

Biodegradable TPE grip for trekking pole

In collaboration with Fizan, the Italian producer of ski and trekking poles, API presented at Plast 2012 a trekking pole with a biodegradable grip, made of Apinat. These compounds are biodegradable according to European Standard EN 13432 and are made using up to 40 % of renewable raw materials. API says, that the good rheological properties of the material allow the grips to be injection-moulded in thicknesses up to 5 mm without the need for any further action on the moulds, while reducing cylinder temperatures by 30 °C providing considerable energy savings. Cycle times can be reduced without compromising the quality of the finished product.

Because of its intrinsic polarity Apinat adheres well to the metal surface of the pole and also shows good resistance to weathering and sweat, providing a comparable level of performance as the thermoplastics traditionally used for this type of application.

Lorenzo Brunetti, Vice President of API, explained that as well as the technical challenges of the application, API has made a conscious decision to produce sporting goods for outdoor use that respect the environment, something that lovers of trekking are concerned about. "We wanted to provide these people with something extra, some first-hand experience to help them appreciate not only the technical and functional value of these new biodegradable polymers but also to generate an increased awareness of the environmental benefits that these products produce."

Fizan was founded in 1947 by Domenico Fincati. He is said to be the first to produce ski poles in aluminum at a time when steel and bamboo were the normal materials used for these parts. Today the company, based in Rosa near Vicenza, is one of the leading suppliers of ski and trekking poles worldwide.

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