

## **News and Views**

### **NEW SURVEY OF THE MARKET FOR INDUSTRIAL BIOPOLYMERS**

A number of industrial biopolymers have been analyzed in this multi-client market survey. Market sizes are presented by major applications, by country and by type of biopolymer. Suppliers, market shares, prices and distribution channels are also presented. A five year forecast is made. The European countries covered are France, UK, FRG and Italy. Pricing and profitability, biopolymer technology, biopolymer differentiation, opportunities for new functionalities and the potential for acquisition are all part of the report as separate chapters. A comprehensive contact list is supplied with all IMR reports. The numerical part of the report is offered on a pre-programmed Lotus 1-2-3<sup>TM</sup> spreadsheet. This allows users to conduct what-if analysis.

There are 15 application categories covered, e.g. drilling fluids, enhanced oil recovery, toothpaste, textiles, cleaners, foundry coatings, etc. Some eight different biopolymers are discussed. Xanthan gum is by far the most widely used and accounts for over 90% of identified sales. Some interesting new polymers are being brought on-stream. The major supplier is undoubtedly Kelco with about 75% of the market, but competition from other suppliers is becoming severe.

The total market is estimated at \$33.3 million in the US and W. Europe. The US accounts for about 50% of this total. A large portion of sales is concentrated in a limited number of applications and a limited number of accounts within those applications.

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## BIOCON ENTER THE REFINED CARRAGEENAN MARKET

The multinational biotechnology company, Biocon Ltd, which is based in Ireland, has entered the market for refined carrageenan. For several years the company has been producing semi-refined carrageenan from its plants in the Phillipines. The decision to develop a refined material was made because of its greater potential profitability compared with semi-refined carrageenan and Biocon's access to good quality weed sources. The production process introduced at the company's plant in Waterford, Ireland has some novel features which according to project leader, Dave Laughton, result in a material with improved dispersibility compared with carrageenan produced by conventional processes. This has advantages for some applications. The carrageenans will be initially targeted towards uses in the processed meat and dairy industries. There appears to be a growing shortage of good quality carrageenan so users will welcome the arrival of a new supplier.

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