RECOVINYL news

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WELCOME to the latest edition of the Recovinyl newsletter. The focus of this issue is building products made from recyled PVC and the sustainability arguments that can be made for their use. Find out about two companies producing recycled PVC building products: Deceuninck and REHAU.

Recovinyl backs new 'green' building products

New building products made from recycled PVC-U help give manufacturers an added competitive edge, particularly from the specification sector where 'green' procurement is an issue. Cladding and window cills made from 100% recycled PVC-U are examples of how the material can be sustainably used in new building products applications without any loss of performance, says Roger Morton, of Axion Recycling, Recovinyl's UK agents.

Roger comments: "Given the UK construction industry's commitment to improve sustainability across the whole sector, sourcing 100% recycled products that can truly demonstrate 'closed-loop recycling' can make a significant contribution to providing environmentally-friendly solutions."

Belface is an external cladding profile manufactured from Cycle-foam, a 100% recycled PVC product, by PVC-U window systems company Deceuninck. The main profile consists almost entirely of recyclate, with just a 0.5mm top layer of new material to give an ecological product a stylish new look.

Hazel Wilson, Deceuninck's Building Products Division Manager, explains: "The material composition and design of the Belface range has been developed to ensure a high performing product that retains its shape and structural integrity when exposed to the rigours that external cladding must endure.

"It has been very well received by the specification market and is very popular with architects who regard it as a long-life product that has been thoroughly tested and is very recyclable. Novasil, our internal window cill range, is also made with recycled content in line with our long-standing environmental policy to recycle PVC-U waste."

Roger concludes: "As well as diverting material from landfill, recycling preserves natural resources with associated savings in energy and provides a significant reduction in carbon emissions compared to using virgin polymer. We welcome the increasing use of PVC recyclate in products, such as cladding, cabling and piping that demonstrates the material's sustainability and ability to be recycled many times."

To find out more about the Belface range and other Deceuninck building products, contact Hazel Wilson: Tel: 01249 810404 email: Hazel.Wilson@deceuninck.com

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REHAU: DISPELLING THE MYTHS ABOUT PVC

As one of Europe's largest polymer producers, REHAU has spent many years promoting the positive benefits of the material in the construction industry, as well as in diverse sectors such as medical, transport and furniture.

However, myths and controversy surrounding the manufacture, use and recycling of PVC in construction continue to have a negative influence on architects and specifiers. This impacts particularly on REHAU's PVC-U window systems which compete head on against aluminium and timber in both the public and private sectors; so REHAU has responded by producing its first sustainability brochure aimed at dispelling many of these myths.

REHAU has brought together independent research findings from bodies as diverse as the BRE (Building Research Establishment), the BPF (British Plastics Federation), WRAP (Waste Research Action Programme) and various British government and EU studies to support the use of PVC as a safe, reliable, cost effective, sustainable and recyclable material.

REHAU points out, for example, that more dioxins are released to the atmosphere through sources involving the combustion of wood than are produced by the entire halogenated chemicals industry and that energy used in PVC manufacture is less per cubic decimetre than for either steel or aluminium.

It also addresses the argument that PVC is not sustainable because it is made from chlorine by referencing the BPF's Specifier Briefing 'The Open and Shut Case for PVC-U' which explains that the main ingredient of PVC is common salt - 50 quadrillion tonnes of which are to be found in the world's seas.

In this and many of its other sales and marketing materials, REHAU is encouraging architects and specifiers to make a more honest assessment of the environmental impact of PVC-U products based on their full life cycle including end of life disposal and/or reuse.

It wants them to consider the 'Three Pillars of Sustainability' - social, economic and environmental - as laid out in the 1987 Brundtland Report 'Our Common Future' which together deliver favourable lifecycle cost study comparisons of PVC window frames vs softwood, hardwood and aluminium.

REHAU's arguments in favour of the use of PVC-U windows are supported by its status as an environmentally friendly manufacturer. For example, it produces a range of products designed to promote the use of sustainable energy including ground to air heat exchangers and ground source energy probes, as well as storm water management and rainwater harvesting systems. It is also a partner with the EU's voluntary Green Building Programme which intends to raise awareness and trigger additional investments in energy efficiency and renewable energies among owners of non-residential buildings. And, perhaps most significantly, its environmental management system complies with ISO14001.

REHAU is mailing the brochure to key architects and specifiers and making it available at its permanent exhibition in the London Building Centre.

Copies are available free from the company on: 01989 762600 or it can be downloaded in PDF format via the website at www.rehau.co.uk