

# The road to genuine sustainability

The road to carbon neutrality and sustainability is a long one, writes Les Williams of Fenner Dunlop BV. In hindsight, the world should have begun the journey hundreds of years ago. In our defence, we did not know then what we know now. The harsh reality is that the world is now playing catch-up and the stakes could not be higher and the need for genuine action more urgent.

Achieving greater sustainability of our products has been something that we have been particularly focusing on for the past two or three years. Wherever possible, we are looking to replace our current raw materials with bio-based and recycled materials provided that are not detrimental to performance or product longevity in any way. We now have an increasing range of products that contain recycled material including a number of products currently under test with customers. These products have up to 70% of sustainability-based rubber compounds. Looking forward, all Fenner Group compound recipes will continue to be developed that use bio-based materials such as natural rubber and other ingredients that can be regrown as well as chemicals that can be formed and reused throughout their full lifecycle.



resistant belts can never be compromised.

Secondly, our belts need to be safe to handle. We stringently adhere to local and international regulations relating to the chemicals, preparations and substances that are used to create finished products. This includes the use of any 'substance of very high concern' (SVHC) that may pose a hazard to human health and the environment including those that have category 2 carcinogenic classifications and are what are scientifically termed as 'persistent'. The third safety aspect is strongly linked to safety of handling because it also concerns the use of potentially hazardous chemicals and substances. In particular, persistent organic pollutants that are bioaccumulative in human and wildlife and toxic to aquatic organisms, even at low concentrations. Their impact on the environment when the product is ultimately disposed of is enormously important.

Producing conveyor belts that can remain operational for many times longer than our competitors has a hugely positive impact on the environment. Belts that last longer means less manufacturing and less transportation, all of which means less carbon footprint.

Ultimately, however, every belt comes to the end of its working life but it is encouraging to see the development of new technologies that can take used belts and tires and convert them into reusable elements such as carbon black, oil and gas and much more besides. Here in Fenner Dunlop and in our parent company, the Michelin Group, we will continue to embrace and pioneer such technology for the benefit of all.



## CONVEYING ADVICE



Throughout our company, we have an excellent team of technicians who are also constantly looking out for new alternatives in raw materials; the development of new rubber compound recipes and formulations as well as new fabric constructions and designs. The common goal is to achieve as high a level of sustainability in the raw materials that we use as possible. However, it is also essential that safety is not sacrificed in any way.

### SAFETY FIRST

There are three aspects to safety when it comes to conveyor belts — applicable use, handling and disposal. In terms of use, the most common safety issue is where belts need to be fire retardant. We see ourselves as the number one in the field and the level of protection provided by our fire-