

EDITORIAL

I am very pleased to welcome you to this issue of Bioprocessing of Solid Waste and Sludge. This year has been full of surprises in many geographical areas and in many topics. However, to some of us, it does not come as a surprise that the level of interest on biological processing of solid wastes continues to grow in many parts of the world.

The political and regulatory climate in the European Union is such that biological processing of organic residues will continue to be widely applied. Most member states of the European Union are emphasizing the collection and processing of source-separated organic residues through composting and on converting some of the residues into a gaseous fuel by means of anaerobic digestion. The solid residue from the digestion process typically is composted and applied to land.

The growth in the use of composting for stabilizing organic matter continues in North America as well. Unfortunately the United States has not, as yet, developed a comprehensive policy aimed at the recovery of resources from organic residues. At the present time, the growth in the use of bioprocessing is due to various diversion goals set forth by individual states. Municipalities in those states are recovering and processing different amounts of the organic fraction of municipal solid wastes. In addition, various entities have identified a number of waste streams that can be converted into useful soil amendments or fuels. Some of these wastes include: animal manures, and agricultural and food processing residues.

Bioprocessing of residues also is being explored and utilized in Australia and in isolated cases in some countries in South America, Asia, Africa, and in the South Pacific.

Recent events and articles published in both the popular and in the scientific literature remind us of the importance of decreasing our dependence on fossil fuels. A reduction in the use of petroleum for the production of fuels and fertilizers through bioprocessing of solid wastes and sludge, in addition to the well-known environmental benefits, can have a major positive impact on the economy of a region. Furthermore, a decrease in the use of fossil fuels can also have significant benefits on foreign policy and the security of many countries.

Renewable energy from organics recycling was the subject of a recent conference organized by BioCycle and co-sponsored by several entities. The conference was held in Des Moines, Iowa, USA and was attended by more than 200 participants. The conference covered a number of interesting topics including: conserving energy through recycling by-products, utilizing agricultural and commercial feedstocks, producing energy and compost from municipal solid waste and others.

I would like to encourage every professional in the field of solid waste to provide reliable input to decision makers so that the production of energy from organics recycling and other biomass is considered in modern energy policy worldwide. I would also like to take this opportunity to remind you that it should be a moral obligation of waste managers in industrialized countries to provide every type of assistance to professionals in developing countries to help them manage their organic residues in a responsible manner.

Finally, it is the intention of the Editors of the BSWS to continue to support and promote organics recycling on a worldwide basis in cooperation with several organizations such as BioCycle, JORA, the US EPA and others and to provide you with the latest and most accurate information on bioprocessing in a timely basis.

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