Since January 2020 Elsevier has created a COVID-19 resource centre with free information in English and Mandarin on the novel coronavirus COVID-19. The COVID-19 resource centre is hosted on Elsevier Connect, the company's public news and information website.

Elsevier hereby grants permission to make all its COVID-19-related research that is available on the COVID-19 resource centre - including this research content - immediately available in PubMed Central and other publicly funded repositories, such as the WHO COVID database with rights for unrestricted research re-use and analyses in any form or by any means with acknowledgement of the original source. These permissions are granted for free by Elsevier for as long as the COVID-19 resource centre remains active.
2020 reported sales declined by 6% year on year in local currency and by 12% in Swiss francs.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the entire chemicals industry was confronted by an ‘unprecedented economic environment’ in 1Q 2020, which, in the case of Clariant, was exacerbated by a mild winter season, the company says. Efforts to minimize the impact of the pandemic are ‘fully in place’ based on a strong balance sheet and liquidity position, Clariant reports.

More information: www.clariant.com

Cabot delivers ‘solid results’ in second quarter of fiscal 2020

For the second quarter of its 2020 fiscal year, Boston-headquartered Cabot Corp recorded a small net loss attributable to the company of US$1 million and total segment EBIT of $95 million on net sales of $710 million. This compares with net income of $23 million and total segment EBIT of $112 million on net sales of $844 million achieved in the same quarter of fiscal 2019.

According to Cabot’s CEO Sean Keohane, the company delivered ‘solid results’ in 2Q fiscal 2020 despite the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic during the quarter. The estimated impact of the coronavirus crisis on EBIT in the quarter was $21 million, primarily due to lower sales in China, Keohane says. A rapid decline in volumes was also experienced across the Americas and EMEA (Europe, Middle East and Africa) regions in the second half of March after ‘a strong result’ in January, February and early March, he reports. Reinforcement Materials was particularly affected, experiencing a 14% year-on-year decline in global volumes in 2Q fiscal 2020, with Asia down 20%, EMEA 13% and the Americas 8%.

The Reinforcement Materials segment reported sales of $355 million in 2Q fiscal 2020 compared to $445 million a year earlier. The segment’s EBIT was flat compared to the previous year at $61 million, and up 30% sequentially from the first quarter of the year despite the negative impact from the COVID-19 pandemic. The lower sales volumes were offset by higher margins due to pricing and mix benefits in both the tyre and industrial products lines, Cabot reports.

The Performance Chemicals segment posted sales of $245 million in 2Q fiscal 2020 ($254 in 2Q fiscal 2019), of which Performance Additives accounted for $168 million and Formulated Solutions $77 million. EBIT decreased by $7 million year on year to $31 million, primarily due to lower margins and weaker product mix in fumed metal oxides, partially offset by higher volumes. Volumes in the Performance Additives business increased by 6% year on year due to the specialty carbons product line, the company says. Looking ahead, Keohane expects COVID-19 to have a ‘pronounced effect’ on fiscal third quarter results but says that Cabot’s ‘financial footing is sound’.

In other news, Cabot has completed the $115 million acquisition of Chinese carbon nanotube producer Shenzhen Sanshun Nano [ADPO, March–April 2020, pp. 10–11]. It will be integrated into the Performance Chemicals segment.

More information: www.cabotcorp.com

Orion Engineered Carbons reports lower results in 1Q 2020

For the first quarter of 2020, Orion Engineered Carbons reported net sales of US$336.0 million compared to net sales of $384.7 million a year earlier. Quarterly net income was $18.0 million, some 5% lower than net income of $19.0 million in 1Q 2019, largely due to foreign exchange rate losses; however, adjusted net income for the three months was $26.6 million, up from $23.8 million in the first quarter of 2019. Adjusted EBITDA was $63.8 million in 1Q 2020 compared to $64.6 million the previous year.

Orion’s Specialty Carbon Black business posted net sales of $119.8 million in 1Q 2020, a 9.0% decrease year over year, mainly due to lower volumes and the pass through of lower feedstock costs to customers, partially offset by favourable product mix and base price increases. Compared to 1Q 2019, volumes decreased by 8.8% to 58,300 tonnes, mainly due to weakening demand in the North America and Western Europe regions, predominantly in the automotive and pipe markets, the company says. The segment’s gross profit decreased by 4.0% year on year to $39.7 million, while adjusted EBITDA fell by 4.5% to $28.1 million, although the associated margin increased 110 basis points to 23.4%.

In the Rubber segment, net sales declined by 14.6% to $216.2 million in 1Q 2020, largely due to lower volumes and lower feedstock costs, partially offset by base price increases.