

Pirelli performance:

Greener & cleaner

TEXT: Claudia B Flisi PHOTO: Maurizio Camagna and Getty Images

Green performance is not just a marketing slogan at Pirelli Tyre, the world's fifth-largest tyre company - it's corporate policy. Now Nynas has been awarded for helping Pirelli stay green and clean.



Pirelli

Founded: 1872 in Milan, Italy, by Giovanni Battisti Pirelli

Management: Marco Tronchetti Provera, Chairman and CEO

Location: Headquarters in Milan, with 20 factories in 11 countries on four continents and sales in 160 countries

Publicly quoted: On the Milan Stock Exchange since 1922

Product statistics: World's fifth-largest tyre manufacturer by sales, and leader for high-end tyre products. Consumer sales represent 70 percent of total revenues; industrial sales represent the remaining 30 percent.

Turnover: EUR 4.85 billion in 2010

Number of employees: 29,570 (year end 2010)

Website: www.pirelli.com.

ITALIAN TYRE manufacturer Pirelli formalised its commitment to green more than a decade ago when it signed the Business Charter for Sustainable Development of the International Chamber of Commerce in 1990. Exactly a century earlier, in 1890, the company produced its first bicycle tyres with performance as a priority, and the same has been true of every bike, motorcycle and automotive tyre that the company has produced since then. One proof of performance is the company's current role as sole tyre supplier for Formula 1 racing as well as the World Superbike competition.

"A green footprint is part of our philosophy," notes Luigi Staccoli, Chief Procurement Officer for Pirelli, and the impact of that philosophy can be felt in all Pirelli processes, products and ser-

vices. For this reason, Pirelli was well prepared when the European Union banned the use of highly aromatic oils in tyre manufacture in 2010. Highly aromatic oils have traditionally been used as plasticisers and compound viscosity reducers in tyre production, constituting up to 25 percent of the final product. But they have been shown to be carcinogenic, so the EU took action.

ALTHOUGH THE BAN covers only European production, Pirelli decided to eliminate the use of highly aromatic oils in all its factories worldwide, including regions where they were not banned, such as South America, Russia and China, and in motorsport tyres, which had specifically been excluded from the EU edict.

"Our decision is good for the environment, also because tyre performance



Luigi Staccoli and
Pierluigi de Cancellis

Our decision is good for the environment, because tyre performance has not been negatively affected.

Pierluigi de Cancellis

has not been negatively affected,” points out Pierluigi de Cancellis, Head of Material Development for Pirelli research and development. Pirelli was able to maintain the ratio between grip and rolling resistance, he says.

HOWEVER, THE CHANGE in tyre composition meant that reliable suppliers of oils with less environmental impact were needed on a global scale. So Pirelli turned to Nynas, a long-time supplier to Pirelli in various parts of the world. In January 2012 Nynas became Pirelli’s major global supplier of plasticisers, representing more than half of its manufacturing needs.

The decision to partner with Nynas was based on a number of factors, Staccoli says. Firstly, Nynas sees tyre oils as a core business and has considerable experience in the field, a critical factor for

Pirelli. Oil isn’t easy to ship or store, as the viscosity changes depending on the temperature. In addition, government regulations must be respected, and these vary from country to country and region to region. Nynas has the expertise to deliver its oils safely at the right time and temperature.

SECONDLY, Nynas has a global presence, which is essential for Pirelli factories operating on a just-in-time basis. Where Nynas is not physically close to a Pirelli factory, it has storage silos within proximity that ensure delivery within 24 hours. Thirdly, over the years the oil supplier’s customer service has been validated. Last but not least, Nynas has developed a wide range of oils and is proactive in proposing appropriate types, which makes it easier for tyre engineers in R&D to develop better-per-

forming products with a reduced environmental impact.

The partnership has been an overwhelming success - so much so that Pirelli recently named Nynas “Best Supplier 2011”. Marco Tronchetti Provera, Chairman and CEO of Pirelli, announced the honour at an awards ceremony at the company’s headquarters in Milan, Italy. The awards committee evaluated the suppliers based on the following criteria: quality, innovation, speed, price, sustainability, logistic network and service level.

One of the major reasons for winning the award was, as mentioned earlier, Nynas’ ability to assist Pirelli in quickly moving away from using highly aromatic oils. This ultimately allowed the tyre manufacturer to abide by the EU ban on such oils while still continuing to produce high -performance tyres. ♦