

sistent closed cell structure. "It's difficult to minimize the tradeoffs between thermal stability, foaming control and high processing temperatures when applying wire insulation," said Barto du Plessis, the company's general manager. "This new technology balances all three performance requirements and boosts productivity without the need for additional equipment investment."

The additive, the release said, provides wire manufacturers the following benefits: superior foaming performance, due to maximum gas generation resulting from no premature foaming enables greater process control; tight tolerances, as enhanced dispersion of active foaming ingredients produces a consistent cell structure of 200 micron or less, so insulation thickness and density are reduced without adversely effecting electrical, chemical or thermal properties; and thermal stability, as it offers excellent heat resistance from 340-380°C supports effective homogenization of the foaming agent with high-performance polymers.

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Electrolytic process is a plus for surface pretreatment of both wire and strip

Germany's Staku-Anlagenbau GmbH, which is represented in North America by Wire Machine Systems and focuses on processes for surface pre-treatment and finishing, reports that its electrolytic phosphating (Ephos) technology has been shown to offer superior results for inline cleaning and coating of high-quality stainless steel.

A press release provided the following details about the Ephos technology, which was showcased earlier this year at wire Düsseldorf. The electrolytic process is especially appropriate for high-quality stainless steel as it can be directly phosphatized without having to apply an intermediate coating beforehand. The phosphate layer can serve as a lubricant carrier for cold forming or as a bonding agent for paint or rubber coatings. The electrical potential applied from outside prevents the basic



material from dissolving, which increases the operating life of the process baths by months and thus guarantees consistently high product quality.

All systems can be equipped with optional titrolisers to guarantee on-line monitoring of the process baths. The electrolytic process reduces process times from minutes to fractions of a second, making a new in-line production installation possible. It reduces the overall in-line layout length while simultaneously increasing capacity. Ephos coating of stainless steel can be realized at speeds up to 200 fpm due to a coating time of four seconds. The coating thickness can be between 2 and 4 gr/mm², which is enough for the following rubber coating process.

STAKU has already supplied Eclean (electrolytic degreasing) lines for strip to handle a width of 63 in. at speeds of 500 fpm. The higher speeds, for example, made it possible to increase the capacity of CO₂ welding wire production with Ecopp (electrolytic coppering) by 50% and cut manufacturing cost in half, mostly from low disposal costs and savings in the use of precious metal. It also extends the operating life of a typical copper sulfate bath from one week to as long as two to three months.

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