

## Comment

Dela Plast of Pretoria has set up its plant for the production of food packaging containers and components and gained ISO and other food grade compatibility accreditation. The initiative also required the installation of automation systems, such as the conveyor here, to achieve less handling of mouldings as well as, and possibly most importantly, the appointment of a QA/food safety manager, which role Cornelia Kerkhoff is now thriving in – see page 29



# Little consensus, or appreciation, among public of industry's products

Brand companies should change to plastic because it's a better solution

THIS ISSUE

**T**HERE has been a rush of sector conferences recently and we've been fortunate to host quite a large number of international delegates, some of who have made interesting observations.

One of the most relevant was that by Zoran Davidovski of the Plastic Pipe Conference Association (PPCA), who was at SAPPMA's Pipes XI conference at Emperors in September. According to Davidovski, who is based in Austria, many people do not understand plastic materials and often are unaware of the many advantages that the materials offer. He gave a presentation at the conference in which the acceptance of plastic pipe was compared between various European countries. There was little conformity, whereas from an African perspective, we might have anticipated that, with Europe being such a highly civilized area, there would have been more agreement.

Perhaps you have faced similar unfamiliarity? Many people I talk to express complete surprise that there is even such a thing as a plastics industry, let alone of the advantages of the product solutions produced. The average citizen seems to regard plastics as either a bottle or a bag, and has little awareness of what the huge range of plastic components used in the automotive, medical, household, electric/electronic and numerous other applications actually are.

But apparently suppliers of products made from other materials are similarly unaware that their customers don't really understand much about the products they supply.

It might be useful to bear this in mind: at the moment most of the material substitution taking place is because plastics are seen as a cheaper, and not as a better solution – which is what they actually are.

### Perils of recycling ventures

The fact that the Appeals Court did not support

tyre recycling venture REDISA's appeal against the liquidation order issued against it earlier this year has created a major crisis in the tyre sector. Getting an industry recycling venture up and running is no mean feat, with the path literally littered with obstacles, often from businesses and people who derive their living from these sectors. REDISA had a comprehensive business plan, but it appears there may have been some personality clashes or other agendas. Some individuals in the tyre manufacturing sector have been quoted as saying they would rather see the tyre levy going to the government than to REDISA. Do these people have any idea that this will be the last they will ever see of the levy funds?

It may have been helpful for the anti-venture lobby to have chatted with people in the local bag manufacturing sector, who have seen absolutely no result from their levy payments for over a decade.

This also goes to show how tricky the future may prove to be: the non-profit sector sustainability associations in the plastics industry have got off to a good start, and have been helping create recycling businesses and jobs (which are vital to the future of the industry), but it can all come unstuck very quickly.

### New manufacturing ventures

We report on several new manufacturing ventures in this issue and it has to be said that you have to have big things to start projects now, but that is the nature of entrepreneurship – situations where most people would decline ... except you. Plus we report about an empowerment venture where the person involved really has the potential and the attitude to succeed, and we hope he does. We need more young black individuals to get involved in business ventures – the door is wide open for you!

*Getting an industry recycling venture up and running is no mean feat*

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