

Various possibilities are being investigated to fulfill our critical monomer requirements. This discussion briefly summarizes the various options being considered beyond normal purchasing activities.

Vinyl Chloride Monomer (VCM) - Calvert City Operation

- The ethylene plant's present feedstock is propane and propane is still the leading feedstock candidate for Calvert City. In addition to the present domestic supplies, possibilities for propane imports are being actively investigated for the 1976-77 period and after.
- We are also looking at Ethane and Butane feed possibilities for shorter range (late 1974) partial feedstock requirements.
- The other major option is converting the ethylene plant to handle naphtha as well as propane. An engineering estimate on conversion is being prepared with a parallel search for a naphtha source. The potential timing is mid-1975.

Vinyl Chloride Monomer - Intermediate Range

The major option being considered is a 500 million pound/year purchase arrangement from a major new VCM supplier. One of the basic assumptions of this plan calls for an agreement to purchase from such a new source of VCM by mid-1976. Also, we will probably obtain an option from a present supplier to sell us 300 million pounds a year from a proposed new VCM plant scheduled for completion in 1977.

Possibilities for a joint venture, preferably with a company basic in hydrocarbons, perhaps involving ethylene, chlorine, ethylene dichloride, as well as vinyl chloride, are being explored.

Elastomer Monomers

A variety of activities are being pursued which are beyond the normal purchasing scope of operations in our attempts to get butadiene, styrene and isoprene.

Both butadiene and isoprene are manufactured by dehydrogenation processes which consume a large amount of energy for steam and fuel. In butadiene, a major R&D effort is being directed to produce this material by the oxydehydro process which would result in lower useage of raw material and fuel. Plant trials are anticipated for the first quarter of 1974 and with the possibility of conversion in 1975. Conversion to the oxydehydro process would only partially solve the feedstock problem. We are actively pursuing agreements for foreign sources of butanes which could be traded for the needed butylenes. This effort is very similar to our propane work and a common source may be found.

A contract for off-shore (Puerto Rico) isoprene is now in the works as a short range solution. In addition a complete review of new isoprene processes which consume less energy and do not depend on gasoline components as feedstocks is being prepared for longer range consideration. An R&D effort on the oxydehydrogenation of isoamylenes to improve raw material utilization and reduce energy usage is being activated.

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