
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thai Bioplastics Misinformation on Oxo-Biodegradable Technology

Vancouver, Canada (July 22, 2011) - The statements made by the Thai Bioplastics Industry Association (TBIA) are typical of comments from the Bioplastics industry. Bioplastics are represented as offering ideal biodegradation performance, but the performance is based on composting standard specifications, which require the high temperature, moisture and oxygen control only found in industrial composting facilities. There is no value in the use of expensive Bioplastics for disposable products if these products do not end up in an industrial composting facility. As there is no commercial composting conducted in Thailand, one can see no reason to be using Bioplastics.

In this light, the statement of Mr. Borrisuttanakul, the TBIA president, is particularly puzzling. He states that “We support bioplastics that are compostable, in that they should turn into fertiliser within 180 days”. Again, it must be asked, if there is no composting conducted in Thailand, then what is the justification for using Bioplastics? Bioplastic will only biodegrade in 180 days in an industrial composting facility. Furthermore, Bioplastics do not turn into fertilizer when composted but rather are nearly completely converted to Carbon Dioxide, leaving almost no compost behind. It would appear there is confusion as to the performance of Bioplastics, even among the so-called experts.

The major Bioplastics manufacturers specifically state that their products are not intended for landfill disposal. The reason for this is that landfills, even the ones in Thailand, will become anaerobic (depleted of oxygen), so that any biodegradation that occurs will result in the production of methane gas. Methane is 24 times more harmful than Carbon Dioxide as a contributor to the global warming problem, and any methane generation has considerable negative impact on the environment. With this in mind, one has to ask once again, where is the justification for using Bioplastics in Thailand?

Another often quoted advantage of Bioplastics is that they do not rely on petroleum raw materials and use renewable resources. Unfortunately, these “renewable resources” turn out to be food resources, and it is now well recognized that using food to make plastics is not a sustainable practice. Furthermore, the growing of these renewable raw materials is energy-intensive and requires tremendous usage of water resources. So to claim that Bioplastics are more environmentally responsible than conventional plastics ignores these facts. Indeed, a recent UK environmental agency study concluded that plastic bags made from conventional plastics have less environmental impact than Bioplastics bags.

Oxo-biodegradable additives provide an economical means to enable conventional plastics such as polyethylene, polypropylene and polystyrene (that take decades or centuries to degrade) to degrade in a short time frame. This helps to alleviate the problem of the persistence and accumulation of plastics in the environment. The degradation, biodegradation, and non-ecotoxicity of Oxo-biodegradable plastics is evaluated in accordance with the ASTM D6954 standard testing guide, which provides tests suitable for establishing and validating the degradation performance.

EPI Environmental Products Inc.

Although Oxo-biodegradable plastics do not meet the 180 day biodegradation time frame required by the composting standards, biodegradation has certainly been verified and substantiated both in independent lab testing, and in substantial scientific literature. In addition, EPI is the only company to have studied the degradation performance of plastics containing its additives in real, working landfills, and has proven that its plastics will completely degrade in the landfill. Because the oxygen in the landfill eventually is depleted, biodegradation of oxo-biodegradable plastics is not expected to occur in the landfill environment and therefore, harmful methane gas will not be generated.

Biodegradation of Oxo-biodegradable plastics will occur in the environment where moisture, oxygen, and micro-organisms are present. This is particularly the case for products that end up in the environment as litter. As the products break down, the micro-organisms that are present in soil will consume the degraded plastic and allow the plastic to enter the natural biocycle.

In conclusion, the statements of the TBIA do not fully reflect reality when it comes to Bioplastics and Oxo-biodegradable plastics. Certain facts are conveniently omitted and without knowing all the facts, it is impossible to understand the real benefits or drawbacks of any technology. All the facts must be on the table before any informed decision can be reached, and the TBIA has not presented all the facts.

About EPI Environmental Products Inc.:

Established in 1991 in Canada, EPI Environmental Products Inc. (EPI) with its UK subsidiary EPI (Europe) Ltd. has become a world leader in the fight against plastic waste. EPI licenses proprietary technology that causes plastic to degrade. Plastic bags, plastic film, plastic packaging and other single-use plastics can remain in the environment for decades. When these products are manufactured using EPI's additives, they will degrade and subsequently biodegrade when discarded in soil, in the presence of microorganisms, moisture, and oxygen.

###

Contact:

Weronika Stepień, Media Relations
EPI Environmental Products Inc.
Tel: 1 (604) 738-6281
Email: weronikastepien@epi-global.com
www.epi-global.com