

Since being launched on the market in 2009, ten orders have been booked for PrimeDry steel Yankees, some of which have already been delivered to customers. The world's widest steel Yankee to date, with a working

width of 7.4 m, will be supplied to Indonesia. Another record will be set by supplying the first steel Yankee with a diameter of 18 feet (5.48 m) to a customer in China. ■

## Södra

# Why commitment is key

**Södra believes the potential for growth in tissue is worth investing in, but it needs partners in the chain if true innovation and efficiency improvements are to be fully realised.**

There has been much talk in recent years of the need to increase collaboration across the paper chain in order to improve innovation and improve efficiency, and tissue is no exception. Which is why Europe's largest market pulp producer, Södra Cell, has been steadily increasing its investment in the tissue sector, both at laboratory level and via collaborative projects with customers, suppliers and universities. Alexandra Wigell, responsible for all customer activities within Product Performance, says tissue is a segment with its own terms. "If we are to be an attractive supplier for our tissue customers, we need to have the best possible insight into their conditions, and this demands commitment."

A lot has happened in the tissue market during the last decade. Increased welfare and living standards in different parts of the world have led to an increase in tissue consumption, particularly in Asia, the Middle

East and Latin America. Growth also remains steady in Europe, and this is where Södra Cell will continue its focus. "Europe is Södra Cell's most important market and where we are closest to the customers," says business area manager, Dick Carlsson.

Carlsson believes that future growth will primarily occur in tissues based on virgin-fibre based grades. "This is partly due to the increased demand for quality from consumers and partly from the declining availability of high quality recycled fibres – which is due to the reduction of graphic paper," he says. Tissue's supply chain is relatively short compared to other end products, and this demands good logistics and low stock levels, which is why Södra Cell offers its customers various logistics concepts.

Increased knowledge of the customer's needs and requirements is essential to be able to grow in tissue, and to be able to develop further as a professional supplier, in Carlsson's view. "Based on the communications we have had with our customers about their fibre requirements we have so far been able to identify three major areas of interest. One is to achieve an easily beaten fibre that, for example, can add softness to bathroom tissue, and another is to obtain an easily dried fibre that saves energy in the tissue machine. The third area is more focused on kitchen rolls where fibres that can offer a high wet strength and good reactivity with wet strength chemicals are needed."

"By learning more about the conditions, needs and requirements of the fibre, we can best focus our innovation resources to further develop pulp products. This is how we can ensure our position as the number one choice for both our existing and future customers," he concludes. Few paper products are so consumer governed as tissue, and Wigell believes that this is one of the reasons why tissue is such an exciting segment. "Here it is the consumer's experience of the product that is crucial – the paper must feel soft, strong, secure, attractive. Our role is to translate both the trends and the experiences to the properties of pulp."

To this end, Södra Cell is part of several research clusters and networks operated by research departments and universities. A common feature of these collaborations



The next demanding customer for tissue products? Pictures: Södra Cell

is that actors with different expertise are invited to join the working groups to broaden each other's views and perspectives. "The finished tissue product is not only the result of processed pulp. We need to know all the factors that contribute to the final product. That's the guarantee that none of the tissue producer's suppliers must sit alone in their chambers and optimise their own process without understanding how it all fits together," said Sverker Albertsson, Södra's project manager for tissue. Karlstad University in Sweden runs the project TERP

(Tissue Education Research Programme), to which three doctoral candidates are connected. Södra is also a part of TRC (Tissue Research Cluster), which is run by Innventia. Both projects include tissue manufacturers, fibre suppliers, chemical suppliers, and paper machinery manufacturers. "The more we know about the whole value chain, from raw materials like fibre and chemicals to the final consumer's needs, the greater the opportunity for us to identify the area where we can do even more good," concludes Alexandra. ■