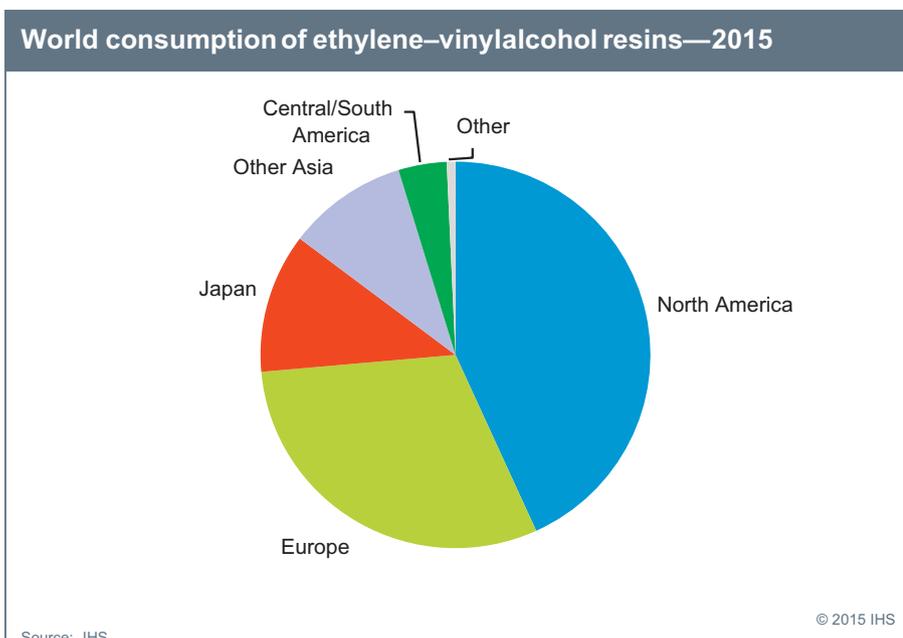


Abstract

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 (especially biaxially oriented material), low-density polyethylene, nylons, or other moisture barrier films provides films or articles that are useful even with liquids.

In all world areas, EVOH is 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:



EVOH was first commercialized in Japan around 1972, grew at double-digit rates globally through the 1990s, then slowed to an average annual rate of 6% through 2007 and 2% during 2007–10.

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.

The increasing costs of raw materials manufactured from natural gas and crude oil feedstocks, such as ethylene and vinyl acetate monomer (VAM), could negatively affect the profitability of EVOH consumers; hence, demand may continue to slow from higher historical rates.

During 2015–20, 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).

Contents

Summary	3
Introduction	5
Environmental	6
Supply and demand by region	7
North America	7
Producing companies	7
Salient statistics	7
Consumption	8
Price	10
Trade	10
Central and South America	11
Producing companies	11
Salient statistics	11
Consumption	11
Europe	12
Producing companies	12
Salient statistics	12
Consumption	13
Price	14
Trade	14
Japan	14
Producing companies	14
Salient statistics	15
Consumption	15
Price	17
Trade	17
Other Asia	17
Producing companies	17
Salient statistics	17
Other Regions	19
Producing companies	19
Salient statistics	19
Bibliography	20

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