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Introduction

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This issue of the *Journal of Industrial Microbiology and Biotechnology* is composed largely of papers that were presented at the 7th International Conference on the Biotechnology of Microbial Products (BMP), held in Honolulu, 27–30 October 2002. The BMP Conferences, started in 1988, and sponsored and managed by the Society for Industrial Microbiology, have centered on the roles that biotechnology plays in the identification and discovery of microbial-based small molecules that have interesting and often important pharmacological properties. This has also included novel ways to screen for known activities and the detection of new activities of known compounds. The use of biotechnology in titer improvement has also been an important part of the BMP conferences. All of these subjects were part of the

7th BMP conference and representative papers from the conference are included in this issue. A session on genomics focusing on the strains that produce industrially important metabolites was introduced for the first time at BMP and a number of papers from the meeting are included in this issue. A session was devoted to non-ribosomally produced peptides and the genes that encode them and a paper from that session is also included.

The 7th BMP Conference was dedicated to Sir David Hopwood, in tribute to his many contributions to the field of microbiology and genetics of *Streptomyces* and to biotechnology. His special lecture entitled, “*Streptomyces* genes: from Waksman to Sanger” is included in this issue.