

WITH MILLAD® 3988, WEI LI FINDS NEW APPLICATION FOR ISBM MACHINE

Making clear PP bottles for hot-fill market boosts sales by 50 percent

A machinery manufacturer has tapped a rich new market thanks to a clarifying agent for polypropylene (PP) resin. By using resin clarified with MILLAD 3988 from Milliken Chemical, Hong Kong-based Wei Li Plastics Machinery Co. is producing clear PP bottles for hot-fill food and beverages. From January through June 2001, the new application had generated 50 percent higher sales compared to the same period last year.

Wei Li makes the new WL-CP03 two-stage injection stretch blow molding (ISBM) machine and markets it in more than 33 countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, North America and South America. The company also manufactures other machinery and provides preform molding, air supply systems and counsel on preform design and bottle design.

Wei Li had found success making low-maintenance, energy-efficient ISBM machines flexible enough to produce 10 ml-20 L bottles made of PP, PET, polymethyl methacrylate and polycarbonate. However, it did not make machinery designed especially for producing clear PP bottles.

"We did not make a machine especially for producing clear PP bottles because in the past, we could not find suitable PP resin in our local market," said Maggie Chau, Wei Li business manager. "And, our clients had the incorrect perception that PP bottles were all poor in transparency when compared to PET."

Through consultation with Milliken's Asia Pacific Technical Manager Aster Teo and Country Manager Nelson Ng, the company determined that it could utilize Milliken's resin-clarifying agent to supply a cost-effective alternative machine to customers who originally planned to use hot-fill PET.

The company sells the WL-CP03 machine with heating elements and blow molds tailor made for

heating PP preforms with MILLAD 3988, stretch blowing them into bottles with exceptional transparency. By finding the new application for its equipment, Wei Li is targeting the market for hot-fill jars and bottles used for food and beverages such as tea, juice, soy sauce and tomato sauce.

"Hot-fill tea products have been getting extremely popular in China and Hong Kong this year," Chau said. "Thousands of small- and medium-sized tea products manufacturers are scrambling for hot-fill bottles. Using resin clarified with MILLAD 3988, our machine can produce recyclable, hot-fill clear PP bottles at lower cost than the special grade of PET required for hot-fill.

As a result, we've increased our machine sales by creating a new application for our stretch blow molding machine."

Milliken provided on-site technical assistance at the Wei Li plant by supplying sample PP preforms and participating in blowing tests. Milliken also provided Wei Li with a comprehensive list of PP resin suppliers around the world.



“A critical factor in this success was Milliken Chemical’s ability to supply technical support and the clarifying agent for the resin,” Chau said. “Milliken’s worldwide presence means that our customers have access to field service and resin suppliers no matter where their plants are located.”

With headquarters located in Gent, Singapore, Sao Paulo and Spartanburg, S.C., Milliken Chemical is a leading manufacturer of clarifiers and colorants for plastics applications. It is part of the Milliken Chemical and Industrial Specialties Division of Milliken & Co., a manufacturer of fabrics and yarns for the home furnishings, industrial products, automotive and apparel markets as well as packaging, textile and specialty chemicals.

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