

News Release

Saltigo at Chemspec Europe, Basel, Switzerland,
June 1 and 2, 2016, Stand F40

Staying ahead thanks to flexibility

- Rapid and targeted response to customers' needs is success factor
- Sharp rise in demand for Saltidin

Leverkusen – “Chemspec Europe is and will remain a key industry meeting point for us in all aspects of exclusive synthesis and fine chemicals,” says Dr. Torsten Derr, Managing Director of custom manufacturing specialist Saltigo GmbH. This wholly owned subsidiary of specialty chemicals company LANXESS is thus once again showcasing its wide range of services for synthesizing chemical active ingredients and intermediates at this year's 31st International Exhibition for Fine and Speciality Chemicals, which is being held at the Basel Exhibition Center on June 1 and 2. “Flexibility is a key competence in custom manufacturing,” says Derr: “A rapid and targeted response to our customers' needs and the requirements of the market is a crucial success factor, as it enables them to leverage competitive advantages.”

The high level of process engineering expertise is another key lever in Saltigo's success. The presentation “Process Intensification: A Prerequisite for Success in Custom Manufacturing” by Saltigo employees Dr. Guido Giffels, head of Manufacturing Strategy, and Dr. Christoph Schaffrath, head of Agro Marketing, at the Royal Society of Chemistry symposium in Basel at 11.30 a.m. on June 1, 2016 is thus devoted to synthesis optimization and scale-up efficiency.

Agrochemicals – challenges and opportunities

Flexibility in the interests of customers also means always being ready to respond quickly to unexpected events in times of lower demand. “The current weak demand on the agrochemicals market may end suddenly at any time, triggered by intensive pest infestation in a particular region, for example. This now represents a major challenge for us and our customers in the agrochemical industry,” says Schaffrath.

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The considerable consolidation activities in the agrochemical sector also make reliable market forecasts difficult. Schaffrath nonetheless expects to see a stable growth trend. “We expect annual market growth of around three percent till 2025.” Owing to the rising demand for high-quality foodstuffs and the increasing global population, the development of modern agriculture is dependent on new technologies to increase yields per hectare. “This increasingly requires highly innovative active ingredients with ever more complex structures. This area is one where we can make optimal use of our skills – our comprehensive technology portfolio and many years of process development expertise ensuring a short time to market and cost-effective production,” adds Schaffrath.

Saltidin – effective, safe, available

Another recent example of Saltigo’s flexibility in responding to market needs is Saltidin. This insect repellent has recently been experiencing a sharp rise in demand as a result of the Zika virus, which has now spread around the world. “We recognized the potential of Saltidin and the resulting growth in demand at an early stage and therefore gradually started to adapt our production capacity to market needs,” says Derr, adding: “We truly believe we can meet the demand not only in Brazil and the United States, which remains high, but also the impending rising demand in Europe with the start of the mosquito season.”

In chemical terms, Saltidin is 1-(1-methylpropoxycarbonyl)-2-(2-hydroxyethyl)piperidine. The substance has the non-proprietary name icaridin and a neutral odor and does not irritate, sensitize or stick to the skin. It is ideal for a very wide range of insect repellent formulations that are applied in a variety of ways and is used by numerous manufacturers of such products worldwide.

Flexible production concepts

“From exclusive synthesis, we’re completely aware of the customer requirement to obtain even large quantities of a substance as quickly as possible,” says Dirk Sandri, head of Marketing Fine Chemicals at Saltigo. This calls for flexibility in production planning and creativity from employees in process optimization, both of which are strengths at Saltigo. With Saltidin, the company also benefits from production experience gained over many years.

“Using findings we obtain continuously during production, we were able to adapt key drivers within a short time and thus almost double production of our main plant for Saltidin in Dormagen,” says Sandri. For example, this involved optimizing the cycle times of the multi-step batch process and the material flow between the individual synthesis stages. The next few weeks will also see the start of production of the repellent at the Central Organics Pilot Plant (ZeTO) in Leverkusen on a similar scale to Dormagen – a second string to Saltigo’s bow, which Sandri welcomes, particularly in terms of securing supplies for customers.

The conversion and development work that is mainly being carried out at ZeTO as part of a EUR 60 million investment project is also on schedule, thus making plant manager Dr. Boris Bosch confident that the project can be completed on time at the end of next year. “Meanwhile, in the other production units of ZeTO, operations are continuing unhindered. This was key to also being able to start Saltidin production here within a short space of time,” says Bosch.

In the medium term, Saltigo will once again be significantly increasing production capacity for the repellent. With this in mind, the plant in Dormagen is set to expand by next spring. “Forward planning of the delivery capability and reliability of supplies is a crucial competitive factor for us – it’s fundamental. This sets us apart from suppliers for whom the price per kilogram is the primary selling point. We, in contrast, are interested in long-term, partnership-based customer relationships. The example of Saltidin shows we go to great lengths to achieve this,” says Sandri.

Effective defense instead of risky destruction

“The Zika virus is spread by mosquitoes. It has currently been documented for two mosquito species, but others could follow. Saltidin repels mosquitoes by impacting their smell receptors, rendering an insect incapable of recognizing people as blood donors. Our active ingredient is therefore not an insecticide and thus, when used as directed, not harmful to humans either,” says Sandri. This is a further major benefit of the product in addition to good compatibility with the skin. Mosquito repellent substances such as icaridin are expressly recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO) to protect pregnant women and nursing mothers against infection in endemic areas in particular.

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The Zika virus is suspected of harming unborn children and causing microcephaly, which is increasingly prevalent, especially in Brazil. Recently, a growing number of babies have been born there with abnormally small heads and mental retardation, which may be related to a Zika infection in the mothers.

Saltigo GmbH is a leading supplier in the field of custom synthesis. The company of specialty chemicals group LANXESS belongs to the Advanced Intermediates segment, which achieved total sales in 2015 of EUR 1,826 million. Saltigo, headquartered in Leverkusen and with production facilities in Leverkusen and Dormagen, employs around 1,200 staff worldwide.

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Detailed information about the company can be found on the internet at <http://www.saltigo.com>. You can find information concerning LANXESS chemistry in our WebMagazine at <http://webmagazine.lanxess.com>.