

## Introduction—special issue JIMB-BioMicroWorld2007

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This special issue of the Journal of Industrial Microbiology and Biotechnology contains a compilation of peer-reviewed papers presented at the II<sup>nd</sup> International Conference on Environmental, Industrial and Applied Microbiology (BioMicroWorld2007) held in Seville (Spain) on November 28–December 1, 2007, where over 550 researchers from about 60 countries attended and presented their cutting edge research.

The main goals of this meeting were to (1) identify new approaches and research opportunities in applied microbiology, presenting works, which linked microbiology with research areas usually related with other scientific and engineering disciplines; (2) consolidate international collaborative efforts; and (3) communicate current research priorities and progress in the field. In other words, the focus of the meeting was not only to present current science but also to discuss and synthesize research priorities and directions for the future. The contents of this special issue mirror this focus.

There were many excellent presentations in the several conference sessions and plenary lectures. The conference was structured into four main sessions covering the following topics: (1) Environmental, Marine, Aquatic Microbiology/Geomicrobiology; (2) Agriculture, Soil, Forest Microbiology, (3) Food Microbiology, (4) Industrial Microbiology/Future Bioindustries; four additional special sessions were dedicated to the following: (1) Bioremediation; (2) Microbial Production of Chemicals and Pharmaceuticals/

Biosurfactants/Biotechnologically Relevant Enzymes and Proteins; (3) Medical and Pharmaceutical Microbiology; (4) Techniques and Methods/Microbiology Education.

The lectures presented by the following three plenary speakers can be highlighted as good examples of modern interdisciplinary applied microbiology: Dr. J. L. Ramos Martín, from the CSIC-Spanish National Research Council (Granada, Spain), presented a lecture titled “*The toluene paradox: to eat, to tolerate or to run away*”; Dr. M. L. González-Martín, from the Biosurfaces and Interfacial Phenomena Group of the Department of Applied Physics, UEX (Badajoz, Spain), expounded on “*Physico-chemistry of microbial adhesion to materials: from macroscopic surface thermodynamics to modern nano-scale technology*”; finally, Dr. Riitta Puupponen-Pimiä, from the VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland (Espoo, Finland), presented a lecture titled “*Antimicrobial and antiadhesion properties of bioactive berry compounds*.”

This special issue is made up of papers presented in all the abovementioned sessions but clearly bearing in mind the scope of the Journal of Industrial Microbiology and Biotechnology, that is, all these original research papers bridge the gap between high-level academic research and industry for all aspects concerning microbes and their uses. As a result, a complete and heterogeneous issue is presented here.

We hope readers will find this issue interesting and helpful to their research purposes, and it helps to consolidate the conference as a regular research meeting in the field. We would like to thank all members of the Organizing and Scientific Advisory Committees for the work done during the conference preparation. We would also like to thank all the contributing authors for sharing their knowledge and research, as well as all the reviewers for their advice, which certainly helped to improve the quality, accuracy and

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relevance of this publication. Lastly, we would like to thank Dr. Allen Laskin, Editor-in-Chief, and Springer for giving us the opportunity to produce this special issue.

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BioMicroWorld2007 General Chairman