

Mercer Stendal prepares restart of pulp mill

Firefighters put out the blaze at Mercer Stendal's pulp mill on 8 July, five days after the outbreak at the wood chips storage depot and conveyor system, CEO André Listemann confirmed. Firefighting staff were lastly concentrating on identifying hidden smoulders and were continuously dousing the affected areas to prevent the fire from reigniting, the company added.

The company is now busy with carrying away the charred remains. At the same time, fresh wood chips are being moved in, the CEO informed on Friday. "We are currently working flat out to resume pulp production, which is fortunately fully intact and was not affected by the fire," Mr Listemann explained.

Since replacing the conveyor belts and the damaged plant components could take several months, Mercer is working on setting up a temporary wood chip feeding solution e.g. using of alternative transport technology. Meanwhile, a technical fault at the conveyor system was identified as cause of the fire, according to local media.

Mercer's Stendal mill has a capacity to produce 680,000 tpy of NBSK pulp. □

Flexible packaging mill Cartiera Rivignano files for insolvency

The manufacturer of flexible packaging paper Cartiera Rivignano in northern Italy has filed for insolvency. High raw material costs and a lack of orders have caused the company's downfall. The commercial court of Udine opened insolvency proceedings on 8 July. The first hearing will take place on 19 December. For the 40 employees of the mill, an extension of short-time work until the end of the year has been requested.

Paper production in Rivignano was already stopped on 12 May and has not been resumed since. The company was waiting to see if an interested buyer for the mill would pursue its takeover plans, a spokesperson for the Slc Cgil trade union told EUWID. When the buyer dropped out, Cartiera Rivignano decided to close the paper mill.

Demand for flexible packaging paper was not bad at all, the spokesman added. But the high costs for raw materials had become a big problem for the company, which produces its paper from fresh fibre, he explained. The costs could not be passed on sufficiently to customers and orders had failed to materialise.

Cartiera di Rivignano produced flexible packaging paper for food contact, including baking paper, street food bags and cheese storage paper. The company has two plants in Rivignano, which operate a paper machine, a coating unit, a finishing unit, a cutting centre and a logistics centre. □

Eerbeek mill to stop production for upgrade on 13 September

FOLBB has revealed more details on the planned upgrade of the board machine at the Eerbeek plant. The company already announced in May that it would replace the shoe press at the folding boxboard (FBB) machine in September. The company now revealed that production at the machine will be stopped on 13 September for 25 to 30 days in order to install a new shoe press and to upgrade the machine's drying section.

The current press equipment section has reached the end of its technical life and will be completely replaced by a state-of-the-art shoe press. The investment will deliver better performance and increased efficiency for the pressing process, according to FOLBB. At the same time, the infrared burners used to dry the cartonboard will be upgraded. This yields approximately 5 per cent savings on the use of natural gas.

"This is the first step in a multi-year investment process to modernise the mill and make it more sustainable," says Otto van Beers, managing director of Folding Boxboard Eerbeek.

The Eerbeek mill and its German counterpart Bayersbronn form FOLBB Group, which was acquired by funds managed by Oaktree Capital in July 2021.

"Our current owner actively supports investments in the modernisation and sustainability of our board mill in Eerbeek over the coming years," says FOLBB Group CEO Daniel Wiktorin. "The modernisations and improvements we are announcing today involve an investment of several millions." □

Steinbeis orders stock preparation line

German recycling paper producer Steinbeis Papier has placed an order with Andritz for a full-scale stock preparation line for conventional recovered paper and special recovered paper grades. The line is featured to handle 78 to 200 tpd. Commissioning is scheduled for the end of the first quarter of 2023.

The new line will process raw material grades such as wet-strength and coated papers, high wet-strength labels, moisture-resistant labels used for brewery applications and plastic-laminated recycled paper, Andritz explains.

Andreas Rauscher, CEO of Steinbeis Papier said: "The latest product – called Steinbeis Label, a wet-strength and alkali-resistant label paper – brought about the idea of a new wastepaper processing line to create the preconditions for a closed-loop process in Glückstadt. Thus, wet-strength and alkali-resistant label paper can be recycled and used as the raw material for new label paper." □

NEWS IN BRIEF

Brazilian producer of eucalyptus pulp **Suzano** has announced a new price hike for customers in Europe. For deliveries starting 1 July, the company plans to charge \$30/t more. As a result, the list price for bleached hardwood sulphate pulp will increase from \$1,350 to \$1,380/t.

Valmet will supply the world's first two electrical folding machines for pulp bales to **Södra Cell's** Mönsterås pulp mill in Sweden. The machines' start-up is planned for the last quarter of 2022. The new Valmet Electrical Folding Machine is a further refinement of the Valmet Folding Machine VKC. By removing the hydraulics and using only electrical drives, the machine's performance and the working environment for maintenance personnel and operators is improving. In addition, electricity consumption is reduced. Södra Cell can produce up to 750,000 tpy softwood and hardwood pulp at the Mönsterås mill.

The **Economic Stabilisation Fund** (ESF) of the German federal government has granted **Leipa Georg Leinfelder GmbH** a €40m loan. The original intention behind the fund, which the federal government created in March 2020, was to counteract the economic effects of the coronavirus pandemic. Leipa did not want to comment on the granting of state aid when asked by EUWID.

Andritz is strengthening its paper machine service portfolio with the acquisition of Italy's blades manufacturer and service provider **Bonetti Group**. The transaction was completed on 30 June. Milan-based Bonetti runs five production facilities in Italy, Germany, Canada and the US, producing doctor, creping and coater blades, and blade holders for tissue and paper machines. The company also offers supervision, installation and maintenance services. The acquisition fits in perfectly with Andritz's long-term strategy to acquire complementary businesses and expand its aftermarket business with its stable source of sales and earnings, Austria's technology group announced. Bonetti Group has a staff of 150 and sales of approximately €25m, according to Andritz.

Andritz has received an order from Chinese **Dongfang Smart Energy** to supply two paper machine approach flow systems and LC (low consistency) refiners to its mill in Wugong County, Xianyang City, Shaanxi Province, China. Start-up is scheduled for the second quarter of 2023. The PMA systems will have an aggregate design capacity of 1,850 tpd and will be part paper machines 1 and 2 producing kraft board and testliner. Dongfang Smart Energy is part of Shaanxi Power Generation Group and is active in various business segments, such as pulp and paper manufacture, thermal power production and supply, sewage treatment and recycling, and the recovery of renewable resources.