

ISSUE 1

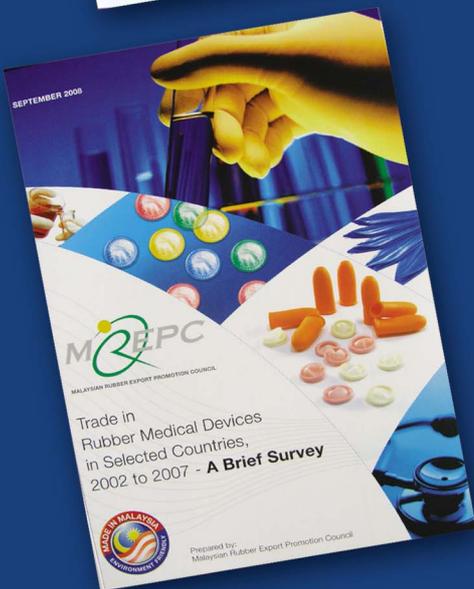
STRETCH

A quarterly publication of the
Malaysian Rubber Export Promotion Council

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Volume 3



Minister Officiates
MREPC *Events*

As depressing economic performance reports trickle in from most sectors of business entities world-wide, Malaysia included, MREPC, within its own constraints and in its small way, has constantly been perusing ways and means of doing its part to assist local rubber product manufacturers cope with the prevailing gloomy scenario. It is at least comforting to note that some sectors of the country's rubber product manufacturing industry are apparently not adversely affected by the global economic downturn by virtue of their inherent resilience in their provision of essential products.

There was therefore much delight when the Honourable Minister of Plantation Industries and Commodities, Datuk Peter Chin Fah Kui, kindly consented to launch the MREPC 2009 Incentives for local rubber product manufacturers, MREPC's Quarterly Rubber Statistics Bulletin and MREPC's Medical Devices Report, as well as officiate the opening of the MREPC Medical Devices Seminar, on 22 January 2009. To all our distinguished guests, thank you for making the event a very successful one.



CEO of MREPC Dato' Teo Suat Cheng

MREPC's incentives for rubber product manufacturers were launched in 2007 primarily to encourage the increased participation of manufacturers in relevant international events, with the ultimate objective of accelerating and expanding the market share for Malaysian rubber products and penetrating hitherto untapped markets. Many have taken advantage of the incentives offered, and have benefitted from such participation. In its ongoing efforts to add further value in its services to the industry, MREPC has initiated a review of its incentives and has come out with even more attractive offerings, including provisions for product certification and accreditation of testing laboratories, activities which are vital in the testament to the quality of products offered. These improved incentives will hopefully go some way to assist manufacturers gain a greater share of the global market.

We have to admit that whilst Malaysia has grown progressively as a leading exporter of latex-based products, she has not performed as well in the export of dry rubber products, even though Malaysian expertise and technology are not lacking in these products. We therefore urge our manufacturers, especially those in the dry rubber product sector, to earnestly take advantage of MREPC's 2009 incentives and join us in the programmes we have planned to meet the challenge of increasing our export of rubber products.

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International Rubber Conference 2008, Kuala Lumpur

{20–23 October 2008}



The MREPC booth at IRC 2008

The International Rubber Conference (IRC) 2008, organized by the Malaysian Rubber Board (MRB), was held at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre from 20 to 23 October 2008. The Conference was officiated by the Minister of Plantation Industries and Commodities Malaysia, Datuk Peter Chin Fah Kui, on Tuesday, 21 October.

In conjunction with the conference, various rubber-related seminars and an exhibition were also held. Twenty exhibitors took the opportunity to showcase their companies' products while the seminars were attended by more than 500 delegates from various countries. Speakers included those from renowned universities and international rubber associations and research centres. MREPC's Deputy CEO, Dr. Abdul Kadir Mohamed, chaired the conference session on Rubber and Engineering.

The fourth Automechanika Shanghai exhibition was held in the Shanghai New International Expo Centre in Pudong, Shanghai, China from 10 to 12 December 2008. It is considered the leading auto-parts exhibition in China for the aftermarket, with more than 2,000 exhibitors. Automechanika Shanghai showcased four main product groups – parts and systems, accessories and tuning, repair and maintenance, and IT and management. Business matching and various seminars were also held in conjunction with the event.

Four Malaysian manufacturers participated under the MREPC umbrella. They were NSR Rubber Protective Sdn. Bhd., AE Rubber Industries Sdn. Bhd., Tantex Rubber Works Sdn. Bhd. and Wonderful Wire & Cable Sdn. Bhd. The Malaysian pavilion was visited by local as well as trade visitors from countries like Germany, France, USA, India, UAE, and Ukraine.

Automechanika 2008, Shanghai

{10–12 December 2008}



Malaysian participants at Automechanika Shanghai

**Venus 2008,
Berlin**

[16–19 October 2008]



CEO of MREPC, Dato' Teo (centre), at a Malaysian manufacturer's booth

MREPC, together with Malaysian manufacturers of condoms, participated for the first time in Venus 2008, an international trade exhibition featuring a wide range of products in the adult care industry. The trade show was held for the 12th time, with 383 exhibitors from 36 countries and over 5,400 professional visitors attending the event. MREPC participated in this trade show to explore business opportunities for Malaysian manufacturers of condoms and adult healthcare products. Participating Malaysian manufacturers were BioGreen Medical Sdn. Bhd., Innolatex Sdn. Bhd., Takaso Rubber Products Sdn. Bhd. and Medical Latex (Dua) Sdn. Bhd. These companies were keen to look for new business associations with buyers, manufacturers and traders from the European market as well as from other regions.

A fair number of enquiries were received by MREPC for condoms and related products such as finger cots, pleasure dams and tattoo gloves. Novelty condoms were among the products that drew much attention at the show and elicited many enquiries from traders and importers.

Manufacturers were satisfied with the arrangement made for them by MREPC and expressed their intention to exhibit again in the next edition of Venus Berlin. They were also pleased with the number of serious visitors received during the trade show.

MEDICA is an important trade fair for all those involved in the healthcare sector. Organized in Dusseldorf, Germany, this trade fair has been attracting more than 100,000 visitors annually. With its extensive ancillary programmes, numerous special events, two major congresses and the largest product display in the industry, MEDICA is the hub of the medical trade.

Despite the worldwide financial crisis, MEDICA 2008 managed to attract 137,000 trade visitors, on par with the previous year's event. China had a strong presence at the event, comprising 9% (395 exhibitors) of total exhibitors (4313 exhibitors). MREPC participated at MEDICA 2008 to promote Malaysian-manufactured rubber medical devices and highlight Malaysia as a source of environment-friendly rubber products. It also provided informative and educational materials on SMG and latex allergy, as well as links to Malaysian manufacturers. Malaysia, as the world's largest exporter of medical gloves, was represented by 13 glove manufacturers. Four condom manufacturers and a producer of rubber catheters also participated at the fair.

**MEDICA 2008,
Dusseldorf**

[19–22 November 2008]



MREPC Europe representative, Roland Newell (right), attending to a visitor

MREPC received a good number of inquiries for gloves, condoms, probe covers and finger cots, catheters and other items. Although most glove enquiries were related to latex examination and surgical gloves, there was also interest in other types of gloves, including latex-free, radiation, insulation, industrial, high risk and gynaecology gloves, as well as gloves for hairdressers. Visitors generally acknowledged the high quality of Malaysian gloves and most of them are currently buying from Malaysian manufacturers. Some visitors, especially from the US and Europe, were aware of the SMG programme and enquired on contact details of SMG manufacturers. MREPC also received enquiries on matters related to latex allergy issues.

Participation in MEDICA 2008 was effective in generating interest in Malaysian-manufactured rubber medical devices – MREPC’s stand received a larger number of registered visitors than the previous year.

“ MREPC participated at MEDICA 2008 to promote Malaysian-manufactured rubber medical devices and highlight Malaysia as a source of environment-friendly rubber products ”

International Trade Malaysia (INTRADE 2008), Kuala Lumpur

(13–16 November 2008)



Ms. Uthaya of MREPC (right) attending to a visitor

INTRADE is an international trade event showcasing products and services from over 40 industry sectors. Held for the second time at the MATRADE Exhibition and Convention Centre (MECC) in Kuala Lumpur, INTRADE attracted visitors from Malaysia and the ASEAN region. Over 400 exhibitors participated in INTRADE 2008, from more than 60 countries, including Algeria, China, Hong Kong, India, Japan, Senegal, Sudan and UAE. Over 12,000 visitors from Asia, Africa and South America visited the show.

MREPC participated to promote Malaysian rubber medical devices, general rubber goods, rubber automotive parts and industrial rubber goods. Medical Latex (DUA) Sdn. Bhd., Heveaplant (M) Sdn. Bhd. and MALCORP also participated in this show. MALCORP is a consortium representing a group of dry rubber product manufacturers.

MREPC displayed posters on rubber medical devices, highlighting the advantages of natural rubber. The products displayed included gloves, condoms, catheters, cast shields, pleasure dams and finger cots, as well as dry rubber products such as rubber expansion joints, carpet underlays, automotive parts, hoses and rubber-to-metal bonded parts.

In conjunction with the show, MATRADE organized an inward buying mission to create opportunities for Malaysian companies to promote their products and services to international buyers and traders. This attracted significant international participation. The enquiries MREPC received through business meetings as well as from walk-in visitors have been forwarded to industry members for their action.

The days leading to the Chinese Lunar Year of the Ox were even more joyful at MREPC with the opening of the MREPC Rubber Medical Devices Seminar being officiated by Datuk Peter Chin Fah Kui, Minister of Plantation Industries and Commodities, on 22 January 2009. The memorable occasion also saw the Minister launched MREPC's Rubber Product Statistical Bulletin and the MREPC 2009 Incentives.

In his welcoming address, the Chairman of MREPC, Tan Sri Datuk Dr. Arshad Ayub informed that since its inception in April 2000, MREPC had been diligently playing its role to facilitate and promote Malaysian rubber products worldwide. He then outlined that throughout 2008, MREPC organized various programmes which included 12 international and five domestic trade shows, two missions and seven seminars. With regard to this, the Chairman stated that MREPC would leverage on the strength of the 2008 programmes and improve them based on the economic scenario to kick start 2009 with a message that the rubber product industry was well equipped to weather the difficult times ahead.

In his speech, the Minister stated that with signs of the bleak global economic situation not letting up any time soon, no industry could afford to be complacent. He reminded all stakeholders that despite the industry's excellent performance, it could not afford to rest on its laurels, given the prevailing challenges and threats that might impact it adversely. He advised companies to aggressively venture overseas to traditional and non-traditional markets to seek further opportunities. Companies which see the economic downturn as an opportunity for self-improvement could make significant long term gains against competitors that cut back on key investments during recessions. In the wake of such challenges, the Minister expressed hope that more companies would come forward to avail themselves of the MREPC 2009 incentive packages and further strengthen their export capacities and capabilities. He also conveyed his confidence that MREPC would continue to make concerted efforts to identify and get as many companies as possible, including those who are export ready but not yet exporting, to make use of these revised incentives.

OFFICIAL
OPENING OF
MREPC RUBBER
MEDICAL DEVICES
SEMINAR AND
LAUNCH OF
MREPC RUBBER
PRODUCT
STATISTICAL
BULLETIN AND
MREPC 2009
INCENTIVES,
22 JANUARY 2009



The Minister officiating the MREPC events

The Minister emphasized that with the world economy going through one of the most difficult periods ever, it was imperative that all stakeholders work together and be prudent and pragmatic to ensure a progressive future for the industry. In this regard, he congratulated MREPC for initiating a new set of incentives which would greatly reduce costs for companies seeking export opportunities. This would be certainly welcomed by the industry, given the adverse economic environment.

The Minister was also pleased that MREPC had come out with its Rubber Medical Devices (RMD) Report and the Rubber Product Statistical Bulletin. The seminar that had been scheduled was aimed at sharing the findings available in MREPC's RMD report and would provide stakeholders with potential avenues to focus their market

promotional efforts. Likewise, the quarterly rubber product statistical bulletin would enable the general trend of trade in the selected product or product group to be discerned by manufacturers to determine the viability of entering a new market or moving towards a new segment within an existing market.

The Minister reiterated that MREPC would continue to support and facilitate the efforts of the industry to aggressively seek and pursue opportunities overseas and urged all industry members to work closely with MREPC in this endeavour to preserve the nation's export-oriented industries while meeting the common goal of an expanded market for Malaysian rubber products.



Invited guests at the ceremony

Chairman of MREPC, Tan Sri Datuk Arshad Ayub (right), presenting a set of documents to the Minister

The Minister (centre), flanked by the Deputy Minister (left) and CEO of MREPC (right), at the press conference



Participants at the Medical Devices Seminar

Rubber Medical Devices Seminar

Following the official launch, the seminar on RMD was held and this attracted 45 participants from the industry.

Two briefings preceded the seminar. Mr. Krishnasamy Raman, Director of Industry Relations and Public Affairs, briefed on the MREPC 2009 incentives while En. Adnan Abdullah, Director of Marketing and Development, presented MREPC's 2009 marketing and promotional programmes. The presentation for MREPC's Rubber Medical Devices Seminar was conducted by Dr. Chew Cheng Sim, Director, Corporate Planning and Research.



Dr. Chew conducting the seminar

The Rubber Medical Devices Seminar

The Rubber Medical Devices Seminar was one of the continuous efforts undertaken by MREPC to build and safeguard Malaysia's image as a supplier of quality and reliable rubber products. The seminar highlighted that Malaysia, as the world's third largest exporting country of rubber medical devices, accounted for 11.5% of the total exports amounting to US\$2.02 billion in 2007. Malaysia's performance had been exceptional as total exports of rubber medical devices grew at a strong compounded annual growth rate of 14.6% from 2002 to 2007. Gloves, latex threads and catheters, of which Malaysia is presently one of the world's largest exporters, are expected to remain the key driving force behind the country's rubber product exports.

The seminar also provided updates on rubber medical devices trade information by examining the imports and exports of rubber medical devices and their compounded annual growth rates in selected countries, including established markets such as the US, Mexico, Netherlands, Germany, UK, Ireland and Japan and emerging markets such as China, Brazil, India, Russia, and South Africa. Trade in rubber medical devices by Thailand, Indonesia, China and India were also discussed.

The marketing and promotional programmes for 2009, which include participation in domestic and international trade fairs as well as organization of various marketing missions, reflect MREPC's continuous efforts to play a pivotal role as a catalyst to facilitate, strengthen and expand the industry's foothold in the global market.

The MREPC 2009 Incentives was a move to further strengthen and liberalize the existing incentives to assist stakeholders to initiate and sustain their export initiatives. The revised and new incentives under MREPC include a range of financial support for international trade exhibitions, overseas market missions, product certification, laboratory accreditation, acquisition of market research reports, production of promotional material and market promotion incentives for Standard Malaysian Glove (SMG). The incentives were designed to allow industry players to selectively capitalise on the type of incentives that would best enable them to tap into the export potential of high value-added product markets worldwide.

Comprehensive details of the MREPC 2009 incentives and marketing and promotional programme may be obtained by contacting MREPC's office at 03-2780-5888 or visiting MREPC's website at www.mrepc.com

The Rubber Product Statistical Bulletin as well as the Rubber Medical Devices Report may be purchased from MREPC.



Mr. Adnan with his briefing

Major Destinations of Malaysia's Rubber Product Exports (RM'000)

Country	January-December 2008	January-December 2007	% Change	% Share (2008)
EU-27	3,247,892	3,304,063	-1.7	28.9
USA	3,001,224	2,506,302	19.7	26.7
ASEAN	977,796	960,011	1.9	8.7
Japan	691,663	566,169	22.2	6.2
Hong Kong, SAR	357,850	335,552	6.6	3.2
Australia	339,833	432,643	-21.5	3.0
Brazil	337,948	279,388	21.0	3.0
China, P.R.	277,225	259,262	6.9	2.5
Canada	194,421	172,558	12.7	1.7
South Korea	142,016	134,184	5.8	1.3
Taiwan	120,128	119,261	0.7	1.1
Turkey	92,224	98,300	-6.2	0.8
Subtotal	9,780,227	9,167,698	6.7	87.0
World Total	11,238,630	10,469,821	7.3	100.0

Source: Department of Statistics, Malaysia

Malaysia's Exports and Imports of Rubber Products (RM'000)

	Exports		Imports	
	2008	2007	2008	2007
January	925,925	828,885	250,239	201,331
February	882,574	722,157	193,284	152,080
March	933,822	933,729	265,121	212,695
April	840,829	817,909	198,794	207,134
May	934,435	834,167	225,328	210,603
June	872,875	865,895	247,505	213,095
July	967,179	857,235	267,279	230,949
August	1,006,346	1,031,700	274,756	223,140
September	1,005,430	889,600	256,560	217,330
October	1,003,051	837,188	205,251	228,700
November	974,830	903,445	222,022	198,953
December	932,798	947,905	228,571	209,878
January-December	11,238,630	10,469,821	2,820,811	2,505,892
% Change (January-December) 08/07	7.3		12.6	

Source: Department of Statistics, Malaysia



Takaso plant at Muar

Takaso

Pioneer Malaysian Manufacturer of Condoms

A product, serving an important function but yet often mentioned only in a hush-hush manner in conversation, is the humble contraceptive device known as the condom. It is said that condoms have been used for 400 years, and are principally used for contraceptive purposes and to prevent the transmission of sexually transmitted diseases such as syphilis, gonorrhoea, HIV and others. As a form of contraceptive, male condoms have the advantage of being inexpensive, easy to use, and with few side-effects. A female version of the condom is also available and is predominantly made from polyurethane. Modern condoms are largely made from latex, but other materials such as polyurethane and animal intestines may also be used. Innovative ideas have created condoms with different colours, patterns and even flavours! Third world countries are actively using condoms on a large scale to facilitate family planning and national population control.

Considering the world's population of six billion, the amount of condoms used annually is mind boggling, to say the least. There is thus no shortage of manufacturers worldwide ever willing to supply this essential item. Malaysia as a major supplier of natural rubber counts close to a dozen condom manufacturers among its rubber product sector. Situated on a one-hectare site within sight of the magnificent Muar bridge at one of the earliest industrial estates of Tanjung Agas at Muar, Johor, is Takaso Rubber Products Sdn. Bhd., the first fully-Malaysian-owned condom manufacturer, started by the Tee family. Takaso, incorporated in 1978, is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Takaso Resources Berhad, a public listed company on Bursa Malaysia, and is helmed by its energetic and affable managing director, Francis Tee. Tee, a very much hands-on individual, is equally at home both designing his own equipment at the factory floor and at the apex of management propelling his company forward in the international marketplace.



Managing Director of Takaso, Francis T.C. Tee, JP



Francis Tee (right) receiving an award from Minister of Plantation Industries and Commodities, Datuk Peter Chin

Takaso, while being one of the largest Malaysian manufacturers of condoms, has an equally sizeable business in the baby product sector. In fact, the business is spread 50-50 between the two. One would have imagined that condoms and baby products make strange bedfellows – the former being used in many instances to prevent conception, while the latter are products directed at the babies' market, which would welcome more babies. Careful scrutiny, however, indicates that condoms are not used exclusively to prevent the increase in babies, but merely to have them in a planned manner to promote mother-child health and enhance quality family life. Thus it makes sense that Takaso would venture into rubber baby products, and more recently into such products as high-end baby milk powder.

According to Tee, it is easier to expand the business by product diversification, instead of increasing volume in existing products. His vision is to concentrate on this, especially to expand into household items. To maintain its share in the market, the company has to constantly provide attractive and quality products and this can only be achieved with a mixture of good management, regular innovations and product improvement via technology and research. Products, both condoms and baby products

such as baby teats, soothers, feeding bottles, are thus manufactured under stringent quality processes and with state-of-the-art equipment. Automated test facilities for quality control and assurance are the order of the day at Takaso. "We are also aware of the enormous importance of skill and loyal human resource, and spare no effort to provide the best training for our labour force," says Tee. "We are very proud that our strength of 300 staff members comprise exclusively Malaysians," he adds.



Takaso's range of condoms (top) and baby products (above)

Realizing early on the importance of branding and the enormous cost of promoting a brand, Takaso set out to market its products under its own brands. For condoms, they are marketed under the brands 'Romantic' and 'Playsafe', while all its baby products are collectively promoted under its main 'Japlo' brand. For condoms, the company has developed many innovative and novel products such as their 'Quick & Easy' series. This series' packing contains thick aluminium foil at the top and durable polymer film at the bottom, and is hermetically sealed to extend the shelf-life of the condom. The product has been awarded by the Design Council of Malaysia as one of the Malaysia Good Designs in the year 2007. Other innovative company designs include the revolutionary 'FIT-TEX' condom, which boasts of a 3-point dimension

feature and is anatomically shaped, and the 'Lighted Vibradom'.

Contract manufacturing forms a minor fraction of Takaso's business, and 70% of its condoms are exported under its own brands. Takaso's products are exported to 39 countries worldwide. Tee acknowledges that growth in mature markets such as the US and Europe is difficult, and that it may be possible to make inroads into emerging markets such as Eastern Europe, where brands may be an important marketing issue. "Condom users are becoming more selective. Apart from going for brands, they are also looking at packaging and how companies market the product," says Tee. He anticipates demand for baby-related products would probably decline during the current recession but remain encouraging

in China, Russia and the Middle East as these countries have huge reserves and strong consumer confidence. Demand for such products may also come from Eastern European countries.

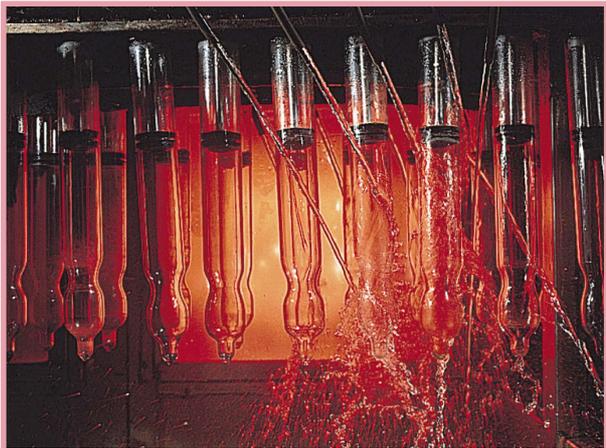
As Takaso's products are principally healthcare in nature, a high degree of standard and quality are maintained in the manufacturing process, and it has the distinction of being the first Malaysian manufacturer of condoms to obtain the EN46002 certification. It has also been granted the right and license to use the BSI kitemark on its condoms since 2000. Its baby products under the brand Japlo have also been granted the 'halal' certification by JAKIM of Malaysia, and this has greatly facilitated the distribution of these products in the Middle East.



Not only does Takaso constantly introduce new and innovative products, for example in its condom range, it regularly creates equally attractive and practical packaging for these products as well.



Besides the 'FIT-TEX' condom and other products mentioned above, investment in R&D has resulted in development of innovative products such as nitrosamine-free baby soothers and nipples, new designs for soothers and baby bottles to meet the need of changing customer preferences and market trends.



Cleaning process of condom formers



According to Tee, the prevailing global economic situation has not affected the company's sales adversely for the reason that condoms are a low-price and essential product. However, the terms of business are affected in some ways. Tee is also of the opinion that the prospect of the rubber industry in Malaysia is good as long as the supply of natural rubber is maintained, and acknowledges that there is good linkage between suppliers and manufacturers. He sees some labour issues and feels more processes could be automated.



Watertightness test for condoms

The company is highly committed to its corporate social responsibility and charitable activities are organized regularly for the benefit of staff and the local community.

For more information on Takaso Rubber Products Sdn. Bhd. and its range of condoms and baby products, visit its website at www.takaso.com.my

Glove Seminar Series in Australia ‘Gloves: Managing Infection Control Effectively’

(Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane, 8–12 December 2008)

MREPC had previously organized seminars on gloves with the theme ‘Selecting the Right Gloves’ in Melbourne and Sydney. After a lapse of more than three years, it was felt that another series of seminars ought to be organized in Australia to further disseminate information on latex gloves. This was considered particularly important given that a guideline published in 2003 by the New South Wales Health Department of Australia had called for a latex-free environment. This guideline has not been revised and is hence still applicable.



Participants at the Sydney Seminar

The Malaysian delegation was led by Dato’ Teo Suat Cheng, CEO of MREPC. Other delegation members included representatives from Top Glove Corporation, Supermax Corporation, Oon Corporation and the Malaysian Rubber Board (MRB). The Chairman of MREPC, Tan Sri Datuk Arshad Ayub, attended the seminar in Sydney.

Participants consisted of representatives from government healthcare departments, medical professionals and healthcare workers from medical institutions and hospitals, university researchers, service providers and glove manufacturers and distributors. There were a number of participants from the Royal Adelaide Hospital in South Australia. The Malaysian Trade Commissioner, Mr. Ong Yew Chee, was present at the seminar in Sydney.



Chairman of MREPC (seated second from left) and CEO of MREPC (seated third from left) with speakers and Malaysian delegates at the Sydney seminar

Six papers were presented in Melbourne and five in Sydney and Brisbane. MREPC invited two speakers from Europe: Dr. Henning Allmers of Germany presented a paper on the proven safety and cost benefits derived from using NRL (natural rubber latex) powder-free gloves while Dr. Kristiina Turjanmaa of Finland discussed the allergenicity of latex gloves and how the use of gloves with low allergens have a positive impact on the work environment where previously sensitized and allergic workers can continue to work at their usual jobs.



CEO of MREPC, Dato' Teo Suat Cheng, introducing the seminar at Melbourne

Two well-known clinicians from Australia, Dr. Connie Katelaris and Dr. Michael Sutherland, were also invited to share their insights on developments in Australia. Dr. Katelaris, a professor from the University of Western Australia and president-elect of the Asian Pacific Association of Allergology, Asthma and Clinical Immunology, spoke on the decreasing incidences of latex protein allergy in Australia after adoption of certain preventive measures. Dr. Sutherland touched on his research in Alfred Hospital in Melbourne where incidences of latex allergy showed a reduction with the introduction of low-allergenic-protein gloves. Dr. Esah Yip from MREPC highlighted the superior properties of latex gloves and introduced SMG (Standard Malaysian Gloves) while Dr. Amir Hashim from MRB presented a paper on the biodegradability of latex gloves.



Dr. Esah Yip of MREPC (left) in discussion with participants

In general, participants found the information provided by the speakers very useful and educational. Many were not aware of the differences between latex and non-latex gloves. Most had the impression that to avoid latex allergy, the only way was to use non-latex gloves. The differences in barrier properties of the different materials used in gloves were also conveyed. Several participants indicated that they would request a change to latex gloves from the vinyl ones they were using in their respective places of work.



Dr. Turjanmaa giving her presentation

Overall, the latex-safe message did get through to the audience in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane. Participants were also better informed of the issues involved.



Dr. Allmers with his presentation

The slides of all the papers presented during the Australian glove seminars may be viewed at the website, www.latexglove.info

In the previous issue of Stretch (Vol.2, issue 4), MREPC provided details of its 2009 trade promotion programme. Below is another list of events that are recommended for Malaysian rubber product manufacturers to consider participating on their own.

Exhibition Name	Product Category
Rubber Medical Devices	
01 Egymedica – The 9 th International Medical Exhibition Cairo, Egypt, 3–5 May 2009	Gloves, catheters, condoms, breathing bags, dental dams, exercise bands and other rubber medical products
02 International Medical Instruments and Equipment Exhibition (China Med) – 21 st edition Beijing, China, 19–21 March 2009	Gloves, catheters, condoms, breathing bags, dental dams, exercise bands and other rubber medical products
03 Medifest – 4 th edition New Delhi, India, December 2009	Gloves, catheters, condoms, breathing bags, dental dams, exercise bands and other rubber medical products
04 Meditec Clinika – 2 nd edition Hyderabad, India, 21–23 February 2009	Gloves, catheters, condoms, breathing bags, dental dams, exercise bands and other rubber medical products
05 Medical Technology India – 1 st edition New Delhi, India, 9–11 January 2009	Gloves, catheters, condoms, breathing bags, dental dams, exercise bands and other rubber medical products
06 Apteka (Anteka) – 16 th edition Moscow, Russia, 17–20 March 2009	Gloves, catheters, condoms, breathing bags, dental dams, exercise bands and other rubber medical products
07 Hospital St. Petersburg – 14 th International Healthcare Exhibition St. Petersburg, Russia, September 2009	Gloves, catheters, condoms, breathing bags, dental dams, exercise bands and other rubber medical products
08 VENUS – 13 th edition Berlin, Germany, 15–18 October 2009	Condoms, pleasure dams, finger cots
Non-medical Gloves	
09 A + A Dusseldorf, Germany, 3–6 November 2009	Industrial glove, high risk glove, radiation glove, non-medical gloves and other workplace safety devices
Latex Foam	
10 Interzum 2009 – 50 th edition Cologne, Germany, 13–16 May 2009	Mattresses, mattress supports, bolsters, pillows and cushions
11 INDEX – 19 th edition Dubai, UAE, December 2009	Mattresses, mattress supports, bolsters, pillows and cushions
12 Interiors UAE – 2 nd edition Abu Dhabi, UAE, 29 March–1 April 2009	Mattresses, mattress supports, bolsters, pillows and cushions
Sporting Goods	
13 ISPO Winter – 69 th edition Munich, Germany, 1–4 February 2009	Swim fins, swim caps and other swimming accessories, pool socks and other sporting goods
14 Sports Source Europe Munich, Germany, 1–4 February 2009	Swim fins, swim caps and other swimming accessories, pool socks and other sporting goods
15 Kielce Sport-Zima – 18 th edition Swietokrzyskie, Poland, 19–22 February 2009	Swim fins, swim caps and other swimming accessories, pool socks and other sporting goods

16	Kielce Sport-Lato – 19 th edition, Summer Swietokrzyskie, Poland, 21–23 August 2009	Swim fins, swim caps and other swimming accessories, pool socks and other sporting goods
17	Interboot – 48 th edition Friedrichshafen, Germany, 19–27 September 2009	Swim fins, swim caps and other swimming accessories, pool socks and other sporting goods
Latex Thread		
18	Munich Fabric Start – Since 1995 Munich, Germany, 3–5 February 2009	Latex threads and latex straps
19	Baltic Textile + Leather – 18 th edition Vilnius, Lithuania, September 2009	Latex threads and latex straps
Rubber Automotive Parts		
20	European Automotive Components Expo Stuttgart, Germany, 16–18 June 2009	Springs and seals, cables, rubber products, valves, oil pumps
21	AAPEX USA 2009 – Automotive Replacement Market Las Vegas, USA, 4–6 November 2009	Automotive parts and components
22	KOAA Show 2009 – Korea Autoparts & Auto-related Industries Show Seoul, Korea, November 2009	Automotive parts and equipment
23	Auto Guangzhou – International Automobile Exhibition Guangzhou, China, November 2009	Automotive parts and equipment
24	Auto + Automechanika St. Petersburg – International Auto and Parts Exhibition St. Petersburg, Russia, October 2009	Motorcars exhibition, auto workshops, service stations, spare parts and accessories
25	Automechanika China – Vehicles & Service Trade Fair Shanghai, China, 9–11 December 2009	Vehicles, car workshops, service station equipment, automobile spare parts and accessories
26	Equipe Auto – Leading International Exhibition attended by the entire Automobile Industry Paris, France, 13–18 October 2009	Automotive parts and products, from design through maintenance and eventual recycling
27	European Automotive Components Expo – Trade Exhibition for Automotive Component suppliers targeting Europe. Stuttgart, Germany, 16–18 June 2009	Automotive components
28	Nashville International Auto Show – International Auto Show Nashville, Tennessee, USA, 27–29 November 2009	Automotive vehicles, parts and services
29	Orange County Auto Show – California International Auto Show Anaheim, California, USA, 22–25 October 2009	Automotive - latest models, parts, services and systems
30	Tbilisi International Auto Show – Specialized Fair for Automobiles Tbilisi, Georgia, 15–19 December 2009	Automobiles, auto business, spare parts and cosmetics.
31	Vietnam Autoexpo – Vietnam International Automobile Supporting Industries Exhibition Conference Hanoi, Vietnam, 10–13 June 2009	Passenger and commercial vehicles, parts and systems

Trade Fair Tips

As a manufacturer or an exporter, you are probably sensing the pressure and feeling apprehensive about how you are going to maintain or develop your business with the prevailing adverse economic situation. You may need to pause a moment and apply some creative thinking to your business. Participation in an international trade fair will provide the opportunity to draw comparisons with your competitors, stimulate creativity and provide the momentum that will help you take action to advance ahead.

Design an overall strategy

Companies participate in an international trade fair to connect with current and prospective customers and to learn about new technologies or products that will influence the future of their business. In order to accomplish this successfully, set clear goals and objectives for your trade fair participation.

You can have more than one goal, of course, but the point is that you need to be clear about what your participation in an international trade fair is going to achieve.

What do you want to get out of it? Do you expect to sell a particular amount of inventory at the trade fair, or expect to become known to a certain number of wholesale suppliers? Are you focusing on promotion or hoping to launch a new product? Do you want to use your participation as an avenue to secure media exposure, competitive intelligence or industry trend data? These are some of the questions that have to be answered in order for you to have a starting point when considering specific fairs.

It is also a well accepted fact that trade fairs can be an incredibly effective promotion and sales tool for businesses to launch or demonstrate new or enhanced products. However, it is never enough to know how to produce a product and understand customer needs to grow your business. You also need to have complete and current knowledge about the business and ascertain future trends. Participation in an international trade fair - even during a downturn - not only will help you remain visible in the eyes of your potential buyers but it can be a very effective vehicle to obtain knowledge and receive ideas that can help you make educated decisions on how to help your company move forward.

Whether you are a trade fair novice, or an experienced participant, these tips aim to assist you ensure the money, time and staff invested in an international trade fair will pay off in bringing about stronger customer relationships and profitable sales leads.

Once you have defined the goals and objectives for an international trade fair participation, share these goals and objectives with the staff who will be manning the booth. Only with a keen understanding of your goals and objectives would they be able to be in a strong position to evaluate events and make thoughtful decisions about those, which might represent the best opportunities.

Do your research

You need to choose an international trade fair that will give your business the best ROI (return on investment) in terms of your goals and objectives. If your goal is on-site sales, having a booth at that big splashy trade fair where your booth is one of a dozen that sell similar products may not be the best choice.

It would be more productive to choose a trade fair that best targets the audience that you want to reach, and best suits your participation goals. Find out what the particular trade fair's objectives are, and investigate and evaluate the fair's audience by perusing the trade fair statistics and press releases from previous years.

Give yourself enough time..! Planning and preparation for a major trade fair can take 12 to 18 months.



Plan your budget

Once you have chosen a particular trade fair to attend, find out everything you can about your space, including where it is on the floor, what kind of other exhibits will be around it, whether it is a high traffic or low traffic area, and the physical conditions of the booth space, such as lighting.

Ask about conference services, power sources, booth design and construction, and any other associated fees you may incur with your booth exhibit. These will all play an important role in planning your budget.



Plan your booth in terms of your audience

It is essential to design your booth to suit your potential audience. Different audiences “shop” trade fairs differently, and have different needs.

Your booth is one of the most important aspects of your trade fair presentation. Just being there is not enough to make attending a trade fair worthwhile. You need to have a trade fair booth that is going to draw and engage potential customers and contacts, and your booth display and design will play a big part in determining if your trade fair experience is worthwhile. Here are some trade fair display tips:

Think neatness and visibility when putting your booth display together

- » Where possible, use a display board to hang some of your products at customer eye-level to draw them into your booth. Make sure your display is organized and tidy; customers will be turned off by messiness or by having to do too much searching to find what they want.

Have a stock of promotion items that you can use as giveaways at your booth

- » Small items that people can take away and use (while being reminded about your business) are best. Be sure you place these items in a location where people will have to walk into or through your booth to get them. For example, supplying visitors with coffee in a mug that bears your company products and information that they can take away with them.

Make sure you have plenty of promotional literature on hand

- » Ensure a sufficient supply of colour fliers and brochures as well as order forms, price sheets and business cards that you can hand out to booth visitors to make it easy for them to find all the information they need about your business later. It might also be useful to have a press kit prepared for the trade media, especially on the opening day.

Have your trade fair booth staffed at all times

- » Someone has to be there to greet browsers, engage them in conversation, and take their questions. If you are unable to be there every minute the trade fair is open, ensure that the staff that mans your booth is conversant in the products and have some authority in decision making process especially on prices.

Actively engage trade booth visitors

- » Give people who approach your booth a friendly greeting, and welcome their questions, even if they are not related to your products. Be sure your body language is friendly; do not stand there with your arms crossed over your chest, for instance. “Chat” with booth visitors, and find out what aspect of your business they are most interested in. Be prepared to offer specific solutions to their questions. The trick is to draw them in without intimidating or overwhelming them.



Advertise in advance

Put the word out that you are participating in a particular trade fair, by inviting your clients, customers, suppliers, and other contacts to attend the fair. Be sure you give them all the details, such as your booth number. If you have a website, be sure to advertise your upcoming trade fair attendance on your website. Send email reminders to loyal customers and strong prospects before the fair, urging them to stop by your booth.



Follow up promptly

After the show, follow up on the contacts and leads you made during the trade fair as soon as possible either through email, regular mail, or phone calls. The faster you send them out, the more your business will stand out from the rest. Trade fairs can be incredible sources of contacts and customers for your business – if you choose your trade fair venue carefully and plan in advance to have a successful trade fair experience. Join us in the next issue of Stretch for “How to Staff Your Booth at a Trade Fair”.

(Article credit: R. Krishnasamy and Nawal Ali of the Industry Relations and Public Affairs Division of MREPC)

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SBIM 1

MREPC-led trade fairs

- **1%** for booth cost
- **30%** of interpreter services
- **50%** of accommodation cost

- **50%** of booth cost
- **50%** of accommodation cost
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Twenty-four hours in Isfahan, Iran



The Malaysian delegation with their Iranian host (centre)



On Khaju bridge

Malaysians who were in Iran for the Tehran Confair in August 2008 braved an uncomfortable six-hour desert road trip from Tehran to get to Isfahan, the jewel of Iran. The visit to Isfahan, to hold discussions with the Isfahan Chamber of Commerce and to visit the premises of one of the larger companies manufacturing rubber civil engineering products in Iran, provided a brief glimpse of a rich culture and friendly, generous people.

On the evening of our arrival in Isfahan, we had dinner with our hosts in the open air, in the garden of the Abbasi Hotel, where we stayed the night. The hotel is a converted caravanserai, a rest stop in an oasis for weary travellers in days gone by. The garden restaurant covers most of a huge square surrounded by the two-storey hotel building that is reminiscent of Kuala Lumpur's rail station. Date palms, fig and other fruit trees dot the garden, with tables laid among flower beds, fountains and paved paths that cover the square. The hotel is old style, with ornate carvings and designs and stained glass windows, but the rooms are fitted with modern conveniences. Our hosts were gracious and we enjoyed the dinner with fresh fruits, rice and meat dishes, including the ever present kebabs and excellent yoghurt (mast).

After dinner, our hosts offered to show us the sights of the city. Although it was after nine at night, on a weekday, the streets were busy, with people shopping and enjoying the cooler night air, after the scorching heat of the day. Our first stop was Khaju Bridge, a meeting place for young and old. People gathered in alcoves along the whole length of the lower level of the bridge, to drink tea, smoke hookahs and listen to Persian music. It appeared that different alcoves had different types of music; from one we could hear a plaintive song, almost a lament, and we were told that it was a love song.

From another, surrounded by young people, came the vigorous sounds of a drum and rhythmic clapping and when we came up close, there were youngsters dancing and singing. We walked the length of the bridge along the lower alcoves crowded with people, and then back along the upper level, which was quiet and gave a good view of the river.

A number of bridges cross the river Zayande Rud which cuts through Isfahan, including Khaju Bridge and the Shahrestan Bridge. We drove along the river for a short distance and our hosts pointed out the landmarks of the city. Then we headed for Naghshe Jahan Square, in the heart of the city. We parked and walked towards the centre of this large square (500 metres in length and 150 metres across). All around us there were people taking after-dinner walks or just sitting on the grass in family groups, with children running and calling to each other. Young people saw that we were foreigners and came up to talk to us, to practise their English. When they learnt that we were from Malaysia, there was great interest to know about education here and how they could come here to study. We were invited to have tea with different family groups, but declined politely.

The Square, with the beautiful Imam Mosque at southern end, the Ali Ghapu Palace on the western side, the Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque in the east and the Qaysariyeh Gateway leading to the Bazaar in the north, was built mostly in the 17th century, and stands as a testament to the skills of Persian architects and artisans of the period.

It was almost midnight by the time we left the square and drove back through quiet streets to our hotel, to prepare for a day of meetings and factory visits. In my mind was a wish, unlikely to be fulfilled, to come back to Isfahan with time enough to savour all that it has to offer.

(Article credit: Adnan Abdullah – Adnan is the Director of the Marketing and Development Division of MREPC)