

Arkema celebrates the 70th birthday of its flagship Rilsan® polyamide 11 brand

“A proven legacy. An exciting future.” is the theme for Arkema’s celebration of the 70th anniversary of the invention of its flagship Rilsan® polyamide 11 series of high performance polymers.

The 70th birthday celebration will be marked by a series of customer events across the globe during which Arkema will present the spectacular history and the exciting future of one of the world’s most famous specialty polymer families.

“Today, Rilsan® PA11 is known globally for being one of the world’s highest performing specialty polymers,” said Kevin Hanrahan, chief marketing officer for Technical Polymers. “The brand has become synonymous with differentiated performance as well as being 100 percent biobased. But the brand came from humble and challenging origins,” noted Hanrahan.

History of Rilsan® PA 11 in 8 key dates

- June 1947: First patent, commercialized by a small French firm called Organico
- 1949: Polyamide 11 makes its market debut under the brand name Rilsan®; Serquigny plant is built
- 1950’s: The automaker Citroën is one of the first to grasp the potential of the new plastic, using it to make the fuel lines of the legendary DS
- 1970: Production begins in USA (Birdsboro, Pennsylvania)
- 1980’s and 1990’s: Rilsan® PA11 becomes the reference for many automotive, oil & gas applications
- 2000’s: 3D printing, advanced composites, lightweight sports equipment, and metal replacement are common development themes
- 2013: Production begins in China (Zhangjiagang)
- 2017: The Rilsan® brand celebrates 70 years of growth and optimistically looks to the next chapter of growth and innovation

“The first commercial batch was made in 1947 in a re-purposed spinning mill called ‘La Dame Blanche’ in Serquigny, France. These historic first steps were taken during very difficult times. The desperate conditions of post-World War II forced the original inventors to work under extremely adverse conditions. Each harrowing step of the Rilsan® pioneers is richly documented in our digital image archives which we are delighted to share with our customers. We also document the evolution of Rilsan® PA11 in its original applications through a series of nostalgic advertisements and promotions. From humble beginnings in textiles, fibers, brushes and pipes, the polymer quickly gained recognition in specialized applications.”

The celebration officially kicked off at Arkema’s Serquigny, France production facility and research center on June 10th. During the festivities, Erwoan Pezron, global president for Technical Polymers, reflected not only on the rich legacy of the Rilsan® polymer family, but on its exciting future.

“The rapidly evolving world in which we live presents more and more opportunities for continued growth,” said Pezron. “Rilsan® polymers are now produced in all three major regions – Europe, North America and Asia. And we are ready to meet many of tomorrow’s challenges today – such as lightweight metal replacement for the automotive industry, additive manufacturing (3D printing), and sports equipment that helps athletes break records. The first 70 years have prepared us well!”



The celebration will continue with several customer events across the globe, mainly in China and USA.

Rilsan® PA 11, a high performance biobased product

With its feedstock sourced 100% from the oil of the castor bean, Rilsan® PA11 is a biobased member of the Nylon family of polymers. Castor beans are grown in arid landscapes that are difficult to cultivate so the crop does not compete with the human or animal food chain.

Find out more

- [70th birthday of Rilsan® polyamide 11 brand](#)
- [Rilsan polyamide family](#)

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