

Ethylene–Vinyl Alcohol Resins

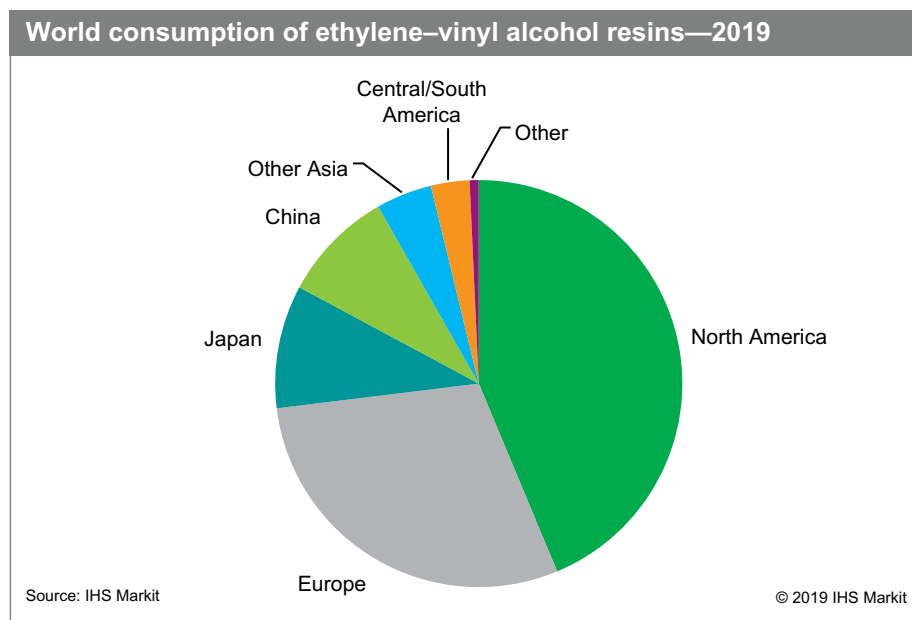
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Abstract

Ethylene–vinyl alcohol copolymer resins (EVOH) are specialty products that have superior gas barrier properties. They are often used as the internal layer in multilayer food packaging films and blow-molded rigid containers for a variety of purposes including gasoline tanks for automobiles. EVOH can be fabricated by melt processing. The barrier properties of EVOH films decrease in the presence of moisture, so coextrusion with protective polypropylene (PP) (especially biaxially oriented material), low-density polyethylene (LDPE), nylons, or other moisture barrier films provides films or articles that are useful even with liquids.

In all world areas, EVOH are used predominantly in laminated gas barrier packaging films and to a lesser extent in extruded articles including blow-molded or thermoformed plastic parts, sheets, and automotive gasoline tanks.

The following pie chart shows world consumption of ethylene–vinyl alcohol resins:



The EVOH industry is an oligopoly, that is, a market with a very limited number of producers, a result of the high market entry barriers of high capital costs and the time-consuming and expensive process of product specification for food usage.

EVOH are made from ethylene and vinyl acetate. The polymer content of the ethylene can be 25 to 50 mole percent in EVOH resins, and can be adjusted to reach desired properties in the final resin.

Contacts

Koon-Ling Ring • Koon-Ling.ring@ihsmarkit.com
Maria deGuzman • Maria.deguzman@ihsmarkit.com

During 2019–24, the worldwide average annual growth rate for EVOH consumption is expected to be about 3%; the highest growth rate will be in Other Asian countries (excluding Japan).

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IHS Markit Customer Care

CustomerCare@ihsmarkit.com

Americas: +1 800 IHS CARE (+1 800 447 2273)

Europe, Middle East, and Africa: +44 (0) 1344 328 300

Asia and the Pacific Rim: +604 291 3600

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