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Press Release

Total Petrochemicals and Galactic venture into bioplastics production

Total Petrochemicals and Galactic have announced the signature of an agreement for the creation, after obtaining the approval of the competent competition authorities, of a joint venture to develop a production technology for PolyLactic Acid (PLA) bioplastics of renewable vegetable origin.

The project entails the construction of a pilot plant capable of producing 1,500 tonnes per year of PLA using a clean, innovative and competitive technology, to be developed by both partners. Based on the Galactic Escanaffles site, near Tournai (Belgium), the plant is scheduled to come on stream in 2009. The research and development phase, which will start at the same time as its construction, should last 4 to 5 years. Called Futerro, the new company will benefit from the support of the Total Petrochemicals Research Centre in Feluy. This ambitious research project is made possible by the financial support of the Walloon Region within the framework of the competitive hubs of the Walloon Marshall Plan.

Total Petrochemicals' objective with this PLA development project is to fulfil a growing demand for plastics of renewable origin

For Galactic, this new development will mean new outlets for lactic acid by turning it into feedstock for a new green chemistry.

Lactic acid is obtained from the fermentation of sugar (beet or cane) or starch (corn, wheat, potato or manioc). PLA is an aliphatic polyester obtained by polymerising this lactic acid. It is compostable, and today is used primarily in food packaging and in textile.

Press contacts

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Total Petrochemicals

Total Petrochemicals, the petrochemicals activities of Total Group, includes base chemicals from steam crackers and certain refinery processing plants – olefins (ethylene, propylene), C4 fractions and aromatics (benzene, toluene, xylenes and styrene) –, as well as the commodity polymers they derived from (polyethylene, polypropylene, polystyrene). With over 7,000 persons, Total Petrochemicals conducts its activities in Europe, the United-States, the Middle-East and Asia. Its products are used in many consumer and industrial markets, including Packaging, Construction and Automotive. For more information go to www.totalpetrochemicals.com

Galactic

Galactic, a biotechnology company, and a subsidiary of Finasucre (one of the world's leading sugar producers) and the Belgian holding company Bois Sauvage, produces lactic acid and lactates. With some 250 people employed on its three production sites (Belgium, China, USA), the company exports its products to over 65 countries. These are used primarily in the human and animal food sector as well as in medical and cosmetics applications. For more information go to www.lactic.com

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