

## BD Report

**Evaluation of the Oxo-degradable characteristics of a clear PP lunch box sample containing 1% Reverte™ BD 93470 supplied by CEC Plastics Sdn Bhd, care of PBE Marketing**

**Report issue date: 29<sup>th</sup> November 2018**

**Report Issue No.: 001**

**Sample details:**

**Received supplied from: CEC Plastics Sdn Bhd**

**Project Reference No.: BD 1890**

**Sample(s) received: 02/10/2018**

**Sample description:**

| Sample Number | Material Type | Sample Form | Thickness | Base Colour | Print | Reverte™ Grade | Reverte™ Batch No. | Addition Level (wt%) |
|---------------|---------------|-------------|-----------|-------------|-------|----------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| 14306         | PP            | Lunch box   | ~0.45 mm  | Clear       | No    | BD93470        | #23517             | 1%                   |
|               |               |             |           |             |       |                |                    |                      |
|               |               |             |           |             |       |                |                    |                      |
|               |               |             |           |             |       |                |                    |                      |

Prepared by

Signature



Name

Julie Simmons

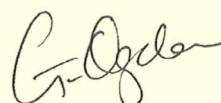
Position

Polymer Technologist

Date

29<sup>th</sup> November 2018

Authorised by



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Technical Manager

29<sup>th</sup> November 2018

The testing detailed in this report was performed wholly at:

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This report is applicable to the unique sample supplied to Wells Plastics Ltd by CEC Plastics Sdn Bhd via our local distributor PBE Marketing. It should be noted that the report does not guarantee that subsequent production batches supplied by CEC Plastics Sdn Bhd will contain Reverte™ oxo-biodegradable masterbatch manufactured by Wells Plastics Ltd at the correct dosage level.

Unless otherwise stated, the testing, analysis and reporting of the results of the evaluation reported here were performed in accordance with the referenced applicable methods (internal, national or international.)

Work Instructions used in this evaluation:  
QWI82 Production of BD graph & test report  
QWI85 Accepting a BD sample  
QWI86 BD Sample preparation  
QWI91 Operating FT-IR for analysis of BD samples  
QWI92 Printing BD sample FT-IR scans  
QWI93 Conducting UV degradation testing

## Evaluation of the Oxo-Biodegradable characteristics of a clear PP lunch box sample supplied by CEC Plastics Sdn Bhd, care of PBE Marketing

### 1. Background

CEC Plastics Sdn Bhd is interested in evaluating Wells' "Reverte™" oxo-biodegradable masterbatch for use in PP lunch boxes.

Reverte™ oxo-biodegradable masterbatch BD 93470 has been recommended for their application. This product contains a mixture of a metal ion pro-oxidant and a photoinitiated initial degradation inhibition package. The grade utilised is polypropylene based and has been specifically formulated to withstand the higher heat histories that are associated with the production of PP products.

The formulation has been developed for a 1% addition to give thin PP film maintained at 20°C a controlled in-house shelf life of approximately 18 months, a further dwell time, normally around 2 to 4 months after photoinitiation and then a rapid breakdown of properties resulting in acute embrittlement after a further 3 to 6 months. However, thicker sections, product composition, some stabiliser packages and specific polymer blends and pigmentation can significantly extend this embrittlement period.

CEC Plastics Sdn Bhd supplied one sample for evaluation of its oxo-biodegradable properties. The sample was a clear PP lunch box. It was ~0.45 mm in thickness and submitted as containing 1% BD 93470. A section was cut out and labelled with a description/internal testing number for identification. The sample was subjected to testing of its oxo-degradable properties in Wells Plastics' laboratory at their plant in Stone, Staffordshire, UK.

### 2. Samples as received / before testing



### 3. Method

The high molecular weight of commercial grades of polymers render them fundamentally hydrophobic and, therefore, very resistant to direct microbial attack. A reduction of the polymer chain length from its initial value of around 250,000 to a value between 4,000 and 10,000 increases its intrinsic microbial accessibility and enables subsequent biodigestion.



Reverte<sup>TM</sup> products initially catalyse the oxo-degradation of the polymer chains and then promote the growth of microbial colonies to expedite the second biodegradation stage.

The initial chain scission (degradation) of the polymer chain causes a serial reduction in polymer molecular weight which ultimately results in acute embrittlement, micro-fragmentation and biodigestion.

This degradation can be tracked by the measurement of critical physical properties, using test methods such as ASTM D3826 to measure properties such as elongation, but this method is somewhat flawed because as the degradation gets underway the test sample becomes too friable for physical testing.

However, because oxo-degradation causes the formation of a carbonyl group at the point of every scission, measurement of the onset and level of this carbonyl group development in the test product is a more accurate direct measure of its induced degradation by the metal ion pro-degradant system within the Reverte<sup>TM</sup> masterbatch. This carbonyl index, as it is directly proportional to the elongation at break, can be used to determine the elongation when the sample is too weak to be conventionally tested. The point of embrittlement in polyolefins is defined as the point at which the elongation at break is  $\leq 5\%$ .

Polyolefins are generally reduced to the embrittled state of  $\leq 5\%$  elongation when the carbonyl index is greater than approximately 0.1 to 0.6 depending on the type, grade, pigmentation and thickness of the product under consideration. Thicker sections, stabiliser packages and heavier pigmentations can give critical carbonyl indices far greater than the range given, but the actual critical carbonyl index is readily determined empirically during the testing procedure.

The sample was aged using a modified ASTM D 5208-01 (Cycle C) test method. The ageing cabinet utilised contained UV lamps to simulate gentle outdoor sunlight. The temperature of the cabinet was maintained at 50°C according to the test method. Results from Wells' standard PP film without any Reverte<sup>TM</sup> addition was presented alongside the test specimen as a comparative control.

It should be noted that the level of UV exposure generated in the ageing cabinet is very low and should not be compared with the levels generated, for example, in QUV ageing experiments.

In effect, the UV exposure level is around 26kLy per year in the cabinet. To put this in perspective, to simulate a full year's outdoor exposure in the UK the samples would have to be in the cabinet for around 3 to 4 years, to match a year in mainland Europe they would have to be in the cabinet for around 4 to 5 years and a year in Florida USA would be simulated by 9 to 10 years in the cabinet.

The test piece in this experiment only spent between 2 - 3 weeks in the cabinet; so we can see that the actual UV exposure was relatively low and that the acceleration of the ageing process should be largely attributed to the higher temperature (50°C) following the photo-triggering stage of the breakdown reaction.

The test specimen was removed after fixed time periods and the carbonyl index determined by Infra-red analysis, using a modified ASTM D 5576 test method. In addition the sample was empirically assessed for friability and state of embrittlement. The carbonyl index at the point at which the test piece was fully embrittled was noted and presented as 100% embrittlement. The remaining carbonyl indices were calculated as a percentage of this and presented as "Degree of Embrittlement".

Finally, Arrhenius principles were applied to the results obtained at 50°C, transposing them into the real-time results that would be expected at 20°C.

## 4. Results

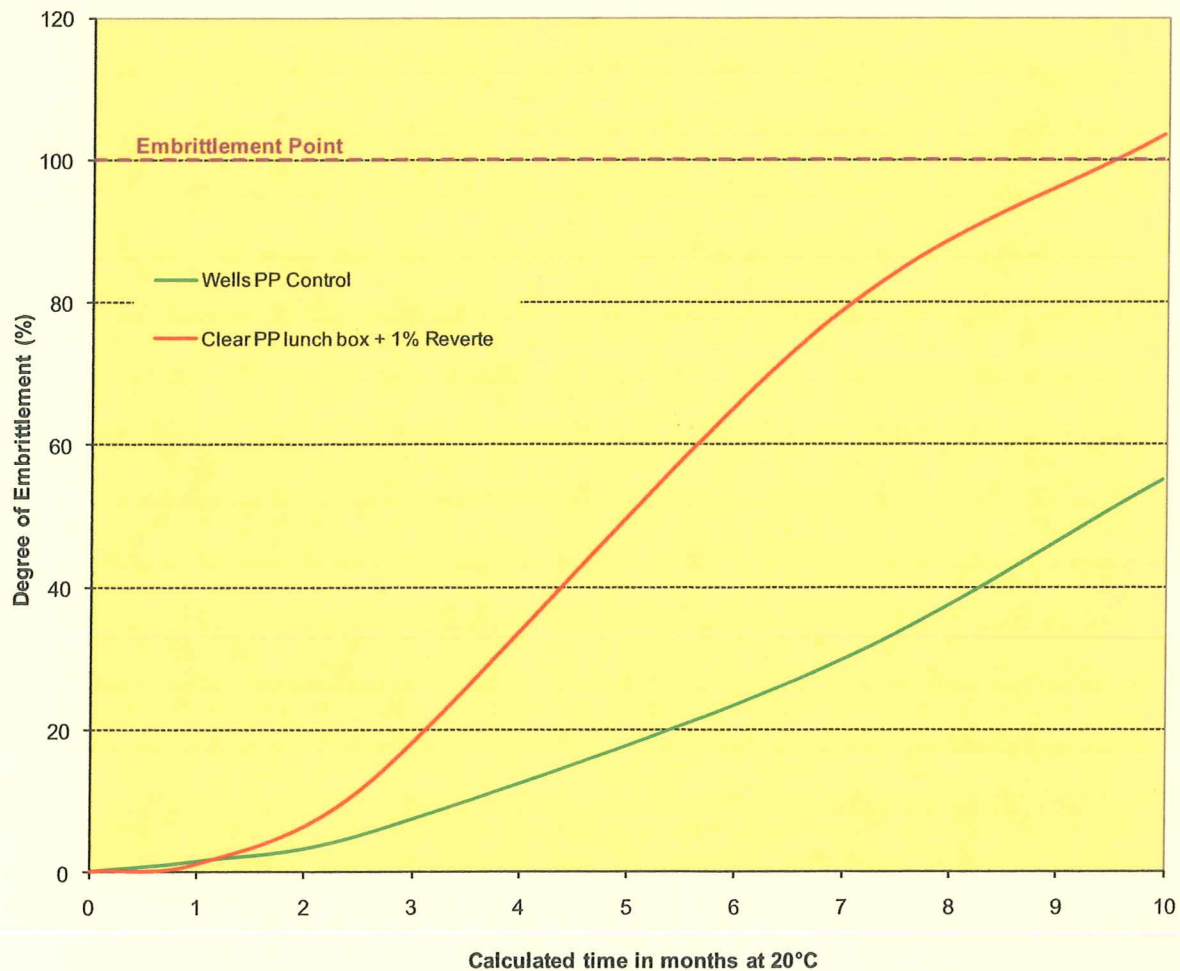
### 4.1 Degree of Embrittlement

|   | Degree of Embrittlement (%) |     |      |      |       |
|---|-----------------------------|-----|------|------|-------|
| Accelerated Ageing Time (hours at 50°C) | 0                           | 48  | 120  | 312  | 456   |
| Calculated Time (months at 20°C)        | 0.0                         | 1.0 | 2.6  | 6.8  | 10.0  |
| Wells PP Control                        | 0.0                         | 1.5 | 5.5  | 28.5 | 55.0  |
| Clear PP lunch box + 1% Reverte         | 0.0                         | 1.2 | 12.7 | 77.0 | 103.6 |

A photograph of the test specimen after its accelerated ageing period may be found in Appendix 1.

### 4.2 Graph of results

**Initial Degradation Profile for a clear PP lunch box sample containing Reverte supplied by CEC Plastics Sdn Bhd**



## 5. Discussion of Results

It is always difficult to precisely quantify results obtained in terms of real-time degradation due to the vagaries of natural conditions. However, the Arrhenius principles that we have applied to the accelerated ageing results enable us to present the results that would be expected from ageing in a real environment at a constant temperature of 20°C in sunlight.



The Wells clear PP control film sample demonstrated fairly typical behaviour, not reaching a point of embrittlement during the test period and only reaching a level of embrittlement of around 55% after the 456 hour accelerated ageing period (calculated to around 10 months at 20°C).

In marked contrast the clear PP lunch box sample containing Reverte™ demonstrated an enhanced degradation profile. It showed a distinct "dwell time" of ~59 accelerated ageing hours (calculated to around 1.3 months at 20°C) during which time no induced degradation was evident over the control. This was followed by a steady degradation in physical properties with the sample reaching 100% embrittlement after ~435 accelerated ageing hours (equivalent to around 9.5 months at 20°C).

It can be seen that the clear PP lunch box sample containing Reverte™ displayed the characteristic "dwell time" typically exhibited by Reverte™ containing products. This dwell time gives a greatly enhanced window of confidence in the use of oxo-biodegradable additive technology as no induced degradation is evident for the first time period of the product's calculated lifetime following its photo-triggering.

Finally it should be noted that even when a control film may have degraded through normal UV/oxidative attack, this doesn't mean that the chain scission will continue in a uniform and controlled manner until the chains are short enough for microbial digestion.

This is what the use of Reverte™ additive does and it is this which speeds up and facilitates the ultimate biodegradation of the plastic following the initial oxo-breakdown.

It should be re-stated that these are idealised real-time projections based on accurate accelerated laboratory ageing and, as previously stated, natural climatic conditions of sunlight, soil temperature etc do vary. These extrapolated results have, therefore, been prepared in good faith, but any potential user would have to carry out his own empirical observations to ensure that the product was fit for his purpose in the precise ageing regime employed.

## 6. Conclusions

1. The addition of Reverte™ masterbatch to the clear PP lunch box sample submitted by CEC Plastics Sdn Bhd has been shown to be effective in introducing an oxo-biodegradable characteristic, giving a readily distinguishable dwell time after photoinitiation followed by a controlled progression towards full embrittlement.

\*\*\*\*\*END OF REPORT\*\*\*\*\*

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## Appendix I

### A photograph of the sample after ageing



Following its ageing period of 456 accelerated ageing hours (calculated to around 10 months at 20°C), the clear PP lunch box sample containing Reverte™ can be seen to have lost all of its significant physical properties, is exhibiting extreme friability and breaking up when handled.

These observations are commensurate with the measurements taken and contained within the body of this report.

\*\*\*\*\*END OF APPENDIX\*\*\*\*\*

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