

Brazilian Chemistry - always shining brightly!

For quite some time now Brazilian Chemistry has demonstrated an undeniably high performance. Great realizations have been noteworthy over the last few months within the academic scenario as well as industry; this has resulted in considerable coverage by the Brazilian press and an extraordinary amount by the foreign press.

First we will have a look at this last one, more specifically, at the *Chemical and Engineering News* (C&EN), which is a publication of the American Chemical Society (ACS). At the end of last year, this prestigious periodical had an article highlighting the ambitious plans of Oxiteno, with considerations made by Pedro Wongtschowski, its CEO, all about the plans for internationalization and for expansion, including the acquisition of overseas companies having to do with the petrochemical and surfactant sectors.

It is of no little matter to point out that according to Wongtschowski, there are plans in the amount of 3.1 billion dollars to build plants for the production of polyethylene, polypropylene, ethylene oxide (EO), styrene and purified terephthalic acid. Furthermore, this article states certain numbers for the company (data from 2005): sales → 661 million dollars; P&D expenses → 7.1 million dollars. In 2006 the periodical published another article once again mentioning the Brazilian petrochemical sector, reporting Latin America's great plans, highlighting the Brazilian situation with statements by Sérgio Gabrielli, president of Petrobras, who spoke of investments of 3.3 billion dollars until the year 2012. As we can see, this is no small sum.

With the caption "*Brazilian, U.S. chemists forge stronger ties to advance biomass conversion to fuels and chemicals*", this issue of C&EN stresses as historical the symposium held in Águas de Lindóia, in the Brazilian state of Minas Gerais, in May 2007, which was realized thanks to the efforts of the Brazilian Chemical Society (*Sociedade Brasileira de Química - SBQ*), the American Chemical Society and *Embrapa*. At this event, attended by scientists and policy formulators, the topic was the establishment of viable bases to create sustainable scientific collaboration between Brazil and the United States. The development of biomass conversion into fuel, chemical products with a high aggregate and material value, was targeted. According to Gale A. Buchanan, undersecretary of research topics, education and economy of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, "collaboration between our two great agricultural nations will reap benefits for all."

To digress: it is important to point out that in June 2007, The Brazilian Society of Chemistry together with the Royal Chemical Society (RSC) of Great Britain, carried out the symposium, *Chemistry and Innovation: from spin-out to market*, during its 30th annual reunion. This symposium marked the beginning of a series of events which will be carried out with different scientific institutions, both British and Brazilian, to promote scientific cooperation, and the transfer of knowledge and experience between the two countries. The event was a definitive landmark for the Brazilian Chemical Society (SBQ) pro-active position in the agenda of discussions on technological development and innovation within Brazilian chemical industries. This concern, it must be stated, is of no recent date but has been a long time coming. The SBQ has participated actively both in actions and programs together with the CGEE, Center for Gestation and Strategic Studies (*Centro de Gestão e Estudos Estratégicos*), and with the Brazilian Agency for Industrial Development (ABDI), this last through the program Talents for Innovation (*Talentos para Inovação*).

Meanwhile, the C&EN cover article was published in June 2007: *Biofuels in Brazil*. However, what is most noteworthy, and certainly a source of pride to us, is the caption "*Brazil has become a model and ally for the U.S. in the pursuit of sustainable bioethanol, biodiesel, and bioelectricity*".

This is a nine-page article - nine pages!!! It tells the whole saga of research with biocombustibles in Brazil, from the group of visionaries thirty years ago, right up to present day developments. According to Professor Foster A. Agblevor of *Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University*, "the most impressive aspect of the Brazilian bioenergy industry is the integration of sugar cane production, processing, production and equipment, the recycling of residues as fertilizers and the generation of electricity using bagasse".

All these stories of the recent successes of Brazilian Chemistry recognized both nationally and internationally are a consequence of many correct decisions taken over many years and made by many different authors.

May the success of the present serve us as inspiration for the future. The challenge has now been launched...

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