

Wet feet – never again with IQTEX and BASF

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IQTEX and BASF have jointly developed a unique, intelligent system which adapts shoes to suit weather conditions. To make this possible, IQTEX have processed a special superabsorbing fleece from BASF into an innovative ventilation element known as Vayu Verde.



'In contrast to conventional functional clothing, shoes made with Vayu Verde technology are not only breathable but, depending on the weather, can be as air-permeable as a cotton T-shirt or as watertight as rain boots', says Michael Dehn, managing director of IQTEX.

Vayu Verde functions like a flower that closes up in the rain and re-opens when it is dry. When the material gets wet, for example if the wearer steps in a puddle, the superabsorbing fleece in the ventilation element immediately expands and self-seals the system. It even stays watertight under high pressure. Then, as soon as the material integrated into the sole of the shoe dries, it regains its breathability within minutes and the wearer feels a cool and pleasant sensation. Whether rain or sunshine - feet will always stay dry.

Vayu Verde is protected by international patents. IQTEX managing director Michael Dehn and his business partner Christian Wiedemann have already received several prizes for its development including the Brand New Award during the world's largest young entrepreneur competition at the ISPO Sport & Style trade fair in Munich in July 2007.

The fleece in Vayu Verde contains superabsorbent polymers and is marketed by BASF as Luqua fleece. This functional material can absorb large amounts of aqueous liquids and thanks to its reversible moisture binding system is capable of absorbing and releasing large amounts of moisture and humidity. It is already being used for increased climate comfort in office chairs and protective clothing, for example.

The first shoes with Vayu Verde technology are to be launched on the market this year. IQTEX have already developed the first prototypes together with partners such as safety shoe producer Baak and the Deichmann group (children's shoes 'Elefanten'). The Vayu Verde technology is not only suitable for shoes but could also be used to manufacture jackets, gloves, tents, safety helmets, textiles and sports accessories to achieve optimum ventilation. This innovative technology could also be deployed in electronic devices or medical products. Superabsorbents are crosslinked polyacrylates that can absorb and bind huge amounts of liquid: up to 500 times their weight. They are used in many industrial applications, such as for thickening or absorbing liquid waste or as waterblocking coatings for cables. Superabsorbents do not release absorbed liquids under pressure; plant roots, on the other hand, can absorb the water stored in superabsorbents slowly and evenly, which is why superabsorbents are increasingly being used for water storage purposes in the earth or in special plant soil. Superabsorbents are marketed worldwide by the BASF Acrylics & Dispersions division.



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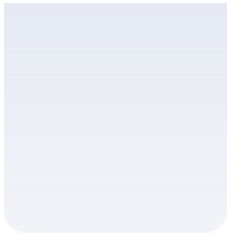
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