

Introduction

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The series of SREN workshops carried out under patronage and sponsorship of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations and focused on application of anaerobic digestion for agriculture and agroindustries was initiated in 1989 in Zaragoza (Spain) by the Federal Agricultural Research Centre Braunschweig. Further workshops were carried out in Braunschweig, Germany (1992); Migal, Israel (1994); Gent, Belgium (1997); and Athens, Greece (1999). Following the decision of the last workshop in Athens, the 7th FAO/SREN workshop took place in Moscow (Russia) May 19–22, 2002.

The purpose of the seventh workshop in this series was to provide a forum for discussion of the recent experience and advances as well as sustainability issues dealing with application of anaerobic technologies for waste (water) treatment, reuse, and renewable energy production. A wide spectrum of scientific and technical topics was presented:

1. Fundamentals of anaerobic microbial conversions: recent findings and modeling.
2. Anaerobic digestion for treatment and reuse of animal wastes.
3. (Co)digestion of agricultural wastes/crops and (municipal) solid wastes.
4. Integrated technologies on the basis of anaerobic digestion.
5. Biogas potential and utilization—state-of-the-art and future applications, sanitary requirements during anaerobic digestion.

The presentations showed that anaerobic digestion and the production of biogas is a key technology to reduce environmental impact, to generate renewable energy, and to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere.

The articles in this special issue of *Applied Biochemistry and Biotechnology* were drawn from the 37 oral and 18 poster presentations. We would like

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In addition to FAO, the workshop was sponsored by ABS (Sweden), Biothane Systems International (The Netherlands), Paques (The Netherlands), and Egast-21st century (Russia).

Overall, we believe that the 7th FAO/SREN workshop continued the traditions established by previous events of this series in providing both technical and informal interactions among representatives of industry, academia, and other research centers working in the field of anaerobic digestion. The 8th FAO/SREN workshop is scheduled for 2005 in Uppsala, Sweden.