Winner of Lettinga Award 2013 announced

The winner of the Lettinga Award 2013, a prize of 25,000 euro, has been announced: Shiva Salek, PhD student from TU Delft, with her project proposal: “Adding value to Anaerobic Digestion technology by production of biobased materials (biocement and fertilizer) and methane enriched biogas using alkaline silicate minerals”.

In the winning project proposal, the TU Delft team will investigate the production of biobased materials by the anaerobic digestion (AD) process when applying minerals for CO_2 sequestration. The impact on the biogas composition and value will be evaluated as well as the cement quality. The economical values received from production of these materials can further rationalize the costs of CO_2 sequestration for climate change mitigation purposes. The use of minerals in AD seems promising. Other research groups are also exploring its potential.

The Lettinga Award was initiated in 2001 and is granted every three years. The focus of the call for 2013 was on Breakthrough Innovation in Anaerobic Technology. The award committee called for innovative approaches, putting anaerobic digestion technologies in the core of the foreseen sustainable society. The following sponsors were fully convinced of the potential of AD technologies in this development and decided to support the fifth Lettinga Award: Paques, Nijhuis Water Technology, Waterleau, Veolia Water – Biothane and LeAF.

The jury consisted of representatives of the sponsors and academia. From many applications that met the criteria, the jury had the challenging task to select one winner. Nevertheless, they unanimously agreed. The winning proposal was described by some of the judges as:
“An elegant combination of anaerobic sludge treatment, biobased product and green gas quality”.
Also, it was described as “A very bold proposal; as bold as Gatze Lettinga approached his research topics in the past. This was the only proposal using AD to produce bio-based products, and not even simple organic building blocks or bio-fuels, but for society crucial inorganic chemicals like cement and fertilizers, while simultaneously also developing a very interesting CO_2 sequestration technology.
The latter will further contribute to the carbon-foot-print reduction which AD already provides so strongly. The proposal crosses the existing research borders of AD, for which the applicants should be complimented and should receive support. If successful; many research groups will follow in their footsteps. The proposal is a small project, with potentially large implications.”

The winner of the Lettinga Award 2013 was announced at the very successful 13th World Congress on Anaerobic Digestion, that took place 25 - 28 June 2013 in Santiago De Compostela in Spain.

More information about the Lettinga Award can be found at the LeAF website.