

update

keeping you informed



Welcome to the November Leather Update

Happy holidays to all our customers.
We thank you for your business and look forward
to working with you in 2011.

A PROBLEM SHARED MOULD continued

Mould growth on leather and leathersgoods is a significant issue, however, it is preventable.

Following on from last month's information on mould and the current high incidence of mould in leather, footwear and leather products, below is an overview of how BLC can help with this issue:

Mould testing and problem solving

There are a number of tests that can be carried out to address mould issues with leather and leather products. Microscopy can be used to demonstrate:

- If mould spores or hyphae are present within the fibre structure and the likely origin of the mould
- If contamination is present in the raw material and/or finished leather
- To what extent the fibre structure has been affected by contamination
- When the mould contamination occurred for purpose of arbitration

Mould spore challenge testing can also be carried out to assess the potential for mould growth to occur if the correct conditions prevail.

Mould evaluation/identification – species

One of the most serious concerns with mould is that certain types can be toxic and pose a health risk to people who come into contact with the spores. It is therefore important to handle mouldy goods with care. Knowing which species of mould you are dealing with is important in understanding how to deal with the problem. BLC carries out mould inspection and testing for mould using both light and high magnification scanning electron microscopy (SEM) to analyse the mould, allowing the species to be identified.

Fungicide is often added to leather during the processing to help prevent mould growth. Analysis can be conducted to determine the level of fungicide within the material. This is important to ensure that the levels are effective to prevent growth, but also to ensure that the material is safe for operatives and the end user.

Mould audits

BLC can help you to prevent mould problems by conducting a mould audit at your manufacturing facility to investigate the conditions under which products are manufactured, stored and packed. During the mould inspection the moisture content and humidity of the manufacturing plant will be measured and assessed, including monitoring of packaging materials, general housekeeping and mould management. Once the mould detection process has been completed, recommendations for on-going mould management will be provided, highlighting key action points.

Mould prevention/remediation

Packing and shipping are areas where mould growth is common due to environmental conditions, which can cycle between hot and cold. BLC can advise best practice for packaging and shipping including the use of mould prevention products and packaging materials.

Mould in leather training course

This popular course, which is delivered in the UK, USA and Hong Kong, provides an insight into the causes and prevention of mould, and help and support with mould issues.

BLC can also advise on other materials such as textiles and synthetics.

Ensure that you manage this important issue in today's global marketplace where goods need to be handled correctly to ensure satisfaction with the end product. Contact BLC for all your mould support and solutions.

November 2010

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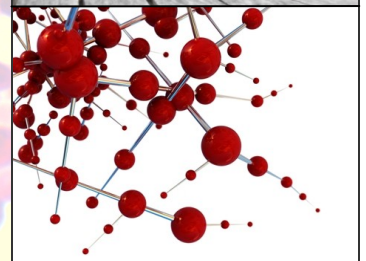
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BLC/FDRA Joint training event in NY– 1 December 2010

BLC Joins forces with FDRA to host a **one day understanding leather, product safety and chemical compliance training course**. Covering all the basics on leather types, leather production, testing and specifications, product safety and leather related problems, including proposition 65 and moisture management by Micro-Pak Ltd. **To reserve a place email [Tracey](mailto:Tracey@bhc.com) or call +441604 679967. A FEW PLACES STILL AVAILABLE!**

CHINA - GB Standards

Companies doing business in China need to be aware of the complexities of GB Standards. In addition to mandatory and voluntary standards, many Chinese regulatory agencies also issue technical regulations for products and services in the Chinese market. Any brand supplying leather product into China needs to demonstrate compliance to chemical testing for formaldehyde and azo dyes.

GB standards are the Chinese national standards issued by the Standardization Administration of China (SAC), the Chinese National Committee of the ISO and IEC. GB stands for Guobiao, Chinese for national standard. National standards, which need to be uniform across all of China, are the most widely implemented standards in China and are categorised as: GB - Mandatory national standard, GB/T - Voluntary national standard, GB/Z - National standardisation technical guide.

Mandatory standards are enforced by laws and administrative regulations and concern the protection of health, personal property and safety. Many Chinese national GB standards are adoptions from ISO, IEC or other international standards developers.

If you are selling leather products in China these standards are mandatory. BLC, working with a Chinese partner, can provide your GB standards testing. Contact Tracey Faulkner to ensure that you do not fall foul of GB regulations and can trade with confidence in China.

Enhanced Metal testing Capability at BLC

BLC is pleased to announce the procurement of a state of the art ICP-MS (inductively coupled plasma with mass spectrometry detection) for high throughput accurate toxic metals screening. This equipment will facilitate testing compliance to all global and brand driven heavy and toxic metal and element standards, including the proposed additional metals to the EN71-3 standard, CPSIA lead standards, proposition 65 restricted metals testing and nickel compliance testing. This further complements BLC's portfolio of high level analytical equipment to provide fast and accurate analysis of restricted and hazardous chemicals in leather and associated materials. For further information contact Tori.

Proposition 65

Court approval has now been given for the DEHP Consent Judgement. The opt-in period is now open.

See news item Proposition 65 dated 27 October 2010

In September there were also 60 day violation notices served to retailers involving the alleged presence of a phthalate DEHP (Di ethyl hexyl phthalate) in adult fashion accessories and a subsequent settlement which is pending court approval. The parties in the lawsuit have entered into a settlement agreement, which has been submitted to the California state court for approval. Under the terms of the settlement, the parties have agreed to comply with a DEHP content limit of 1000 parts per million (ppm-) in all of their covered products.

For further information contact Vikki Addy.

BLC TRAINING IN HONG KONG

Hong Kong was once again the venue for a series of training courses organised and delivered by BLC in partnership with APLF on 10 and 11 November. With record attendances of 46, 50 and 30 on the 3 courses, it is clear that there is a need not only for training to achieve an improved knowledge and understanding of leather itself, but also to cover some of the topical issues which affect the global trade in leather and leather products.



Look out for the dates or the next series of courses to be held in **HONG KONG** in conjunction with APLF Ltd to include:

One Day Understanding Leather
Half Day Mould in Leather
Half Day Product Safety

Contact Tracey for further details.



Technical Committee Update

Tori Moreno Cruse attended the joint CEN TC309/ISO TC216 Footwear committee meetings held in Milan this month as the BSI nominated expert.

The meetings were attended by delegates from the UK, Italy, Spain, France, Germany, Sweden, Portugal and China.

Highlights of these meetings were:

- Work will begin on preparing a new method for flexing resistance of footwear outsoles according to the Bata belt method.
- New standards for phthalates and organotins should be available by the beginning of 2011.
- A new working group is being set up under the ISO TC216 to look at antibacterial properties of footwear components.
- It was reported that phenol is now on the radar for the French authorities. Phenol is being identified in consignments of footwear as the potential cause of complaints due to allergic reactions. Phenol is most likely to originate from the textile and plastic components of the footwear. The committee will look at methods of analysis for this compound.
- The committee has also agreed to begin work on the standardisation of methods for XRF screening of heavy metals, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) and dimethyl formamide.
- The next joint meetings for CEN TC309/ISO TC216 Footwear committees will be held in October 2011 in Madrid.

BLC offers a wide range of footwear testing services.

Tori Moreno Cruse takes on Technical Support Manager Role at BLC



This key role will encompass the management of the technical customer support portfolio, to include client and in-house specifications, representation on technical committees and restricted substances and regulatory affairs management. Tori will also provide essential technical guidance to the sales team within a supportive account management role. For any technical queries, help with specifications or restricted chemical questions contact Tori.

PRECISION TEST EQUIPMENT

MSA

SETTING INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS FOR LEATHER

ST300
SOFTNESS TESTER

Determine leather softness without defacing hide/skin.
Industry standard IUP/36 (ISO 17235:2002)
Analogue and digital versions.

SG300
SUBSTANCE GAUGE

Ergonomic, accurate gauge with optimum reading position.
Analogue and digital versions.

Precision test equipment designed in conjunction with BLC.
For more information call +44 (0)116 260 8866,
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MSA

Lipidiesel – an update

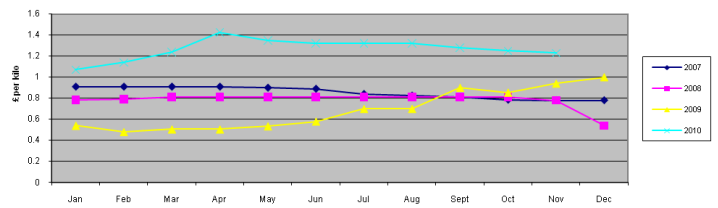
This Eurostars project is now approaching mid-term and BLC have been involved in some very exciting developments in the production of diesel from waste tannery fats. The initial small scale laboratory work and modelling yielded promising data and it has been possible to scale up the process for trials at a commercial plant. The scale up was extremely successful and in terms of figures 1kg of refined waste fat yielded 0.99kg of diesel – an amazing conversion rate! During this process a new production technique was developed and a patent has been applied for. For further details contact [Rob Hallam](#).



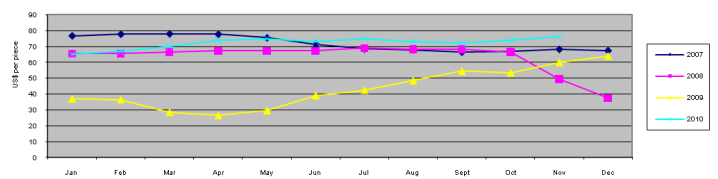
Hide Prices - November 2010

Generally the market increased significantly through the Autumn of 2009, and continued to move up more steadily in the first four months of 2010, but prices in most areas stabilised over the summer of 2010 after reaching levels as high as they have been since 2007. Prices in the main have eased back from the peaks, because they proved unsustainable, but levels remain comparable to what they were before the financial crisis. With hides being widely traded in an international marketplace, fluctuating currency levels have been an increasingly key factor in prices recently, and this can be seen most notably in US Dollar prices, which have been going up while the other markets have been stable or easing back.

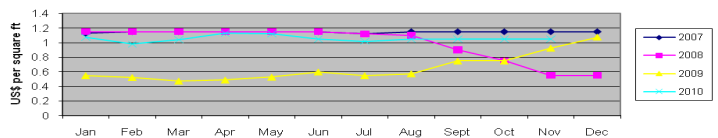
UK Salted Hides 31-35.5kg 2007-2010



US Heavy Native Steers (brined) 2007-2010



Brazilian Wet Blue TR3 2007-2010



BLC members please click [here](#) to access more detailed information via the [BLC website](#).

California Fur Labelling

The California legislature passed a bill prohibiting the sale of any coat, jacket, garment or other article of apparel made in whole or in part of fur, regardless of the price of the apparel or the amount of value of the fur without an appropriate label. The labelling requirement would have gone into effect in September 2010. However, Governor Schwarzenegger vetoed the bill on September 25, 2010. The Governor stated his concern that the labelling requirement would increase costs to distributors, manufacturers and retailers. In addition, he felt that the penalty structure that would have provided a penalty of \$1,000 for each violation was excessive.

Source: FDRA

New Head of Analytical Testing at BLC

Stephen Parkes has joined BLC's testing services team as head of analytical testing. Steve has over 7 years' experience of working in environmental laboratories and has an excellent working knowledge of complex laboratory equipment and processes including GCMS, GC-FID, and HPLC. With a proactive approach to problem solving and improving laboratory systems and procedures as well as experience of method development, Steve has a key role to play in the testing services arena.



BLC MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

BLC has a passion for leather and, with over 85 years of specialist industry experience and technical excellence, we pride ourselves on being experts in footwear and all things leather. We offer membership, testing, training, consultancy and problem solving support.

BLC tailors membership packages specific to the needs of tanners, manufacturers, retailers and suppliers throughout the world. Our specialist team and UKAS accredited laboratory is fully equipped to handle customer requirements.

By becoming a BLC member you will be eligible for the following benefits:

- Immediate access to qualified leather and footwear specialists
- 30% discount on testing, problem solving and consultancy support
- 30% discount on training courses
- Regular updates on legislative and standards related issues that effect the global leather supply chain
- Free use of the LeatherSure mark in the UK on verified products and leathers

BLC possesses a unique advantage over our competitors, offering exceptional customer service and guaranteed fastest turnaround times. We go that extra mile for our customers and work with any organisation regardless of size or location.

For more detailed information on membership please [click here](#), or to contact our sales team direct email info@blcleathertech.com or telephone +44 (0)1604 679999.

UNDER THE SPOTLIGHT: Restricted Substances HEAVY METALS

Introduction

The term 'heavy metals', is most commonly used to describe metallic elements of higher atomic mass that are toxic at low concentrations. These elements, such as cadmium and mercury, are toxic to the human body as they undergo bioaccumulation. This means that they are absorbed by the body at a faster rate than they can be removed, and, over a period of time, can cause chronic poisoning, even if the levels found in the environment are low. Other heavy metals, such as copper and zinc, are essential to bodily functions, but at higher levels they begin to alter metabolic processes and become toxic. Metals such as chromium only fit into this group when they change oxidation states, in this case when chromium III changes to the hexavalent oxidation state chromium VI, and becomes carcinogenic. The short term effects of heavy metal poisoning can range from skin irritation to vomiting, but high level exposure can cause anything from liver damage to renal failure. Legislation and due diligence ensure that these toxic metals are tested for in certain products, and that these products do not release heavy metals when disposed of, in order to limit their introduction into the environment and the food chain.

Background

Heavy metal analysis serves to identify and quantify the elements that are a potential hazard to the consumer after varying levels of contact. The heavy metals of particular interest (cadmium, Cd; mercury, Hg; lead, Pb; barium, Ba; chromium, Cr; antimony, Sb; selenium, Se and arsenic, As) can be extracted from a sample in a number of solutions, and the level of migrated elements can be detected after extraction using inductively coupled plasma-optical emissions spectrometry (ICP-OES). This detection method involves exciting the atoms of the metal using electrons produced by argon plasma. These excited elements emit characteristic wavelengths according to their electron structure, which are then detected. The intensity of the wavelength emitted is directly proportional to the concentration of the element present in the extraction solution, and can be determined using standards of known concentrations.

With the introduction of recent US regulations on lead and other toxic metals there has been renewed interest in the use of hand held XRF instrumentation for assessing the content of heavy metals in consumer products. Whilst XRF is a useful technique for checking for the presence of lead and other heavy/toxic/allergenic metals within a due diligence programme, there can be some problems with its use on certain surfaces generating false positive results. Such anomalies could be related to complications because the component cannot be presented as a flat surface. Also in non-homogenous products, the limited penetration of the x-rays could result in irregular results. Such potential inconsistencies are demonstrated in the following table which describes wet chemistry data and XRF data for metal footwear components. For this reason it is recommended that wet chemistry (to provide a total metal result) is used as part of any safety compliance programme.

| Sample | Description of metal component | Wet Chemistry Result (lead ppm) | XRF Result (lead ppm) |
|--------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 | D ring | 105 | 4100 |
| 2 | D ring | 72 | 5307 |
| 3 | Buckle | 197 | 9996 |
| | Buckle barrel | 362 | 10300 |
| | Buckle tongue | 306 | 14800 |
| 4 | Rivet | 159 | 2054 |
| | Buckle | 183 | 9330 |
| | Buckle barrel | 228 | 10300 |
| | Buckle tongue | 264 | 15900 |

BLC can provide support on toxic/heavy metals testing to CPSIA and Proposition 65 standards. In addition we can help with extractable metal tests and migratory standards such as EN71-3. BLC can also provide support with testing compliance programmes, diligence testing and testing of a comprehensive range of restricted chemicals. For further information contact [Tori](#). [BLC members can access further information via the BLC website - BLC Journal Jan/Feb 2008.](#)

Did you know..... ?

BLC is able to determine animal species type for leather and leather products.

Contact [Marc Gummer](#) for further details.

CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR CLOSURE AT BLC
The BLC laboratory and offices will be closed from 16.00hrs on Friday 24 December 2010 and will reopen on at 8.15hrs on Tuesday 4 January 2011

SAVE THE DATE

Sourcing, Safety and Sustainability

in the leather and materials supply chain

Thursday 31 March 2011 (half day-pm/during APLF)
Hong Kong



Consumer and environmental legislation is constantly changing and it is vital in the global marketplace for retailers, brands and manufacturers to ensure that materials and products meet local, national and international requirements. A

further complexity revolves around the need to ship products around the world and the associated problems including mould issues, chemical compliance and logistical challenges.

A selection of experts and brands offer a global perspective and an opportunity to share in their experiences in relation to the following issues:

- Mould risk, management and solutions
- Mould prevention during leather processing
- Transparency and traceability in the supply chain
- Chemical safety compliance in the US and Europe
- Product material eco-metrics (eco-index)
- Global shipping challenges
- Manufacturing shifts in China
- Leather Naturally, a global forum for leather promotion

For further information contact
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