

PRESS RELEASE

International Summer School – A scientific platform for the next generation of researchers

Zwingenberg and Frankfurt, November 29, 2011: The DECHEMA-VAAM Section on Biotransformations invited selected junior researchers hailing from 18 countries to the second “Summer School for Biotransformations 2011” held in Bad Herrenalb, Germany, from 22 to 25 August 2011. The 2011 Summer School for Biotransformations was organised, among others, by Jürgen Eck (BRAIN AG, Zwingenberg), Andreas Liese (Hamburg University of Technology, TUHH), Andreas Schmid (Dortmund University), Jens Schrader (DECHEMA, Frankfurt) and Christoph Syldatk (Karlsruhe Institute of Technology, KIT).

Participation in the Summer School was limited. A distinguished panel of experts selected 86 up-and-coming researchers from a total of more than 200 applications. The participants flocked to the northern part of the Black Forest from 18 different countries to converse about applied biotechnology issues. A particularly noteworthy item on the agenda were the so-called “speed lectures” – a true challenge for the 86 young scientists, as they were asked to present their work in a mere two minutes to the audience. A total of 26 speakers from the worlds of academia and business discussed the development of novel enzymes and production

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processes and provided insights into state-of-the-art methods to optimise enzymatic properties for applications in industrial processes.

Many lecturers also touched upon innovation management, highlighting the need to speed up the development and implementation of processes leading to new biotech products - from the first scientific idea to market maturity.

Alfredo Aguilar, head of the European Commission's Biotechnologies Unit based in Brussels, also underscored how important this transformation process is. He made clear that a scientific invention must not end with the writing of a paper, as he called upon the young delegates to interact with researchers from other fields of science to help ideas find their way to commercial production. Speaking to the participants of the Summer School he said: "Think and work more to get the results that are both useful and in demand by our society. In your future professional lives you will be interacting not only with other scientists, not only with industry, but also with the people in the street, with politicians, with philosophers, with bioethics etc."

A good example of academic research successfully interacting with business partners is the "Biocatalysis2021" cluster, focussing on the exploration of industrially relevant biocatalysts made from micro-organisms. Andreas Liese (TUHH), himself a member of the cluster management and several "Biocatalysis2021" projects, presented some thoughts on ecological and social compatibility in his lecture titled "Non-Conventional Biotransformations". He emphasised that a close interaction between academic research and industrial implementation of the results will help all partners involved to make research results both a scientific and economic success.

In his presentation on innovation generation, Jürgen Eck, BRAIN AG's CTO, pointed out that "innovation always depends on individuals and the environment in which they operate." He went on to underscore that "it is

exactly events such as the Summer School that help create the environment needed to clear the way for inventions and innovations." In this context the continuous expansion of one's individual network of scientists is a key asset according to Eck.

Concluding the event Christoph Syldatk (KIT) and Jens Schrader (DECHEMA) said that introducing young researchers to the various facets of bio-economics, pointing out existing difficulties to them and creating new opportunities for interaction must continue to remain an important objective in the future.

Thanks to the commitment of all invited speakers and organisers – such as DECHEMA, VAAM and BRAIN AG – as well as the focused work of the selected researchers, the second Summer School "Biotransformations 2011" was a true success. Both participants and organisers agreed that the Biotransformations Summer School tradition must continue and that a follow-up event is to take place soon. You are cordially invited to participate in the workshop "Catalyzing Bioeconomy" organized by the Section on Biotransformation, which will take place in Frankfurt am Main on April 24-25, 2012.

About BRAIN AG

BRAIN AG is an industrial “white” biotech company which discovers and develops novel bioactive natural compounds and proprietary enzymes for its partners and customers in the chemical and pharmaceutical industries, as well as the food and cosmetics industries.

With its unique approach to the discovery and production of new biological compounds and biocatalysts, the company achieves creative solutions by harnessing nature’s untapped biodiversity. Its success is built on its proprietary BioArchive comprising millions of genes, proteins and metabolic pathways from microbial isolates and metagenome libraries. Since its foundation in 1993, BRAIN has entered into over 70 strategic collaborations with nearly all the relevant companies within the chemical industry as e.g. BASF, Ciba, Clariant, Evonik Degussa, DSM, Genencor, Henkel, Nutrinova, RWE, Sandoz, Schering, Südzucker and Symrise, to name but a few. Currently, BRAIN employs 99 highly skilled people. For his groundbreaking industrial biotechnology activities for a sustainable „biologisation of the chemical industry“ using nature’s toolbox for industrial processes, BRAIN CEO Dr. Holger Zinke received the “Deutschen Umweltpreis 2008” of the “Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt”, DBU.

www.brain-biotech.de

About DECHEMA

DECHEMA, Society for Chemical Engineering and Biotechnology, is a non-profit scientific and technical organisation based in Frankfurt am Main, Germany, which was established in 1926. Today it has more than 5,500 members, among them scientists, engineers, companies, organisations and institutes. One core aim of DECHEMA is to promote and support research and development in the fields of chemical engineering and biotechnology.

www.dechema.de

About VAAM

The Association for General and Applied Microbiology (VAAM) is home to some 3,000 scientists from the field of microbiology. VAAM promotes the exchange of scientific information and the co-operation of its members with a view to translating the results of microbiological research to the benefit of society and the environment.

www.vaam.de

Link to the picture gallery:

<http://brain-biotech.de/slideshow/summerschool/slideshow.html>

Pictures

Group picture



From left to right: Florian Hollfelder, University of Cambridge, UK,
Alfredo Aguilar, Biotechnologies Unit, European Commission, Belgium,
Jürgen Eck, co-organiser and CTO of BRAIN AG, Germany

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