

Announcement from Bekaert

March 19, 2010

Bekaert showcases latest rotatable sputtering technology and sawing wire solutions at Photon's 6th Photovoltaic Technology Show 2010

Bekaert confirms leadership and commitment to photovoltaic (PV) and renewable energy markets.

Bekaert, a world leader in advanced metal transformation and coatings, will showcase its latest range of rotatable sputtering solutions for thin-film and c-Si PV cells and its recent advances in sawing wire technology to cut crystalline silicon wafers at Photon's 6th Photovoltaic Technology Show 2010 taking place in Stuttgart, Germany from April 27 - 29, 2010.

Optimizing thin-film PV manufacturing

Solar energy is viewed by many as one of the best solutions to global warming. Bekaert is proud to play an active role in the manufacturing of PV solar cells as part of its commitment to the renewable energy markets and a greener environment. As a pioneer in rotating magnetron technology and ultra-thin sawing wire solutions, Bekaert is working closely with its customers to meet the growing demand for high volume PV cell production and better cell performance.

"To increase the supply of renewable energy at an affordable price and reach grid parity, we need to significantly reduce the cost of thin-film PV manufacturing," says Koen Staelens, Product Market Manager at Bekaert Sputter Products. "The use of rotating magnetrons to deposit TCO and back contact layers on PV cells play a key role in achieving this," adds Koen Staelens. "Higher utilization and deposition rates, higher process stability and reduced coater downtime all contribute to a significant lower total cost of ownership for PV cell manufacturers."

Bekaert's sputter and wire solutions at Photon

At this year's show, Bekaert will demonstrate its Bekaert Axial Magnetron, renowned for its reliability, solid, robust design and outstanding performance. Other elements of Bekaert's extended offering on rotatable sputter targets will also be displayed, including the one-piece AZO rotatable target, which was successfully introduced recently. All rotatable targets are one-piece targets which ensure a more stable process.

Bekaert is also the world's biggest supplier of sawing wire to cut silicon ingots into wafers used in solar cells. The company has developed an ultra-tensile wire technology, winding algorithms and spool designs all adjusted to optimize performance during the cutting process.

“Yield is what it’s all about in this industry,” says Jos Vancoppernelle, Sales and Marketing Manager of Bekaert’s Sawing Wire business. “Our ultra-thin sawing wires (down to 100µm) result in lower kerf loss and hence more wafers per cut,” adds Vancoppernelle. “They also reduce slurry consumption which, when combined with the lower kerf loss, results in higher productivity, improved quality and lower cost of ownership for our customers.”

Photon’s 6th Photovoltaic Technology Show takes place in the New Trade Fair Centre, Stuttgart, Germany from April 27-29, 2010. Recognized as the key event of the year for the PV community, the show draws engineers, manufacturers, technologists, and business professionals from around the world. It is the perfect opportunity to network with peers in the industry and to learn about the latest market trends and innovations. Bekaert will be present in Hall 4, booth # B5.

Bekaert contact details

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About Bekaert

Profile

Bekaert (www.bekaert.com) is a global technological leader in its two core competences: advanced metal transformation and advanced materials and coatings, and a market leader in drawn wire products and applications. Bekaert (Euronext Brussels: BEKB) is a global company with headquarters in Belgium, employing 23 000 people worldwide. Serving customers in 120 countries, Bekaert pursues sustainable profitable growth in all its activities and generates annual combined sales of €3.3 billion.

Bekaert works closely with its customers to enable them to upgrade from planar to rotatable technology and offers lower cost of ownership through longer production runs, faster coating deposition and a more complete use of coating material. Bekaert has built its experience in the sputtering technology field through its own plastic foil coating for window film and industrial applications. Bekaert was the first to bring rotatable targets to market and has successfully partnered with customers to develop the most advanced and complete sputter equipment to effectively use these targets for coating lines worldwide. Industrial customers who execute a coating process for applications such as architectural and automotive glass (including Low-E and solar control films, and anti-reflective coatings), display glass and photovoltaic glass, can significantly benefit from adopting Bekaert’s sputter solutions and technology. Customers can also rely on Bekaert’s world-class local customer support and leading research and development .