

COSMEGRAM

March 2026 • Vol 56 | Issue 3



MONTHLY MEETING - MARCH 2026

Surfactants are Important, Interesting, and Exciting

Speaker: Neil A. Burns - Managing Partner, Neil A. Burns LLC.

Surfactants are used daily in consumer products and are essential ingredients in the materials and processes that sustain modern life. They play critical roles in agriculture, food production, transportation, energy, construction, mining, medicine, and many other industries.

This 20 million metric ton-per-year, \$50 billion global market includes both commodity and specialty products, spanning petrochemical- and oleochemical-based technologies and involving regional and multinational suppliers alike.

Today, the pace of change in surfactant technology and supply chains is unprecedented, with record levels of investment and innovation across the sector.

This presentation will provide a foundational overview of the surfactant market, examine the pressures and challenges it faces, including regulatory demands, and explore emerging products and new concepts shaping its future. The speaker will remain available as long as needed to answer all questions.



Neil Burns has 40 years experience in and around surfactants and oleochemicals. He served as CEO of Oxiteno USA, VVF LLC USA and P2 Science, as well as on the boards of Pilot Chemical, Cedar Concepts, Sivance and American Track Services. Today, he advises a number of surfactant companies. He produces the ICIS / Neil A Burns series of surfactant conferences and writes the surfactants blog. He speaks throughout the world on topics relating to surfactants.



March 17, 2026
5:00 - 8:00 PM



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LETTER FROM *The Editor*

I hope everyone is having a productive start to the year! While losing an hour of sleep is never easy, it's officially time to "spring ahead" into what promises to be an action-packed season for our chapter.

In this issue, you'll find photos recapping our February meeting—it was great to see so much energy and such a strong turnout. We're also looking ahead to some major highlights for our chapter:

- Summer Event (Cooking Class): A chance to swap the lab for the kitchen—registration details & sponsorship opportunities inside!
- Scientific Seminar: Stay ahead of the curve with our upcoming technical deep-dive. Save the date!

Beyond the events, this edition is filled with technical articles and industry updates to keep you in the loop!

Remember, the Cosmegram is your newsletter. If you have a technical article, a fun segment, or even just a spark of an idea you'd like to share with our community, please reach out—we'd love to feature more voices and perspectives in future editions.

Here's to an exciting spring, and I can't wait to see you all at our upcoming events!

Josie Wauford
Lubrizol
Cosmegram Editor 2025
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MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Malina Kobayashi

Was there a defining moment that led you into the industry?

My defining moment was becoming a research intern for Hayley Hoffman, who was running Dandi Day at the time. If she hadn't taken a chance on me, I likely wouldn't have had the opportunities I have today. She took time out of her busy schedule to show me the ins and outs of the industry and served as a prime example of what the beauty industry truly represents: a close-knit community of people who are always willing to help, solve problems, and ultimately create products that make people feel beautiful. All I needed was that first step into the industry, and it has allowed me to pursue my dream every day.



What motivates you most in your career today? How has your career evolved since you first started?

What motivates me today is remembering how hard I worked to get here. I feel incredibly fortunate to work alongside some of the most talented people at SOS Beauty, from brand ideation to formulation. Knowing that we have the potential to create the next must-have product or solve an everyday beauty challenge is what continues to inspire me. My career has evolved from being a junior chemist learning how to formulate to now presenting innovations to the next-gen beauty brands and building my team.



Any advice you would like to give to someone entering the cosmetic field today?

My biggest piece of advice is to always stay open to learning –not just in formulation, but in your everyday life. Even when you think you understand something, don't let that stop you from deepening your knowledge of an ingredient, technique, formulation, or professional skill. Stay humble and always strive to become the best version of yourself.

What's the most "chemist" thing about you outside of work?

When something goes viral on TikTok shop when I'm doomscrolling, I will always look at the IL and judge the product.



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Malina Kobayashi

Do you prefer being a minimalist formulator or a 35-ingredient masterpiece creator?

I used to be a 35-ingredient masterpiece creator because I wanted one formula to have anything and everything in it. Recently, however, I've become more of a minimalist formulator. I've grown to appreciate multifunctional ingredients that deliver both aesthetic performance and skin benefits for the consumer. At the same time, learning how to calculate MOQs and manage raw material liabilities has been an eye-opening experience that has shaped how I approach formulation from both a scientific and practical standpoint.

What is your favorite type of product to formulate? Or what are you the best at formulating?

My favorite area to formulate now is color cosmetics. I didn't have the opportunity to work in this category until about a year ago, and it has opened an entirely new world of cosmetic chemistry for me. It's a humbling experience that has taught me patience and the importance of not being afraid to start over to achieve the perfect shade.

Is there a type of product that you use daily?

One thing about me is that you will never catch me without a sharp winged eyeliner – ONE SIZE liquid eyeliner has always been that girl!

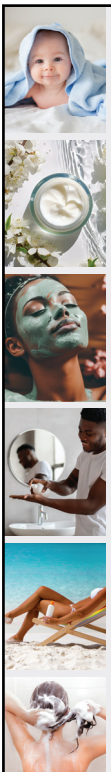
a little bit more about Malina:

Malina Kobayashi is the R&D Supervisor at SOS Beauty Group, where she helps lead the development of innovative, fast-to-market beauty formulas for emerging and established brands. Prior to joining SOS Beauty Group, she served as a Senior Chemist at Best Formulations and worked as a Research Assistant at Dandi Day, experiences that shaped her expertise in formulation and product development. Malina holds a Bachelor's degree in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology from Lewis & Clark College in Portland, Oregon. She grew up on the Big Island of Hawai'i and now calls the South Bay home. In her free time, she enjoys pilates, finding the best matcha, and playing with her dog, Maple the mini bernedoodle.



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Cosmetic Product Development

Speaker: Krissie Gerrard
Owner of Envy Cosmetic Consulting

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Regulatory Updates

USA

FDA

- FDA Grand Rounds - On Feb. 5 there was a webinar for Post Regulation of Cosmetic Products.
- Fragrance Allergen Rule (MoCRA) – expected now in May 2026.
- Facility Registration (MoCRA) – The guidelines and the portal to update the registrations have been update since the required biennial updates of facilities registered for the first time is coming up.

NAD

- Hair Treatment – Bond repair complex and 98% claim was substantiated. According to the NAD. But they determined that an inside-out repair claim was not. Additionally certain claims about hair texture were mixed in terms of the NAD decision. The picture that accompanied them was determined to be misleading. It was also determined that one of the tests for shine increase was only done on brown hair and thus the claim must have a qualifier that “results vary by shade” of hair.

Class Action Lawsuits

- For productions called cocoa butter but contained less than 1% of the ingredient-claims that the marketing is misleading. Stay tuned...

California

- CARB Survey - New due date for fragrance allergen info to be submitted- March 31, 2026.
- SCP
 - a. Released draft of preservatives in leave-on product containing formaldehyde, formaldehyde releasing agents and butylparaben. A workshop on this is on March 17, 2026. Comment period currently open.
 - b. Released findings on candidate chemicals in intimate care products.

New Jersey

- NJ S4509/A6295- Law for hemp containing cosmetic and other product product-It repeals previous regulation and updates parts of other laws.

Regulatory Updates

INTERNATIONAL

Canada

- Recall for cosmetic products not containing the proper hazard symbols, including aerosol, etc.
- Cosmetics Regulations – Introduced requirement to list certain fragrance allergens when at certain thresholds.

France

- Agency for Good, Environmental and Occupational Health and Safety (ANSES)– Announced a proposal that intends to expand the list of PFAs already listed by ECHA as CMR. Comment period open till March 27, 2026.



Ariana Farina

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History of Liquid Gold

As we drive past gas stations this past week, we stare in horror at the rise in prices, on a daily basis, mainly in our great state of California. With global wars raging on, the world supply of Petroleum is in short supply. This does not only affect our prices at the pump but also the supply of Petrochemicals and Plastics. Here is a brief history of the discovery and innovation of the components we use to store our products.

Long before petroleum plastics were discovered, human civilizations used natural polymers such as rubber and Shellac for functional and decorative purposes. These early materials inspired chemists in the 19th century to create Semi-synthetic plastics. In 1856, Alexander Parkes patented Parkesine, the first man-made plastic derived from cellulose nitrate. Later, in 1869, John Wesley Hyatt improved on the previous invention and transformed Parkesine into Celluloid, which found widespread use in film, eyeglasses and consumer goods. These 2 semi-synthetic materials were not petroleum-derived, but they laid the groundwork for fully synthetic plastics.

The true beginning of petroleum-based plastics is marked by the invention of Bakelite in 1907, created by chemist Leo Baekland (These scientists must have had huge egos to keep naming the products after themselves). Bakelite was the first fully synthetic plastic, produced from Phenol, derived from coal tar, fossil fuel byproduct and Formaldehyde. Because it was heat resistant and electrical non-conductive it was ideal for early electronics, telephones, radios and industrial components. Bakelite revolutionized manufacturing by proving that synthetic materials can out-perform natural derivatives.

The innovations into the field of plastics advanced into the 1920s. PVC (Polyvinyl Chloride) first appeared and later commercialized into construction, electrical insulation, raincoats, medical tubing and records.

Polystyrene was produced in the 1930s and was used in toys, castings and disposable packaging.

In 1933, Eric Fawcett and Reginald Gibson accidentally synthesized Polyethylene, which would become one of the most widely used plastics on Earth.

World Wars accelerated further innovations. WWII created massive demand for light-weight, durable materials. Nylon was invented by DuPont in 1935 and became vital for parachutes, ropes, and tires.

History of Liquid Gold

After 1945, there was a rapid expansion into the innovation of Petrochemicals and plastics. In 1951, J. Paul Hogan and Robert Banks of Phillips Petroleum discovered that catalysts can convert Ethylene and Propylene into solid polymers. This invention gave rise to the creation of High-density Polyethylene (HDPE), which is crucial to global plastics production. HDPE can be found in anything, from packaging, to automotive parts, containers and appliances.

PET (Polyethylene Terephthalate) was invented in the 1940s. It would eventually dominate the bottled beverage industry.

Our global consumption of plastics derived from Petrochemicals has grown by leaps and bounds. In the year 2023, global production of plastics reached over 400 million metric tons, with about 90% derived from fossil fuels. This rapid growth also comes with challenges to the environment. Durable plastics persist in the ecosystem, contributing to pollution. The world's over-use of plastics and some of the health hazards associated with certain packaging is giving rise to another all together different scientific innovation involving sustainable bioplastics and enhanced recycling technologies.

With the world's continuing demand for Petrochemicals it is easy to see why fossil fuels are much more than an energy source.



Erica Herrel

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Breaking the Biofilm Barrier: How Rhamnolipids Enable Next-Generation Oral Care Performance

Oral care formulators have never had more tools on the bench—fluorides, enzymes, antimicrobials, chelators, whiteners, flavor systems, and sensory modifiers. Yet one persistent challenge continues to limit real-world efficacy across toothpastes, rinses, and gels: biofilms.

Dental plaque is not simply “bacteria on a surface.” It is a structured microbial community embedded in an extracellular polymeric substance (EPS) matrix that behaves like a protective scaffold and diffusion barrier. This matrix creates micro-niches, slows the penetration of actives, and improves microbial tolerance—making it harder to remove the organisms associated with gingivitis, periodontitis, malodor, and tooth decay.¹ Biofilm-centric thinking is shifting the oral care playbook from “kill planktonic cells” toward “disrupt the matrix, detach the community, then control regrowth.”

This article focuses on an emerging approach: using biosurfactants—specifically rhamnolipids—as biofilm-active formulation tools. Rather than serving only as “foam and feel,” properly selected surfactants can directly influence wetting, detachment, solubilization, and the accessibility of actives at the tooth/biofilm interface.

Why surfactant choice matters more than we think

Surfactants in oral care are often treated as secondary ingredients. In practice, they control:

- Wetting and penetration into micro-textures on enamel and soft tissue
- Detachment forces that lift residues and biofilm fragments
- Solubilization of hydrophobic soils, flavor oils, and lipophilic actives
- Compatibility with antimicrobials/preservatives and mildness systems

Conventional oral surfactants (e.g., sulfates and some amphoteric) can deliver foam and cleaning, but they may also create tradeoffs in mucosal tolerance for sensitive users. In clinical and review literature, sodium lauryl sulfate (SLS) is frequently associated with increased oral mucosal irritation/desquamation in susceptible populations.^{2,3} This has fueled ongoing interest in sulfate-free and “microbiome-conscious” formulations that preserve performance while improving user experience.

Rhamnolipids: a biofilm-first glycolipid platform

Rhamnolipids are microbial glycolipids with strong interfacial activity and a large structural diversity across congeners.⁴ They have a long history of study in the context of surface tension reduction, emulsification, and antimicrobial/biofilm interactions.^{4,5}

In recent oral-microbiology literature, rhamnolipids have been shown to inhibit the growth and/or biofilm formation of key oral bacteria (including *Aggregatibacter actinomycetemcomitans*, *Streptococcus mutans*, and *Streptococcus sanguinis*) under defined experimental conditions.⁶ These findings are consistent with a broader pattern seen across multiple microbial systems: glycolipid biosurfactants can reduce adhesion, disrupt matrix organization, and increase detachment—especially when exposure time, concentration, and biofilm maturity are considered.^{5,7}

The biofilm problem: “It’s not just the microbe—it’s the matrix”

A useful way to visualize biofilm development is as a staged process: attachment → microcolony formation → maturation, with EPS acting as the structural “glue.”¹ Once mature, the biofilm behaves like an engineered material: diffusion slows, gradients form, and actives that work well in solution may underperform at the target surface.

This is why many modern oral care concepts are shifting from “stronger antimicrobial” to multi-mechanism plaque control, combining (1) disruption/detachment, (2) mechanical removal, and (3) regrowth management.

In-vitro evidence: rapid, dose-dependent reduction in mixed salivary biofilm viability

To better approximate real-world oral biofilms, one study design uses mixed salivary communities collected from multiple donors and cultured them on hydroxyapatite-coated pegs to mimic tooth enamel. A common implementation leverages MBEC plates, which enable the generation of multiple equivalent biofilms and standardized susceptibility testing.^{8 9}

In a mixed-community hydroxyapatite peg model with a short, consumer-relevant exposure window (1 minute), rhamnolipid treatment produced a clear, concentration-dependent reduction in biofilm viability across a tested range of concentrations (approximately 0.6% to 5% w/w), measured by CFU recovery.¹⁰ In addition, sequencing of recovered colonies in that work suggested that some organisms can be suppressed more strongly than others—highlighting a potential path toward more selective plaque management rather than broad, non-specific microbial suppression.¹⁰

These results support a practical hypothesis: biofilm disruption can occur rapidly, and surfactant selection can meaningfully change the effective action of an oral care formula in the limited time window consumers actually use.

How rhamnolipids may work in oral care systems (a practical mechanistic model)

Based on interfacial behavior, published biofilm literature, and in-vitro mixed-biofilm results, rhamnolipids can be framed as contributing in four overlapping modes:

1. Rapid wetting and surface coverage

Low interfacial thresholds support faster spreading across enamel and into micro-textures, improving contact between the formula and the biofilm surface.^{4 5}

2. Matrix penetration and detachment

Micelle formation and interfacial layers can mobilize hydrophobic EPS components and weaken adhesion forces, promoting detachment during rinsing/brushing.^{5 7}

3. Species-dependent microbial stress

Glycolipid biosurfactants can destabilize membranes and modulate adhesion pathways in ways that may be organism-dependent, potentially supporting more targeted outcomes.^{5 6}

4. *Enhanced solubilization of hydrophobes (flavor, actives, residues)*

Efficient micellization can improve robustness of flavor delivery, reduce flavor drop-out in ethanol-free systems, and increase solubilization of hydrophobic residues and actives.^{4 5}

Formulation relevance: where rhamnolipids fit best

From a development standpoint, rhamnolipids can be evaluated for:

- Ethanol-free, sulfate-free mouthwashes where solubilization and sensory “bloom” are difficult to achieve concurrently.⁴
- Biofilm-focused gels targeting plaque control and malodor management.
- Microbiome-conscious concepts where selective pressure against problem organisms is preferred over broad suppression.¹⁰
- Preservative synergy strategies where biofilm disruption reduces tolerance and improves the apparent performance of standard antimicrobial systems.^{5 7}

A note on responsible claims and next steps

In-vitro hydroxyapatite-peg biofilm models are valuable because they (1) create true surface-attached communities, (2) enable standardized replicate testing, and (3) can use exposure windows aligned with real consumer use.^{8 9} Still, translating lab findings into consumer claims requires careful progression:

- expand organism panels (including malodor-associated and periodontal species),
- quantify MIC/MBEC and time-kill kinetics across congeners,
- assess compatibility with fluoride systems, polymers, and flavor packages, and
- validate sensory, irritation potential, and stability in finished formulations.

Bottom line: biofilm-first performance with a consumer-friendly pathway

Modern oral care is increasingly about delivering performance without penalty—less irritation risk, lower active loads where possible, and better alignment with clean-label and sulfate-free demands. Rhamnolipids offer a compelling lever for this shift by targeting what most often limits efficacy: the matrix and adhesion mechanics of plaque, not only the microbes.

By combining strong interfacial activity with emerging evidence for rapid biofilm viability reduction in mixed salivary models—and published findings that biosurfactants can inhibit oral biofilm formation—rhamnolipids provide formulators a differentiated pathway for next-generation oral care innovation.^{6 10}

References

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About BioReNuva

BioReNuva is a biotechnology ingredients company developing next-generation biosurfactants for consumer applications, with a focus on high-performance glycolipids designed to improve both functional performance and end-user experience. BioReNuva applies modern strain engineering and fermentation to produce bio-based surfactants that enable efficient wetting, cleaning, and solubilization, while supporting milder formulation approaches and broad compatibility across common beauty, personal, and oral care systems. In oral care, BioReNuva's research emphasizes biofilm-focused mechanisms—targeting plaque adhesion and matrix integrity—to help formulators build more effective, microbiome-conscious products across rinses, gels, and pastes.



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COMMUNICATIONS RECAP: FEBRUARY MEETING

Thanks to everyone who participated in our very first Live LinkedIn Poll during February's meeting!



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Polling our audience LIVE from February's CaliSCC Meeting

We'll be picking 2 lucky participants for tonight's special prizes!

Where did you find success in 2025's challenging industry landscape?
The author can see how you vote. [Learn more](#)

Ingredient Innovation	50%
Community Collaboration	36%
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Agile Lead Times	14%

76 votes • Poll closed • [Remove vote](#)



Communications Co-Chairs Raymond Sullivan-Bojorquez and Catherine Hoang announce the results and winners of our Live LinkedIn Poll

COMMUNICATIONS

RECAP: FEBRUARY MEETING

Our winners received:

*a collectible #CALISCC hat and one ticket to our coastal
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Congratulations to Erick Jonathan Guzman (Above Rinaldi Labs) and Marla Palumbo (EME Ltd)

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