

# Tackling the marine litter issue

*A world leader in innovative and environmentally responsible technologies for industry, Cortec® manufactures over 450 products distributed worldwide with five plants in the US, one in Europe, and sales channel partners in over 70 countries. Kristy Gillette, Product Development Manager at Cortec, highlights one of their latest product innovations: EcoOcean, a new degradable bioplastic that addresses the issue of marine litter.*

Cortec was founded by Boris Miksic, a Croatian immigrant who built the business from scratch into a leading bioplastics producer with over a 100 million USD in revenues. Gillette says their main business today is the development and manufacture of corrosion inhibiting material, mostly for industrial packaging applications. One of their most recent product innovations, EcoOcean, is slightly different however.

EcoOcean™ is a new bioplastic which is said to offer a unique combination of environmental and performance benefits. One of those environmental benefits being that it is marine biodegradable, as such addressing the marine litter issue. Marine litter currently poses a dire, vast and growing threat to the marine and coastal environment. Most marine litter consists of material that degrades slowly, if at all,

so a continuous input of large quantities of these items results in a gradual build-up in the marine and coastal environment. This negative trend has been confirmed by a number of studies in various regions, clearly indicating that the situation with regard to marine litter is continuously getting worse. Gillette says that while Cortec doesn't claim that EcoOcean is the answer to this problem, they certainly hope the launch of this product can be a first step in solving it. She explains that EcoOcean™ is the result of not only novel bioplastics resin technology, but also of production and processing breakthroughs attained after years of development work by Cortec's extrusion plants in Cambridge, MN and Beli Manastir, Croatia. The new EcoOcean™ is available as films and bags and after use, is ideally disposed of in commercial composting, or in oxygen deprived anaerobic digesters. However,



*Boris Miksic, CEO of Cortec Corporation, collecting plastic garbage from Galapagos beaches with National Geographic's scientist Dr. Lynn Fowler*

as is seen worldwide, plastics can still end up in the waterways—even in communities with the harshest and strictest penalties for litter. EcoOcean™ has an advantage in nearly all intentional and unintentional disposal methods. In entombed landfills, the main benefit is the film's renewable content. In composting, it allows rapid aerobic biodegradation naturally and safely. The films rapidly breakdown in as little as 15 days in anaerobic digestion (AD) systems or methane producing landfills (WtE). EcoOcean™ has been tested to numerous standards and specifications. EcoOcean™ will this year become available in standard sizes and forms in over 70 countries.



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