

Book reviews

Biomass for Energy and Industry, 4th E.C. Conference, edited by G. GRASSI, B. DELMON, J.-F. MOLLE, AND H. ZIBETTA, Elsevier Applied Science Publishers, London and New York, 1987, xxvii + 1363 pages + Author and Subject Indexes, £95.00.

This conference overwhelmingly represented the current research of the European Community, and, as such, was excellent in its scope. Considerable effort was expended to include political and environmental considerations of biomass utilization. This was represented by the opening speeches (pp. 1-49), as well as by several papers concerned with land use, management, and agricultural diversification. This is not to say that conversion processes and engineering data were de-emphasized. Rather, the volume presents a unique gathering of information about biomass conversion, particularly economics, that is essential to implementing these technologies into the commercial world. Readers seeking contributions concerned with basic chemistry will be disappointed, as the few papers addressing this area are of an applied nature. An exception to this are the first three papers, describing catalytic oxidation techniques, found in poster section No. 4. Overall, the experimental contributions are well documented and of good quality, although necessarily short. The summaries of the four workshop sessions, namely, production, biochemical and thermochemical conversion, and biomass for energy in developing countries, are concise and splendid.

An excellent point about this volume is its timeliness, as the International Conference was held during 11-15 May 1987. Generally, proceedings of such conferences have taken upwards of three years to be published. However, continuity of type style, Figures, and Tables was sacrificed in order to gain rapid publication. In a few instances, Tables and Figures had no titles.

This massive volume is organized according to the sequence of sessions presented at the conference, which makes it quite useful to those who attended. It would have been less cumbersome to non-attendees had the first and second sessions of Biological Conversion Processes and Thermochemical Conversion Processes been respectively combined.

This volume is a worthwhile addition to the library of experimentalists and others attempting to expand the use of renewable resources. The price is somewhat high, but is generally equivalent to that of other recent symposium volumes of like mass.