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MEDIA ADVISORY

June 23, 1993

Note to editors:

We wanted to make sure you were aware of the attached press release, which was recently issued by the Dutch Plastics Federation.

It describes a recent decision by the Board of Appeals of the Dutch Foundation for Publicity Codes, upholding a decision that the Dutch Minister for Environment Control has unfairly characterized vinyl plastics as environmentally undesirable. The Board reached its decision after a thorough examination of the environmental aspects of vinyl. According to the Dutch Plastics Federation:

"The Board of Appeals came to the conclusion that VROM (the Ministry) had not been able to present evidence that incentives to avoid the use of PVC are justified... . The Board of Appeals was convinced by the factual and objective information, derived from diverse studies concerning the environmental aspects of PVC, including emissions during production, further processing and waste disposal. Comparative studies on the environmental effects of products (ecobalances) also demonstrate that PVC does not yield to other plastics on environmental grounds and often scores better than traditional materials."

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June 25th, 1993

The Foundation for Dutch Publicity Codes confirms that negative publications on PVC are misleading

PVC PLASTICS WIN ANOTHER ROUND

The Board of Appeals of the Dutch Foundation for Publicity Codes has confirmed the previous judgement of the Publicity Code Commission (verdict of June 4th, '93) that the Dutch Ministry for Environmental Control (VROM) was unable to demonstrate that plastic PVC should be avoided for environmental reasons.

For this reason the Board considers any publications in this respect misleading and as such undesirable.

The Foundation for Code of Publicity came to this verdict as a result of a complaint of the Dutch Plastics Federation (NFK) concerning a brochure published by the Dutch Environmental Ministry. In this brochure negative statements concerning PVC products in office environments were published.

The Board of Appeals came to the conclusion that VROM had not been able to present evidence that incentives to avoid the use of PVC are justified.

During the session of the Board all environmental aspects of PVC were discussed in detail. The arguments of VROM for a policy of promoting avoidance of PVC, were all refuted by the substantial evidence of the NFK. The Board of Appeals was convinced by the factual and objective information, -derived from diverse studies- concerning the environmental aspects of PVC, including emissions during production, further processing and waste disposal. Comparative studies on the environmental effects of products (ecobalances) also demonstrate that PVC does not yield to other plastics on environmental grounds and often scores better than traditional materials.

End of discussion on PVC ?

Previously the Dutch Environmental Ministry had already informed the plastics industry to have no formal objections against recyclable PVC products. The judgement of the Foundation for Publicity Codes illustrates that the Ministry has also no substantial arguments to discriminate non-recyclable PVC products. The Board of Appeals only made a reservation for packaging. This because of the Packaging Covenant from 1991, with which the industry made voluntary agreements to reduce the use of PVC in packaging applications. This agreement was based on the assumed relation between PVC and the formation of dioxins during combustion of municipal waste. Since following research has demonstrated that PVC has no effect on dioxins with municipal waste combustion and ecobalance studies show PVC to be a very good product also for packaging, the NFK considers the voluntary agreement to reduce PVC in packaging to be out of date. The policy of the plastics industry is aimed at revising the Packaging Covenant in this respect.

Emotions

Mr. W. Beerman, chairman of the Dutch Steering Committee for PVC & Environment, is very satisfied with the judgement of the Foundation for Publicity Codes. " This verdict means the end of a long dispute on the use of PVC in a large number of applications as piping systems, window frames, office appliances, home decorations and many others. With this decision, the Board of Appeals has given a sound judgement concerning PVC at the highest level. All environmental aspects of the PVC substance chain are covered by this. We hope this will contribute to a finishing of the environmental discussion on PVC, which has now been proven to have mere emotional grounds."

PVC life cycle management

A large number of companies in the Netherlands are active with the production of PVC raw materials and the conversion to end products. Together these companies published in 1991 a first report on the life cycle management of PVC.

This report not only illustrates the environmental aspects in the cycle, but also presents all initiatives for further improvement of the environmental impact and recycling of PVC products from waste.

The decision of the Board of Appeals means an incentive for the continuation of activities with PVC life cycle management. Proper publicity, within the frame of formal product policy, is an important requirement for this.