

(19) World Intellectual Property Organization
International Bureau



(43) International Publication Date
16 March 2006 (16.03.2006)

PCT

(10) International Publication Number
WO 2006/028757 A2

(51) International Patent Classification:
C08K 3/08 (2006.01)

(21) International Application Number:
PCT/US2005/030551

(22) International Filing Date: 29 August 2005 (29.08.2005)

(25) Filing Language: English

(26) Publication Language: English

(30) Priority Data:
10/934,897 3 September 2004 (03.09.2004) US
10/997,040 24 November 2004 (24.11.2004) US

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(81) Designated States (*unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of national protection available*): AE, AG, AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BW, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CN, CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DZ, EC, EE, EG, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KM, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MA, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MZ, NA, NG, NI, NO, NZ, OM, PG, PH, PL, PT, RO, RU, SC, SD, SE, SG, SK, SL, SM, SY, TJ, TM, TN, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, UZ, VC, VN, YU, ZA, ZM, ZW.

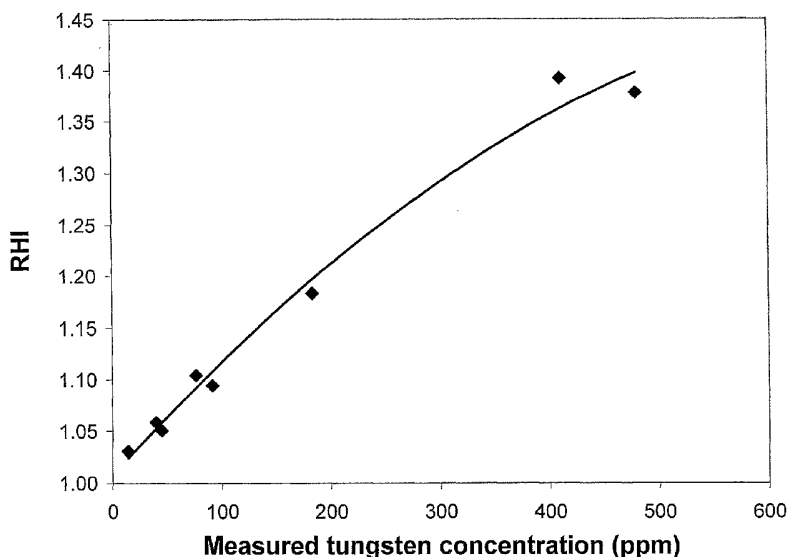
(84) Designated States (*unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of regional protection available*): ARIPO (BW, GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, MZ, NA, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM, ZW), Eurasian (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European (AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, HU, IE, IS, IT, LT, LU, LV, MC, NL, PL, PT, RO, SE, SI, SK, TR), OAPI (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

Published:

— *without international search report and to be republished upon receipt of that report*

For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the beginning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.

(54) Title: POLYESTER POLYMER AND COPOLYMER COMPOSITIONS CONTAINING METALLIC TUNGSTEN PARTICLES



(57) Abstract: Polyester compositions are disclosed that are suitable for molding, and that include polyester polymers or copolymers having incorporated therein metallic tungsten particles that improve the reheat properties of the compositions. Processes for making such compositions are also disclosed. The tungsten particles may be incorporated in the polyester by melt compounding, or may be added at any stage of the polymerization, such as during the melt-phase of the polymerization. A range of particle sizes may be used, as well as a range of particle size distributions. The polyester compositions are suitable for molding, and for use in packaging made from processes in which a reheat step is desirable.

Polyester Polymer and Copolymer Compositions Containing Metallic Tungsten Particles

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

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The invention relates to polyester compositions, suitable for molding, that are useful in packaging, such as in the manufacture of beverage containers by reheat blow molding, or other hot forming processes in which polyester is reheated. The compositions exhibit improved reheat, while maintaining acceptable visual appearance, such as clarity and color.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

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Many plastic packages, such as those made from poly(ethylene terephthalate) (PET) and used in beverage containers, are formed by reheat blow-molding, or other operations that require heat softening of the polymer.

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In reheat blow-molding, bottle preforms, which are test-tube shaped extrusion moldings, are heated above the glass transition temperature of the polymer, and then positioned in a bottle mold to receive pressurized air through their open end. This technology is well known in the art, as shown, for example in U.S. Pat. No. 3,733,309, incorporated herein by reference. In a typical blow-molding operation, radiation energy from quartz infrared heaters is generally used to reheat the preforms.

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In the preparation of packaging containers using operations that require heat softening of the polymer, the reheat time, or the time required for the preform to reach the proper temperature for stretch blow molding (also called the heat-up time), affects both the productivity and the

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energy required. As processing equipment has improved, it has become possible to produce more units per unit time. Thus it is desirable to provide polyester compositions which provide improved reheat properties, by reheating faster (increased reheat rate), or with less
5 reheat energy (increased reheat efficiency), or both, compared to conventional polyester compositions.

The aforementioned reheat properties vary with the absorption characteristics of the polymer itself. Heat lamps used for reheating
10 polymer preforms are typically infrared heaters, such as quartz infrared lamps, having a broad light emission spectrum, with wavelengths ranging from about 500 nm to greater than 1,500 nm. However, polyesters, especially PET, absorb poorly in the region from 500 nm to 1,500 nm. Thus in order to maximize energy absorption from the lamps
15 and increase the preform's reheat rate, materials that will increase infrared energy absorption are sometimes added to PET. Unfortunately, these materials tend to have a negative effect on the visual appearance of PET containers, for example increasing the haze level and/or causing the article to have a dark appearance. Further, since compounds with
20 absorbance in the range of 400-700 nm appear colored to the human eye, materials that absorb in this wavelength range will impart color to the polymer.

A variety of black and gray body absorbing compounds have been used
25 as reheat agents to improve the reheat characteristics of polyester preforms under reheat lamps. These reheat additives include carbon black, graphite, antimony metal, black iron oxide, red iron oxide, inert iron compounds, spinel pigments, and infrared absorbing dyes. The amount of absorbing compound that can be added to a polymer is
30 limited by its impact on the visual properties of the polymer, such as brightness, which may be expressed as an L* value, and color, which is

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measured and expressed as an a^* value and a b^* value, as further described below.

5 To retain an acceptable level of brightness and color in the preform and resulting blown articles, the quantity of reheat additive may be decreased, which in turn decreases reheat rates. Thus, the type and amount of reheat additive added to a polyester resin is adjusted to strike the desired balance between increasing the reheat rate and retaining acceptable brightness and color levels. It would be ideal to
10 simultaneously increase the reheat rate and decrease the rate at which color and brightness degrade as the concentration of the reheat additive in a thermoplastic composition is increased.

15 There remains a need in the art for polyester compositions, suitable for molding, that contain reheat additives that improve reheat without the problems associated with known reheat additives, such as unacceptable reductions in brightness, clarity, and color.

20 SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The invention relates to polyester compositions, suitable for molding, that comprise polyester polymers or copolymers, and especially thermoplastic polyester polymers or copolymers, having incorporated
25 therein metallic tungsten particles that improve the reheat properties of the compositions. The tungsten particles may be incorporated in the polyester by melt compounding, or may be added at any stage of the polymerization, such as during the melt-phase of the polymerization. A range of particle sizes may be used, as well as a range of particle size
30 distributions.

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The polyester compositions according to the invention are suitable for molding, and are particularly suited for use in packaging in which a reheat step is desirable or necessary, and are provided with metallic tungsten particles to improve reheat efficiency. These compositions
5 may be provided as a melt, in solid form, as preforms such as for blow molding, as sheets suitable for thermoforming, as concentrates, and as bottles, the compositions comprising a polyester polymer, with metallic tungsten particles dispersed in the polyester. Suitable polyesters include polyalkylene terephthalates and polyalkylene naphthalates.

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The invention relates also to processes for the manufacture of polyester compositions in which metallic tungsten particles may be added to any stage of a polyester polymerization process, such as during the melt phase for the manufacture of polyester polymers. The metallic tungsten
15 particles may also be added to the polyester polymer which is in the form of solid-stated pellets, or to an injection molding machine for the manufacture of preforms from the polyester polymers.

20 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Fig. 1 depicts tungsten particle size distribution of the sample used in Examples 1 through 3 as revealed by scanning electron microscopy;

25 **Fig. 2** depicts the relationship between the reheat index and the concentration of metallic tungsten particles used as a reheat additive;

Fig. 3 depicts the impact of the reheat index on the L^* value for a polyester containing metallic tungsten particles;

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Fig. 4 depicts the impact of the reheat index on the haze for a polyester containing metallic tungsten particles;

35 **Fig. 5** depicts the relationship between the reheat index and a^* value for a polyester containing metallic tungsten particles;

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Fig. 6 depicts the relationship between the reheat index and the b^* value of a polyester containing metallic tungsten particles;

5 **Fig. 7** depicts the effect of additive concentration on the reheat index for metallic tungsten particles added during polyester polymerization process;

10 **Fig. 8** depicts the relationship between L^* value and reheat index for polyester containing metallic tungsten particles added during polyester polymerization process;

15 **Fig. 9** depicts the relationship between haze and reheat index for polyesters containing metallic tungsten particles added during polyester polymerization process;

20 **Fig. 10** depicts the relationship between L^* value and reheat index for tungsten metallic particles added by two different methods: addition to the polymerization process (pzn) and by melt compounding into a polyester (cmpd).

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

25 The present invention may be understood more readily by reference to the following detailed description of the invention, including the appended figures, and to the examples provided. It is to be understood that this invention is not limited to the specific processes and conditions described, because specific processes and process conditions for processing plastic articles may vary. It is also to be understood that the
30 terminology used is for the purpose of describing particular embodiments only and is not intended to be limiting.

35 As used in the specification and the claims, the singular forms "a," "an," and "the" include plural referents unless the context clearly dictates otherwise. For example, reference to processing a thermoplastic "preform," "container" or "bottle" is intended to include the processing of a plurality of thermoplastic preforms, articles, containers, or bottles.

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By "comprising" or "containing" we mean that at least the named compound, element, particle, etc. must be present in the composition or article, but does not exclude the presence of other compounds, materials, particles, etc., even if the other such compounds, material, particles, etc. have the same function as what is named.

As used herein, a " d_{50} particle size" is the median diameter, where 50% of the volume is composed of particles larger than the stated d_{50} value, and 50% of the volume is composed of particles smaller than the stated d_{50} value. As used herein, the median particle size is the same as the d_{50} particle size.

According to the invention, metallic tungsten particles are used in which the tungsten metal is provided in the elemental state. These particles are to be distinguished from tungsten compounds or complexes. Tungsten compounds are further described in Kirk-Othmer *Encyclopedia of Chemical Technology*, Vol 24, 4th ed., (1995) pp. 588-600, incorporated herein by reference. Tungsten and tungsten alloys suitable for use according to the invention are further described in Kirk-Othmer *Encyclopedia of Chemical Technology*, Vol. 24, 4th ed., (1995) pp. 572-588, incorporated herein by reference.

The metallic tungsten particles useful according to the claimed invention may predominantly comprise, in terms of weight percent, elemental tungsten metal, with typical impurities, in which the tungsten metal may be predominantly elemental tungsten, or a tungsten metal alloy in which tungsten may be alloyed with one or more other metals, semi-metals, and/or non-metals, so long as the alloys substantially retain the metallic properties of tungsten.

Further, the phase or phases present in the metallic tungsten alloy particles according to the invention may include amorphous phases,

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solid solution phases, or intermetallic compound phase solid solutions, and may thus be distinguished from compositions comprised predominantly of tungsten compounds such as those in which the tungsten has a higher oxidation state, although the alloys may, of course, include compounds of tungsten that result from the alloying process, again so long as the alloys substantially retain their metallic properties.

Alloys useful according to the invention thus include those in which tungsten and one or more other metals or nonmetals are intimately mixed with tungsten, such as when molten, so that they are fused together and dissolved with each other to form, at least in part, a solid solution. We do not mean, of course, to exclude tungsten alloys that have measurable amounts of tungsten compounds present, up to about 50 wt.%, so long as such alloys retain substantial metallic properties, and in any event, the tungsten present substantially retains its metallic properties, the presence of tungsten compounds in the alloy notwithstanding.

Alloys are thus suitable for use according to the invention so long as such alloys comprise at least 20 wt.% tungsten metal, or at least 30 wt.% tungsten, or at least 50 wt.% tungsten, or at least 60 wt.% tungsten, or at least 90 wt.% tungsten, or at least 95 wt.% tungsten, as determined, for example, by elemental analysis, especially when the tungsten is the major alloying element. Not wishing to be bound by any theory, we believe that the effectiveness of tungsten as a reheat additive may be a function of the absorptive properties of the tungsten itself, such as the optical constants in the wavelength of interest, so that tungsten alloys are also suitable for use according to the invention, so long as such alloys have a significant amount of tungsten, such as the minimum amounts of tungsten as already described.

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5 The metallic nickel particles may thus be elemental tungsten, or may be a tungsten metal alloy in which tungsten is alloyed with one or more other materials, such as other metals, so long as such other materials do not substantially affect the ability of the particles to increase the reheat properties of the polymer compositions.

10 We note that tungsten metal particles can be produced by numerous techniques. Some of these methods are described in the Powder Metallurgy entry in Kirk-Othmer *Encyclopedia of Chemical Technology*, Vol 16, 4th ed., (1995) pp. 353 – 392, incorporated herein by reference. For example, the tungsten metal particles according to the invention may be formed by atomization, reduction, decomposition, electrolytic deposition, precipitation, electrode spinning, high energy impaction, mechanical comminution, condensation, decomposition of metal
15 hydrides, or rapid solidification technology. According to the references from the *Encyclopedia of Chemical Technology* (Kirk-Othmer, Vol 24, 4th ed., 1995 pp. 588 - 600), tungsten metal powder can be obtained from ammonium paratungstate by stepwise reduction with carbon or hydrogen.

20 Shapes of metallic tungsten powder which can be used in this invention include, but are not limited to, the following: acicular powder, angular powder, dendritic powder, equi-axed powder, flake powder, fragmented powder, granular powder, irregular powder, nodular powder, platelet
25 powder, porous powder, rounded powder, and spherical powder. The particles may be of a filamentary structure, where the individual particles may be loose aggregates of smaller particles attached to form a bead or chain-like structure. The overall size of the particles may be variable, due to a variation in chain length and degree of branching.

30 Metallic tungsten particles useful according to the invention for the improvement of reheat and color in polyester compositions include those having a range of particle sizes and particle size distributions, although

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we have found certain particle sizes and relatively narrow particle size distributions to be especially suitable in certain applications. For example, in some embodiments, especially those in which the polyester comprises PET, metallic tungsten particles having a median particle size of approximately 0.15 micrometers (μm), and a relatively narrow particle size distribution, are advantageous.

The size of the metallic tungsten particles may thus vary within a broad range depending on the method of production, and the numerical values for the particle sizes may vary according to the shape of the particles and the method of measurement. Particle sizes useful according to the invention may be from about 0.005 μm to about 10 μm , or from 0.05 μm to 1 μm , or from 0.05 μm to 0.9 μm . When the polyester composition comprises PET, we have found that particle sizes from 0.08 μm to 1.1 μm are especially suitable.

The metallic tungsten particles may thus be elemental tungsten, or may include other materials, such as other metals, so long as such other materials do not substantially affect the ability of the particles to increase the reheat efficiency of the polymer compositions.

The particles useful according to the invention may likewise be tungsten hollow spheres or tungsten-coated spheres, in which the core is comprised of tungsten, of mixtures of tungsten with other materials, or of other materials in the substantial absence of tungsten. The tungsten particles may also be coated by a thin layer of tungsten oxide so long as the oxide coating does not substantially affect the ability of the particles to increase the reheat properties of the polymer compositions. Again, not wishing to be bound by any theory, we think it likely that the effectiveness of tungsten as a reheat additive is a function of the absorptive properties of the tungsten itself, so that tungsten-coated particles are suitable for use according to the invention, so long as the

- 10 -

coating thickness is sufficient to provide adequate reheat properties. Thus, in various embodiments, the thickness of the coating may be from about 0.005 μm to about 10 μm , or from 0.01 μm to 5 μm , or from 0.10 μm to 0.5 μm . Such tungsten coatings may also comprise tungsten alloys, as already described.

Metal particles, which have a mean particle size suitable for the invention, may have irregular shapes and form chain-like structures, although roughly spherical particles may be preferred. The particle size and particle size distribution may be measured by methods such as those described in the Size Measurement of Particles entry of Kirk-Othmer *Encyclopedia of Chemical Technology*, 4th ed., vol 22, pp. 256 – 278, incorporated herein by reference. For example, particle size and particle size distributions may be determined using a Fisher Subsieve Sizer or a Microtrac Particle-Size Analyzer manufactured by Leeds and Northrop Company, or by microscopic techniques, such as scanning electron microscopy or transmission electron microscopy.

The amount of metallic tungsten particles present in the polyester compositions according to the invention may vary within a wide range, for example from about 0.5 ppm up to about 1,000 ppm, or from 1 ppm to 450 ppm, or from 1 ppm to 400 ppm, or from 1 ppm to 300 ppm, or from 5 ppm to 250 ppm, or from 5 ppm to 200 ppm. Thermoplastic concentrates according to the invention may, of course, have amounts greater than these, as further described elsewhere herein.

The metallic tungsten particles according to the claimed invention may be pure tungsten, or may be particles coated with tungsten, or may be tungsten alloyed with one or more other metals. Metals that can be alloyed with tungsten in amounts up to 50 wt.% or more include germanium, iron, chromium, nickel, molybdenum, titanium, vanadium, carbon, and tantalum. Metals that can be present in minor amounts, for

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example up to about 10 wt.% or more, include gold, silver, copper, aluminum, manganese, and silicon.

5 The metallic tungsten particles may thus be elemental tungsten, or may include other materials, such as other metals, so long as such other materials do not substantially affect the ability of the particles to increase the reheat properties of the polymer compositions.

10 The tungsten metal particles can be coated with a fine layer of tungsten oxide or other coating, so long as the oxide coating does not substantially affect the ability of the tungsten particles to increase the reheat efficiency of the polymer compositions

15 A range of particle size distributions may be useful according to the invention. The particle size distribution, as used herein, may be expressed by "span (**S**)," where **S** is calculated by the following equation:

$$S = \frac{d_{90} - d_{10}}{d_{50}}$$

20

where d_{90} represents a particle size in which 90% of the volume is composed of particles smaller than the stated d_{90} ; and d_{10} represents a particle size in which 10% of the volume is composed of particles smaller than the stated d_{10} ; and d_{50} represents a particle size in which
25 50% of the volume is composed of particles larger than the stated d_{50} value, and 50% of the volume is composed of particles smaller than the stated d_{50} value.

30 Thus, particle size distributions in which the span (**S**) is from 0 to 10, or from 0 to 5, or from 0.01 to 2, may be used according to the invention.

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In order to obtain a good dispersion of metallic tungsten particles in the polyester compositions, a concentrate, containing for example about 500 ppm metallic tungsten particles, may be prepared using a polyester such as a commercial grade of PET. The concentrate may then be let down
5 into a polyester at the desired concentration, ranging, for example, from about 1 ppm to about 500 ppm, or from about 1 to about 450 ppm.

The amount of metallic tungsten particles used in the polyester will depend upon the particular application, the desired reduction in reheat
10 time, and the toleration level in the reduction of a^* and b^* away from zero along with the movement of L^* brightness values away from 100. Thus, in various embodiments, the quantity of metallic tungsten particles may be at least 1 ppm, or at least 5 ppm, or at least 50 ppm. In many applications, the quantity of metallic tungsten particles may be at least
15 50 ppm, in some cases at least 60 ppm, and even at least 100 ppm. The maximum amount of metallic tungsten particles may be limited by one or more of the desired reheat rate, or maintenance in L^* , b^* and haze, which may vary among applications or customer requirements. In some embodiments, the amount may be less than 500 ppm, or may be
20 at or below 450 ppm, or at or below 400 ppm, or may not exceed 300 ppm. In those applications where color, haze, and brightness are not important features to the application, however, the amount of metallic tungsten particles used may be up to 1,000 ppm, or up to 5,000 ppm, or even up to 10,000 ppm. The amount can exceed 10,000 ppm when
25 formulating a concentrate with metallic tungsten particles as discussed later in this invention.

The method by which the metallic tungsten particles are incorporated into the polyester composition is not limited. The metallic tungsten
30 particles can be added to the polymer reactant system, during or after polymerization, to the polymer melt, or to the molding powder or pellets or molten polyester in the injection-molding machine from which the

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bottle preforms are made. They may be added at locations including, but not limited to, proximate the inlet to the esterification reactor, proximate the outlet of the esterification reactor, at a point between the inlet and the outlet of the esterification reactor, anywhere along the recirculation loop, proximate the inlet to the prepolymer reactor, proximate the outlet to the prepolymer reactor, at a point between the inlet and the outlet of the prepolymer reactor, proximate the inlet to the polycondensation reactor, or at a point between the inlet and the outlet of the polycondensation reactor.

5

10

The metallic tungsten particles may be added to a polyester polymer, such as PET, and fed to an injection molding machine by any method, including feeding the metallic tungsten particles to the molten polymer in the injection molding machine, or by combining the metallic tungsten particles with a feed of PET to the injection molding machine, either by melt blending or by dry blending pellets.

15

20

Alternatively, the metallic tungsten particles may be added to an esterification reactor, such as with and through the ethylene glycol feed optionally combined with phosphoric acid, to a prepolymer reactor, to a polycondensation reactor, or to solid pellets in a reactor for solid stating, or at any point in-between any of these stages. In each of these cases, the metallic tungsten particles may be combined with PET or its precursors neat, as a concentrate containing PET, or diluted with a carrier. The carrier may be reactive to PET or may be non-reactive. The metallic tungsten particles, whether neat or in a concentrate or in a carrier, and the bulk polyester, may be dried prior to mixing together. These may be dried in an atmosphere of dried air or other inert gas, such as nitrogen, and if desired, under sub-atmospheric pressure.

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30

The impact of a reheat additive on the color of the polymer can be judged using a tristimulus color scale, such as the CIE L*a*b* scale.

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The L* value ranges from 0 to 100 and measures dark to light. The a* value measures red to green with positive values being red and negative values green. The b* value measures yellow to blue with yellow having positive values and blue negative values.

5

Color measurement theory and practice are discussed in greater detail in *Principles of Color Technology*, pp.25-66 by Fred W. Billmeyer, Jr., John Wiley & Sons, New York (1981), incorporated herein by reference.

10

L* values for the polyester compositions as measured on twenty-ounce bottle preforms discussed herein should generally be greater than 60, more preferably at least 65, and more preferably yet at least 70.

15

Specifying a particular L* brightness does not imply that a preform having a particular sidewall cross-sectional thickness is actually used, but only that in the event the L* is measured, the polyester composition actually used is, for purposes of testing and evaluating the L* of the composition, injection molded to make a preform having a thickness of 0.154 inches.

20

The color of a desirable polyester composition, as measured in twenty-ounce bottle preforms having a nominal sidewall cross-sectional thickness of 0.154 inches, is generally indicated by an a* coordinate value preferably ranging from about minus 2.0 to about plus 1.0, or from about minus 1.5 to about plus 0.5. With respect to a b* coordinate value, it is generally desired to make a bottle preform having a b* value coordinate ranging from minus 3.0 to positive value of less than plus 5.0, or less than plus 4.0, or less than plus 3.8.

25

30

Polyesters according to the invention having an acceptable bottle sidewall haze generally have a haze value, as measured on samples having a cross-sectional thickness of about 0.0125 inches, of less than 6.0%, or less than 5.0%, or less than 4.0%, or 3.0% or less.

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The measurements of L^* , a^* and b^* color values are conducted according to the following method. The instrument used for measuring b^* color should have the capabilities of a HunterLab UltraScan XE, model U3350, using the CIE Lab Scale (L^* , a^* , b^*), D65 (ASTM) illuminant, 10° observer and an integrating sphere geometry. Clear plaques, films, preforms, bottles, and are tested in the transmission mode under ASTM D1746 "Standard Test Method for Transparency of Plastic Sheeting." The instrument for measuring color is set up under ASTM E1164 "Standard Practice for Obtaining Spectrophotometric Data for Object-Color Evaluation."

More particularly, the following test methods can be used, depending upon whether the sample is a preform, or a bottle. Color measurements should be performed using a HunterLab UltraScan XE (Hunter Associates Laboratory, Inc., Reston VA), which employs diffuse/8° (illumination/view angle) sphere optical geometry, or equivalent equipment with these same basic capabilities. The color scale employed is the CIE $L^*a^*b^*$ scale with D65 illuminant and 10° observer specified.

Preforms having a mean outer diameter of 0.846 inches and a wall thickness of 0.154 inches, and bottle sidewall sections having a wall thickness of 0.0115 inches to 0.012 inches are measured in regular transmission mode using ASTM D1746, "Standard Test Method for Transparency of Plastic Sheeting". Preforms are held in place in the instrument using a preform holder, available from HunterLab, and triplicate measurements are averaged, whereby the sample is rotated 90° about its center axis between each measurement.

The intrinsic viscosity (It.V.) values described throughout this description are set forth in dL/g unit as calculated from the inherent viscosity (Ih.V.) measured at 25°C in 60/40 wt/wt phenol/tetrachloroethane. The

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inherent viscosity is calculated from the measured solution viscosity. The following equations describe these solution viscosity measurements, and subsequent calculations to lh.V. and from lh.V. to lt.V:

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$$\eta_{inh} = [\ln (t_s/t_o)] / C$$

10

where η_{inh} = Inherent viscosity at 25°C at a polymer concentration of 0.50 g/ 100 mL of 60% phenol and 40% 1,1,2,2-tetrachloroethane
 \ln = Natural logarithm
 t_s = Sample flow time through a capillary tube
 t_o = Solvent-blank flow time through a capillary tube
 C = Concentration of polymer in grams per 100 mL of solvent (0.50%)

15

The intrinsic viscosity is the limiting value at infinite dilution of the specific viscosity of a polymer. It is defined by the following equation:

20

$$\eta_{int} = \lim_{C \rightarrow 0} (\eta_{sp}/C) = \lim_{C \rightarrow 0} \ln (\eta_r/C)$$

25

where η_{int} = Intrinsic viscosity
 η_r = Relative viscosity = t_s/t_o
 η_{sp} = Specific viscosity = $\eta_r - 1$

Instrument calibration involves replicate testing of a standard reference material and then applying appropriate mathematical equations to produce the "accepted" I.V. values.

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Calibration Factor = Accepted IV of Reference Material /
 Average of Replicate Determinations

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Corrected IhV = Calculated IhV x Calibration Factor

The intrinsic viscosity (IhV or η_{int}) may be estimated using the Billmeyer equation as follows:

5

$$\eta_{\text{int}} = 0.5 [e^{0.5 \times \text{Corrected IhV}} - 1] + (0.75 \times \text{Corrected IhV})$$

10

Thus, a beneficial feature provided by polyester compositions containing metallic tungsten particles is that the compositions and preforms made from these compositions have an improved reheat rate, as expressed by twenty-ounce bottle preform surface temperature (PST), relative to a control without a reheat additive. The higher the PST value, the higher the reheat rate.

In some embodiments, the polyester compositions containing metallic tungsten particles, and preforms made from these compositions, may have a b* color of less than 5.0, or less than 3.8, or less than 3.7, and in any case greater than minus 3.0, even at loadings ranging from 100 ppm to 200 ppm. Similarly, preforms from the polyester compositions according to the invention may have an L* brightness of at least 60, or at least 65, or at least 70. The compositions may also result in an increase in bottle sidewall percent haze that is much less than compositions containing other types of reheat additives at the same levels of reheat rate. The sidewall bottle haze value measured at a thickness of 0.0125 inches (+/- 0.004) may be 6.0% or less, or 5.0% or less, or even 4.0% or less.

30

According to the invention, in various embodiments, there are thus provided concentrate compositions comprising metallic tungsten particles in an amount of at least 0.05 wt.%, or at least 2 wt.%, and up to about 20 wt.%, or up to 35 wt.%, and a thermoplastic polymer normally

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solid at 25°C and 1 atm such as a polyester, polyolefin, or polycarbonate in an amount of at least 65 wt.%, or at least 80 wt.%, or up to 99 wt.% or more, each based on the weight of the concentrate composition. The concentrate may be in liquid, molten state, or solid form. The converter of polymer to preforms has the flexibility of adding metallic tungsten particles to bulk polyester at the injection molding stage continuously, or intermittently, in liquid molten form or as a solid blend, and further adjusting the amount of metallic tungsten particles contained in the preform by metering the amount of concentrate to fit the end use application and customer requirements.

The concentrate may be made by mixing metallic tungsten particles with a polymer such as a polycarbonate, a polyester, a polyolefin, or mixtures of these, in a single or twin-screw extruder, and optionally compounding with other reheat additives. A suitable polycarbonate is bisphenol A polycarbonate. Suitable polyolefins include, but not limited to, polyethylene and polypropylene, and copolymers thereof. Melt temperatures should be at least as high as the melting point of the polymer. For a polyester, such as PET, the melt temperatures are typically in the range of 250°-310°C. Preferably, the melt compounding temperature is maintained as low as possible. The extrudate may be withdrawn in any form, such as a strand form, and recovered according to the usual way such as cutting.

The concentrate may be prepared in a similar polyester as used in the final article. However, in some cases it may be advantageous to use another polymer in the concentrate, such as a polyolefin. In the case where a polyolefin/metallic tungsten particles concentrate is blended with the polyester, the polyolefin can be incorporated as a nucleator additive for the bulk polyester.

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The concentrate may be added to a bulk polyester or anywhere along the different stages for manufacturing PET, in a manner such that the concentrate is compatible with the bulk polyester or its precursors. For example, the point of addition or the lt.v. of the concentrate may be
5 chosen such that the lt.v. of the polyethylene terephthalate and the lt.v. of the concentrate are similar, e.g. +/- 0.2 lt.v. measured at 25°C in a 60/40 wt/wt phenol/tetrachloroethane solution. A concentrate can be made with an lt.v. ranging from 0.3 dL/g to 1.1 dL/g to match the typical lt.v. of a polyethylene terephthalate under manufacture in the
10 polycondensation stage. Alternatively, a concentrate can be made with an lt.v. similar to that of solid-stated pellets used at the injection molding stage (e.g. lt.v. from 0.6 dL/g to 1.1 dL/g).

Other components can be added to the polymer compositions of the
15 present invention to enhance the performance properties of the polyester composition. For example, crystallization aids, impact modifiers, surface lubricants, denesting agents, stabilizers, antioxidants, ultraviolet light absorbing agents, catalyst deactivators, colorants, nucleating agents, acetaldehyde reducing compounds, other reheat
20 enhancing aids, fillers, anti-abrasion additives, and the like can be included. The resin may also contain small amounts of branching agents such as trifunctional or tetrafunctional comonomers such as trimellitic anhydride, trimethylol propane, pyromellitic dianhydride, pentaerythritol, and other polyester forming polyacids or polyols
25 generally known in the art. All of these additives and many others and their use are well known in the art. Any of these compounds can be used in the present composition.

The polyester compositions of the present invention are suitable for
30 molding, and may be used to form preforms used for preparing packaging containers. The preform is typically heated above the glass transition temperature of the polymer composition by passing the

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preform through a bank of quartz infrared heating lamps, positioning the preform in a bottle mold, and then blowing pressurized air through the open end of the mold.

5 A variety of other articles can be made from the polyester compositions of the invention. Articles include sheet, film, bottles, trays, other packaging, rods, tubes, lids, and injection molded articles. Any type of bottle can be made from the polyester compositions of the invention. Thus, in one embodiment, there is provided a beverage bottle made
10 from PET suitable for holding water. In another embodiment, there is provided a heat-set beverage bottle suitable for holding beverages which are hot-filled into the bottle. In yet another embodiment, the bottle is suitable for holding carbonated soft drinks.

15 The metallic tungsten particle reheat additives used in the invention affect the reheat rate, brightness, and color of preforms and the haze value of the bottles made from these preforms. Any one or more of these performance characteristics can be adjusted by varying the amount of reheat additive used, or by changing the particle size, or the
20 particle size distribution.

The invention also provides processes for making polyester preforms that comprise feeding a liquid or solid bulk polyester and a liquid, molten or solid polyester concentrate composition to a machine for
25 manufacturing the preform, the concentrate being as described elsewhere. According to the invention, not only may the concentrate be added at the stage for making preforms, but in other embodiments, there are provided processes for the manufacture of polyester compositions that comprise adding a concentrate polyester composition to a melt
30 phase for the manufacture of virgin polyester polymers, the concentrate comprising metallic tungsten particles and at least 65 wt.% of a polyester

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polymer. Alternatively, the tungsten particles may be added to recycled PET.

5 The polyester compositions according to the invention have a good reheat rate with improved L* and b* ratings, and low sidewall bottle haze. The resulting polymers also have excellent solid stating stability.

10 In yet another embodiment of the invention, there is provided a polyester beverage bottle made from a preform, wherein the preform has a PST of 112°C or more and an L* value of 60 or more.

15 In each of the described embodiments, there are also provided additional embodiments encompassing the processes for the manufacture of each, and the preforms and articles, and in particular bottles, blow-molded from the preforms, as well as their compositions containing metallic tungsten particles.

20 The polyester compositions of this invention may be any thermoplastic polymers, optionally containing any number of ingredients in any amounts, provided that the polyester component of the polymer is present in an amount of at least 30 wt.%, or at least 50 wt.%, or at least 80 wt.%, or even 90 wt.% or more, based on the weight of the polymer, the backbone of the polymer typically including repeating terephthalate or naphthalate units.

25 Examples of suitable polyester polymers include one or more of: PET, polyethylene naphthalate (PEN), poly(1,4-cyclo-hexylenedimethylene) terephthalate (PCT), poly(ethylene-co-1,4-cyclohexanedimethylene terephthalate) (PETG), copoly(1,4-cyclohexylene dimethylene/ethylene terephthalate) (PCTG) and their blends or their copolymers. The form of
30 the polyester composition is not limited, and includes a melt in the manufacturing process or in the molten state after polymerization, such

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as may be found in an injection molding machine, and in the form of a liquid, pellets, preforms, and/or bottles. Polyester pellets may be isolated as a solid at 25°C and 1 atm in order for ease of transport and processing. The shape of the polyester pellet is not limited, and is
5 typified by regular or irregular shaped discrete particles and may be distinguished from a sheet, film, or fiber.

It should also be understood that as used herein, the term polyester is intended to include polyester derivatives, including, but not limited to,
10 polyether esters, polyester amides, and polyetherester amides. Therefore, for simplicity, throughout the specification and claims, the terms polyester, polyether ester, polyester amide, and polyetherester amide may be used interchangeably and are typically referred to as polyester, but it is understood that the particular polyester species is
15 dependant on the starting materials, i.e., polyester precursor reactants and/or components.

The location of the metallic tungsten particles within the polyester compositions is not limited. The metallic tungsten particles may be
20 disposed anywhere on or within the polyester polymer, pellet, preform, or bottle. Preferably, the polyester polymer in the form of a pellet forms a continuous phase. By being distributed "within" the continuous phase we mean that the metallic tungsten particles are found at least within a portion of a cross-sectional cut of the pellet. The metallic tungsten
25 particles may be distributed within the polyester polymer randomly, distributed within discrete regions, or distributed only within a portion of the polymer. In a preferred embodiment, the metallic tungsten particles are disposed randomly throughout the polyester polymer composition as by way of adding the metallic tungsten particles to a melt, or by mixing
30 the metallic tungsten particles with a solid polyester composition followed by melting and mixing.

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The metallic tungsten particles may be added in an amount so as to achieve a preform surface temperature of at least 112°C, or at least 115°C, or at least 120°C, while maintaining an L* brightness of 60 or more, when measured at a PST of 112°C.

5

Suitable amounts of metallic tungsten particles in the polyester compositions (other than polyester concentrate compositions as discussed elsewhere), preforms, and containers, may thus range from about 0.5 to about 500 ppm, based on the weight of the polymer in the polyester compositions, or as already described. The amount of the metallic tungsten particles used may depend on the type and quality of the metallic tungsten particles, the particle size, surface area, the morphology of the particle, and the level of reheat rate improvement desired.

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The particle size may be measured with a laser diffraction type particle size distribution meter, or scanning or transmission electron microscopy methods. Alternatively, the particle size can be correlated by a percentage of particles screened through a mesh. Metallic tungsten particles having a particle size distribution in which at least 80%, preferably at least 90%, more preferably at least 95% of the particles fall through an ASTM-E11 140 sieve are suitable for use as reheat agents. Metallic tungsten particles having a particle size distribution in which at least 80%, preferably at least 90%, more preferably at least 95% of the particles fall through a ASTM-E11 325 sieve are also suitable for use as reheat agents.

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The metallic tungsten particles used in the invention not only enhance the reheat rate of a preform, but have only a minimal impact on the brightness of the preforms and bottles by not reducing the L* below acceptable levels. An acceptable L* value of preforms or bottles is deemed 60 or more when measured at a PST of 112°C.

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In various other embodiments, there are provided polyester compositions, whether in the form of a melt, pellets, sheets, preforms, and/or bottles, comprising at least 0.5 ppm, or at least 50 ppm, or at
5 least 100 ppm metallic tungsten particles, having a d_{50} particle size of less than 100 μm , or less than 50 μm , or less than 1 μm or less, wherein the polyester compositions have an L^* value of 65 or more, or 68 or more, or even 70 or more, when measured at a PST of 112°C, or 115°C, or 120°C.

10

According to various embodiments of the invention, metallic tungsten particles may be added at any point during polymerization, which includes to the esterification zone, to the polycondensation zone comprised of the prepolymer zone and the finishing zone, to or prior to
15 the pelletizing zone, and at any point between or among these zones. The metallic tungsten particles may also be added to solid-stated pellets as they are exiting the solid-stating reactor. Furthermore, metallic tungsten particles may be added to the PET pellets in combination with other feeds to the injection molding machine, or may be fed separately
20 to the injection molding machine. For clarification, the metallic tungsten particles may be added in the melt phase or to an injection molding machine without solidifying and isolating the polyester composition into pellets. Thus, the metallic tungsten particles can also be added in a melt-to-mold process at any point in the process for making the
25 preforms. In each instance at a point of addition, the metallic tungsten particles can be added as a powder neat, or in a liquid, or a polymer concentrate, and can be added to virgin or recycled PET, or added as a polymer concentrate using virgin or recycled PET as the PET polymer carrier.

30

In other embodiments, the invention relates to processes for the manufacture of polyester compositions containing metallic tungsten

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particles, such as polyalkylene terephthalate or naphthalate polymers made by transesterifying a dialkyl terephthalate or dialkyl naphthalate or by directly esterifying terephthalic acid or naphthalene dicarboxylic acid.

5 Thus, there are provided processes for making polyalkylene terephthalate or naphthalate polymer compositions by transesterifying a dialkyl terephthalate or naphthalate or directly esterifying a terephthalic acid or naphthalene dicarboxylic acid with a diol, adding metallic tungsten particles to the melt phase for the production of a polyalkylene
10 terephthalate or naphthalate after the prepolymer zone, or to polyalkylene terephthalate or naphthalate solids, or to an injection molding machine for the manufacture of bottle preforms.

Each of these process embodiments, along with a description of the
15 polyester polymers, is now explained in further detail.

The polyester polymer suitable for molding may be PET, PEN, or copolymers, or mixtures, thereof. A preferred polyester polymer is polyethylene terephthalate. As used herein, a polyalkylene
20 terephthalate polymer or polyalkylene naphthalate polymer means a polymer having polyalkylene terephthalate units or polyalkylene naphthalate units in an amount of at least 60 mole% based on the total moles of units in the polymer, respectively. Thus, the polymer may contain ethylene terephthalate or naphthalate units in an amount of at
25 least 85 mole%, or at least 90 mole%, or at least 92 mole%, or at least 96 mole%, as measured by the mole% of ingredients added to the reaction mixture. Thus, a polyethylene terephthalate polymer may comprise a copolyester of ethylene terephthalate units and other units derived from an alkylene glycol or aryl glycol with an aliphatic or aryl
30 dicarboxylic acid.

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While reference is made in certain instances to polyethylene terephthalate, it is to be understood that the polymer may also be a polyalkylene naphthalate polymer or another polyester described herein.

5 Polyethylene terephthalate can be manufactured by reacting a diacid or diester component comprising at least 60 mole % terephthalic acid or C₁ - C₄ dialkylterephthalate, or at least 70 mole %, or at least 85 mole %, or at least 90 mole %, and for many applications at least 95 mole%, and a
10 diol component comprising at least 60 mole % ethylene glycol, or at least 70 mole %, or at least 85 mole %, or at least 90 mole %, and for many applications, at least 95 mole %. It is preferable that the diacid component is terephthalic acid and the diol component is ethylene glycol. The mole percentage for all the diacid component(s) totals 100 mole %, and the mole percentage for all the diol component(s) totals 100
15 mole %.

The polyester pellet compositions may include admixtures of polyalkylene terephthalates, PEN, or mixtures thereof, along with other thermoplastic polymers, such as polycarbonates (PC) and polyamides.
20 It is preferred in many instances that the polyester composition comprise a majority of a polyalkylene terephthalate polymers or PEN polymers, or in an amount of at least 80 wt.%, or at least 95 wt.%, based on the weight of polymers (excluding fillers, compounds, inorganic compounds or particles, fibers, impact modifiers, or other polymers which may form a
25 discontinuous phase). In addition to units derived from terephthalic acid, the acid component of the present polyester may be modified with, or replaced by, units derived from one or more additional dicarboxylic acids, such as aromatic dicarboxylic acids preferably having from 8 to 14 carbon atoms, aliphatic dicarboxylic acids preferably having 4 to 12
30 carbon atoms, or cycloaliphatic dicarboxylic acids preferably having 8 to 12 carbon atoms.

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Examples of dicarboxylic acid units useful for the acid component are units from phthalic acid, isophthalic acid, naphthalene-2,6-dicarboxylic acid, cyclohexanedicarboxylic acid, cyclohexanediacetic acid, diphenyl-4,4'-dicarboxylic acid, succinic acid, glutaric acid, adipic acid, azelaic
5 ' acid, sebacic acid, and the like, with isophthalic acid, naphthalene-2,6-dicarboxylic acid, and cyclohexanedicarboxylic acid being preferable.

It should be understood that use of the corresponding acid anhydrides, esters, and acid chlorides of these acids is included in the term
10 "dicarboxylic acid".

In addition to units derived from ethylene glycol, the diol component of the present polyester may be modified with, or replaced by, units from other diols including cycloaliphatic diols preferably having 6 to 20 carbon
15 atoms and aliphatic diols preferably having 2 to 20 carbon atoms. Examples of such diols include diethylene glycol (DEG); triethylene glycol; 1,4-cyclohexanedimethanol; propane-1,3-diol; butane-1,4-diol; pentane-1,5-diol; hexane-1,6-diol; 3-methylpentanediol- (2,4); 2-methylpentanediol-(1,4); 2,2,4-trimethylpentane-diol-(1,3); 2,5-
20 ethylhexanediol-(1,3); 2,2-diethyl propane-diol-(1, 3); hexanediol-(1,3); 1,4-di-(hydroxyethoxy)-benzene; 2,2-bis-(4-hydroxycyclohexyl)-propane; 2,4- dihydroxy-1,1,3,3-tetramethyl-cyclobutane; 2,2-bis-(3-hydroxyethoxyphenyl)-propane; and 2,2-bis-(4-hydroxypropoxyphenyl)-
propane.

25 The polyester compositions of the invention may be prepared by conventional polymerization procedures well-known in the art sufficient to effect esterification and polycondensation. Polyester melt phase manufacturing processes include direct condensation of a dicarboxylic
30 acid with a diol optionally in the presence of esterification catalysts in the esterification zone, followed by polycondensation in the prepolymer and finishing zones in the presence of a polycondensation catalyst; or else

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ester interchange usually in the presence of a transesterification catalyst in the esterification zone, followed by prepolymerization and finishing in the presence of a polycondensation catalyst, and each may optionally be subsequently solid-stated according to known methods. After melt
5 phase and/or solid-state polycondensation the polyester polymer compositions typically have an intrinsic viscosity (lt.V.) ranging from 0.55 dL/g to about 0.70 dL/g as precursor pellets, and an lt.V. ranging from about 0.70 dL/g to about 1.1 dL/g for solid stated pellets.

10 To further illustrate, a mixture of one or more dicarboxylic acids, preferably aromatic dicarboxylic acids, or ester forming derivatives thereof, and one or more diols, are continuously fed to an esterification reactor operated at a temperature of between about 200°C and 300°C, typically between 240°C and 290°C, and at a pressure of about 1 psig
15 up to about 70 psig. The residence time of the reactants typically ranges from between about one and five hours. Normally, the dicarboxylic acid is directly esterified with diol(s) at elevated pressure and at a temperature of about 240°C to about 270°C. The esterification reaction is continued until a degree of esterification of at least 60% is achieved,
20 but more typically until a degree of esterification of at least 85% is achieved to make the desired monomer. The esterification monomer reaction is typically uncatalyzed in the direct esterification process and catalyzed in transesterification processes. Polycondensation catalysts may optionally be added in the esterification zone along with
25 esterification/transesterification catalysts.

Typical esterification/transesterification catalysts which may be used include titanium alkoxides, dibutyl tin dilaurate, used separately or in combination, optionally with zinc, manganese, or magnesium acetates or
30 benzoates and/or other such catalyst materials as are well known to those skilled in the art. Phosphorus-containing compounds and cobalt compounds may also be present in the esterification zone. The resulting

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products formed in the esterification zone include bis(2-hydroxyethyl) terephthalate (BHET) monomer, low molecular weight oligomers, DEG, and water as the condensation by-product, along with other trace impurities formed by the reaction of the catalyst and other compounds such as colorants or the phosphorus-containing compounds. The relative amounts of BHET and oligomeric species will vary depending on whether the process is a direct esterification process, in which case the amount of oligomeric species are significant and even present as the major species, or a transesterification process, in which case the relative quantity of BHET predominates over the oligomeric species. The water is removed as the esterification reaction proceeds and excess ethylene glycol is removed to provide favorable equilibrium conditions. The esterification zone typically produces the monomer and oligomer mixture, if any, continuously in a series of one or more reactors. Alternatively, the monomer and oligomer mixture could be produced in one or more batch reactors.

It is understood, however, that in a process for making PEN, the reaction mixture will contain monomeric species such as bis(2-hydroxyethyl) naphthalate and its corresponding oligomers. Once the ester monomer is made to the desired degree of esterification, it is transported from the esterification reactors in the esterification zone to the polycondensation zone comprised of a prepolymer zone and a finishing zone.

Polycondensation reactions are initiated and continued in the melt phase in a prepolymerization zone and finished in the melt phase in a finishing zone, after which the melt is solidified into precursor solids in the form of chips, pellets, or any other shape. For convenience, solids are referred to as pellets, but it is understood that a pellet can have any shape, structure, or consistency. If desired, the polycondensation reaction may be continued by solid-stating the precursor pellets in a solid-stating zone.

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Although reference is made to a prepolymer zone and a finishing zone, it is to be understood that each zone may comprise a series of one or more distinct reaction vessels operating at different conditions, or the zones may be combined into one reaction vessel using one or more sub-stages operating at different conditions in a single reactor. That is, the prepolymer stage can involve the use of one or more reactors operated continuously, one or more batch reactors or even one or more reaction steps or sub-stages performed in a single reactor vessel. In some reactor designs, the prepolymerization zone represents the first half of polycondensation in terms of reaction time, while the finishing zone represents the second half of polycondensation. While other reactor designs may adjust the residence time between the prepolymerization zone to the finishing zone at about a 2:1 ratio, a common distinction in all designs between the prepolymerization zone and the finishing zone is that the latter zone operates at a higher temperature, lower pressure, and a higher surface renewal rate than the operating conditions in the prepolymerization zone. Generally, each of the prepolymerization and the finishing zones comprise one or a series of more than one reaction vessel, and the prepolymerization and finishing reactors are sequenced in a series as part of a continuous process for the manufacture of the polyester polymer.

In the prepolymerization zone, also known in the industry as the low polymerizer, the low molecular weight monomers and minor amounts of oligomers are polymerized via polycondensation to form polyethylene terephthalate polyester (or PEN polyester) in the presence of a catalyst. If the catalyst was not added in the monomer esterification stage, the catalyst is added at this stage to catalyze the reaction between the monomers and low molecular weight oligomers to form prepolymer and split off the diol as a by-product. If a polycondensation catalyst was added to the esterification zone, it is typically blended with the diol and

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fed into the esterification reactor as the diol feed. Other compounds such as phosphorus-containing compounds, cobalt compounds, and colorants can also be added in the prepolymerization zone. These compounds may, however, be added in the finishing zone instead of or
5 in addition to the prepolymerization zone.

In a typical DMT-based process, those skilled in the art recognize that other catalyst material and points of adding the catalyst material and other ingredients vary from a typical direct esterification process.

10

Typical polycondensation catalysts include the compounds of antimony, titanium, germanium, zinc and tin in an amount ranging from 0.1 to 1,000 ppm based on the weight of resulting polyester polymer. A common polymerization catalyst added to the prepolymerization zone is an
15 antimony-based polymerization catalyst. Suitable antimony-based catalysts include antimony (III) and antimony (V) compounds recognized in the art, and in particular, diol-soluble antimony (III) and antimony (V) compounds with antimony (III) being most commonly used. Other suitable compounds include those antimony compounds that react with,
20 but are not necessarily soluble in, the diols, with examples of such compounds including antimony (III) oxide. Specific examples of suitable antimony catalysts include antimony (III) oxide and antimony (III) acetate, antimony (III) glycolates, antimony (III) ethyleneglycoxide and mixtures thereof, with antimony (III) oxide being preferred. The
25 preferred amount of antimony catalyst added is that effective to provide a level of between about 75 and about 400 ppm of antimony by weight of the resulting polyester.

This prepolymer polycondensation stage generally employs a series of
30 two or more vessels and is operated at a temperature of between about 250°C and 305° C for between about one and four hours. During this stage, the It.V. of the monomers and oligomers is typically increased up

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to about no more than 0.35 dL/g. The diol byproduct is removed from the prepolymer melt using an applied vacuum ranging from 15 to 70 torr to drive the reaction to completion. In this regard, the polymer melt is typically agitated to promote the escape of the diol from the polymer melt and to assist the highly viscous polymer melt in moving through the polymerization vessels. As the polymer melt is fed into successive vessels, the molecular weight and thus the intrinsic viscosity of the polymer melt increases. The temperature of each vessel is generally increased and the pressure decreased to allow for a greater degree of polymerization in each successive vessel. However, to facilitate removal of glycols, water, alcohols, aldehydes, and other reaction products, the reactors are typically run under a vacuum or purged with an inert gas. Inert gas is any gas which does not cause unwanted reaction or product characteristics at reaction conditions. Suitable gases include, but are not limited to, carbon dioxide, argon, helium, and nitrogen.

Once an lt.V. of typically no greater than 0.35 dL/g is obtained, the prepolymer is fed from the prepolymer zone to a finishing zone where the second half of polycondensation is continued in one or more finishing vessels ramped up to higher temperatures than present in the prepolymerization zone, to a value within a range of from 280°C to 305°C until the lt.V. of the melt is increased from the lt.V of the melt in the prepolymerization zone (typically 0.30 dL/g but usually not more than 0.35 dL/g) to an lt.V in the range of from about 0.50 dL/g to about 0.70 dL/g. The final vessel, generally known in the industry as the "high polymerizer," "finisher," or "polycondenser," is operated at a pressure lower than used in the prepolymerization zone, typically within a range of between about 0.8 and 4.0 torr. Although the finishing zone typically involves the same basic chemistry as the prepolymer zone, the fact that the size of the molecules, and thus the viscosity, differs, means that the reaction conditions also differ. However, like the prepolymer reactor,

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each of the finishing vessel(s) is connected to a flash vessel and each is typically agitated to facilitate the removal of ethylene glycol.

5 The residence time in the polycondensation vessels and the feed rate of the ethylene glycol and terephthalic acid into the esterification zone in a continuous process is determined in part based on the target molecular weight of the polyethylene terephthalate polyester. Because the molecular weight can be readily determined based on the It.V. of the polymer melt, the It.V. of the polymer melt is generally used to determine
10 polymerization conditions, such as temperature, pressure, the feed rate of the reactants, and the residence time within the polycondensation vessels.

Once the desired It.V. is obtained in the finisher, the melt is fed to a
15 pelletization zone where it is filtered and extruded into the desired form. The polyester polymers of the present invention are filtered to remove particulates over a designated size, followed by extrusion in the melt phase to form polymer sheets, filaments, or pellets. Although this zone is termed a "pelletization zone," it is understood that this zone is not
20 limited to solidifying the melt into the shape of pellets, but includes solidification into any desired shape. Preferably, the polymer melt is extruded immediately after polycondensation. After extrusion, the polymers are quenched, preferably by spraying with water or immersing in a water trough, to promote solidification. The solidified condensation
25 polymers are cut into any desired shape, including pellets.

As known to those of ordinary skill in the art, the pellets formed from the condensation polymers, in some circumstances, may be subjected to a solid-stating zone wherein the solids are first crystallized followed by
30 solid-state polymerization (SSP) to further increase the It.V. of the polyester composition solids from the It.V. exiting the melt phase to the desired It.V. useful for the intended end use. Typically, the It.V. of solid

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stated polyester solids ranges from 0.70 dL/g to 1.15 dL/g. In a typical SSP process, the crystallized pellets are subjected to a countercurrent flow of nitrogen gas heated to 180°C to 220°C, over a period of time as needed to increase the lt.V. to the desired target.

5

Thereafter, polyester polymer solids, whether solid stated or not, are re-melted and re-extruded to form items such as containers (e.g., beverage bottles), filaments, films, or other applications. At this stage, the pellets are typically fed into an injection molding machine suitable for making preforms which are stretch blow molded into bottles.

10

As noted, metallic tungsten particles may be added at any point in the melt phase or thereafter, such as to the esterification zone, to the prepolymerization zone, to the finishing zone, or to the pelletizing zone, or at any point between each of these zones, such as to metering devices, pipes, and mixers. The metallic tungsten particles can also be added to the pellets in a solid stating zone within the solid stating zone or as the pellets exit the solid-stating reactor. Furthermore, the metallic tungsten particles may be added to the pellets in combination with other feeds to the injection molding machine or fed separately to the injection molding machine.

15

20

If the metallic tungsten particles are added to the melt phase, it is desirable to use particles having a small enough d_{50} particle size to pass through the filters in the melt phase, and in particular the pelletization zone. In this way, the particles will not clog up the filters as seen by an increase in gear pump pressure needed to drive the melt through the filters. However, if desired, the metallic tungsten particles can be added after the pelletization zone filter and before or to the extruder.

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Thus, according to the invention, metallic tungsten particles of a wide range of d_{50} particle sizes can be added either together with a

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phosphorus-containing compound to the esterification zone, the prepolymer zone, or at any point in between, or after the addition of a phosphorus compound to the esterification zone prior to completing the esterification reaction to the desired degree, or after the addition of the phosphorus compound to any zone and to a reaction mixture containing an active phosphorus compound. The point at which the metallic tungsten particles are added, or the presence or absence of such other active compounds in the melt, is not limited since the metallic tungsten particles function to enhance the rate of reheat. The function of the metallic tungsten particles as a reheat enhancing additive allows a wide operating window and flexibility to add the metallic tungsten particles at any convenient point, even in the presence of active phosphorus-containing compounds in the melt phase.

Thus, the metallic tungsten particles may be added together with phosphorus compounds either as a mixture in a feedstock stream to the esterification or prepolymer zone, or as separate feeds but added to the reaction mixture within the zone simultaneously. Alternatively, the metallic tungsten particles may be added to a reaction mixture within the esterification zone after a phosphorus compound has been added to the same zone and before completion of the esterification reaction.

Typical phosphorus-containing compounds added in the melt phase include acidic phosphorus-containing compounds recognized in the art. Suitable examples of such additives include phosphoric acid, phosphorous acid, polyphosphoric acid, carboxyphosphonic acids, and each of their derivatives including acidic phosphate esters such as phosphate mono- and di-esters and non-acidic phosphate esters such as trimethyl phosphate, triethyl phosphate, tributyl phosphate, tributoxyethyl phosphate, tris(2-ethylhexyl) phosphate, trioctyl phosphate, triphenyl phosphate, tritolyl phosphate, ethylene glycol phosphate, triethyl phosphonoacetate, dimethyl methyl phosphonate,

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tetraisopropyl methylenediphosphonate, mixtures of mono-, di-, and tri-esters of phosphoric acid with ethylene glycol, diethylene glycol, and 2-ethylhexanol, or mixtures of each, among others.

5 In addition to adding metallic tungsten particles to virgin polymer, whether to make a concentrate or added neat to the melt phase after the prepolymerization reactors or to an injection molding zone, metallic tungsten particles may also be added to post-consumer recycle (PCR) polymer. PCR containing metallic tungsten particles is added to virgin
10 bulk polymers by solid/solid blending or by feeding both solids to an extruder. Alternatively, PCR polymers containing metallic tungsten particles are advantageously added to the melt phase for making virgin polymer between the prepolymerization zone and the finishing zone. The It.V. of the virgin melt phase after the prepolymerization zone is
15 sufficiently high at that point to enable the PCR to be melt blended with the virgin melt. Alternatively, PCR may be added to the finisher. In either case, the PCR added to the virgin melt phase may contain the metallic tungsten particles. The metallic tungsten particles may be combined with PCR by any of the methods noted above, or separately
20 fed to and melt blended in a heated vessel, followed by addition of the PCR melt containing the metallic tungsten particles to the virgin melt phase at these addition points.

Other components can be added to the compositions of the present
25 invention to enhance the performance properties of the polyester polymers. For example, crystallization aids, impact modifiers, surface lubricants, denesting agents, compounds, antioxidants, ultraviolet light absorbing agents, catalyst deactivators, colorants, nucleating agents, acetaldehyde reducing compounds, other reheat rate enhancing aids,
30 sticky bottle additives such as talc, and fillers and the like can be included. The polymer may also contain small amounts of branching agents such as trifunctional or tetrafunctional comonomers such as

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trimellitic anhydride, trimethylol propane, pyromellitic dianhydride, pentaerythritol, and other polyester forming polyacids or diols generally known in the art. All of these additives and many others and their use are well known in the art and do not require extensive discussion. Any of

5 these compounds can be used in the present composition. It is preferable that the present composition be essentially comprised of a blend of thermoplastic polymer and metallic tungsten particles, with only a modifying amount of other ingredients being present.

10 Examples of other reheat rate enhancing additives that may be used in combination with metallic tungsten particles include carbon black, antimony metal, tin, copper, silver, gold, palladium, platinum, black iron oxide, and the like, as well as near infrared absorbing dyes, including, but not limited to, those disclosed in U.S. Pat. No. 6,197,851,

15 incorporated herein by reference.

The iron oxide, which is preferably black, may be used in very finely divided form, e.g., from about 0.01 to about 200 μm , or from about 0.1 to about 10.0 μm , or from about 0.2 to about 5.0 μm . Suitable forms of

20 black iron oxide include, but are not limited to, magnetite and maghemite. Red iron oxide is less preferred as it imparts an undesirable red hue to the resultant polymer. Such oxides are described, for example, on pages 323-349 of *Pigment Handbook*, Vol. 1 (1973), John Wiley & Sons, incorporated herein by reference.

25 The compositions of the present invention optionally may additionally contain one or more UV absorbing compounds. One example includes UV-absorbing compounds which are covalently bound to the polyester molecule as either a comonomer, a side group, or an end group.

30 Suitable UV-absorbing compounds are thermally stable at polyester processing temperatures, absorb in the range of from about 320 nm to about 380 nm, and are nonextractable from the polymer. The UV-

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absorbing compounds preferably provide less than about 20%, more preferably less than about 10%, transmittance of UV light having a wavelength of 370 nm through a bottle wall 305 μ m thick. Suitable chemically reactive UV absorbing compounds may include, for example,
5 substituted methine compounds.

Suitable compounds, their methods of manufacture and incorporation into polyesters are further disclosed in U.S. Pat. No. 4,617,374, the disclosure of which is incorporated herein by reference. The UV-
10 absorbing compound(s) may be present in amounts between about 1 ppm to about 5,000 ppm by weight, preferably from about 2 ppm to about 1,500 ppm, and more preferably between about 10 and about 500 ppm by weight. Dimers of the UV absorbing compounds may also be used. Mixtures of two or more UV absorbing compounds may be used.
15 Moreover, because the UV absorbing compounds are reacted with or copolymerized into the backbone of the polymer, the resulting polymers display improved processability including reduced loss of the UV absorbing compound due to plateout and/or volatilization and the like.

20 The polyester compositions of the present invention, suitable for molding, may be used to form a variety of shaped articles, including films, sheets, tubes, preforms, molded articles, containers, and the like. Suitable processes for forming the articles are known and include extrusion, extrusion blow molding, melt casting, injection molding,
25 stretch blow molding, thermoforming, and the like.

The polyesters of this invention may also, optionally, contain color stabilizers, such as certain cobalt compounds. These cobalt compounds can be added as cobalt acetates or cobalt alcoholates (cobalt salts or
30 higher alcohols). They can be added as solutions in ethylene glycol. Polyester resins containing high amounts of the cobalt additives can be prepared as a masterbatch for extruder addition. The addition of the

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cobalt additives as color toners is a process used to minimize or eliminate the yellow color, b^* , of the resin. Other cobalt compounds such as cobalt aluminate, cobalt benzoate, cobalt chloride and the like may also be used as color stabilizers. It is also possible to add certain

5 diethylene glycol (DEG) inhibitors to reduce or prevent the formation of DEG in the final resin product. Preferably, a specific type of DEG inhibitor would comprise a sodium acetate-containing composition to reduce formation of DEG during the esterification and polycondensation of the applicable diol with the dicarboxylic acid or hydroxyalkyl, or

10 hydroxyalkoxy substituted carboxylic acid. It is also possible to add stress crack inhibitors to improve stress crack resistance of bottles, or sheeting, produced from this resin.

With regard to the type of polyester which can be utilized, any high

15 clarity, neutral hue polyester, copolyester, etc., in the form of a resin, powder, sheet, etc., can be utilized to which it is desired to improve the reheat time or the heat-up time of the resin. Thus, polyesters made from either the dimethyl terephthalate or the terephthalic acid route or various homologues thereof as well known to those skilled in the art along with

20 conventional catalysts in conventional amounts and utilizing conventional processes can be utilized according to the present invention. Moreover, the type of polyester can be made according to melt polymerization, solid state polymerization, and the like. Moreover, the present invention can be utilized for making high clarity, low haze

25 powdered coatings. An example of a preferred type of high clarity polyester resin is set forth herein below wherein the polyester resin is produced utilizing specific amounts of antimony catalysts, low amounts of phosphorus and a bluing agent which can be a cobalt compound.

30 As noted above, the polyester is produced in a conventional manner as from the reaction of a dicarboxylic acid having from 2 to 40 carbon atoms with polyhydric alcohols such as glycols or diols containing from 2

- 40 -

to about 20 carbon atoms. The dicarboxylic acids can be an alkyl having from 2 to 20 carbon atoms, or an aryl, or alkyl substituted aryl containing from 8 to 16 carbon atoms. An alkyl diester having from 4 to 20 carbon atoms or an alkyl substituted aryl diester having from 10 to 20 carbon
5 atoms can also be utilized. Desirably, the diols can contain from 2 to 8 carbon atoms and preferably is ethylene glycol. Moreover, glycol ethers having from 4 to 12 carbon atoms may also be used. Generally, most of the commonly produced polyesters are made from either dimethyl terephthalate or terephthalic acid with ethylene glycol. When powdered
10 resin coatings are made, neopentyl glycol is often used in substantial amounts.

Specific areas of use of the polyester include situations wherein preforms exist which then are heated to form a final product, for
15 example, as in the use of preforms which are blow-molded to form a bottle, for example, a beverage bottle, and the like. Another use is in preformed trays, preformed cups, and the like, which are heated and drawn to form the final product. Additionally, the present invention is applicable to highly transparent, clear and yet low haze powdered
20 coatings wherein a desired transparent film or the like is desired.

This invention can be further illustrated by the following examples of preferred embodiments, although it will be understood that these examples are included merely for purposes of illustration and are not
25 intended to limit the scope of the invention unless otherwise specifically indicated.

EXAMPLES

Example 1

- 5 In this example, metallic tungsten particles were purchased from Alfa Aesar (Stock number 44210) having a stated particle size of less than 1 μm . The particles were found to have a d_{50} of 0.42 μm , with a particle size range from about 0.20 μm to about 0.72 μm , as measured by scanning electron microscopy.
- 10 The metallic tungsten particles were added during melt compounding to a commercial PET resin, VORIDIAN TM 9921 Polymer (a copolymer PET that has been crystallized and has an It.V. of 0.8 dL/g, available from Eastman Chemical Company, Kingsport, Tennessee). A concentrate containing
- 15 479.9 ppm tungsten was prepared using VORIDIAN 9921 Polymer as the base resin. The extrusions were performed using a one-inch single-screw extruder with Saxton and Pineapple mixing head. The extruder was also equipped with pelletization capability. The concentrates were then let down
- 20 into 9921 Polymer at different concentrations ranging from 5 ppm to 479.9 ppm. During the compounding process, 9921 Polymer was used to purge the extruder barrel several times to ensure no cross contamination occurred between different batches.
- 25 After melt compounding, discs with a diameter of 3 cm and a thickness of 0.17 cm were molded using a Daka® Microcompounder/Microinjector. Molded discs were also prepared from the 9921 Polymer as a control. The molded discs were then used for both color (L^* , a^* , b^* and haze) and reheat measurements.

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Color measurement of the molded discs was conducted in the following manner. A HunterLab UltraScan spectrophotometer was used to measure L^* , a^* and b^* on three discs stacked together (approximately 0.51 cm thickness). The instrument was operated using a D65 illuminant light source with a 10° observation angle and integrating sphere geometry. The color measurements were made in the total transmission (TTRAN) mode, in which both light transmitted directly through the sample and the light that is diffusely scattered is measured. The discs were stacked together using a holder in front of the light source, with the light normally incident on the disc surface. Haze was determined as the ratio of the diffuse light intensity to the total light intensity transmitted by the specimen. Haze was calculated according to the following formula:

$$Haze = \left(\frac{Y_{diffuse\ transmission}}{Y_{total\ transmission}} \right) \times 100$$

where Y represents the intensity of light.

The reheat measurement on molded discs was carried out as follows. The disc was placed onto a support which was in contact with the sample along its edges only. An actuator then automatically moved the disc beneath a pyrometer and measured the initial temperature (T_i). The disc was then moved to a fixed distance below a lamp housing equipped with a bulb (GE DYH projection bulb, 250 W, 120 V) operating at 60 V. The sample was exposed to a radiant light for 20 seconds. The color temperature of the lamp was approximately 2,200 °C. After heating, the disc was automatically returned to the pyrometer where the surface temperature (T_f) of the center area of the side which faced the lamp (front side) was recorded two seconds after the lamp was turned off. A 90 second cooling cycle was used between consecutive tests, during which a fan cooled the lamp housing prior to loading the next sample. The reheat index (known as RHI) was

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then calculated by comparing the temperature difference of a test sample with that of the control sample as shown in the following equation:

$$RHI = \frac{(T_f - T_i)_{sample}}{(T_f - T_i)_{control}}$$

5

As shown in Figure 1, Tables 1 and 2 below, the particle size of the tungsten powder was in the range of 0.20 μm to 0.72 μm with a mean value of 0.42 μm , and a standard deviation of 0.11 μm .

10

Table 1. Quantiles of the particle size analysis

Cumulative percentage	Statistical notation	Particle diameter (μm)
100.00%	maximum	0.71
99.50%		0.71
97.50%		0.68
90.00%		0.56
75.00%	quartile	0.50
50.00%	median	0.42
25.00%	quartile	0.33
10.00%		0.27
2.50%		0.22
0.50%		0.21
0.00%	minimum	0.21

15

Table 2. Moments of the particle size analysis

Mean	0.42
Std Dev	0.11
Std Err Mean	0.01
upper 95% Mean	0.44
lower 95% Mean	0.40
N	110

20

The final tungsten concentration in the polymers was determined by inductively coupled plasma optical emission spectroscopy (ICP-OES) using

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a Perkin-Elmer Optima 2000 instrument. The levels of loading of tungsten and the color and reheat results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Reheat and color results of melt compounded samples with tungsten as a reheat additive

Sample	Reheat additive	Measured tungsten concentration (ppm)	RHI	L*	a*	b*	Haze	WI CIE
1	none	0	1.00	83.60	-0.80	4.20	2.26	41.98
2	W	479.9	1.38	54.65	-1.18	1.85	37.72	9.33
3	W	44.6	1.05	79.25	-0.92	4.53	6.64	31.31
4	W	91.2	1.09	76.31	-0.97	4.64	11.20	24.97
5	W	183.5	1.18	70.22	-1.11	4.00	18.55	17.60
6	W	410.7	1.39	54.80	-0.83	2.33	35.82	6.09
7	W	39.7	1.06	79.66	-0.87	4.44	6.70	32.63
8	W	14.1	1.03	82.52	-0.86	4.15	3.57	39.98
9	W	76.4	1.10	77.19	-0.86	3.78	9.94	31.37

Figure 2 shows the relationship between RHI and the concentration of tungsten (note: in this example, RHI is calculated using 9921 Polymer as the reference sample). These results show that metallic tungsten particles are very effective at increasing the RHI of the base resin.

In Figure 3, the relationship between RHI and L* is illustrated for a polyester containing metallic tungsten particles. The results show that when compounded into PET, the metallic tungsten particles provide satisfactory L* values.

Figure 4 shows the correlation between RHI and haze for 9921 Polymer containing metallic tungsten particles.

Figures 5 and 6 show that the addition of metallic tungsten particles to 9921 Polymer causes only insignificant shifts in color results (a* and b*).

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Example 2

5 In this example, the concentrate of 9921 Polymer containing 479.9 ppm tungsten particles as described in Example 1 was used to prepare preforms and bottles. The concentrate was combined with Voridian™ CM01 Polymer, which is a PET copolymer containing no reheat additive, to give final tungsten concentrations of 62 ppm and 100 ppm. Standard twenty-ounce bottle preforms were prepared using a BOY (22D) injection molding machine operated under a melt temperature of 280°C and cycle time of 10 30s.

Two sets of blow molding experiments were performed using the Sidel SB02/3 blow molding unit so as to check the reheat of each composition. 15 The first set of experiments was conducted in order to evaluate the reheat rates, or preform surface temperature (PST), of the preforms containing tungsten particles. A series of five preforms was passed in front of the quartz infrared heaters and the PST of each composition was measured. The higher the PST value, the higher the reheat rate (or RHI) of the 20 composition. The infrared lamp settings for the Sidel SB02/3 blow molding unit are shown in Table 4. The preform heating time in the heaters was 38 seconds, and the power output to the quartz infrared heaters was set at 64%.

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Table 4. Sidel SBO2/3 lamp settings. Note lamps in Zones 6 through 8 were not turned on.

Heating zone	Lamps ON=1 OFF=0			
	Lamp power setting (%)	Heater 1	Heater 2	Heater 3
Zone 8				
zone 7				
Zone 6				
Zone 5	90	1	0	1
Zone 4	90	1	0	1
Zone 3	90	1	0	1
Zone 2	90	1	1	1
Zone 1	90	1	1	1

5

In the second set of experiments, the oven power was changed so as to blow the bottles for different composition at a similar PST to ensue consistent material distribution in the final bottles with different level of tungsten particles. The PST has been controlled to be 115°C in this set of experiments.

10

Color measurements on the preforms were performed using a HunterLab UltraScan XE (Hunter Associates Laboratory, Inc., Reston VA), which employs diffuse/8° (illumination/view angle) sphere optical geometry. The color scale employed was the CIE LAB scale with D65 illuminant and 10° observer specified. Twenty ounce preforms, which have a sidewall thickness of 0.154 inches, overall height of 3.93 inches, and outer diameter of 0.846 inches, were measured in regular transmission mode using ASTM D1746, "Standard Test Method for Transparency of Plastic Sheeting".

15

Preforms were held in place in the instrument using a preform holder, available from HunterLab, and triplicate measurements were averaged, whereby the sample was rotated 90° about its center axis between each measurement.

20

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Bottle sidewall haze was measured using a BYK-Gardner (Silver Spring, MD) Haze-Gard Plus according to ASTM D 1003 on sections of the bottle sidewalls with a sidewall thickness of 0.012 inches.

5 The results set forth in Table 5 show that the formulations containing tungsten particles had high PST compared to CM01, indicating that the tungsten particles were very efficient at absorbing the energy from the quartz infrared heaters of the blow molding machine.

10 **Table 5.** Preform surface temperature (PST) at 64% oven power setting and preform color results

Sample	Resin	Reheat additive	Measured tungsten conc. (ppm)	PST (°C)	Preform Color Results		
					L*	a*	b*
10	CM01	none	0	110	81.23	-0.4	2.79
11	CM01	W	62	119	75.52	-0.8	2.63
12	CM01	W	100	123	71.02	-0.89	2.55

15 As shown in Table 6 the formulations containing tungsten particles (entries 14 and 15) required lower oven power to reach a PST of 115 °C compared to CM01 resin (entry 13). It further illustrates that tungsten particles cause only an insignificant increase in bottle sidewall haze.

20 **Table 6.** Sidewall haze for bottles blown at the same preform surface temperature (PST). Note the oven power needed to reach the same PST in each sample is also given

Sample	Resin	Reheat additive	Measured tungsten concentration (ppm)	Oven Power (%)	PST (°C)	Bottle Sidewall Haze (%)
13	CM01	none	0	59	115	1.01
14	CM01	W	62	61	115	1.61
15	CM01	W	100	57	115	1.94

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Example 3

Tungsten particles as described in Example 1 were added to a PET polymerization process in order to determine their effect on reheat rate and color. Polymers were prepared in the following manner.

In the first step, a PET oligomer was prepared by charging purified terephthalic acid (PTA), purified isophthalic acid (PIA), ethylene glycol (EG), and antimony trioxide (ATO) catalyst to a 2-L autoclave. The formulation was as follows: 651.0 g PTA, 13.0 g PIA, 396.0 g EG and 0.249 g ATO. The raw materials were reacted at 245 °C and 40 psig for 200 minutes. At the end of the reaction, the resulting oligomer was discharged from the reactor and allowed to solidify at room temperature and was then pulverized to a coarse powder.

In the second step, a polymer was prepared from the oligomer in the following manner. Oligomer (121g) was charged to a 500 mL polymerization flask equipped with a polymer head, an overhead stirrer, a nitrogen inlet, a dry-ice condensing trap, and a vacuum source. A metal bath was used as the heating source. Polymerization was carried out in three stages using the following conditions:

Stage 1 (early prepolymer): 272 °C, 140 torr, 70 minutes
Stage 2 (prepolymer): 275 °C, 20 torr, 70 minutes
Stage 3 (polycondensation): 285 °C, 2.5 torr, 100 minutes

The tungsten powder was dispersed in EG (to a final concentration of 4.2 wt.% tungsten in EG) and then a portion of the dispersion was added to the polymerization process during the prepolymer. Phosphorus was added as a phosphoric acid solution in EG (1 wt.% P) immediately following the charge. A series of polymers was prepared with tungsten charges of from 0

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ppm (control) to 287 ppm. Using this procedure, polymers were produced with an It.V. of 0.62 dL/g containing 220 ppm antimony as catalyst, 30 ppm phosphorus and 0 – 130 ppm tungsten. The concentrations of antimony and phosphorus in the polymer were determined by X-ray fluorescence (XRF), and the final tungsten concentration in the polymers was determined by inductively coupled plasma optical emission spectroscopy (ICP-OES).

Molded discs were prepared, and RHI and color were prepared as described in Example 1. In the case of the lab polymers, the reheat rate was calculated by using a control polymer containing 0 ppm reheat additive. The results are given in Table 7.

Table 7. Reheat and Color results of lab polymerized samples with tungsten as reheat additive

Sample	Reheat additive	Measured tungsten concentration (ppm)	RHI	L*	a*	b*	Haze
16	none	0	1.00	81.4	-0.9	4.1	4.1
17	W	22	0.99	79.5	-0.2	5.5	5.3
18	W	45	1.02	78.9	-1.0	5.1	6.8
19	W	105	1.06	75.5	-1.1	5.7	11.3
20	none	0	1.00	81.3	-0.8	4.4	4.6
21	W	86.6	1.04	78.1	-1.1	5.2	9.9
22	W	120.8	1.06	76.9	-1.3	5.5	11.6

Figure 7 shows that on a concentration basis, metallic tungsten particles with a median particle size of about 0.42 μm were effective at increasing the polymer reheat. Figure 8 shows that polymers containing metallic tungsten particles have high L* values. Figure 9 shows the correlation between reheat rate and haze for polymers containing tungsten particles.

Figure 10 compares the L* and RHI results obtained when metallic tungsten particles are compounded into 9921 Polymer, as described in Example 1, and the results obtained when tungsten particles are added during the

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polymerization process, as described in Example 2. The plot shows that the preferred mode of addition is during the compounding process, because the impact on L^* is less.

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We claim:

1. A polyester composition suitable for molding, comprising:
a polyester polymer; and
5 metallic tungsten particles, having a median particle size from about 0.005 μm to about 10 μm , dispersed in the polyester polymer in an amount from about 0.5 ppm to about 500 ppm, with respect to the total weight of the polyester composition.
- 10 2. The polyester composition according to claim 1, wherein the median particle size of the metallic tungsten particles is from about 0.05 μm to about 5 μm .
- 15 3. The polyester composition according to claim 1, wherein the median particle size of the metallic tungsten particles is from about 0.05 μm to about 2 μm .
- 20 4. The polyester composition of claim 1, wherein the metallic tungsten particles are present in an amount from 1 ppm to 450 ppm, with respect to the total weight of the polyester composition.
- 25 5. The polyester composition of claim 1, wherein the metallic tungsten particles are present in an amount of from 1 ppm to 400 ppm, with respect to the total weight of the polyester composition.
6. The polyester composition of claim 1, wherein the metallic tungsten particles are present in an amount of from 1 ppm to 300 ppm, with respect to the total weight of the polyester composition.

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7. The polyester composition of claim 1, wherein the metallic tungsten particles are present in an amount of from 5 ppm to 250 ppm, with respect to the total weight of the polyester composition.

5 8. The polyester composition of claim 1, wherein the metallic tungsten particles are present in an amount of from 5 ppm to 200 ppm, with respect to the total weight of the polyester composition.

10 9. The polyester composition of claim 1, wherein the metallic tungsten particles are present in an amount less than 500 ppm, with respect to the total weight of the polyester composition.

15 10. The polyester composition of claim 1, wherein the polyester polymer comprises polyethylene terephthalate modified with one or more of isophthalic acid or 1, 4-cyclohexanedimethanol.

11. The polyester composition of claim 1, wherein the polyester composition is in the form of a beverage bottle preform.

20 12. The polyester composition of claim 1, wherein the polyester composition is in the form of a beverage bottle.

13. The polyester composition of claim 1, wherein the polyester composition is in the form of a molded article.

25 14. The polyester composition of claim 1, wherein the polyester polymer comprises a continuous phase, and wherein the metallic tungsten particles are dispersed within the continuous phase.

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15. The polyester composition of claim 1, wherein the metallic tungsten particles have a median particle size from 0.08 μm to 1.1 μm , and provide the polyester composition with a reheat rate index of at least 1.05 while maintaining the polyester composition at an L^* brightness of 70 or more at a reheat rate index of 1.05.

16. The polyester composition of claim 1, wherein the metallic tungsten particles comprise tungsten-coated particles.

17. The polyester composition of claim 1, wherein the metallic tungsten particles comprise hollow spheres comprised of tungsten.

18. The polyester composition of claim 1, wherein the metallic tungsten particles comprise a tungsten alloy that includes tungsten and one or more of: germanium, iron, chromium, molybdenum, titanium, vanadium, carbon, or tantalum.

19. The polyester composition of claim 1, wherein the metallic tungsten particles comprise a tungsten alloy, wherein tungsten is present in an amount of at least 30 wt.%, with respect to the total weight of the tungsten alloy.

20. The polyester composition of claim 1, wherein the metallic tungsten particles comprise a tungsten alloy, wherein tungsten is present in an amount of at least 50 wt.%, with respect to the total weight of the tungsten alloy.

21. The polyester composition of claim 1, wherein the metallic tungsten particles comprise a tungsten alloy that includes tungsten and one

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or more of: germanium, iron, chromium, nickel, molybdenum, titanium, vanadium, carbon, or tantalum.

22. The polyester composition of claim 21, wherein the alloy further
5 comprises, in an amount of no more than about 10 wt.%, one or more of:
gold, silver, copper, aluminum, manganese, or silicon.

23. The polyester composition of claim 1, wherein the metallic
tungsten particles have a particle size distribution in which the span (S) is
10 from 0 to about 10.

24. The polyester composition of claim 1, wherein the metallic
tungsten particles have a particle size distribution in which the span (S) is
from 0.01 to 2.

15 25. A polyester composition having improved reheat, comprising:
a polyester polymer in which poly(ethylene terephthalate) residues
comprise at least 90 wt.% of the polyester polymer; and
metallic tungsten particles, having a median particle size from about
20 0.05 μm to about 2 μm , randomly dispersed in the polyester polymer in an
amount from about 5 to about 50 ppm, wherein the polyester composition
has a reheat index of 1.05 or more and an L* brightness level of 70 or more
at the reheat rate index of 1.05.

25 26. A process for producing a polyester composition, comprising:
an esterification step comprising transesterifying a dicarboxylic acid
diester with a diol, or directly esterifying a dicarboxylic acid with a diol, to
obtain one or more of a polyester monomer or a polyester oligomer;
a polycondensation step comprising reacting the one or more of a
30 polyester monomer or a polyester oligomer in a polycondensation reaction

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in the presence of a polycondensation catalyst to produce a polyester polymer having an It.V. from about 0.50 dL/g to about 1.1 dL/g;

a particulation step in which the polyester polymer is solidified into particles;

5 an optional solid-stating step in which the solid polymer is polymerized to an It.V. from about 0.70 dL/g to about 1.2 dL/g; and

a particle addition step comprising adding and dispersing metallic tungsten particles to provide an amount from about 5 ppm to about 250 ppm by weight of the solid-stated polymer, wherein the particle addition
10 step occurs before, during, or after any of the preceding steps.

27. The process according to claim 26, wherein the process further comprises a forming step, following the solid-stating step, the forming step comprising melting and extruding the resulting solid polymer to obtain a
15 formed item having the metallic tungsten particles dispersed therein.

28. The process according to claim 27, wherein the particle addition step occurs during or after the solid-stating step and prior to the forming
20 step.

29. The process according to claim 26, wherein the particle addition step comprises adding the metallic tungsten particles as a thermoplastic concentrate prior to or during the forming step, the thermoplastic concentrate comprising the metallic tungsten particles in an amount from
25 about 50 ppm to about 5,000 ppm, with respect to the weight of the thermoplastic concentrate.

30. The process according to claim 26, wherein the metallic tungsten particles have a median particle size from about 0.005 μm to
30 about 10 μm .

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31. The process according to claim 26, wherein the particle addition step is carried out prior to or during the polycondensation step.

5 32. The process according to claim 26, wherein the particle addition step is carried out prior to or during the particulation step.

33. The process according to claim 26, wherein the particle addition step is carried out prior to or during the solid-stating step.

10 34. The process according to claim 26, wherein the particle addition step is carried out prior to or during the forming step.

35. The process according to claim 26, wherein the dicarboxylic acid
15 comprises terephthalic acid.

36. The process according to claim 26, wherein the dicarboxylic acid diester comprises dimethyl terephthalate.

20 37. The process according to claim 26, wherein the diol comprises ethylene glycol.

38. The process according to claim 26, wherein the dicarboxylic acid
25 comprises naphthalene dicarboxylic acid.

39. The process according to claim 26, wherein the dicarboxylic acid comprises an aromatic dicarboxylic acid.

40. The process according to claim 29, wherein the thermoplastic
30 concentrate comprises:

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metallic tungsten particles, in an amount ranging from 0.15 wt.% and up to about 35 wt.% based on the weight of the thermoplastic concentrate; and

5 a thermoplastic polymer, in an amount of at least 65 wt.% based on the weight of the thermoplastic concentrate.

41. The process according to claim 40, wherein the thermoplastic polymer comprises one or more of: a polyester, a polyolefin, or a polycarbonate.

10

42. A process for making a polyester preform, comprising feeding a molten or solid bulk polyester and a liquid, molten or solid polyester concentrate composition to a machine for manufacturing the preform, the concentrate composition comprising metallic tungsten particles having a median particle size from about 0.005 μm to about 10 μm , to obtain a preform having from about 5 ppm to about 250 ppm metallic tungsten particles, based on the weight of the polyester preform.

15

43. The process of claim 42, wherein the metallic tungsten particles are present in the concentrate composition in an amount of at least 0.15 wt.%.

20

44. The process of claim 42, wherein the concentrate polyester polymer comprises the same residues as the bulk polyester polymer.

25

45. The process of claim 42, wherein the bulk polyester and the polyester concentrate are fed to the machine in separate streams.

30

46. The process of claim 42, wherein the concentrate polyester comprises post-consumer-recycle polyester.

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47. A process for producing a polyester composition, comprising adding a concentrate polyester composition to a melt phase process for the manufacture of virgin polyester polymers, said concentrate comprising
5 metallic tungsten particles having a median particle size from about 0.005 μm to about 10 μm , to obtain a polyester composition having from about 5 ppm to about 250 ppm metallic tungsten particles, based on the weight of the polyester composition.

10 48. The process of claim 47, wherein the polyester concentrate is added to the melt phase when the melt phase has an lt.V. which is within ± 0.2 lt.V. units of the lt.V. of the polyester concentrate.

Figure 1

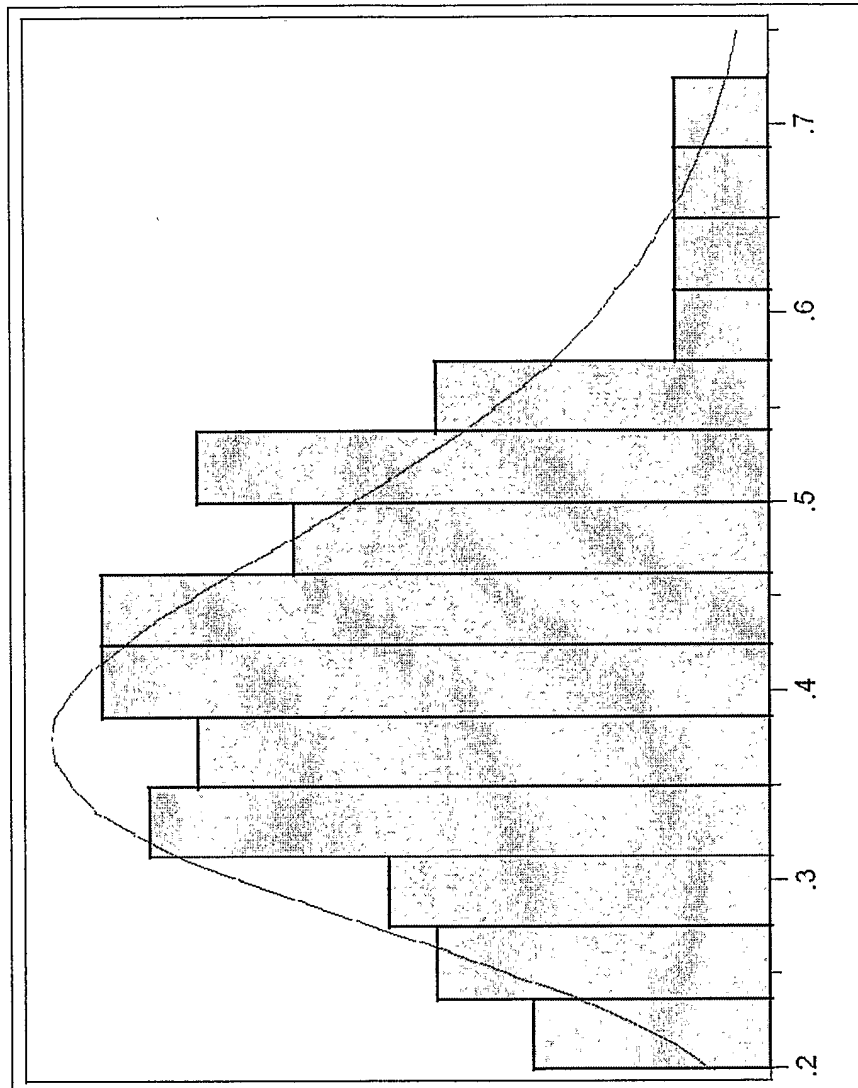


Figure 2

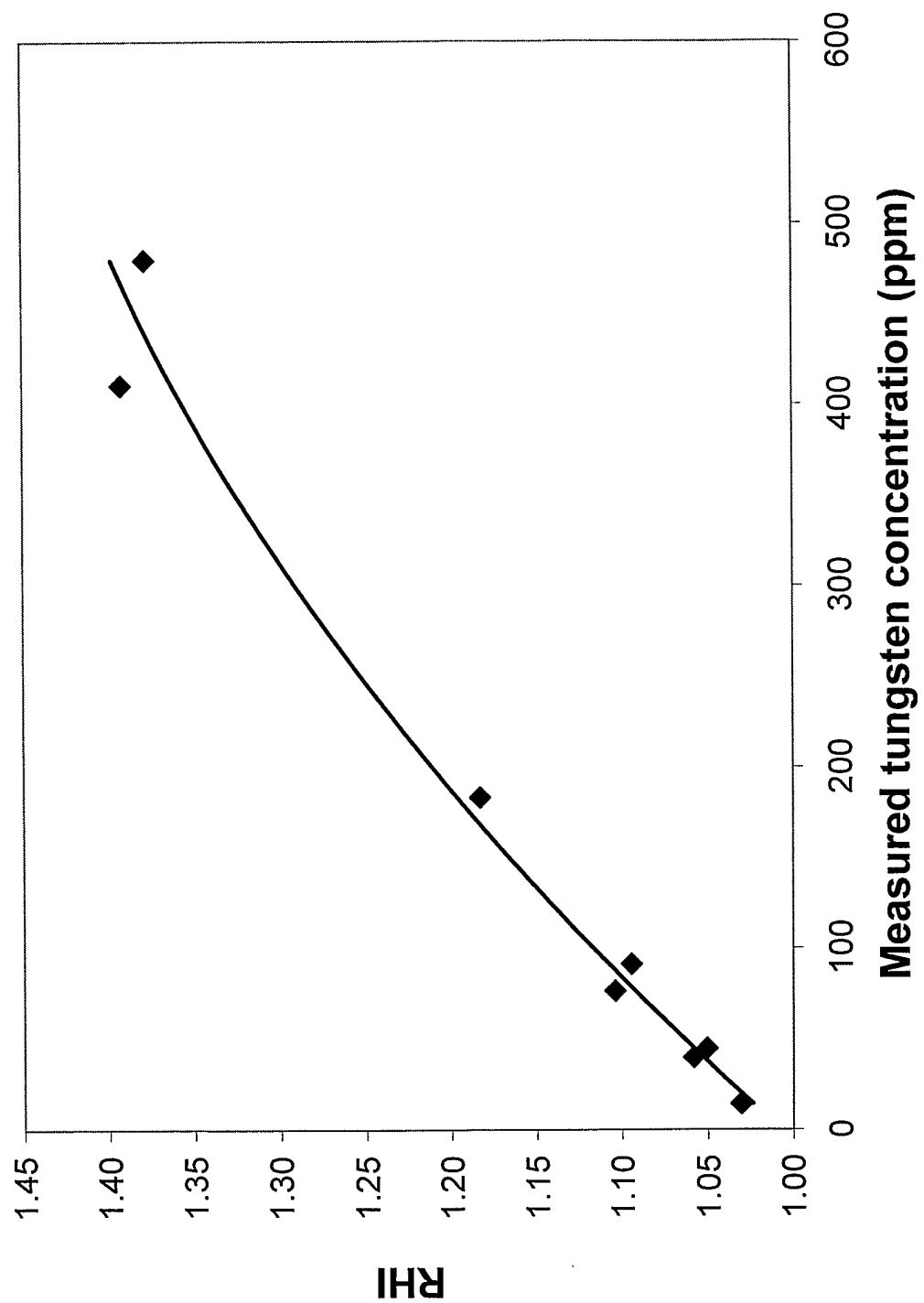


Figure 3

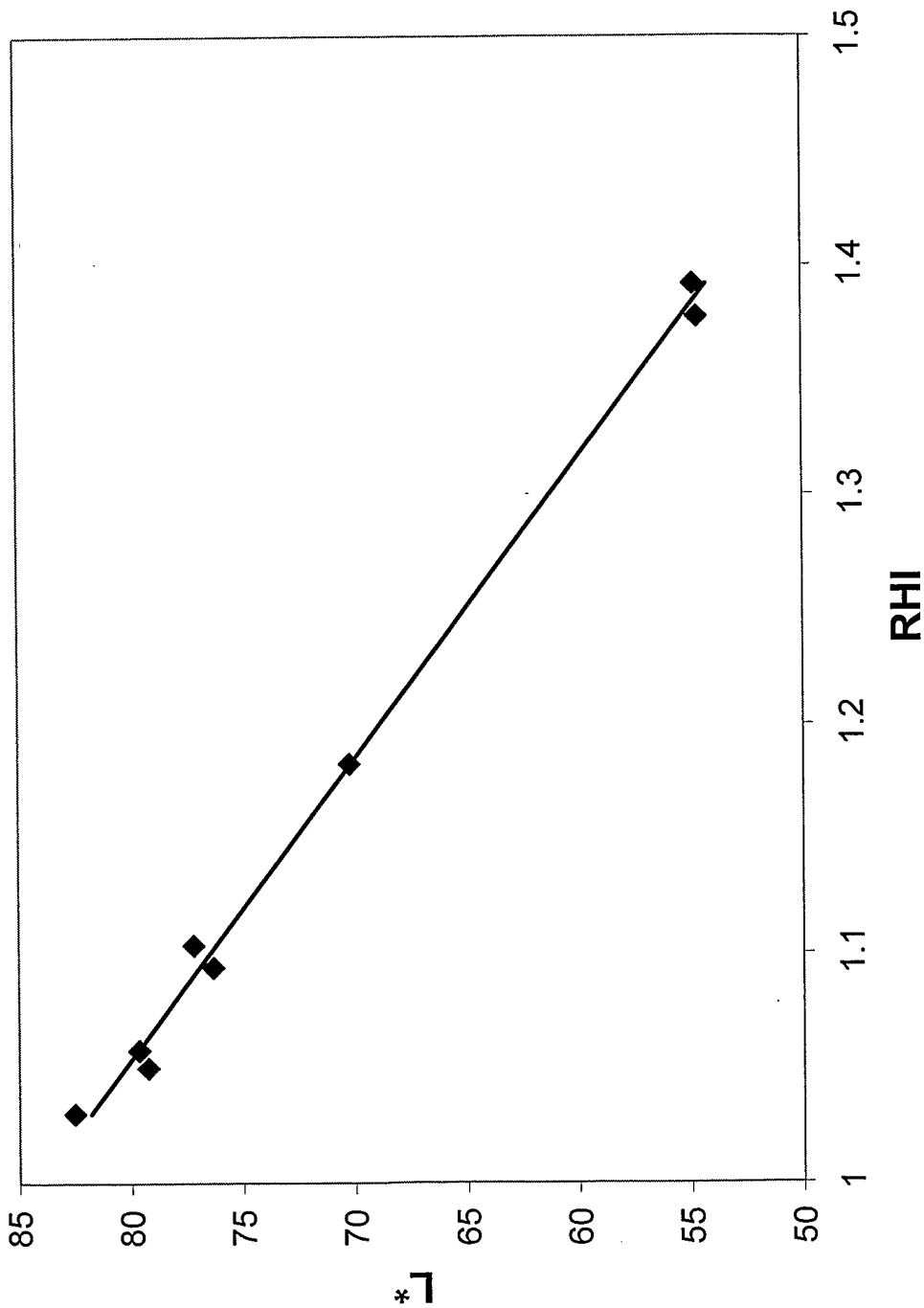


Figure 4

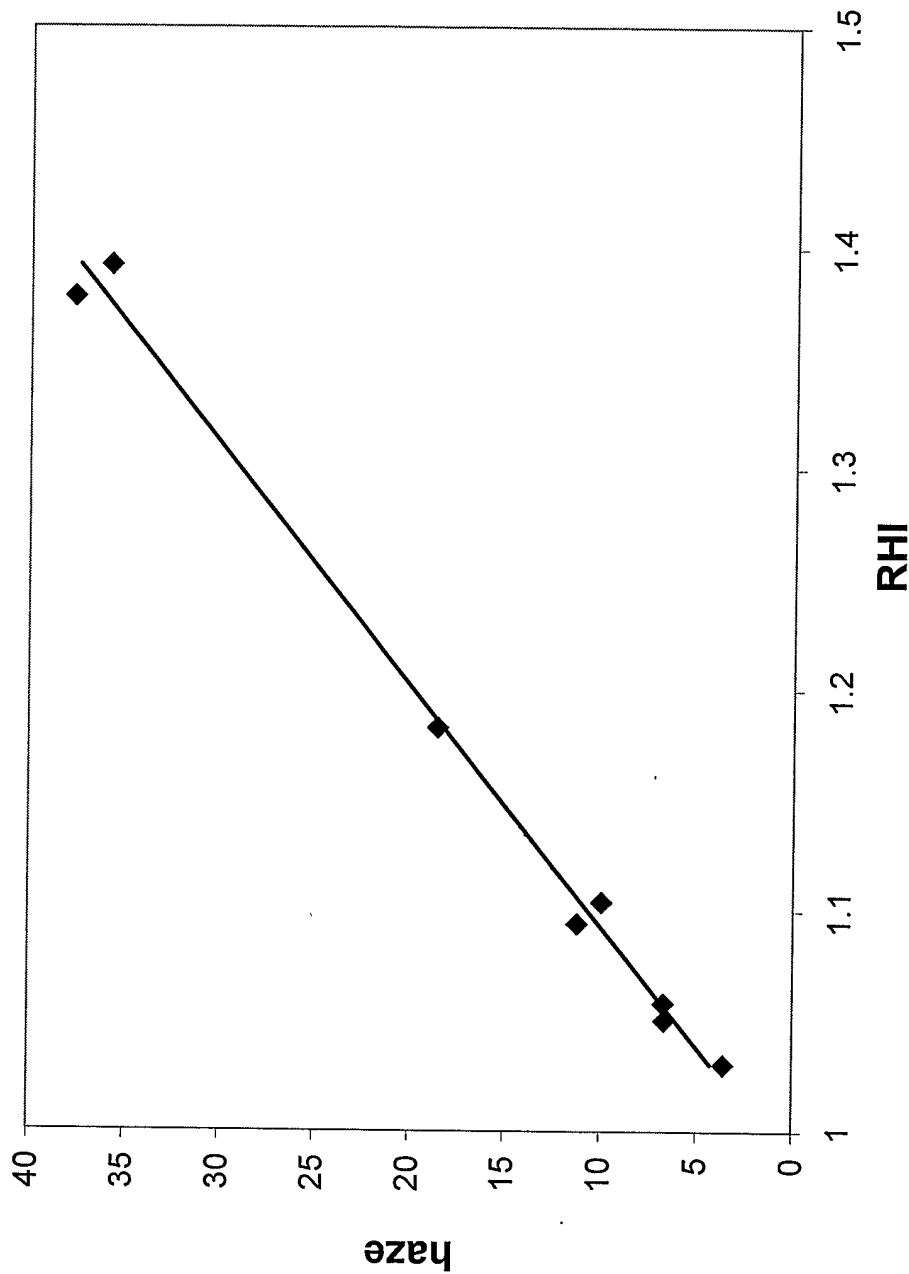


Figure 5

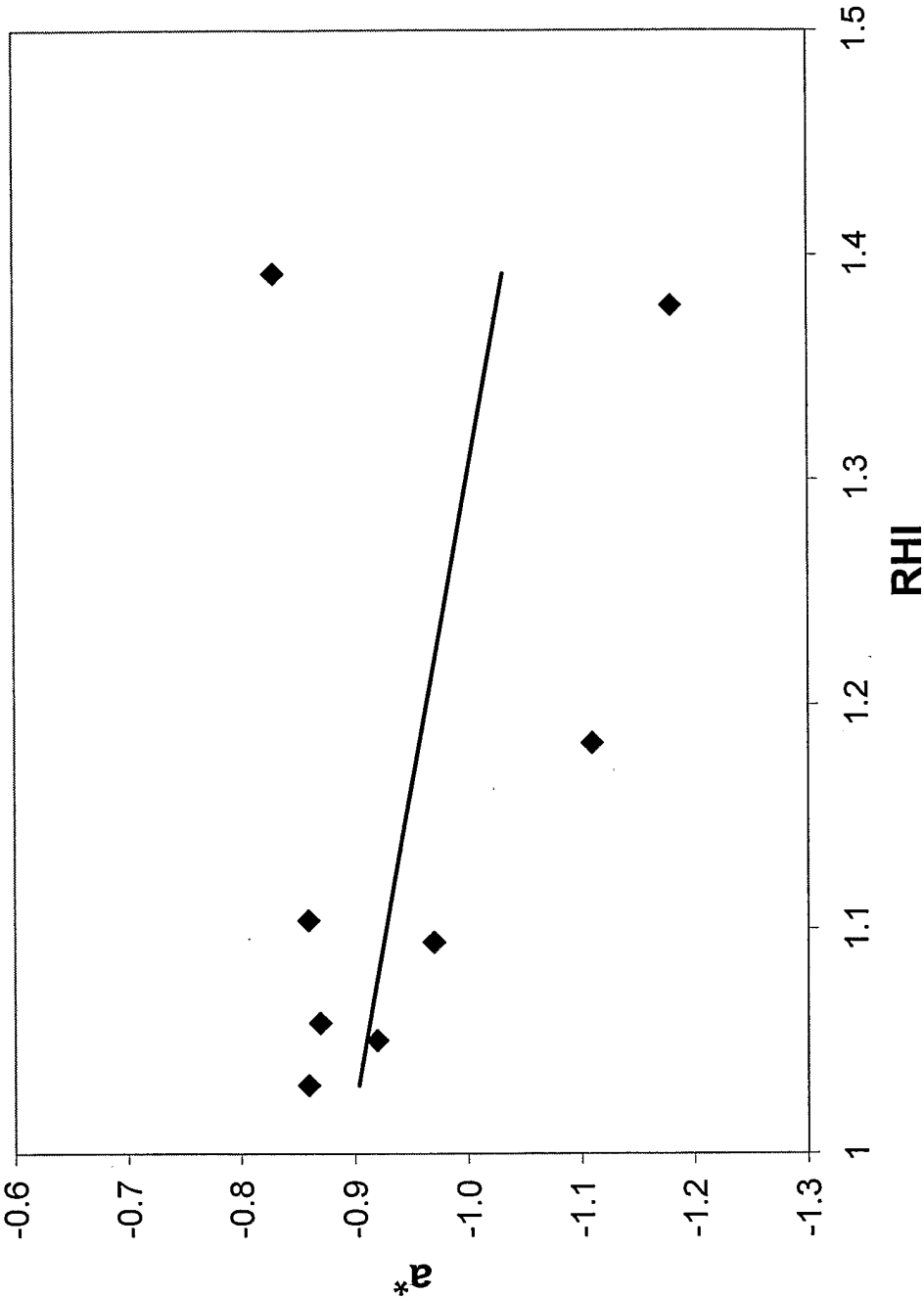


Figure 6

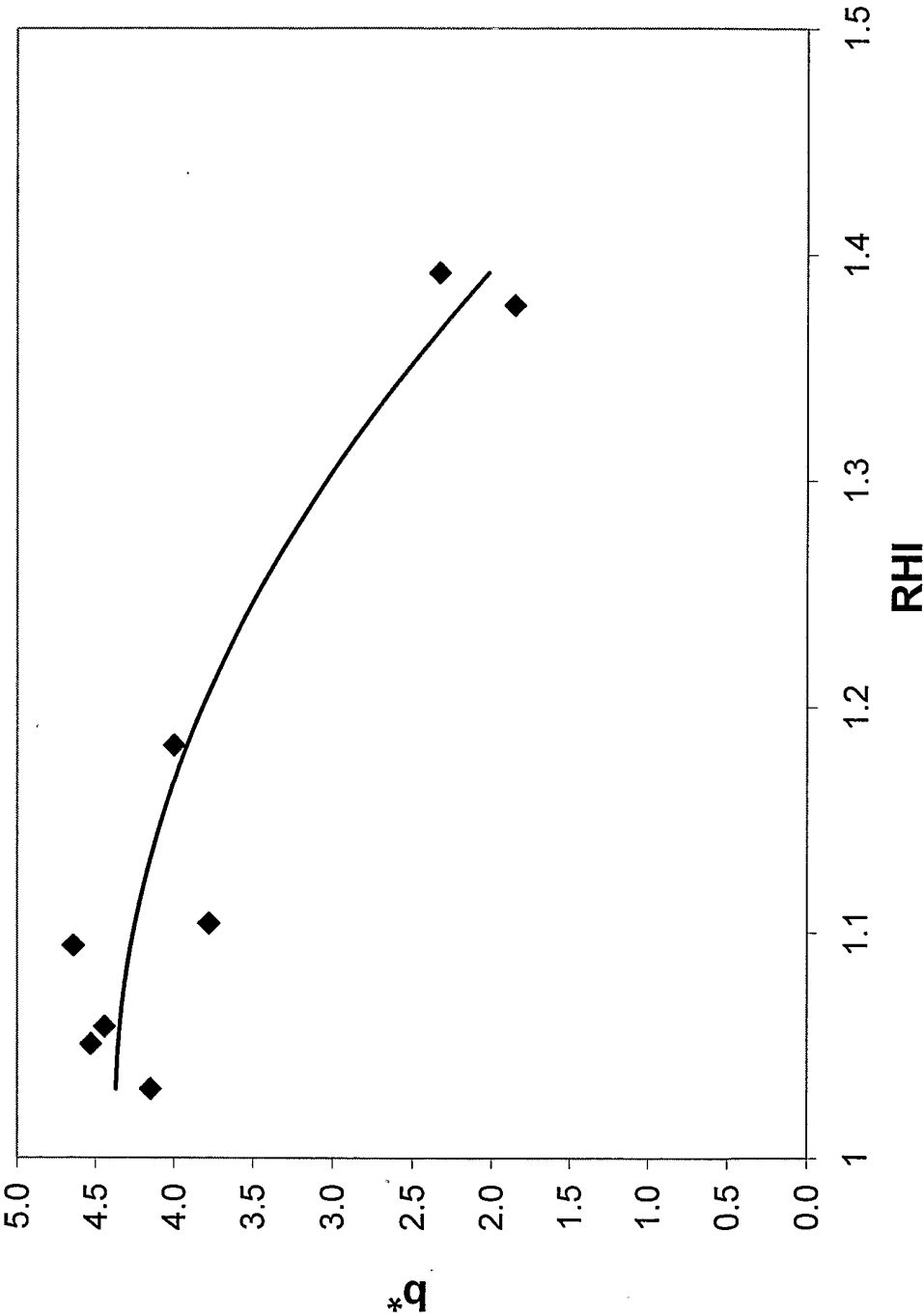


Figure 7

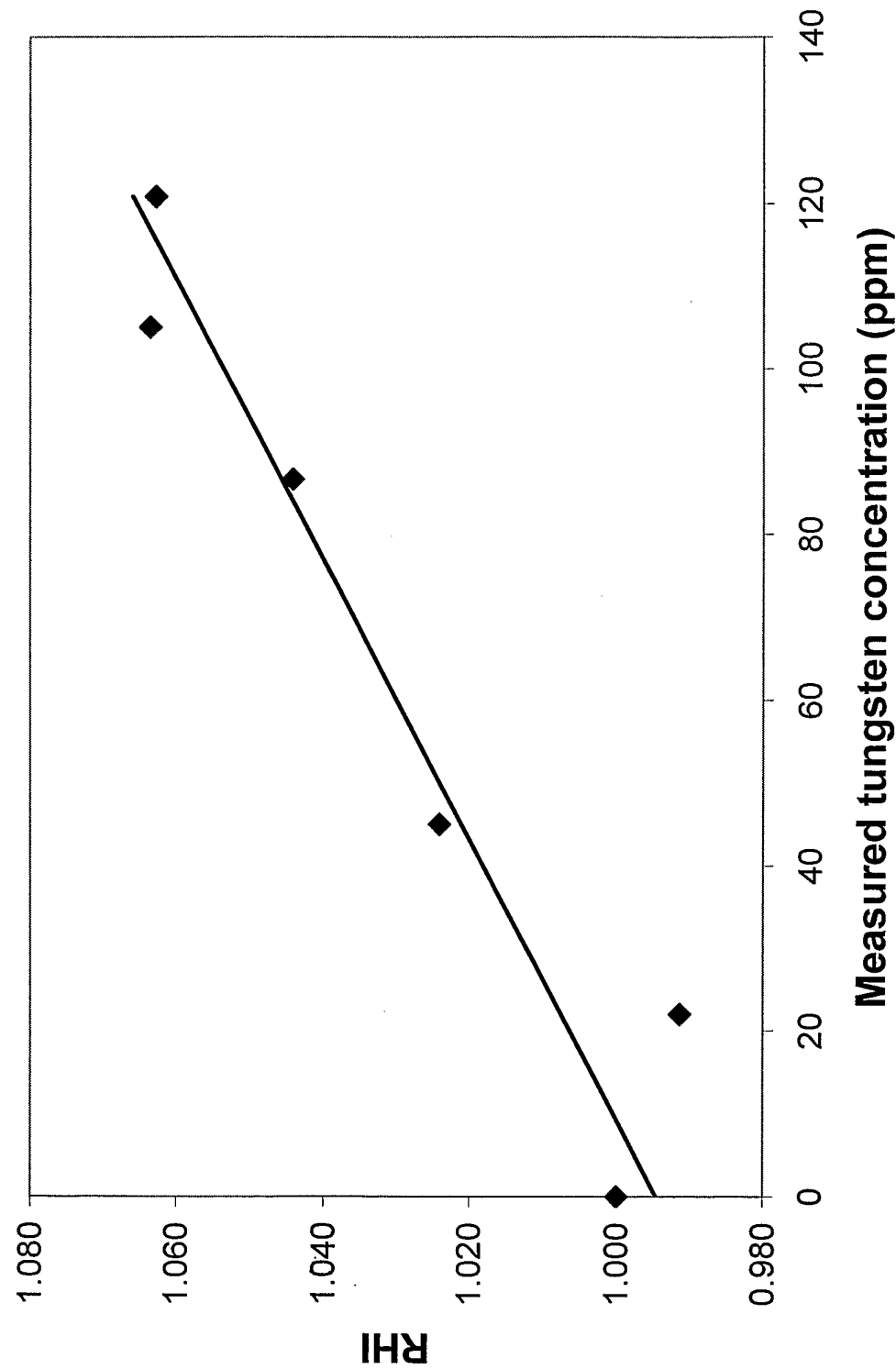


Figure 8

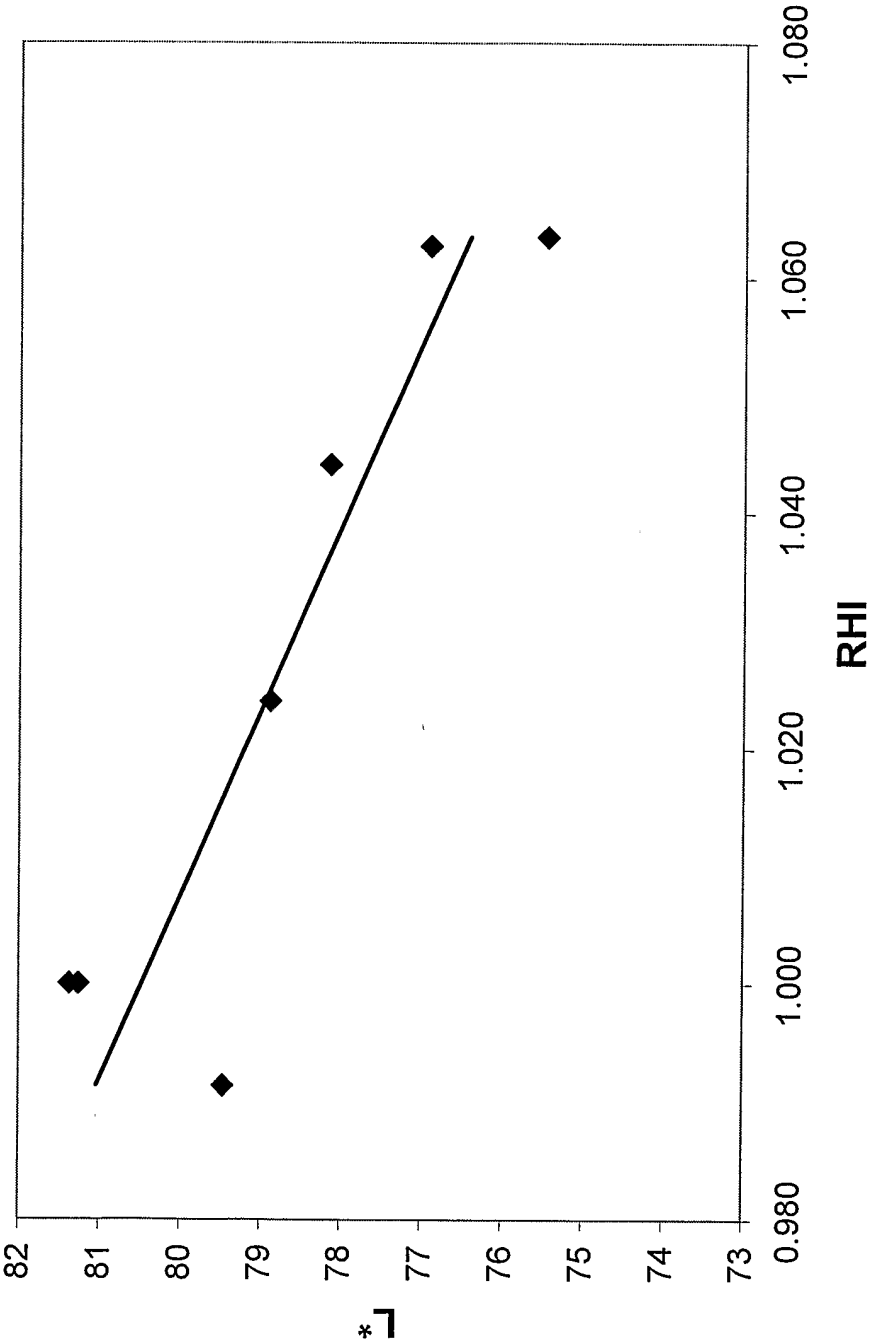


Figure 9

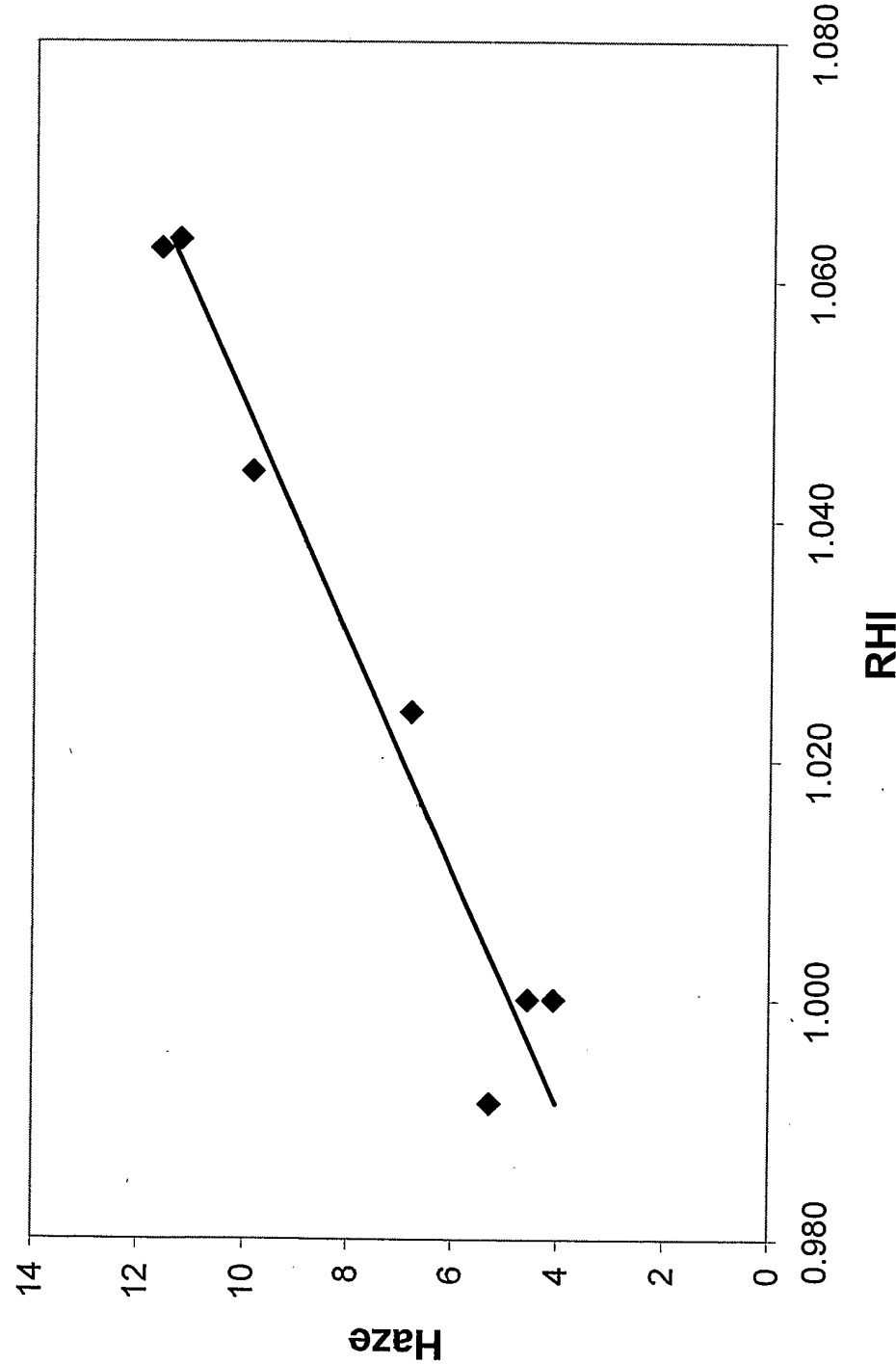


Figure 10

