

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

I feel it necessary to register my disappointment in the paper: "Application of Acid Protease for Eco-friendly Pre-Treatment of Goat Skin to Improve Antimicrobial Finish using Herbal Natural Extracts".

The use of the term "Finish" in the leather industry implies a process following completion of tanning and retanning. It is therefore not clear whether the antimicrobial application was made on the pelt or on leather. One has to make the assumption that the application was on the untanned skin following enzyme treatment as there is reference to "alternative to conventional wet chemical treatment" and no documentation of tan or retan process. If so, then the need for antimicrobial processing following acid protease treatment is moot. There is no need for preservation treatment at this stage and immediate processing through tanning and retanning would in

any case wash away most of the antimicrobials. Furthermore, the rationale for the research undertaken - "leather is highly prone to microbial proliferation and biodeterioration" - is simply false. Intact leather artifacts from centuries ago belie this statement. Hides, skins or pelts - yes; leather - no.

I also feel it necessary to speak specifically to the incorrect interpretation of the "zone of inhibition" technique for evaluating antimicrobial effects. "Growth" or "No Growth" must be evaluated on the leather. Zone of inhibition is correctly interpreted as the ability of an antimicrobial to diffuse into the Agar to exhibit effect and NOT for the protection of a sample against microbial attack. In fact, there should be less protection of the skin or leather as antimicrobial substance is lost to the matrix. The continued use of this technique in our industry to show efficacy of antimicrobials in protecting a substrate is simply wrong.

Sincerely,
Dr. Elton Hurlow
Past President ALCA / Past President
IULTCS

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