Overview

The Fourth International Symposium on Feedstock Recycling of Plastics (ISFR 2007) was held from September 16 to 20, 2007, on Jeju Island, Korea. The topics were not just limited to chemical processes such as pyrolysis, solvolysis, and gasification carried out to obtain energy and feedstocks for the chemical industry, but also covered the impact of politics and society.

First, I would like to thank Dr. Chung and Dr. Na for their great hospitality and for the successful organization of this conference, despite being hampered by the typhoon that was responsible for the late arrival of many participants, making it necessary to reorganize the first couple of days. We are also pleased to compile the special issue “Chemical Feedstock Recycling (5)” and appreciate the large number of submissions we have received from many participants.

With previous symposia having been held in Sendai (Japan, 1999), Oostende (Belgium, 2002), and Karlsruhe (Germany, 2005), this was the second time that the symposium had visited east Asia, naturally highlighting the noteworthy advances made in the host country, Korea. Professor Kim provided an interesting overview of waste management in Korea, allowing comparison with the systems in Japan and Europe provided by Mr. Ida, Professors Serrano, and Buekens. The selection of topics also showed the good exchange of ideas between industry and academia.

The focus of this conference was again the classical recycling techniques such as pyrolysis and solvolysis. Next to the well-established methods, newer techniques were intro-

duced. Ball mill degradation and microwave heating techniques, for example, provide new interesting opportunities for the recycling and degradation of used plastics. The use of oyster shells for the dechlorination of PVC combines the disposal of two different materials. Therefore, only a few new results from the field of mechanical recycling were presented. Recent developments include chemical technologies in the mechanical recycling in order to keep up with the increasing variety of materials. All three major recycling processes mechanical and feedstock recycling and thermal energy recovery, as well, will have their place in a future integrated waste management.

More and more presentations focus on the use of biomaterials. Since the recent oil price rises, affecting also the price of plastics, alternative materials for the production of plastics and energy have become more attractive. Biowastes are not only obtained from forestry and agriculture as a renewable source for organic raw materials and energy, but also from construction and demolition sites, where biomaterials are often heavily contaminated and are combined with other materials. In order to take account of this development, the focus of the next symposium, ISFR 2009, will also be concentrated on these materials.

Finally, I am pleased to announce that the Fifth ISFR, under its new name, the International Symposium on Feedstock and Mechanical Recycling of Polymeric Materials, will take place in Chengdu (China) in October 2009, hosted by Professor Wang.

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