Dow Introduces Breakthrough Polypropylene Resin for Production of Remarkably Soft, Cloth-Like Nonwoven Textiles

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GENEVA--(BUSINESS WIRE)--The Dow Chemical Company (NYSE: Dow) today introduced DOW SOFT TOUCH™ Polypropylene (PP) Resin, a family of breakthrough single-pellet resin solutions for the efficient production of mono-component spunbond nonwoven fabrics that exhibit remarkable softness and drape while retaining the physical properties of polypropylene nonwoven fabrics.

Responding to consumer desire for softer fabrics in absorbent hygiene products and medical nonwovens, Dow's first product in the new DOW SOFT TOUCH PP Resin family, DC 543 Developmental Polypropylene Resin, was unveiled at INDEX 11, a global trade fair for the nonwovens industry taking place in Geneva, Switzerland from April 12-15, 2011.

The health and hygiene industry's drive to identify softer nonwoven fabrics has triggered the development of a range of raw materials solutions in recent years, from resin additives, mechanical alteration, and blends to bi-component fibers. Each solution offers some degree of softness, but often at only marginal perceptibility, higher cost or increased operational complexity.

Nonwoven fabrics made with DOW SOFT TOUCH PP resin overcome these challenges through a single pellet solution that can be used in existing mono-spinbond lines. The new resin solutions offer noticeably improved comfort for end-users of nonwoven products in the form of tactile softness, improved drape (ductile softness) and a reduction in noise intensity.

In recent sensory testing, highly trained panelists easily perceived the improved softness attributes of nonwoven fabrics made with DOW SOFT TOUCH PP resin and gave them more favorable ratings than fabrics made with homopolymer polypropylene. Handle-o-Meter testing, an industry accepted method of measuring softness, further confirmed the panel results.

DOW SOFT TOUCH PP resin also offers key physical properties that until now have been a challenge to achieve in combination with breakthrough softness. The resin has a low bonding temperature and a broad bonding window for processing efficiency and flexibility. It also offers tensile properties comparable to polypropylene and excellent abrasion resistance for low linting and fuzzing in the final nonwoven article.

"Dow is committed to meeting brand owner and converter needs by closely monitoring global trends and constantly developing new products to address market needs," said Carlos Ruiz, global market director for Dow's Health & Hygiene business. "The new single-pellet DOW SOFT TOUCH PP resin also enables the production of excellent, cost-effective nonwoven fabrics in mono-spinbond lines."

To help brand owners and converters satisfy their sustainability objectives, nonwoven webs formed with DOW SOFT TOUCH PP resin can be recycled back into mainstream production, thereby reducing operational waste. Additionally, with a lower bonding temperature than homopolymer polypropylene, the resin also contributes to reduced energy consumption during processing.

Dow's stand at INDEX 11 is #1540. For more information on this new product family, please visit www.dowsofttouchpp.com or contact your local Dow representative.

About The Dow Chemical Company

Dow (NYSE: Dow) combines the power of science and technology with the “Human Element” to passionately innovate what is essential to human progress. The Company connects chemistry and innovation with the principles of sustainability to help address many of the world’s most challenging problems such as the need for clean water, renewable energy generation and conservation, and increasing agricultural productivity. Dow's diversified industry-leading portfolio of specialty chemical, advanced materials, agrosciences and plastics businesses delivers a broad range of technology-based products and solutions to customers in approximately 160 countries and in high growth sectors such as electronics, water, energy, coatings and agriculture. In 2010, Dow had annual sales of $53.7 billion and employed approximately 50,000 people worldwide.

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