technologies (www.achfoam.com) has been recycling and reprocessing expanded polystyrene for years. In 2010, however, the EPS manufacturer began molding EPS packaging using EcoSix Molding Beads from RAPAC containing 60% or more recycled content, leaping ahead of typically much smaller percentage rates. “We are very excited about this development and how it will help to improve the industry as a whole,” says Mary Burk, corporate marketing, ACH Foam Technologies. Initially, ACH Foam will offer EcoSix for its WineLoc wine shipping containers. EcoSix recycled content will also be available upon request in other EPS packaging.

ACH Foam reports that EPS packaging has typically only contained up to 30% recycled content. Historically, past efforts to include higher percentages have been met with product performance concerns.

Working with RAPAC’s EcoSix Molding Beads, which themselves contain 60% reclaimed polystyrene, ACH Foam has been able to develop shippers that have passed industry-accepted drop tests.

RAPAC collects multiple forms of recycled EPS and reprocesses it into its EcoSix resin. The company, a large EPS recycler, then re-extrudes the resin to create the EcoSix molding beads. Dennis W. Koerner, RAPAC vice president, reports that “RAPAC’s



ACH Foam Technologies offers the DuraTherm insulated shipping container, which can contain EcoSix upon request.

recycled beads are made of at least 60% reclaimed polystyrenes from product that has been diverted from the nation’s waste stream.”

ACH Foam Technologies developed an in-house process to mold EcoSix. According to the company, EcoSix has successfully passed ISTA 3A drop tests for 60% recycled content material and while meeting ACH Foam’s quality standards.

In addition, ACH Foam reports that it has been collecting data on EcoSix’s thermal properties, and the data show that EcoSix’s insulating properties are “equivalent or better” than those of standard recycled EPS.

EcoSix’s manufacture relies on a steady source of reclaimed polystyrene,

which ACH Foam is contributing through its postconsumer and postindustrial recycling sources. Retailers and even drug manufacturers themselves are embracing recycling programs. Burk points to pharmaceutical mail-back program for EPS containers shipped to customers.

For now, though, more needs to be done to expand collection centers and efforts around the country. Quite simply, not all reclaimed EPS can be reprocessed. ACH Foam Technologies is taking an industry lead in those efforts. As leaders in the collection of recycled EPS and in the use of EPS with recycle content, ACH Foam Technologies will be developing EcoSix packaging for customers on request. ■