

theaxionnewsletter

WELCOME to the latest edition of the Axion Newsletter. In this issue Axion calls for stronger controls on the export of WEEE, reports on Vefi Ltd, a company impressed by the quality of Axpoly® and a new WRAP funding initiative supporting the development of the recycling and reclamation of plastics from construction waste in Scotland.

WEEE LEGISLATION FAILING TO DELIVER

More than 16 months after its launch in the UK, the WEEE Directive is still failing to deliver its original aims of high-quality recycling of waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) to produce a useful stream of materials for re-manufacture back into new E & E goods. In fact there is now an increase in the level of waste being exported to third world countries, which can be to the detriment of human and environmental health, claims Axion.



Example of WEEE being recycled in the Far East

It can be argued that the export of untreated WEEE waste, or whole items labelled for 're-use', to countries with a lack of control on disposal of unwanted material fractions, causes more environmental damage than EU landfill of whole WEEE items, Keith Freegard, Axion Sales Director, told a Brussels conference.

Giving his views on the Directive's track record to date, Keith suggested that Europe should process the waste streams created by WEEE primary treatment inside

Europe, under legislative controls which ensure that the environment and human health is protected. The producers of electrical equipment have been made responsible for their end-of-life waste products under this Directive and Keith Freegard believes that this should include ensuring that the by-products of primary WEEE treatment are handled in processes which uphold the principles of Duty of Care for waste.

"It's clear that the WEEE Directive is failing to deliver what it originally set out to do; that is the best treatment, recycling and recovery techniques should be applied to maximise material re-use and to minimize risks to human health and the environment," he said. "In reality what has happened is finding the cheapest way to smash up an electrical item. While the metal recovery from this route is a valuable benefit, there is a destruction of the potential value in circuit boards and plastic components, which end up in a highly co-mingled, very dirty WEEE shredder residue."

The Directive allows the by-products of WEEE primary treatment to be exported for further recycling to countries where the processing methods are claimed to operate under 'broadly equivalent standards'. Evidence of the mass of material that actually ends up being recycled or the environmental disposal methods used for unwanted waste fractions is non-existent, in Keith's view.

Calling for much stronger controls on the export of WEEE and how it is subsequently re-used or recycled, Keith added: "We may have got some things right, but my view is we got an awful lot wrong."

Axpoly® - 'IMPRESSIVE MATERIAL' SAYS KEY CUSTOMER

Vefi Ltd, market-leading manufacturer of horticultural pots and trays in Norway, Sweden and Finland, is delighted with the results it is achieving from using Axpoly to mould its cultivation pots and transport trays. The company is thermoforming Axpoly to thicknesses from 0.5 to 1.0 mm with very pleasing results. As Audun Hem Larsen, Managing Director of Vefi Ltd, comments:

"We started using Axpoly granulate for our extruding lines and have found this material very good for our purposes. Since 1985, Vefi has been the pioneer of a hydroponic system for growing lettuce and herbs in channels. Sales of this system are growing rapidly and



Vefi product made from Axpoly

we use Axpoly to make all our pots and trays for this system."

Continued...

Axpoly® - 'IMPRESSIVE MATERIAL' SAYS KEY CUSTOMER Continued.....

Vefi is particularly impressed with the quality of Axpoly and the improvements in product quality that have been achieved as a result of switching to the 100% recycled material. Audun says:

“Since we started to use Axpoly, our product quality has improved a lot.” High quality polymer is essential for Vefi as Audun explains:

“It is important for us to have products of exactly the right quality because our pots and trays are part of an automatic pot robot system.”

Axion Director Roger Morton comments: “This is great customer feedback for us. Vefi are using Axpoly in a very thin application and it's success very much demonstrates the quality of the material.”

Audun is keenly aware of the carbon savings achieved by using Axpoly over virgin polymer and says that using recycled material is a selling point for his customers:

“It is an important part of both our own and our customers' marketing strategies that our customers' end products – lettuce and herbs – are sold in pots and trays made from recycled material.”



Vefi product made from Axpoly

“Recently, Axion have supplied us with green-coloured Axpoly to manufacture mini window greenhouses and pots for hobby growers. We requested the green material because our customer would like to highlight the fact that the products are made from recycled material.”

WRAP BUILDS ON SCOTTISH CONSTRUCTION RECYCLING

Projects in Scotland developing recycling or reclamation facilities for plastics construction waste can take advantage of a new funding initiative. The Capital Grant Programme launched today, can provide up to 30% of total costs of plant, equipment and infrastructure.

The scheme is open to those developing new or existing recycling and reclamation facilities for a wide range of non-inert construction and demolition waste. The Waste and Resources Action Programme (Wrap) set up the scheme in response to construction contractors who said there wasn't enough capacity to deal with construction waste.

As well as plastics, other materials such as waste timber, packaging waste and soils are included. A similar project is already in operation in England and one has been proposed for Wales.

Wrap director for Scotland, Iain Gulland, said the not-for-profit organisation was “specifically interested” in

projects that will “significantly increase the quantity and quality” of the waste materials reprocessed.

Applicants must be based in Scotland, have an end market for their output and should be able to get up and running by 31 December 2010. Wrap specifies that projects must be dependent on its support for viability and should be commercially sustainable in the medium to long term. The project must also result in an auditable annual output for a minimum of five years.

The deadline for applications is 12.30pm on 18 December and successful applicants will be informed by the end of the following February.

Wrap is hosting two free workshops covering the type of projects it can fund and how to apply. It will also cover the other services Wrap offers to those reprocessing construction and demolition waste.

To book a place contact Sonia Simpson on 01295 819612 or email sonia.simpson@wrap.org.uk.

To find out more about the scheme in general, email capital.support@wrap.org.uk or call Wrap on 01295 819900.

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