

Press Release

10/15/2014

Interview with Henkel Expert Dr. Monika Tönnießen on the Subject of Food Safe Packaging

Henkel Webinar to Deal with Mineral Oil Migration Problems

As the world's largest adhesives manufacturer, Henkel is committed to finding ways of improving food safety. Through its web-based knowledge platform "Food Safe Packaging Portal," Henkel will be broadcasting a webinar on December 5, 2014 entitled "Everything you need to know about mineral oil components in food packaging adhesives." In this webinar, to be held in English, Dr. Monika Tönnießen will be talking about the problems associated with mineral oil hydrocarbons in food packaging.

The purpose of these live webinars is to shed light on important issues surrounding food packaging safety. Participants are also able to put their questions live and online to the Henkel presenters while the webinars are still in progress. Interested parties are invited to register via the website: www.henkel.com/foodsafety. Registrants will also gain access to the Premium Area, which offers further webinars, white papers, a comprehensive glossary, and videos covering a range of key issues. In advance of the broadcast, Dr. Monika Tönnießen spoke about the mineral oil issue in a brief interview with our editor.

Dr. Monika Tönnießen is a chemist in the Product Safety department of the Henkel Adhesive Technologies business unit. She is an expert in all aspects of material contact with foodstuffs and is a member of the Paper and Packaging Working Group of the Association of European Adhesives and Sealants Manufacturers (FEICA).



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Interview with Henkel Expert Dr. Monika Tönneßen

What is the current situation with respect to the revision of the “Mineralölverordnung,” the German mineral oil ordinance?

The third draft of the German mineral oil ordinance has now been distributed, so it is still at the consultation stage and has yet to be translated into law. It should also be remembered that this is a national statutory instrument rather than an EU regulation. The mineral oil ordinance relates to mineral oil residues in recycled paper and specifies the limits allowable in such packaging material. Other sources of mineral oil are not dealt with in this ordinance; there is no mention of adhesives. In the view of the Federal Ministry for Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection, packaging from recycled paper is a major source of food contamination.

How does mineral oil actually get into the food?

According to a 2012 report by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) on the subject of mineral oil hydrocarbons in food, there are numerous sources of food contamination by mineral oil components. It is now a well known fact that, for example, many foods such as cocoa beans are transported in jute sacks that are treated with mineral oil, so that foods such as chocolate may become contaminated with mineral oil even before they are packed.

What dangers to consumers do mineral oils in food represent?

There are thousands of different mineral oil components, and their effects on human health vary enormously. One mineral oil is not the same as another, so it is essential to precisely differentiate the substances involved. Mineral oil aromatic hydrocarbons (MOAH) are regarded as a particularly harmful fraction. It is suspected of containing substances likely to be carcinogenic and/or mutagenic. However, as the MOAH fraction is a mix of many components, it would be impossible to carry out a toxicological assessment for each possible culprit.

What means are available to prevent the migration of mineral oils into foods?

The first action always has to be to minimize the sources of contamination as far as possible – for example to eliminate critical mineral oil components from adhesive formulations. As it is not possible to remove mineral oil hydrocarbons during the paper recycling process, provision of an efficient barrier layer for food packaging made from recycled paper and cardboard is one possible solution.

Henkel operates worldwide with leading brands and technologies in three business areas: Laundry & Home Care, Beauty Care and Adhesive Technologies. Founded in 1876, Henkel holds globally leading market positions in both the consumer and industrial businesses with well-known brands such as Persil, Schwarzkopf and Loctite. Henkel employs about 47,000 people and reported sales of 16.4 billion euros and adjusted operating profit of 2.5 billion euros in fiscal 2013. Henkel's preferred shares are listed in the German stock index DAX.

Photo material is available at <http://www.henkel.com/press>

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The following material is available:



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