

ORBIT 2003 (Perth) Proceedings
“Biological Processing of Organics”
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PREFACE

Nothing is more constant than change! The handling of organic residual materials is currently experiencing the truth of this rule. As I was asked by the city of Tunis 18 years ago to examine the question if it was reasonable to establish the composting of waste, I certainly had to answer “yes” but the farmers refused the application of composts. So the project was filed. Last year the Tunisian agriculture demanded actively the composting of the city’s organic wastes as they needed urgently compost for the cultivation of plants, basically to improve the capacity of soils to detain water thus reducing water consumption and to decrease soil erosion. What an important revision of opinions. Produced amounts of compost increased by the factor 250 within the last 18 years in Europe. What a change.

At the same time it could be observed that the focus of scientific investigations was shifted from pure technical aspects to new topics such as possible compost applications and compost quality assurance. This is essential as only best compost qualities, safe and deliberately produced, find a ready market. As the farmers understood the benefits of compost application, the compost producers have to grasp that only high qualities will satisfy consumers thus guarantee constant sales.

I reviewed the programs of the past conferences prior to the ORBIT 2003 and they reflect this development exactly. The ORBIT has been an open forum since its onset for topics related to biological waste treatment, though the focal points have shifted from the technique to the application. Plant engineering and construction were dominant in the beginning, though the ORBIT conference 2001 in Seville was already focused on quality assurance and application themes. The ORBIT is here a trend setting event.

A further novelty can be observed. The spectrum is widening. Composting has possessed a dominating position during the last conferences and now anaerobic techniques have gained ground. This development can be stated worldwide and the current ORBIT 2003 stays abreast of these changes.

Nothing is more constant than change. New topics, and moreover, a new region can be experienced with the ORBIT 2003 conference. This regional component, besides the internationality, is brought in by this year’s partner, the Murdoch University. I wish to express here my sincere thanks to the Murdoch University for organizing this conference. I would also like to acknowledge Waste Management Board of Government of Western Australia, the Co-operative Research Centre for Environmental Biotechnology (EB CRC), the City of Stirling and Atlas Group for providing some sponsorship for the conference.

I wish all participants interesting experiences and lots of discussions. I hope that all readers of the proceedings might find useful information and invite all to communicate with the authors.

Weimar, April 2003

W. Bidlingmaier

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