

EDITORIAL

First Solvias Science Day

The first Solvias Science Day took place at the Horburg Ausbildungszentrum on June 25, 2001 under the motto 'Collaborative Research in Catalysis, Polymorphism and In-Process Analytics'. About 120–140 persons attended the four sessions. This issue of CHIMIA contains a short description of the event as well as the texts of the nine oral presentations.

Motivation and Contributions

The Solvias mission statement is: 'Our business is scientific and technical services and products. Our philosophy is to foster innovation and tread new paths'.

If we take this seriously, it is clear that science is one of the bases of the Solvias enterprise – not the only one, maybe not always the most important one, but certainly the one with the longest tradition. As a technology-oriented service company with a strong research culture in catalysis and related areas, first in Ciba-Geigy, then in Novartis and finally as an independent company, Solvias has to ensure that its strong scientific reputation remains undisputed both within the company and for its customers. This fact was one of the motivations to organize this first Solvias Science Day. In his laudatio for the first Solvias Leading Scientist, F. L'Eplattenier (Member of the Solvias Board) also commented on these aspects.

A second motivation for organizing the Science Day was the termination of several large research projects originally started in Novartis and supported by the Technology Advisory Board of Novartis. In all these projects, collaboration with external academic groups was a major issue. On the one hand, this called for a presentation of important results obtained in these projects as described by M. Beller (University of Rostock) on the carbonylation of chloroarenes, by W. Weissensteiner (University of Vienna) and A. Mezzetti (ETH Zürich) on the synthesis of new chiral diphosphine ligands, and by Solvias scientists R. Hilfiker and A. Zilian on the stabilization of small particles, polymorphism and in-process analytics, respectively. These presentations were concluded by A. Pfaltz (University of Basel, Solvias Scientific Advisor) with an overview on recent developments in asymmetric catalysis. On the other hand, the issue of collaboration between industry and universities was addressed both from the academic point of view by A. Togni (ETH Zürich; Solvias Scientific Advisor) and by M. Studer (Solvias) from an industrial standpoint.

Last but not least, the Science Day was a suitable setting for the award of the first 'Solvias Leading Scientist' and in his account at the end of the series of presentations, B. Pugin described the successes and also failures during 15 years of catalysis research.

Looking back, we are very pleased and satisfied with the results. All comments from customers and colleagues showed us that the first Solvias Science Day was very successful and achieved most of its goals concerning science, information and – yes – also marketing our services. It was a stroke of luck that at the same time, CHIMIA offered us the opportunity to publish some sort of proceedings in a topical issue and we certainly did not say no!

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