

Editorial

There is an increasing awareness among the general public of the importance of the intelligent use of earth's biological resources for the production of chemicals, materials and precursors, resulting in an economy that is turning towards considering the valuable contributions offered by these resources. To face the present challenges of reducing the use of nonrenewable resources and the negative impact of polymer pollution on the environment, the world's scientists are making their contribution by unraveling biological structures and studying and developing new materials and applications from biomass resources.

The scientific community in Latin America is consciously participating in these efforts, and since this region is the producer of a substantial percentage of the world's biomass resources, it is very interested in the new developments. One example of this interest was the II Workshop on Biodegradable Polymers and Biocomposites (BIOPOLL, Argentina) that was held along with the III Workshop on Biobased Polyurethane Composites with Natural Fillers (BIOPURFIL) in the city of Buenos Aires, Argentina, on November 11–13, 2015, which was chaired by Dr. Analía Vázquez and Dr. Mirta Aranguren.

Counted among the more than hundred participants from Latin America, North America and Europe was an important percentage of young researchers and doctoral students. The sessions included recent scientific advances in the topics covered, as well as a final round table with the participation of innovators from the academic and industrial sectors. Contributions from lecture, oral and poster presentations have been selected for this special issue of the *Journal of Renewable Materials* in the belief that they will be of interest to all those working in the area of science and technology of biobased polymers and composites.

The first two articles are devoted to the study of biopolymers. The first one presents an original analysis and modeling of the structure of biological liquid crystalline structures as nature plywood analogues.

The second one deals with the denaturation process of type I bovine collagen.

The third article, which presents a study of nanocomposites made from biodegradable polymers, focuses on the preparation of clay nanocomposites from a blend of poly(lactic acid) and poly(butyleneadipate-co-terephthalate).

The next articles are devoted to the subject of bio-based polyurethanes, using vegetable oil- and resin-based polyols. One of them addresses the partial replacement of synthetic polyols by a rapeseed oil-based counterpart and glycerol in the production of polyurethane-microcellulose nanocomposites. In the following article, the authors investigate the properties of rigid polyurethane foams produced from a soybean oil-based polyol with water as foaming agent. The final article focuses on the preparation of rigid polyurethane foams for thermal insulation purposes, based on tall oil and including the use of poly(ethylene terephthalate) (PET) from recycled bottles.

As guest editors, we are confident that the different subjects covered by this selection represent a valuable contribution because of the nature of the raw materials involved, as much as the original approach of some of the research articles.

Finally, we would like to take the opportunity to thank all the contributing authors for their excellent work as well as the organizing committees of the workshop that were responsible for this successful event. Also, Prof. Alessandro Gandini is to be acknowledged for his help with the editorial work on some of the submitted articles.

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