

Biodegradable plastic consumption doubles

By David Vink

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Oil-derived plastics are losing market share to bioplastics, according to IBAW.

23 August 2004 – The use of biodegradable plastics has doubled between 2001 and 2003 to 40,000 tonnes, according to IBAW, the International Biodegradable Polymers Association.

Although this figure includes oil-based biodegradable materials, producers are now using naturally-occurring materials as much as technically possible, the association said.

IBAW said biopolymers – derived from starch and vegetable oil from plants and cellulose – now dominate the market for biodegradable plastics. It predicted they will continue to increase their market share over oil-derived plastics, especially given the current high cost of oil.

The association's president Dr. Harald Käß said politicians are now joining the chemicals industry in backing bioplastics. He said he would like to see this developing into official support for bioplastics, as much as there is for renewable energy.

Käß concluded that plastics need at least 20 years of development before they become widely used in the market. He said: "The bioplastics age has only just started."

- EPN's market-leading biodegradable plastics conference, Bioplastics 2004, takes place on 8-9 December in Frankfurt, Germany. For more information see www.plastics-events.com or call +44 (0)20 7505 6044