



NEWS

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The Polyurethane Foam Association Introduces ‘*Platform on Sustainability*’

Knoxville, TN (November 28, 2007) – The Polyurethane Foam Association (PFA) today released the ‘*Polyurethane Foam Association Platform on Sustainability*,’ outlining seven principles in the trade association’s commitment to pursue ‘green’ issues.

According to PFA Executive Director Bob Luedeka: “A sustainability program is a process and not an endpoint. These seven principles provide guidance for our group’s current activities and future programs. Our goal in publishing the ‘*PFA Platform on Sustainability*’ is to create a springboard for ongoing discussion, education and growth in this area.”

Luedeka noted that long before “sustainability” became an agenda item, the flexible polyurethane foam industry had developed systems for recovering and recycling virtually 100% of scrap produced in the foam production and fabrication processes. Recovered foam scrap is recycled to make bonded polyurethane carpet cushion, a product that can add significant longevity to carpet, contributing to sustainability. In recent years, flexible polyurethane foam recycling programs have expanded to include post-consumer foam scrap.

According to a study conducted last year by the American Chemistry Council’s Center for the Polyurethanes Industry, more than 200 million pounds of post consumer foam was collected for recycling in the United States. In addition, development of bio-based raw materials is currently a high priority for U.S. foam manufacturers and their suppliers.

As stated in the '*Platform on Sustainability*,' the PFA aims to "support members' continuing efforts to be responsible stewards of the environment by producing products that emphasize health and safety and improve the flexible polyurethane foam 'footprint' through recycling and sustainability." Seven initial steps in the process are addressed:

Polyurethane Foam Association Platform on Sustainability

The Polyurethane Foam Association (PFA) supports our members' efforts to be responsible stewards of the environment by producing better performing products that emphasize health and safety and improve the flexible polyurethane foam (FPF) 'footprint' through recycling and sustainability based on seven principles:

- 1) Reduce solid waste.*** FPF products are recyclable. The FPF industry scrap collection and reuse system has developed into one of the most successful examples of recycling in the world. In the United States, nearly all manufacturing scrap is collected and recycled. Each year hundreds of millions of pounds of post-consumer waste FPF are diverted from landfills and recycled as bonded carpet cushion. PFA members are encouraged to improve the efficiency and widen the scope of post-consumer recycling efforts.
- 2) Maintain technical sessions to share scientific research about environmentally friendly materials and renewable feedstocks.*** PFA organizes technical programs twice a year as forums for presentation of relevant research and product innovations. Current bio-based raw materials now used within the FPF industry were introduced at PFA technical programs.
- 3) Support energy saving technologies.*** FPF manufacturing technology is an example of energy-efficient production. Through the use of an exothermic reaction, FPF is manufactured with little requirement for energy or water. PFA manufacturing members also conserve energy by utilizing over-the-road trailer and container compression techniques to increase capacity, thereby reducing fuel costs associated with transportation of FPF materials.
- 4) Continue efforts to improve product safety.*** PFA is developing a voluntary analysis and evaluation program of FPF products. It will promote a high level of product safety for workers and the consuming public. The corresponding labeling program will enable end-product manufacturers, retailers and consumers to distinguish between FPF products that comply and those that do not.
- 5) Encourage sustainability through product performance.*** PFA's voluntary product analysis program includes physical performance requirements that establish a minimum level of product performance. It will help reduce raw material consumption and waste by increasing usable product life and, therefore, improve sustainability.
- 6) Educate to support sustainability.*** PFA created a "Community First" program to help manufacturing members share their commitment to environmental stewardship and manufacturing safety, and also engage their employees in this commitment.
- 7) Maintain continuous dialogue with leaders in sustainability.*** An effective sustainability program cannot be developed in a vacuum. PFA encourages input from NGOs, academia, customers and others involved in the implementation of sustainability initiatives.

The Polyurethane Foam Association was founded in 1980 to educate customers and other groups about flexible polyurethane foam (FPF). This includes providing facts on environmental,

health and safety issues and technical information on the performance of FPF in consumer and industrial products. The PFA membership includes United States FPF manufacturers and their suppliers of raw materials, processing and fabrication equipment, and various industry services. For more information, visit www.pfa.org.

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