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Editorial

Fats and oils as renewable feedstock for the chemical industry

The Paris UN climate conference from 30 November to 11 December 2015 has delivered a new universal climate change agreement. The aim of this new agreement is to put the world firmly on track to a low-carbon, sustainable future that keeps the global temperature rise under 2°C, as claimed by the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.^[1] The increasing and sustainable use of renewable feedstocks on the way to this ambitious goal is of utmost importance.

Thus, a few days earlier, the Global Bioeconomy Summit 2015 “Making Bioeconomy Work for Sustainable Development” held by the German Bioeconomy Council took place from 25th to 26th of November in Berlin, Germany. This event was the first community building platform to discuss bioeconomy policies globally. The UN Food and Agriculture Organisation, the EU Commission and the German Government endorsed this special event and the German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, had assumed patronage. She stated in her welcome address: “The number of people in the world is growing, whereas the earth’s natural resources are limited. This simple fact poses one of the greatest challenges we face today: how can we succeed in meeting the needs of present and future generations alike? A biobased economy offers a promising prospect. It relies on renewable resources and scientific findings. This means that **renewable resources** and biotechnological processes primarily help to safeguard food security and are also used to generate sustainable energy and in industrial manufacturing.” The Global Economy Summit issued a communiqué addressing the key areas of action, *inter alia*: “Bioeconomy innovations are driven by research that allows for rapid progress in the life sciences and related knowledge areas. Combining knowledge in biosciences with inventions in chemistry, energy, primary industry, information technology as well as in engineering, is crucial and especially promising.”^[2]

Equally important and interesting, the G7-Alliance on Resource Efficiency held the conference “Innovative Biobased Products: Opportunities for substituting non-renewable resources” two days earlier in Berlin. At the G7 summit held in Schloss Elmau on 7th and 8th of June 2015 under the German Presidency, the heads of state and government of Germany, France, Italy, the United Kingdom, Japan, Canada and the United States recognized the importance of the conservation and efficient use of natural resources, in particular for the industry’s competitive capacity and for environmental and climate protection. To support knowledge sharing and best practice, they founded the “G7 Alliance on Resource Efficiency” with the goal of conserving natural resources and of using them effectively. Sustainably produced renewable resources can substitute fossil resources and hence make an essential contribution to their conservation and climate protection.^[3]

Remarkably, the sustainable use of renewable resources has become a hot topic of global politics. Fats and oils, including terpenes, are, beside carbohydrates and lignin, the most important renewable feedstock available from biomass. EJLST published a yearly special issue “Fats and Oils as Renewable Feedstock for the Chemical Industry” since seven years based on the respective international workshops organized in Emden and Karlsruhe/Germany. The 8th Workshop on Fats and Oils as Renewable Feedstock for the Chemical Industry took place March 29–31, 2015 in Karlsruhe, Germany, organized by abiosus e.V. in cooperation with the Agency of Renewable Resources (FNR), Germany. Thirty lectures and more than forty posters provided an update on the newest developments in the field of fats and oils as renewable feedstock for the chemical industry. 15 papers were selected for this special issue.

¹<http://unfccc.int/2860.php>

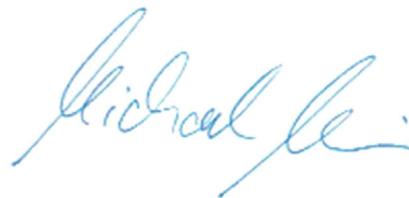
²<http://gbs2015.com/home/>

³<http://www.g7-biobasedproducts2015.de/>

Eventually, we would like to invite you to participate at the 9th workshop on “Fats and Oils as Renewable Feedstock for the Chemical Industry”, which will be held again at the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT), Karlsruhe, Germany, from March 19–21, 2017. Hopefully you will have the opportunity to participate, and we are looking forward to exciting and fruitful discussions with you, the fats and oils community. The program and additional information will be available in September 2016 (<http://abiosus.org/meetings.html.de>).



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