

Market and Technology Challenges in the Oleochemical Industry

Dirk Packet

Oleon, Ertvelde, Belgium

The oleochemical market has changed drastically last 10 years. The major oleochemical companies are now located in South-East Asia. They do not only supply the fast growing local market, but are also exporting massive amounts of fatty acids and fatty alcohols to Western Europe and North America, causing a restructuring of the local oleochemical industry. Product development as well as the development of new innovative processes, is for the European oleochemists the only way to stay ahead of the Asian competition. Whilst new products are appearing regularly on the market, the oleochemical industry remains rather conservative towards new process technologies. This lecture will give an overview of the process innovations of last decades in oleochemistry, and indicate future trends and developments