

## **Spurt in US FDA approved plants push up demand for Borosilicate glass vials**

Wednesday, May 12, 2010 08:00 IST

**Nandita Vijay, Bangalore**

Piramal Glass, a leading pharma packaging major has stepped up its supplies of high value USP Type I Borosilicate glass vials for injectables and infusions. The increased demand for the same is driven by the US FDA approved formulation facilities in the country.

There are over 169 US FDA plants in India. These facilities need to adhere to the international regulatory norms which call for specific glass pack requirements in packaging. "This has increased sales of high value USP Type I Borosilicate glass vials used to pack injectables and infusions," Vijay Shah, managing director, Piramal Glass told Pharmabiz in an email interaction.

Glass is an important option to pack liquid pharmaceuticals particularly injectables and infusions. The choice of the packaging material is determined by the requirement of product stability within a particular packaging mode. Within glass itself, there are three categories directed by US Pharmacopoeia. These are USP Type I, II & III. The differentiation is based on the degree of neutrality with the packed content. Hence, for certain pharmaceutical products, it is mandatory to pack in glass. Injectable market is expected to expand in India going by the increasing number of US FDA approved facilities, he added.

The company claims it is the largest manufacturer of flaconage glass used in pharmaceuticals and exports to over 50 countries. It has an installed capacity of 1,115 tonnes a day. In the last two years, Piramal has increased its production capacity by over 45 per cent primarily through acquisition of facilities in the US apart from increasing capacity in India and Sri Lanka.

Stating that consolidation plans are being worked out for the next two years, he ruled out Greenfield expansion but at the same time indicated that acquisition would be the way forward for which the company has earmarked Rs 160 crore for the next three years.

Sharing his insights on the industry scene, Shah said that currently glass producers manufacturing amber glass are bogged down by excess capacity syndrome and volatile currency rates. Customarily orals dosage forms are packed in amber glass but there has been a major shift towards PET packaging. Fortunately, the amber capacity is interchangeable and manufacturers could easily switch to Beeter bottle production.

However, there is tremendous opportunity for exports to neighbouring countries apart from the developed markets of US and West Europe, he said.