

MONSANTO POLYMER PS &
PETROCHEMICALS CO.
Springfield, Massachusetts

June 7, 1972

To: Kettle Floor Personnel - 80 2 92

As all of you are well aware, we are having more than our share of problems with the new solvent system. Kettle buildup, high THF losses, plugged vacuum jets and dumping problems are raising havoc with our rates, maintenance costs, and operations in general. In an effort to resolve some of these problems, we returned to shift coverage some four weeks ago. Since most of our difficulties were centered around the buildup problem, we zeroed in on this initially. Right from the start we had difficulty maintaining THF purity. Excessive water pickup across the system exceeded the solvent recovery system. As a result, it was necessary to modify operating conditions in order to recover 12,000 gallons of THF every 16 hrs. For the past two weeks we have been achieving this objective and THF purity has been in spec for the same period. Another problem has been keeping the THF hot. Last Friday we replaced the recirculating pump and heat exchanger with a submerged coil. This has not quite solved the problem. As soon as the temperature returns to 60°C, we will begin controlled evaluation using existing cleaning conditions. A general observation is that the increased contact time has retarded polymer buildup despite lack of sufficient purity or temperature. One thing we have learned is that the kettles are not being completely filled. (See chart in kettle floor notebook.) Inadequate vacuum purging is responsible for this problem. We will attempt to correct this either with overflow lines back to T1 or by beefing up the vacuum surge. Our final and most serious problem is the new vapor recovery system. This is killing us in THF usage. Every time we flush a kettle we have 12 gals. of THF or \$30 worth of material in kettle. It is costing us \$1,000/day in THF alone when that system is down. Needless to say, this is receiving our utmost attention. Fortunately, our quality remains excellent as you can see by the chart. This has allowed us to keep most of our customers supplied despite the reduced throughput. As you can see, the road ahead is not an easy one. However, I am confident that we will lick these problems. I will continue to use the kettle floor log books to keep you up to date on what is going on.


J. D. Uihlein

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