

Akzo Nobel secures license for breakthrough aerospace primer technology

Arnhem, the Netherlands, October 16, 2006 - Akzo Nobel's Aerospace Coatings business (ANAC) has announced that it is the first to develop products to contain breakthrough chromate-free technology following the signing of a commercial licensing agreement with the North Dakota State University Research Foundation (NDSU).

Researchers at NDSU have developed new primer technology for coating aluminum aircraft structures which is based on magnesium, rather than chromate (a harmful substance which is highly regulated in the U.S. and is coming under increasing pressure in Europe). This pioneering corrosion inhibiting technology—the first to be just as effective as chromate—will now be incorporated into some of Akzo Nobel's aerospace coatings products.

"Akzo Nobel is always striving to develop and embrace innovative technology and what's special about this agreement is that it also has positive implications for the environment," said Akzo Nobel CEO Hans Wijers, who is also the company's Board member responsible for Coatings. "We will be the only paint manufacturer to use this state-of-the-art technology, which represents another significant coup for our Aerospace Coatings business."

Chromate-free primers have existed for many years, but despite being more environmentally-friendly, none provide the anti-corrosive properties of chromate, which is highly effective at inhibiting corrosion of the high strength aluminum alloys used to manufacture aircraft. What's remarkable about the new magnesium technology now being utilized by Akzo Nobel is the fact that it's the first non-chrome corrosion inhibiting system to perform as well as chromate in laboratory testing.

"We are delighted that the world's largest coatings company has agreed to license this pioneering technology," commented NDSU President Joseph A. Chapman. "It's particularly satisfying for our researchers—Gordon Bierwagen, Michael Nanna and Dante Battocchi—who developed the new aluminum primer technology." The coating developed at NDSU will not only eliminate the need for using hazardous chromate-based materials, but will also provide longer-lasting corrosion protection.

Using the new technology will have cost benefits for airlines because it will remove the need for mandatory extra control measures designed to reduce exposure to chromate. Primers utilizing magnesium will also have the potential to be lower in density than chromate primers, which will reduce weight and result in lower fuel consumption.

"Akzo Nobel is actively working with aircraft manufacturers and specifying authorities to develop formulations utilizing this breakthrough technology," added Wijers, who hailed the successful partnership between ANAC and NDSU. He also said that the company expects to commercialize at least one primer containing the magnesium pigment during 2007.

Akzo Nobel – Global Leader in Coatings

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Note for the editor

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