

News item

marketing communication

TenCate Cetex® thermoplastic composite for AstroMesh® deployable mesh reflector on NASA SMAP spacecraft

TenCate Advanced Composites, a leading developer and manufacturer of advanced composite materials, provides Northrop Grumman's Astro Aerospace to utilize TenCate Cetex® thermoplastic composites for the AstroMesh® deployable mesh reflector on the NASA Soil Moisture Active Passive spacecraft. This reflector uses TenCate Cetex® to achieve parabolic shape design, strength, durability, and weight savings.

NASA's Soil Moisture Active Passive (SMAP) spacecraft launched January 31, 2015, will provide global measurements of soil moisture and indicate whether it is frozen or thawed. The data will be used to understand the processes that link Earth's water, energy and carbon cycles and improve weather and climate prediction models.

The SMAP spacecraft, developed by NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena (California), USA, uses a 6 meter (19 foot) AstroMesh® deployable mesh reflector and boom from Astro Aerospace, a Northrop Grumman company. The reflector, which will spin atop the spacecraft at nearly 15 revolutions per minute, provides for total global mapping every 2 to 3 days. The reflector uses TenCate Cetex® thermoplastic composites to achieve the strength, durability, and weight savings needed.

Daniel Ochoa, Product Development Manager at Northrop Grumman's Astro Aerospace states: "TenCate Cetex® thermoplastics are integral to the structure of our mesh reflectors as they help to create the parabolic shape of the antenna. The material has been extensively tested as part of the unit prior to flight, and is durable and stiff, which is critical to the functioning of the antenna."

**TenCate Advanced Composites
Morgan Hill (California), United States of America, Monday 23 March 2015**

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