



Metabolix Consolidates Patent Position For Production Of Biodegradable Plastics In Plants

Cambridge, MA, October 7, 1994 - Materials Company, Metabolix Inc. ("MBX") of Cambridge, Massachusetts, has begun commercializing technology, licensed from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), for the production of naturally occurring polymers, known as polyhydroxyalkanoates (PHAs).

The PHA plastics range from those that resemble polypropylene to others that are more elastomeric. These materials can be processed using conventional polymer technology and offer significant advantages in certain areas of the commodity and specialty plastics, markets where biodegradability is important. Potential application areas include: packaging, fast food service, disposable diapers, and yard waste bags. These materials are also potentially important to both cruise ship operators and the U.S. Navy who are required to comply with Annex V of the MARPOL treaty. The biocompatibility of PHAs may also lead to applications in the cosmetics, medical, and specialty chemical industries.

The PHA production technology currently allows these plastics to be produced by highly efficient fermentation systems. Longer-term, production of PHAs in plants offers the promise of costs competitive with today's petroleum derived polymers.