



insight. MAGAZINE

No. 18



Cellular rubber • Cellular polyethylene • Sponge rubber • Fluid sealants • Filtration technology

► Investments

New machinery, increased area

► Tested qualities

Railway standard DIN EN 45545-2

► The raw materials situation

How KÖPP handles it

A first-class addition to the range:

EVA by KOEPPcell

Skin tolerance confirmed
by OEKO-TEX®





Dear Readers,

"We have passed the test!" That could be the working title for this edition of **insight**. The last year has posed several tests for us – literally and figuratively. This includes certification of our materials, as well as the challenges of the global economy. The coronavirus crisis has significantly affected global supply chains. Production facilities of suppliers were intermittently out of action, and then the demand for products shot up. There were then also production interruptions due to acts of god, such as the winter storms in the USA, that triggered alarms. In China, the economy recovered rather quicker from the crisis, so most of the scarce raw materials made their way to Asia, and are now noticeably lacking in Europe. We all know that this has led to an extreme scarcity of raw materials. You can see how we did in this "test" on page 3 of this edition of **insight**.

We have had some of our tried and tested qualities tested by independent testing facilities. The results were good! Our light, fine-celled cellular rubber CR-M has now passed the railway standard DIN EN45545-2. The optimal fire behaviour of CR-M was also confirmed, when it passed the fire standard UL-94 with the

highest classification. CR-H and CR-F also passed this test in the V-0 category.

As well as the "Blue Angel", our polyethylene foam K/PE30 has now also passed the so-called "museum standard", which means it is officially qualified for safe packaging and storage of valuable goods.

In this edition, you can also read about our cooperation with the vocational college in Herzogenrath. We will introduce you to some new contact people as well.

I hope you enjoy reading the magazine. Stay in touch, and above all, stay healthy!

Warm regards,

Achim Raab, Managing Director

Continuous investment
in production sites

New machinery, increased area



2010

2014

2016

2019



Managing Director Achim Raab and Production Facility Manager Valentin Dublea breaking ground for the new production hall.

Nearly 4 million euros! That is how much we have invested in machinery and buildings this year, to bring our production capacity up to a level where we can meet the demand for our products, while continuing to comply with our standards for prompt and timely deliveries. In addition to a further splitting machine for our main location in Aachen, an additional loop has been added to the existing systems at our site in Romania. A loop is required for splitting and winding extremely thin and soft layers of cellular rubber and polyethylene. Precise layers can be cut using the H24A from Fecken-Kirfel, which will start operation in the Aachen facility at the end of this year. There will then be five loop machines running in our company, making a noticeable improvement to the processing of plate and roll products.

There will also be a significant increase in our mixing capacity. The new mixer will expand it by about 35%, greatly increasing the production volume. A new milling machine and a new water jet cutter are replacing ageing machinery, preventing the need for repairs that could take up a lot of time and money.

The expansion of our capacity also makes it imperative to expand our production facilities. That is why we are expanding two of the halls at our factory in Romania, and we have started to build a third. This increases our production area by 2,900 m².



SCARCITY OF RAW MATERIALS

How KÖPP handles it

There has been short-time working in the car industry because of a shortage of chips for the electronic controls. There have been great concerns among tradesmen and builders because of rapid increases in raw material prices.

A blockage in the Suez Canal caused a supply bottleneck. Prices for empty containers have gone through the roof. Suppliers of raw materials report "force majeure" incidents. There have been many headlines like this over recent months. "It has never been so difficult to get raw materials as it is now", reports Jan-Niklas Klein, Procurement Team Leader at KÖPP. This applies to oils, chemicals, pure EPDM, and CR. At the moment the rule is: "You buy what you can get your hands on." And sometimes the prices are terrible. Indeed, the rubber and plastic industry has been worst affected by the price increases. There have been price rises of up to 500%. To make matters worse, you can never be sure that the lorry will actually deliver



the goods. Partner companies have told us that they have even been asked to pay five-figure sums, just to ensure that the goods they have ordered actually arrive – otherwise they would be sold to someone else. "These really are dramatic circumstances", observes CEO Achim Raab.

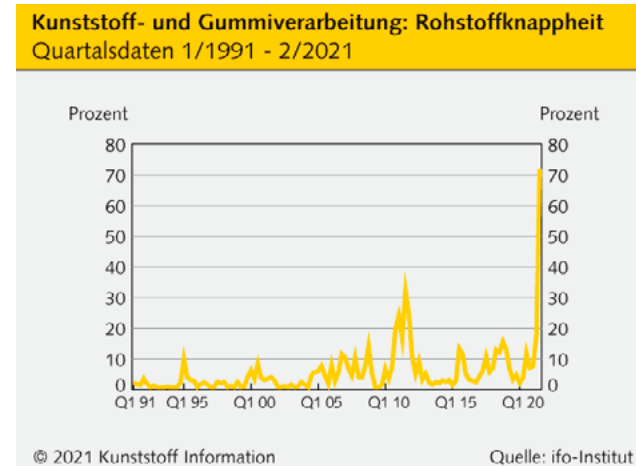
RAW MATERIALS SITUATION

Once more, we are benefiting from our broad positioning and our large warehouse

"Fortunately, we have a few ways that we can respond to this situation", says Achim Raab confidently. "As on many occasions in the past, we are benefiting from our broad range in development and production, and our warehouse philosophy. Our large warehouse gives us and our customers a high level of supply reliability. This means we have never found ourselves in the unfortunate position of running out of important raw materials." The "Development" department is also making a great contribution to solving the raw material problem. "Alternatives" is the magic word. And as the Development department, led by Dr Andreas Peine, is always future-oriented, alternatives have been available for some time. Tested and validated.

As part of our project "Hand in Hand with Nature", extensive research and tests have been carried out to see how process oils can be replaced by bio-oils, without changing the composition of the product. Bio-oils are certainly easier to obtain than process oils, which are now in short supply. In this way, we make use of various markets where competition is not as fierce, while maintaining the same quality.

Plastic and rubber processing: Scarcity of raw materials
Quarterly data 1/1991 - 2/2021



Prices largely stable so far

"The raw materials crisis will undoubtedly affect us", concedes Axel Wynands. "But KÖPP can react very flexibly to the crisis, enabling us to avoid extreme price rises for our customers." This cannot be an easy task, given the terrible price rises in raw materials. According to recognised experts, the situation on the raw materials market will not improve before the middle of next year. We are hoping for the best. Until then, we will remain flexible.

KOEPPCell®

"Our large warehouse gives us and our customers a high level of supply reliability."

A first-class addition to the range: more tested plastic and cellular rubber qualities

As announced in the last edition of insight., we have developed skin-coloured PE and EVA, which we are now successfully marketing. K/PE 45 and K/EV 45 are in high demand, especially for orthopaedic and medical equipment. Our materials also fill a gap in the cosmetic packaging industry, offering a strong product, which has been tested for skin compatibility, meets Oeko Tex standards, and is relatively economical. "Skin tone", or 'pink', is increasingly in demand. Our flexibility, reacting instantly to demand, has always been our special strength. Thanks go to our outstanding Development department!", observes CEO Achim Raab proudly.

We now offer our self-extinguishing chloroprene qualities in different strength classes. Out of CR-M, -F and -H, our customers can choose the right strength for every application. The media resistance of the chloroprene rubber and the tested and certified optimal fire behaviour as per test standard UL 94 V-0 and EN 4554-2 make it the material of choice for the construction industry and for railways.

We also have two new NBR products. NBR-S and NBR-L are used by agricultural machinery manufacturers, who have particular material resistance requirements against aggressive media like oil and plastic, while also requiring outstanding properties for energy absorption, e.g. for seals under high mechanical load. The two qualities are also used as anti-stress mats, e.g. on production tables. Thanks to their optimal damping function, they take the pressure from feet, ease the strain on muscles and joints, and promote blood circulation. The high abrasion resistance ensures a long life.

Do you have any questions about our new qualities, or are you looking for alternatives or entirely new solutions? Speak to our experts!



Setting new standards
TESTED QUALITIES YOU CAN RELY ON

“Everything has been standardised!” It might sound dull, but in industry it makes life a lot simpler. Carefully designed, tested, and approved standards now make it easier to select materials, giving producers and end users a lot more reliability for their day-to-day lives. So it’s not boring to get things right.

In the rubber and foam sector, it is becoming increasingly clear that our customers want materials that need to meet certain standards. People

are particularly interested to hear that our light, fine-celled cellular rubber CR-M has passed the railway standard DIN EN45545-2. The railway standard includes stipulations on fire prevention requirements for materials and components used for building rail vehicles. The standard distinguishes between different hazard levels. These form the basis for the different hazard level-dependent test conditions and processes and the fire behaviour requirements.



[Image source: © pexels-matheus-viana-2372982]



Optimal fire behaviour with double approval

As the demand for a cellular rubber meeting the railway standard was indisputably high, we optimised the fire behaviour of our tried and tested CR-M, and made it fit for testing by Exova GmbH. The results are clear to see. For all hazard levels – from HL1 to HL3 – our material performed exceptionally well. Our CR-M also passed the fire test standard UL- 94 with the classification V-0. During this test, the fire properties are not just tested horizontally, but also vertically (V). “0” is the best classification in this area. And there is something else that attracts our customers in the transport, construction and automotive sectors. Its density of 130 kg/m³ means it is much lighter than comparable materials from our competitors. That is a big advantage in terms of energy consumption!

“Museum standard” for polyethylene

Standardised qualities also play an important role in the packaging industry. Our chemically cross-linked polyethylene foam K/PE 30 now complies with what is known as the museum standard. The emission analysis was carried out using the elaborate BEMMA process (evaluation of emissions from materials for museum equipment) and confirmed that our K/PE 30 satisfies the special requirements for safe packaging and storage of valuable exhibits. “Chemical PE was always a no-go product for storing art, antiquities, or fossils. There was always too much concern about possible corrosive emissions. Now we have passed the ‘museum standard’, we know that our material protects valuable goods”, says QM Manager Michael Decker.



„Now we have passed the ‘museum standard’, we know that our material protects valuable goods.“



KURS - Setting a course for youth development

“Every school-child is a potential expert in foam”, says IT and Training Manager André-Johannes Stiebig confidently. “That is why we need to make young people aware of our company as soon as possible and make contact”, he says, explaining why KÖPP has had a learning partnership with the vocational college in Herzogenrath for several years.

produced by schoolchildren together with Dr Andreas Peine. “We make the learning partnership lively online as well. That is clear. However, we look forward to a time when pupils can visit us again in real life. It is important to be able to look at the complete environment with your own eyes, and to be able to touch things. As we know, perception relies on several senses”, observes Stiebig.

KURS is the name of the initiative, for regular activities as part of a cooperation between schools and regional companies. KURS helps schools to make the idea of business clear and understandable for pupils, through the concrete example of a partner company. KURS also strengthens local business, by presenting companies as employers and “good neighbours”.

Only one of the pupils had the opportunity to experience KÖPP in the flesh, Mats Reinke. He is now in the final stretch of his training as an industrial clerk and he is currently working on his dissertation “Placing a Google Ad for France taking into account Google Analytics”. He is receiving support from marketing expert Sonia Potrawa. Mats Reinke will not be staying on at the company, as he will be studying. “We always offer training with a view to hiring our trainees”, explains Stiebig. “We ensure that they have a comprehensive view of the company by moving them between departments and providing close support from colleagues. At the end, we have a highly trained worker, and of course, we are sorry to see them go. This year, we are welcoming a new trainee to KÖPP: Carina Voß is already in training to be an industrial clerk.

While there would have been mutual visits before the pandemic, meetings now have to be held virtually. However, this did not interrupt the idea of a learning partnership, as online meetings have now become a part of daily life at work. And there is no lack of subjects to be covered online. For example, there has already been an online expert presentation on the important issue of data security and a clear explanatory video about a company visit,



DIGITISATION

After 80 years of processing orders on paper, Köpp is now saying goodbye to its old files. They were shredded professionally, in compliance with data protection regulations and correctly disposed of by a company at our company site.

SUSTAINABILITY AT KÖPP

Do you remember “Hand in Hand with Nature”? It is a project that is close to our hearts! We are always on the lookout for new ways to be more sustainable, to produce less waste, and to waste fewer raw materials. Having made important changes in our production chains, we decided to take a look at our printers. Although we have already been running a paperless operation as far as possible, we saw that we had the opportunity to save a lot of energy used for printing. We replaced all our laser printers with energy-saving inkjets. Modern inkjets do not need to maintain an operating temperature, unlike laser printers, which are often on 24/7. Thanks to our new printers we are set to save tens of thousands of euros over the coming years on energy costs. Right now? Right now! That’s how to make a big energy saving!



KÖPP PEOPLE

We would like to introduce you to a few new contact people. As part of the restructuring of the liquid seals section into an FAD centre of excellence, our plant in Bovenden will now also be managed from Aachen. Your partner for soft rubber and sponge rubber is now Jürgen Müller.

We are welcoming Key Account Manager Ulrich Peters to the sales team, where he will be working in the back office and in the field. You may have got to know him as an expert contact for cellular rubber, polyethylene, and sponge rubber. As a former sales professional for tools and machines, he has an experienced eye for the requirements for our materials and their quality.

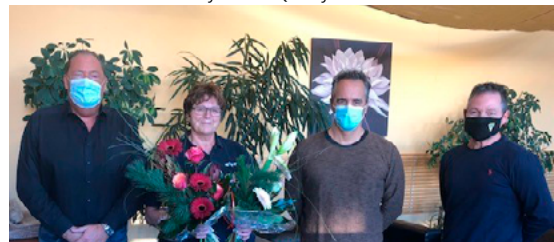
Bastian Sommer has now also joined the sales team. Bastian was previously involved in technical sales for a well-known pump manufacturer, and he is now a contact person for cellular rubber and polyethylene.

We have restructured our procurement. Due to our greatly expanded pipette filter department (reported on in the last edition), a reorganisation was needed. Laure Walter works in procurement, now exclusively in the area of KÖPP filter technology, supporting the Key Account Managers Victor Asselberghs and Markus Peitz. All other areas of procurement are handled by Team Leader Jan-Niklas Klein and Ute Beqiri and Ibrahim Bah.

After more than 40 years in dispatch, we wish our dear colleague Erika Hoppstein all the best for her well-earned retirement. We have also had to say goodbye to Tine Beyer from QA after 22 years of loyal service. Her successor is Daniel Szymczak. Tine Beyer wishes him "all the best, and the same great collaboration that I enjoyed". We wish our two recent retirees all the best, and much health and happiness.



Tine Beyer from Quality Assurance



Erika Hoppstein (Logistics) with the Management



Bastian Sommer, Sales

Ulrich Peters, Sales

Jürgen Müller, Sales

Ms. Beqiri, Mr. Klein, Mr. Bah, Procurement team

Daniel Szymczak, QA

ANNIVERSARIES 2021

AACHEN MAIN SITE

10 YEARS	DATE OF JOINING
Leinesser, Markus	01.02.2011
Walter, Laure	01.09.2011
Peine, Andreas	01.11.2011
Tomic, Dean	01.12.2011
25 YEARS	DATE OF JOINING
Moll, Silvia	12.06.1996

BOVENDEN SUBSIDIARY PLANT

10 YEARS	DATE OF JOINING
Nolde, Alexander	01.01.2011
Beckel, Viktor	01.01.2011
Lorenz, Johann	27.05.2011
Grabowski, Lutz	01.06.2011
Knaus, Gennadij	01.06.2011
Magerhans, Mario	01.06.2011
Dijaj, Nedjat	01.08.2011
40 YEARS	DATE OF JOINING
Baensch, Stefan	27.07.1981

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Manesar, Gurgaon · India

solutions



in foam