



Rice wax



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Takuya Konno,  
President, Nippon Seiro

## Nippon Seiro: Japanese Leader in Wax Production

**Nippon Seiro leads the wax industry with innovative, eco-friendly products, focusing on diversification and sustainability under President Takuya Konno's guidance.** *By Sean McBride*

Nippon Seiro, a specialized wax manufacturer, has a remarkable legacy that dates back to its founding in 1927. Under the leadership of Takuya Konno, the company remains a crucial player in the wax industry, producing a wide range of high-quality waxes for diverse applications.

"Wax is, by definition, a hydrocarbon composite consisting of a mixture of hydrocarbon molecules containing between 20 and 40 carbon atoms that stays solid at room temperature," Mr. Konno explains. This versatile material's unique properties—such as humidity and temperature retention, water repellency and electrical insulation—make it indispensable across various industries.

The applications of wax extend far beyond the commonly known uses like shoe polish, hair wax or car wax. One of the simplest yet most significant uses is in candles. While the demand for candles in Japan has decreased, the international market remains robust, a trend that continued even during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Wax's utility spans numerous sectors. It is used to coat car tires, preventing deterioration, and in the paper and packaging industry to repel water and enhance durability. In the food industry, wax is essential for wrapping paper and gum production. The construction industry uses wax for boards that consolidate small chips, while the medical field relies on it for ointments and surgical applications. Wax's ability to retain heat also makes it valuable for rehabilitation purposes.

"Our competitive advantage over rival companies lies in our ability to produce wax with varying melting points, ranging from 115 degrees Fahrenheit to 240 degrees Fahrenheit, in increments of five degrees," says Mr. Konno. This

precision allows Nippon Seiro to meet specific customer requirements with unparalleled accuracy. Additionally, the company prides itself on reducing oil content in its wax to as little as 0.1 percent, setting a benchmark in the industry.

The environmental impact of fossil fuel-based wax is a significant concern, given the global push towards carbon neutrality. Japan, aiming



Emulsion

for carbon neutrality by 2050, presents both a challenge and an opportunity for Nippon Seiro. The company is committed to mitigating environmental impact by producing biodegradable waxes and reducing oil content in its fossil fuel-based products. Mr. Konno emphasizes: "It is crucial that we get out of this carbon-based society and reduce our dependency on fossil fuels. However, as long as there is demand, we will continue to provide high-quality wax."

One of the promising areas for Nippon Seiro is the development of plant-based waxes, such as rice wax. This innovation aligns with the company's strategy to diversify its product portfolio and reduce reliance on fossil fuels.

"Rice wax development has been a key focus for us and may even replace fossil fuel wax entirely," Mr. Konno states.

Wax emulsions present another growth opportunity. These emulsions, which combine wax with water, have high demand in the construction industry for surface sprays. Despite the high demand, Nippon Seiro is working to expand its production capacity to meet market needs.

Research and development are at the heart of Nippon Seiro's operations. The company is dedicated to innovating and improving its products, focusing on natural and synthetic waxes. "Currently, 90 percent of our business depends on fossil fuel wax, but we are conducting research to diversify and meet our customers' needs with non-fossil fuel sources," says Mr. Konno.

Looking to the future, Mr. Konno envisions a company that continues to provide high-quality, innovative wax products while significantly reducing its environmental footprint. "In ten years, we hope to have a more diverse portfolio of natural and synthetic waxes, supplying our customers in a stable and sustainable manner," he concludes.

As Nippon Seiro approaches its 100th anniversary, it stands at the forefront of the wax industry, poised to lead with innovation and sustainability.

*NOTE: The interview was held on June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2022. At that time Mr. Takuya Konno was the president of Nippon Seiro Co., Ltd. As of July 2024 the current president is Mr. Johei Takimoto.*

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