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RESPONSIBLE EDITORS Prof. Dr. Seema Agarwal, Chair of Macromolecular Science II, University of Bayreuth, Building NW II, Universitätsstraße 30, 95440 Bayreuth, Tel.: +49-921-553397, Email agarwal@uni-bayreuth.de
Prof. Dr. Andreas Greiner, Chair of Macromolecular Science II, University of Bayreuth, Building NW II, Universitätsstraße 30, 95440 Bayreuth, Tel.: +49-921-553399, Email greiner@uni-bayreuth.de

JOURNAL MANAGER Holger Kleeßen, De Gruyter, Genthiner Straße 13, 10785 Berlin, Germany, Tel.: +49 (0)30 260 05-348, Fax: +49 (0)30 260 05-184, Email: epolymers.editorial@degruyter.com

RESPONSIBLE FOR ADVERTISEMENTS Claudia Neumann, De Gruyter, Genthiner Straße 13, 10785 Berlin, Germany, Tel.: +49 (0)30 260 05-226, Fax: +49 (0)30 260 05-264, Email: anzeigen@degruyter.com

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COVER ILLUSTRATION This research presents the preparation of polypropylene foams by the extrusion process, focusing on the influence of the foaming agents and nucleating agents on the microstructure of the foams. Random copolymer PP, branched homopolymer PP and their mixture were used as matrices. Regarding the cellular structure of the foams, using expanded graphite nucleating agent instead of talc results in foams with finer cellular structures, thinner cell wall thicknesses and higher cell densities. Moreover, the foams including the mixture of blowing agents (sodium bicarbonate and citric acid) exhibit higher cell densities and upper expansion ratio. It seems that a by-product of chemical decomposition reaction of the mixed blowing agents can act as an effective nucleation agent. The foams obtained by linear PP show higher cell densities, while the expansion ratio is higher for the foams produced with branched PP.

For more information on this topic please read the article on *The simultaneous effect of nucleating and blowing agents on the cellular structure of polypropylene foamed via the extrusion process* by Mohammad Fasihi, Ali Asgari Targhi and Hossein Bayat on pages 235–241 in this issue. Copyright holder of the image is Mohammad Fasihi, School of Chemical Engineering, Iran University of Science and Technology, 16846-13114, Narmak, Tehran, Iran, Tel.: +98-21-77240286, Fax: +98-21-77240495, e-mail: mfasihi@iust.ac.ir.

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