

## News and Views

### WREXHAM — ANOTHER GREAT SUCCESS

Since its inception in 1981 the International Conference on Gums and Stabilisers for the Food Industry has been held bi-annually at the North East Wales Institute for Higher Education in Wrexham. This year's meeting held from July 13-17, 1987, continued the tradition of a very successful blend of academics, users and suppliers. Many of the latter, along with manufacturers of rheological equipment, participated in the associated industrial exhibition.

Of the 56 oral presentations and papers, all but ten were concerned with aspects of carbohydrate polymers, the majority of the remainder covering protein functionality. Despite the title of the meeting most of the polysaccharide papers reported structural or rheological studies and investigations of gelation mechanisms rather than direct food applications. The meeting was therefore of interest to users of polysaccharides in non-food areas and indeed there was a particularly thought-provoking contribution from Tye of Marine Colloids dealing with non-food applications of carrageenans resulting from their interaction with polyols.

I felt the standard of the academic papers was high and was left with an impression of optimism in that a consensus appeared to be developing on the gelation mechanisms for several polysaccharides and rapid progress has been made in understanding the structure and properties of the gellan group of polysaccharides. Controversy still exists over the mechanism for the formation of mixed gels however.

New ideas that emerged included the suggestion from de Vries that pectin is initially synthesised with a regular repeating unit of 5 esterified and 1 non-esterified galacturonate residue and the solution by Oakenfull and co-workers of the rheological problem posed by the penetration by a cylindrical probe of an elastic solid constrained in a dish. It appears that this will allow a fundamental elastic modulus to be determined from a gel test that can easily be carried out routinely in a quality control environment.

I felt the return to a five day meeting was a success and hope the organisers will keep to the same format in 1989. Drier weather and an easier course for the Kelco sponsored golf competition are the only

major changes I would like Professor Phillips and the organising committee to consider. More seriously it was a bit unfortunate that the Wrexham meeting started the week following the 2nd International Workshop on Plant Polysaccharides, Structure and Function held at Grenoble in France.

**J. R. Mitchell**

## SUMMARIES OF UK PATENT APPLICATIONS

**Cellulose Fibre Reinforced Elastomer Sheets.** GB 2185 030A. Filed 8 January 1986, published 8 July 1987. Applicants — TBA Industrial Products Ltd, Manchester, England.

Fibre reinforced elastomer sheet is made by 'it' colendering a curable elastic dough, fillers and curing agents, together with a fibrous reinforcement constituted by cellulose fibres which may have been subjected to a preliminary opening treatment. Uses are primarily in gasket manufacture.

**Production of Water-insoluble Alkali Metal Salts of Carboxyalkyl Cellulose.** GB 2185 484A. Filed 12 December 1986, published 22 July 1987. Applicants — Dai Ichi Kogyo Seiyaku Co. Ltd.

The method comprises reacting a water-soluble alkali metal salt of carboxyalkyl cellulose with an aliphatic hydroxycarboxylic acid, e.g. glycolic, lactic malic, tartronic, methyltartronic, citric or tartaric acid. The product has a high water adsorption and retentivity and is useful as a water absorbent material and as a disintegrating agent for medicinal tablets.

**Adhesive Substances.** GB 2183 665A. Filed 15 January 1987, published 22 July 1987. Inventors — Bass plc, Burton, England.

Yeast used in brewing, preferably *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*, is treated with alkali and then neutralised, or alternatively an enzyme such as  $\beta$ -glucanase is used to break down the cell wall constituents. The partially disrupted cell wall material then has useful adhesive properties.

**Protection of Proteins and the like.** GB 2187 191A. Filed 9 July 1986, published 3 September 1987. Inventors — Quadrant Bioresources Ltd, Bedfordshire, England.

Sensitive biological materials including polysaccharides such as agarose can be preserved by drying at ambient temperature and at atmospheric pressure in the presence of trehalose. A porous matrix impregnated with trehalose is provided as a receiver for the liquid sample to be dried.

## NOTICES

● = new entry; for full information on other meetings refer to the issue of this journal given in brackets.

### 1987

**Ninth International Enzyme Engineering Conference**  
Santa Barbara, California, USA, 4–9 Oct. [*see* 7 (1) 86]

**Biotechnology/Food Industry Exhibition and Conference**  
London, UK, 10–11 Dec. [*see* 7 (1) 86]

### 1988

**Food Colloids — International Symposium**  
Sharnbrook, Bedford, UK, 13–15 April [*see* 7 (4) 324]

**Tenth Cellulose Conference**  
Syracuse, NY USA, 29 May–1 June. [*see* 7 (3) 245]

**4th International Conference on Chitin and Chitosan**  
Trondheim, Norway, 22–24 August. [*see* 7 (2) 167]

- **Biochemical Engineering VI**  
Santa Barbara, California, USA, 2–7 October.  
Further details from:  
Engineering Foundation  
345 East 47th Street  
New York, NY 10017  
USA

### 1989

**Cellucon 89. Cellulose: Sources and Exploitation**  
UK, 11–15 September. [*see* 7 245]