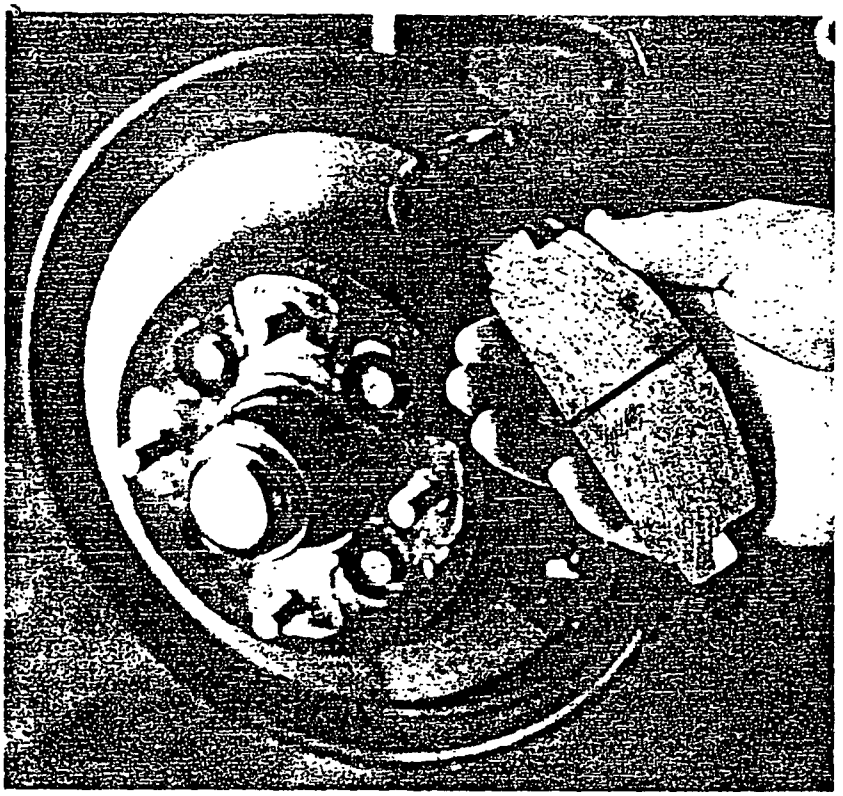

A leading European brake manufacturer is making original equipment disc brake pads with Dow Corning's Lubolid friction control additive. Many European and American auto makers, as well as domestic friction material suppliers, are evaluating Lubolid.

Slick tricks with lubricants

Lubrication companies are now working on broad-spectrum fluids that can be used in a wide variety of applications. Some experts even predict the emergence of a "universal" lubricant meeting the needs of virtually every mechanical power-transmission system.

BEN NAGLER
Assistant Editor

RECENT developments in multigrade and multifunctional oils should help cure the lubrication headaches of most users of power-transmission equipment. The new oils cover a broader spectrum of applications than ever before, reducing the number of lubricants that must be stocked, and giving shop oilers less opportunity for error.

Other encouraging developments include the development of solid lubricants for brakes and clutches. Such lubricants are needed to modify the friction coefficients of materials that will soon be substituted for asbestos in brake and clutch linings.

Further out in the future, research now under way at NASA's Lewis Research Center may provide solid lubricants that make gas bearings more widely applicable and reduce the energy losses of seals and bearings.

Multifunctional lubricants for the 80s

Inventory simplification is the watchword of the 80s, according to spokesmen for lubricant and additive manufacturers. They have found that many of their customers carry inventories of 100 to 200 lubricants—a costly supply that tends to be misused as often as not.

As an example, one steel company found that it was using about 200 lubricants, each intended for a different application. Like many other firms, it also found that the low-level personnel employed as oilers were often using the wrong lubricant. As a result, the company asked its suppliers to help it make a smaller number of lubricants serve a larger number of applications. Beside reducing the probability of error and waste, this inventory simplification program also reduces the cost of maintaining the inventory.

Based on both European and American experience, spokesmen for Lubrizol Corp., Wickliffe, Ohio, view such simplification programs as reasonable and practical, benefiting users and manufacturers alike. They also predict that such programs will expand demand for multifunctional premium lubricants, those that have more performance factors built into the additive package and offer wider safety margins.

However, Don Sargent, Vice President and Technical Director of E/M Lubricants, W. Lafayette, Ind., expects industry to accept premium lubricants slowly. He estimates that more than 90% of lubrication needs can be met with relatively mundane lubricants already on the market, and believes that industry's current focus on maximum value may keep users from switching to more costly products.

Instead, he foresees for the near term a reassessment of where lubricants can and cannot be used. Unfortunately, he notes, many shop people still judge lubricant acceptability by nothing more than color. For full benefit, reassessment should be made on a more scientific basis.

Sargent is also concerned with material costs for presently avail-

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