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The Rubber Letter

A $68.9bn global market, a 400,000 t natural rubber deficit and smart seals: our first monthly briefing.



FROM THE EDITOR

The rubber industry is going through a period of deep transformation. Between global tension over raw materials, exploding demand linked to

electric vehicles and the smart-seal revolution, 2026 looks set to be a decisive year for sealing manufacturers.

KEY FIGURES

$68.9bn	+8 %/year	400,000 t
Value of the global rubber market	Forecast annual growth through 2035	Global natural rubber deficit in 2026

Industry news

SHORTAGE

Record natural rubber deficit

ANRPC forecasts a 400,000-tonne shortfall on the world market. Prices have jumped 25% since January 2026, driven by China's automotive recovery.

MARKET

Prices expected to rise 20 to 30%

After years of underinvestment, many Asian producers have abandoned rubber trees. Weather disruption is worsening the strain on global supply.

INNOVATION

Smart seals with built-in sensors

Real-time monitoring of pressure, temperature and wear. Predictive maintenance cuts unplanned downtime.

AUTOMOTIVE

EVs: a boom in sealing demand

The rise of electric vehicles is boosting specialised seals. The automotive market is expected to reach $33.2bn by 2034 (+5.1%/year).

Trends & outlook

01

Sustainability & eco-design

Bio-based elastomers and green processes are booming. RSPO certification is growing strongly in Europe.

02

Local sourcing

Faced with logistics strain, manufacturers favour regional suppliers to secure production.

03

Electric vehicles

Vehicle electrification opens new markets: battery protection, thermal management, high voltage.

04

Industry 4.0

Connected seals with sensors for predictive maintenance and fewer production stoppages.

TECHNICAL TIP OF THE MONTH

Adapting your seals to the new constraints

01

Natural rubber shortage

Favour synthetic alternatives (EPDM, NBR, FKM) according to the application and chemical constraints.

02

Electric vehicles

Specify seals resistant to specific coolant fluids and high electrical voltages.

03

Rising prices

Plan your purchasing with buffer stocks and long-term framework contracts to secure your costs.

DID YOU KNOW?

The French rubber industry generates €12.7bn in revenue across 225 companies and nearly 470 industrial sites. The sector will offer more than 1,000 jobs a year through 2030.

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