

# **1st Newsletter by KOWREC (6/30/2003)**

## **Recent Movements of KOWREC**

### **1. 2003 General Meeting of KOWREC**

2003 General Meeting of KOWREC was held on 18th. of April at Korea Environmental Institute in Seoul. Dr. Jae-Chun, Jung was elected as the new president of 2003 KORWEC. He is one of the foundation members of KORWEC and this election is his second one since 1997-1998. In his inauguration speech, Dr. Jung promised to do his best for the second jumping and further development of KOWREC during his one-year term. 2003 spring conference of KOWREC was also held on the same day at the same place with the title of "Seminar on the current techniques of sludge disposal, and each local autonomous entity's counterplot to the prohibition policy of direct sludge landfill"

### **2. Changing KOWREC to KORRA**

KOWREC has positively been considering for the change of the title from KOWREC to KORRA (Korean Organic Resource Recycling Association). This idea is emerged from a point of view that organic wastes are no more waste products, it should rather be considered as recycling resources. By changing the title, KOWREC wants to reap further by recruiting new members and broadening the scope of the research area.

### **3. Publishing a book entitled "Food Waste Management and Recycling"**

KOWREC recently published a book entitled "Food Waste Management and Recycling" through the sponsorship of United States Grains Council (USGC). This book, written in Korean, covers broad techniques, policies, and resource plans of food wastes discussed so far in and out of the nation. KOWREC hopes that this book contribute to the sound management and efficient recycling policy of organic waste materials such as food wastes. USGC has been supporting the activities of diverse environmental researches and environment-related groups since 1995 in Korea. The main supporting area of USGC has been focused on the development of biodegradable plastics.

## **Recent News and Issues on Organic Wastes Recycling in Korea**

### **1. The present situation of the recycling food wastes**

At present, food waste products are generated more than eleven thousand tons per day in Korea. 6,400 tons of these waste products, corresponding to 57% of the total amount, are now recycled in a day. The recycling rate of food wastes has been increased up to more than 5 times since last five years (21.7% in 1997, 45.1% in 2000, and 56.8% in 2001). Among food wastes recycled, about 53.3% (3,399 tons/day) goes to the feeding, 41.9% (2,572 tons/day) to the composting, and 4.8% to other areas, showing that the feeding records the highest rate of the recycling of food wastes. 63% of plants (corresponding to 4,308 tons per day) are run by private entities, whereas 37% of those are run by the public institutions, indicating that the private facilities are dominated over the public ones in compost recycling industry in Korea.

### **2. Worrying about the treatment of sewage sludge**

Recently, great concern about how to dispose the sewage sludge is seriously arising in Korea, due to the enforcement of the banning of landfill, which will be enforced on July this year, and the anxiety about the strict regulation of ocean dumping in the near future. To make it worse, annual increase of the sludge generated exceeds much beyond the capacity of the treatment, though quite a lot of wastewater treatment plants are constructed every year. So we are now faced up with a situation where a mid- and long-term policy should be re-established for a new sludge treatment system which can be managed in a more efficient and cost effective way.

### **3. Governmental policy for the active utilization of the recycling products**

Good Recycling (GR) system is newly introduced into the recycling composts, in addition to some recycling products approved already as GR. By a law for the promotion of recycling products and the economical use of resources (an article 39 enacted in 2002),

Ministry of Environment enforced the public institutions to purchase and distribute to the farmers the good-quality organic recycling products such as GR marked composts, if needed. This enforcement will preferentially be applied to the farmers who live in the water protection areas near four Korean primary rivers (Han rivers, Nakdong rivers, Youngsan rivers, and Kum rivers), where any polluting behaviors are strictly prohibited. A fund for this operation is already prepared and waits for its use this year. Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Energy also revised and notified an ordinance for the qualified recycling products in which how to recognize the recycling compost as GR product is described.