We create chemistry

News Release

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First running shoe midsole based on new biopolymer grade by BASF

- **Innovative midsole by ultrarunning brand Mount to Coast combines high performance with sustainability**
- **Biomass-balanced ecoflex® supports the footwear industry to increase use of renewable feedstock**
- **Mount to Coast and BASF enter into strategic cooperation to explore potential of biopolymers for sports shoes**

The footwear specialist for ultrarunning and long-distance shoes, Mount to Coast, Hong Kong, China, and BASF, Ludwigshafen, Germany have entered into a strategic partnership to explore high-performance, sustainable solutions for runners. CircleCELL™, an innovative midsole, is the first footwear technology the collaboration has produced. Based on BASF's new biopolymer ecoflex® BMB, the new midsole is 90% more durable while showing the same energy return as midsoles made of polyether block amide (PEBA), a material widely used for performance running shoes.

In ecoflex® BMB, fossil raw materials are replaced with renewable feedstock at the beginning of the production process. The renewable feedstock comes from organic waste and residual biomass and is attributed to the ecoflex® grade via a mass balance approach which is certified according to REDcert^2 and ISCC PLUS (1). Thus biomass-balanced ecoflex® supports Mount to Coast in increasing the use of renewable feedstocks in its unique process of foaming the CircleCELL™ midsole

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while preserving the characteristics performance shoes require, most importantly, durability. In-house tests by BASF have shown that ecoflex® BMB outperforms other midsole materials in density and rebound.

“We are committed to creating shoes through sustainable materials and innovative processes without compromising the specific performance needs of ultrarunners,” says Yeti Zhang, Mount to Coast’s head of product. “BASF has been a crucial partner in supporting our product development team as we search for ways to balance durability and sustainability. Their creativity in introducing mature technology from one industry into a new space, like the footwear industry, is inspiring and aligns with our goals to offer the running community new performance solutions. We are excited to continue working with a world-renowned company advancing biopolymers.”

Marcel Philipp Barth, head of global business management Biopolymers at BASF adds: “Since 1998, when ecoflex® was introduced on the plastics market, customers in many different industries have come to know and trust it for its consistently high quality, performance and the sustainability benefits it brings to their products. So we are excited to bring BASF know-how on circularity and renewable resources to new application fields, to inspire customers to think of new applications made of our biopolymers. We are looking forward to further exploring this path with Mount to Coast in the footwear industry: They can rely on our on-site application support, our proven capabilities to constantly improve footwear materials which are globally available.” Ecoflex® BMB thus perfectly fits into BASF’s pioneering footwear solutions and deep expertise of the entire value chain for cost-effectively creating shoes that are lighter, more comfortable and durable.

Biomass balance approach

In the biomass balance approach, the fossil feedstocks in the first steps of the manufacturing process are replaced by waste-based renewable resources. The renewable amount is then attributed to specific products at the end of the manufacturing process by means of a third-party certified method. This independent certification confirms that BASF has replaced the required quantities of fossil feedstock for the biomass balanced product that customers buy with renewable feedstock according to the REDcert^2 and ISCC PLUS requirements.

Further information:

www.ecoflex.basf.com/bmb

www.basf.com/massbalance

www.footwear.basf.com

About BASF's Performance Materials division

BASF's Performance Materials division is at the forefront of the much-needed sustainability transformation in plastics. Our products are co-created with customers around the globe to bring innovations to major industry sectors such as transportation, consumer goods, industrial applications, and construction. Our R&D focuses on all stages of the plastics journey: Make, Use and Recycle. The MAKE phase is about improving how plastics are made, from product design to the choice of raw materials and the manufacturing process itself. The USE phase enhances plastics' strengths such as light weight, robustness, and thermal resistance. At the end of the product lifecycle, the RECYCLE phase looks at how to close the loop to achieve a circular economy. In 2023, the Performance Materials division achieved global sales of €7.2 billion. Join #ourplasticsjourney at: https://www.performance-materials.basf.com

About BASF

At BASF, we create chemistry for a sustainable future. We combine economic success with environmental protection and social responsibility. Around 112,000 employees in the BASF Group contribute to the success of our customers in nearly all sectors and almost every country in the world. Our portfolio comprises six segments: Chemicals, Materials, Industrial Solutions, Surface Technologies, Nutrition & Care and Agricultural Solutions. BASF generated sales of €68.9 billion in 2023. BASF shares are traded on the stock exchange in Frankfurt (BAS) and as American Depositary Receipts (BASFY) in the United States. Further information at www.basf.com.

(1) REDcert^2 and ISCC PLUS are sustainability certification schemes for the use of sustainable biomass as raw material in the chemical industry. A certification according to these certification schemes confirms that the biomass used is sustainable and has been fed into the production system in the required amount. It also confirms that the sustainable biomass has been correctly attributed to the corresponding sales products. The certifications are awarded on the basis of on-site audits conducted by independent auditors.