

Rice bran oil ink to reduce environmental load

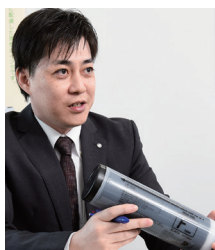
RISO has made its name as a designer, manufacturer and distributor of office printers. RISO is committed to reducing the environmental load of its printers in addition to improvement of product quality. We spoke with RISO about the story behind their new range of rice bran oil inks for digital duplicators.

A new use for disposed resources

Rice bran oil ink is made from rice bran oil. Although rice bran oil inks are already used with offset printers in other industries, RISO is the first to perfect an ink for office applications: the new F Type ink for RISO SF Series digital duplicators.

Mr. Shibata, who was closely involved in the product planning process, recalls that RISO used to import its oil. "By switching to rice bran oil made in Japan, we have significantly reduced shipping distances and also cut our CO₂ emissions by around 87%," he says. "And since most rice bran goes to waste, this also represents an excellent use of resources that would otherwise be unused."

According to Mr. Konno, who was also involved in the product planning process, the new inks were developed in response to demand from RISO digital duplicator owners who were keen to reduce their environmental load. He reports that the new inks have been warmly received.



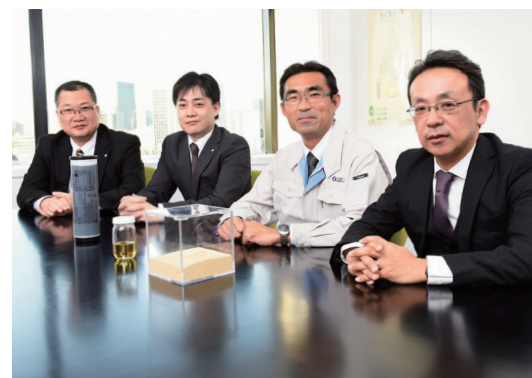
World first for office printers

RISO was quick to embrace the potential of rice bran oil and developed a rice bran oil ink for the first time in the world for ordinary office printers.

"Our aim was to create an ink product that meets all the required quality criteria but is also better for the environment,"

explains Mr. Hoshino from the Research & Development Division. "We saw that there was room for improvement in terms of shelf life and print stability." According to Mr. Hoshino, rice bran oil is resistant to oxidization and keeps well, properties that have been used to extend the recommended use-by date of the F Type ink range. It is also long-lasting and produces more stable printing on the page with less deterioration over time.

"We spent a great deal of time and effort trying to determine the optimum blend of raw materials for the new ink," recalls Mr. Hoshino. "Though we have



Left to right: Mr. Konno and Mr. Shibata (Business Strategy Dept.), Mr. Hoshino (Research & Development Division), Mr. Kawabe (Environmental Activity Promotion Dept.)

required skills, we were dealing with a totally new substance so we were effectively starting from scratch. We had to conduct dozens of new tests. There was a great deal of trial and effort required to achieve the right blend of constituent ingredients to deliver a level of print quality, stability and longevity that was equivalent to former inks. We also had to ensure compatibility with installed digital duplicators, not just the new SF series." The new inks are evaluated to be compatible with most RISO digital duplicators on the market today.

A great product for the environmentally-conscious company

Mr. Kawabe, who is involved in environmental activity promotion, notes that cutting back CO₂ emissions is a good way to help control global warming. "There is a whole host of environmental problems today other than global warming; for example, acute water shortage," he adds. "I believe it's important to consider how switching to rice bran oil can make a real contribution to such problems."