

EPCA '17: MMA players question impact of rise in topanol-A stabiliser use

DATE : 2017-10-05

European methyl methacrylate (MMA) players are questioning the impact of an increase in topanol-A use as a stabiliser in product, on the sidelines of the 51st annual European Petrochemical Association (EPCA) meeting.

In Europe, MEHQ (monomethyl ether of hydroquinone) is traditionally used as a stabiliser in the production of MMA, with some buyers unable to use topanol-A product.

This is because of company approvals and legislation against the use of topanol-A in food-based applications.

New capacity coming on stream in the Middle East uses topanol-A as a stabiliser, as do producers in Asia.

Given the tightness in the market, stabilisers have become a talking point throughout the year.

There have been a number of instances when buyers have been looking for product on the spot market, but were unable to accept it because of the stabiliser used.

Saudi Methacrylates Company (SAMAC), a joint venture between Mitsubishi Rayon (MRC) and Sabic, has a new plant in Saudi Arabia which has the capacity to produce 250,000 tonnes/year of MMA. It is in the late commissioning stage.

Some buyers are concerned about the high level of topanol-A used in its new product. It is twice the amount used in South Korean material and higher than the amount used in Chinese product.

The high amounts used are because of transportation purposes, although some buyers are concerned about what this means for use in production.

If there is a shift in the market to increased topanol-A use as a stabiliser, questions will also be asked about current approvals and legislation.

The annual EPCA meeting runs from 30 September to 3 October.

Source Icis News