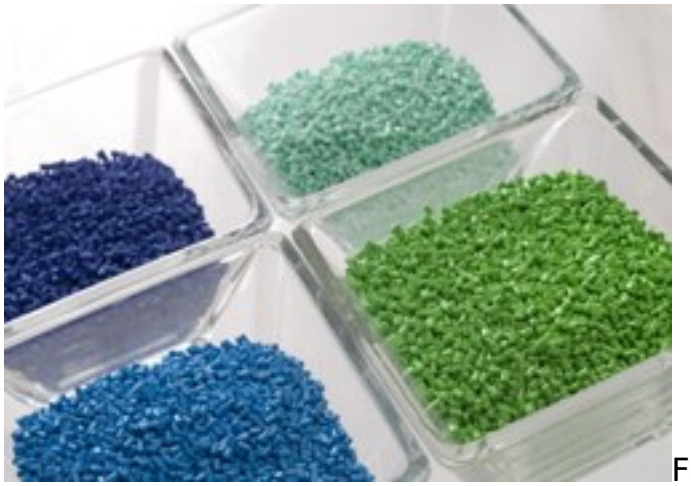
Foster Corporation Expands Manufacturing Capabilities for Custom Pre-Color Polymers



Foster Corporation, a leader in custom medical polymers, has added state-of-the-art extrusion compounding capacity for custom pre-colored polymers used in Class I medical applications. The new line is designed to optimize pigment dispersion of challenging colors and polymers, and maximize throughput necessary to reduce compounding costs.

Foster's new manufacturing line includes twin screw extrusion capable of volume output in excess of 1,000 lbs/hour (454 kg/hour). Traditional strand cutting and underwater pelletizing are available, the latter for low durometer materials such as urethanes and thermoplastic elastomers (TPE). The equipment was designed to serve high volume medical applications where color is critical and cost is important, such as custom colored polymers for bandage or packaging film.

Traditional methods of coloring polymers for high volume applications include blending masterbatch concentrates with natural polymers prior to manufacturing, or pre-coloring polymers using high-throughput, single screw extrusion equipment. While both provide economical and effective solutions for many applications, pigment dispersion can be challenging in some Class I devices. These include polymers with high pigment loadings, films or components with thin walls, and components manufactured using small molding or extrusion equipment with inherently limited dispersion capabilities.

"As a leader in polymer compounding for minimally invasive devices and catheters, Foster has developed an expertise in the dispersion of additives in polymers for thin wall parts," said Christine Howe, Director of Manufacturing for Foster Corporation. "We have designed this new larger line to provide the same quality and consistency for Class I devices with demanding color requirements. These applications generally consume higher volumes and are under increased pressure to reduce costs."

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