ATOFINA Petrochemicals, Inc. Announces Commercial Scale Production of Metallocene Ethylene-Propylene Random Co-Polymers Ready for Customer Trials

Houston, Texas -- May 21, 2001 -- ATOFINA Petrochemicals Inc. recently performed an extended commercial scale production campaign of ethylene-propylene random co-polymers using its proprietary metallocene catalyst technology, Finacene® PP. According to Phil Carruthers, vice president polypropylene

"The breakthrough in producing low melting point polymers while exhibiting a low melt flow rate is a positive step in developing new products where metallocenes bring unprecedented attributes and product improvement to our current customers, as well as expanding into new applications."

The new products range in melting point from 112 to 139 C and melt flow rates from 2.5 to 8 g/10min. ATOFINA believes the commercial production of an ethylene-propylene random pelletized co-polymer having a melting point of 112C is the first commercially produced in the world. Production of low MFR Finacene® PP grades is an excellent differentiated feature of ATOFINA technology. The 20-day production campaign was conducted in March, 2001.

ATOFINA intends to produce additional products during the remainder of 2001. The products exhibit excellent optical properties, improved organoleptics, improved stiffness over Ziegler-Natta randoms, low heat seal initiation temperatures for high performance films, and excellent hot tack.

The target markets include oriented film heat seal applications, skin layer constructions, cast film markets, medical film and devices, molds for manufacturing contact lenses and food cooking/retort applications. ATOFINA's metallocone based random copolymer also offers improved performance attributes in numerous other applications including spun bond non-wovens, staple fibers and staple fiber non-woven.

The company is a world leader in metallocone technology for propylene polymers and has been producing syndiotactic propylene polymers on a commercial scale since 1993.

ATOFINA, the chemical branch of TotalFinaElf, was created in April 2000 from the merger of the chemical and petrochemical activities of TotalFina and Elf Aquitaine. It is headquartered in Paris, France with world sales in excess of $16 billion. ATOFINA is the world's fifth largest chemical company, employing over 70,000 people worldwide. ATOFINA's chemicals activities hold leading position in both Europe and the world in each of their markets: Petrochemical and commodity polymers, intermediates and Performance Polymers, and Specialty Chemicals.

In the US ATOFINA Petrochemicals Inc. is headquartered in Houston, Texas, and has world-scale facilities producing polypropylene, polyethylene, styrene and polystyrene.

N.B. Products having a melt flow rate of up to 8 with various levels of ethylene have also been produced for other non-film markets as reported in an earlier press release in 2000.

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