Drivers for Use of Biobased Building Materials in the Residential Sector

*OBIC was engaged by the Ohio Department of Development (ODOD) to quantify current usage rates of biobased products within the state and to project substitution potential of these biobased products for their petroleum counterparts. One such area of interest is in the residential building materials cluster. Materials such as paint, foam sealant, fiberglass doors, garage doors, fiberglass windows, sofas, and countertops are typical items found in a home where biobased products have a potential for increased use.*

The primary objectives of the Homeowner Survey were to understand Ohio and U.S. homeowner attitudes regarding green products and assess their willingness to pay more for building products incorporating plant-based raw materials. The initial interactive survey which was developed by OBIC and implemented by Harris Interactive, included homeowners in Ohio with 206 completions. This survey was expanded to the entire U.S. with 1299 completions.

Participants were asked to rank their interest on types of green products. The top two were "green" products that save energy and "green" products that create less pollution in both the Ohio and U.S. polls. On the topic of cost, respondents indicated that they were occasionally or always willing to pay more for "green" products 72% or 69% of the time (Ohio, U.S. respectively). Respondents were also asked if they were interested in making their homes more "green". Results were that 81% Ohio and 76% U.S. were either somewhat or very interested and the main reason for wanting to make their home more “green” was to save on energy bills.

This was done in conjunction with the 2009 Soy Technology program, sponsored by the Ohio Soybean Council, and Ashland Performance Materials which offers a line of biobased resins called Envirez®. For more information contact the author at hollis.69@osu.edu or visit the website at bioproducts.osu.edu.