



Versalis and Yulex partner to produce guayule-based biorubber for consumer, medical and industrial applications

San Donato Milanese (Milan) - 28 January , 2013 – Versalis, a global leader in elastomers and a subsidiary of Eni, and Yulex Corporation, an agricultural-based biomaterials company, announced today they are forming a strategic partnership to manufacture guayule-based biorubber materials and will launch an industrial production complex in Southern Europe.

The partnership will cover the entire manufacturing chain from crop science to biorubber extraction to the construction of a biomass power station. Versalis will manufacture materials for various applications: after an initial focus on consumer and medical specialty markets, the target is to optimize the process to reach the tire industry.

The partnership will leverage Yulex's core competencies including crop science and biorubber extraction technologies, to boost Versalis' bio-based portfolio. The investment will include an ambitious research project to develop technologies targeting the tire industry.

Guayule (*Parthenium argentatum*) is a renewable, non-food crop that requires little water usage, no pesticides and it is an alternative source of natural rubber because of its latex allergy friendly properties, unlike Hevea rubber.

Versalis, with its market leading position in the elastomer industry, plans to expand its leading-edge technologies in the synthetic rubber business by including guayule rubber as a supplementary business opportunity and an increased commercial offering.

“The partnership with Yulex is strategic to Versalis, considering concerns over the forecasted scarcity in the butadiene market and volatility of this chemical, which in turn causes long term pressure on the price of products like synthetic rubber,” said Daniele Ferrari, chief executive officer of Versalis. “Partnering with Yulex represents our commitment and momentum towards entering the global market as a major green chemistry player. All of our green chemistry partnerships aim to enhance Versalis' bio-based portfolio and will feed oil-based production chains with high-performance intermediates from renewable feedstocks, in particular in the elastomers business.”

About Yulex Corporation

Yulex Corporation has developed a portfolio of biomaterials derived from the U.S.guayule plant. The company's innovative materials are designed to replace traditional tropical or petroleum based rubber for consumer, industrial and medical markets, with the residual agricultural materials utilized as a feedstock for bioenergy. Yulex closely collaborates with customers to develop and market highly differentiated, premium performance products in an ecologically responsible, sustainable manner. For more information, visit <http://www.yulex.com>.

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