MSA Develops Industrial Hard Hat Made from Sugarcane

"Green" Protective Cap is First to be Manufactured from Renewable Resources

PITTSBURGH, Feb. 13, 2013 /PRNewswire/ -- Pittsburgh-based safety equipment manufacturer MSA (NYSE: MSA) is the largest producer of industrial hard hats in North America and other regions of the world. But that dominance hasn't diminished the company's appetite to innovate and find ways to improve a relatively common product worn every day by construction workers, industrial personnel and utility workers, as well as fans at NFL football games.

(Photo: http://photos.prnewswire.com/prnh/20130213/NE59848-a)

(Photo: http://photos.prnewswire.com/prnh/20130213/NE59848-b)

MSA's iconic V-Gard® line of hard hats, identified by their unique and raised "V-shaped" crown, has saved countless lives by protecting wearers from falling objects and other cranial hazards. But now workers have the option of using a hard hat that not only helps to protect their head, but protects the environment as well.

The new MSA V-Gard GRN (for green) Hard Hat is the first industrial safety product produced from nearly 100 percent renewable resources. Developed and manufactured by MSA in Brazil, the MSA V-Gard GRN Hard Hat is similar to conventional hats in that it's made of high-density polyethylene (HDPE). However, unlike traditional hard hats, the HDPE in the MSA V-Gard GRN model is sourced entirely from sugarcane.

"By developing a hard hat sourced from sugar, we have reduced the overall carbon footprint that's associated with the entire life-cycle of this particular product, from start to finish," said Eric Beck, MSA's Global Director of Strategic Marketing.

Mr. Beck explained that "green" polyethylene is made from sugarcane ethanol, which results in a smaller carbon footprint because, for each ton of the material produced, up to 2.5 pounds of carbon dioxide are captured from the atmosphere. Conversely, Mr. Beck noted that one ton of polyethylene sourced from petrochemicals actually emits more than two pounds of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. He added that green polyethylene is 100 percent recyclable, making it suitable for reuse in non-safety products, which further enhances the sustainability benefits of the new hard hat.

"The environmental advantages of using 'green' HDPE in a hard hat are certainly attractive and are what initially captured our interest," said Dr. Thomas Muschter, MSA Vice President of Global Product Leadership. "But at the end of the day we would not be using this material if it didn't provide the same high level of head protection that our V-Gard brand is known for around the world. That's what makes this product option so attractive. The HDPE sourced from sugarcane provides the same performance and properties as resins made from non-renewable raw materials," he said.

"Environmental sustainability is more important than ever today, and our development of a sustainable hard hat provides MSA customers with yet another way to demonstrate their commitment to preserving the planet," Mr. Beck added. "For green construction projects, or for companies focused on sustainability initiatives, we think the V-Gard GRN Hard Hat provides a perfect fit."

About MSA

*Established in 1914, MSA is the global leader in the development, manufacture and supply of safety products that protect people and facility infrastructures. Many MSA products integrate a combination of electronics, mechanical systems and advanced materials to protect users against hazardous or life-threatening situations. The company's comprehensive line of products is used by workers around the world in a broad range of industries, including the fire service, the oil, gas and petrochemical industry, construction, mining and utilities, as well as the military. Principal products include self-contained breathing apparatus, fixed gas and flame detection systems, handheld gas detection instruments, head protection products, fall protection devices and thermal imaging cameras. The company also provides a broad range of consumer and contractor safety products through a joint venture with MCR Safety. These products are marketed and sold under the Safety Works® brand. MSA, based north of Pittsburgh in Cranberry Township, Pa., has annual sales of approximately$1.2 billion, manufacturing operations in the United States, Europe, Asia and Latin America, and 42 international locations. Additional information is available on the company's Web site at **www.MSAsafety.com** . Information on Safety Works products can be found at www.SafetyWorks.com.*

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