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Vice President of BERSTORFF, Germany, comes to Japan

Mr. Harald Hepke, the vice president of KraussMaffei-Berstorff GmbH of Germany, one of the largest rubber and plastic machinery companies, came to Japan on February 4, and introduced the latest machine developments to major users. He was invited by Mitsuba Mfg. Co., Ltd (President: Kenichi Horiuchi), the company's exclusive agent in Japan. The following is an interview of Mr. Hepke and Mr. Horiuchi.



----- What is the purpose of your visit to Japan?

“The purpose of my visit was to introduce our latest machine developments and new technologies to manufacturers of tires and industrial rubber products in Japan. Additionally, it was also my objective to grasp the needs of Japanese customers and to deepen our cooperation with Mitsuba, who is our exclusive agent as well as technical partner. Japan has been a very important market for our company since about thirty years ago.”

----- What are the principle rubber machines of Berstorff?

“Extruders and automatic production lines that incorporate extruders. While roller head plants are highly representative, we also enjoy a high market share in calendar rolls, Rotcure, thermoplastic elastomer (TPE) extruders, and co-rotating twin screw extruders, among others.”

Advancements in Extrusion Technology Reaching New Heights

Cultivating New Markets in Cooperation with Mitsuba Mfg. Co., Ltd.

----- What are your latest machine developments and new technologies?

“For tire manufacturers, we are globally marketing multi-layer extruders (2 to 5 layers) that are suitable for silica compounds. Because silica rich compounds pose difficult challenges in terms of temperature control and expose screws to extensive wear, they require highly advanced performance from the extruder.

Moreover, in response to ever stricter performance and quality requirements, an increasing number of tires use two colors in the cushion layer. So, in order to simplify the tire forming process, we are developing technologies and devices that use a greater number of extruders. These are highly flexible devices that can accommodate a wide range of compounds.

We are also developing various types of machines for industrial rubber manufacturers. We are offering lines for manufacturing highly functional rubber products, as well as lines that require fewer processes that lead to cost reductions. Furthermore, we are a leading company in TPE extruders, and are introducing a wide range of new models to the market.”

----- How are business conditions for your rubber machinery lately?

“Last year, we had record sales of about twelve billion yen. Although sales in the European market has slowed, they were robust in China, the U.S., and Russia. Thanks to the cheaper euro, we were able to compete for some types of projects in which we are usually not that price competitive.

We would like to carry last year’s momentum into this year as well. And we think we can meet the expectations of the tire and rubber industries through our investments in new technologies and quality improvements.

In the Japanese market, we would like to build an even closer cooperation with Mitsuba to promote our products. By closely listening to the customers’ wishes, we can carry out the designing, fabrication, assembling, sales, and after service in a comprehensive manner to contribute to our customers.”

----- What about cost reductions in the field of rubber machinery?

“Due to fierce competition with other German machinery manufacturers, cost reduction is an important topic. We are fully committed to satisfying our customers not only in performance, but also in terms of price.

We are not competing that much with machine manufacturers from newly industrialized nations. As far as the German market is concerned, there are some market players from Italy and Austria, but they are not used in the more important processes.”

Thirty Years of Experience in Japan

[BERSTORFF, the company] The KraussMaffei Group is a major manufacturer of machinery with an annual turnover of 120 billion yen. Of this, Berstorff is renowned for its rubber machinery and co-rotating twin-screw extruders. With headquarters located in Hannover, the company has 500 employees, half of whom are engineers. They have factories in Munich, Switzerland, Slovakia, China (Shanghai), etc. In Japan, they began a full marketing effort thirty years ago, and have made many deliveries, mainly to the major large companies.

Global Sales of Rubber Machinery reaching 12 billion yen

2013年2月11日

独ベルストルフ社副社長が来日

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