

# **4<sup>rd</sup> ANOR NEWSLETTER by KOWREC**

**(06-06-30)**

## **1. 2006 Spring Seminar of KOWREC & 10 years National Resource Recycling Plans**

**2006 Spring Symposium of KOWREC was held on 21<sup>st</sup> of April at Sejong cultural center in Seoul with the title of “the establishment of the management system and resourcification technology of biomass”. In this symposium, government’s new policies on the future waste management system were introduced. The ultimate goal of the policies is the establishment of the integrated waste management system for “resource-recycling society”. The government will do efforts in the next 10 years to fulfill this goal with the strategies as followings:**

- The enactment of a law for the promotion of resource-recycling society, which will include basic plans on national resource recycle and new assessment system for the circularity of materials.**
- Introduction of new environmental assessment system to reduce and minimize the use of hazardous materials and to enhance the recycling rate for all goods from beginning to disposal.**
- Construction of a specialized district for the recycling of the products and the increase of competitiveness of recycling business.**
- Preparation of total plans for the conversion of biomass (mainly food and animal wastes, various sludges) into useful bio-energy such as, methane, hydrogen gas, and ethanol.**

**Trends in policies and current status on biomass utilization in other leading countries, i.e., United States, EU, and Japan, were also introduced in this symposium.**

## **2. The 7<sup>th</sup> Tripartite Environment Ministers Meeting (TEMM) among Korea, China, and Japan.**

The Seventh Tripartite Environment Ministers Meeting (TEMM) among Korea, China and Japan was held on October 22-23, 2005 in Seoul by the invitation of Korean Minister of the Ministry of Environment. In this meeting, the ministers shared their views on the recent progress in each country regarding environmental management after TEMM 6. They welcomed the outline of China's next five-year plan that clearly expresses the intention to establish an environmentally-friendly society based on the concept of scientific development. The Ministers recognized that TEMM had played an important role for promoting regional environmental cooperation and achieving sustainable development in Northeast Asia. They assured that the three countries would continue to work together on various regional issues.

The Ministers reaffirmed that building a sound material-cycling society is essential in achieving sustainable development in Northeast Asia. The Ministers recognized that the three countries are building sound material-cycle and environmentally-friendly society through various efforts. In this regard, the Ministers welcomed the accomplishments of the Tripartite Symposium on Circular Economy held on September 8-9, 2005 in Beijing, which was a good opportunity to share experiences of the three countries. They also welcomed the Ministerial Conference on the 3R Initiative held in April in Tokyo. The Ministers concurred that the three countries take turns holding joint seminars or workshops on sound material-cycle society and/or circular economy and 3R activities for the next three years as important TEMM activities to strengthen trilateral cooperation on this issue.

The Ministers concurred that the next TEMM will be held in China. The date and venue will be suggested by the host country and subsequently confirmed by Japan and Korea.

## **3. Current status on food waste in Korea**

- In collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and the Ministry of Health and Welfare, the Ministry of Environment established a Basic Plan for Food Waste Recycling (1998 - 2002) and has been actively promoting recycling.

- By virtue of this government's vigorous efforts, in cooperation with various environmental groups, the number of households that dump food waste in food-only collection bins or plastic bags increased from 21.1 % in 1998 to 96.6% by the end of June in 2005.
- The amount of food waste generated each day in Korea reached 11,424 tons in 2004, accounting for 22.5% of the total waste.
- There are about 253 facilities where food wastes are treated in Korea in 2005. Among them, 168 sites are the private ones, most of which are small-scale. Other 85 facilities are the public ones.
- The majority of food wastes are treated and processed to the final products as compost or animal feed in these facilities. However, large amount of food wastewater is generated during these processes.
- At present, the amount of wastewater generated in these facilities reached 4,387 tons/day by the end of 2005. Sixty-seven percent of the total wastewater generated goes into the ocean for dumping, most of which comes from the private sites.

#### **4. Food wastewater problems and future measures**

##### **1) Background**

- Since the prevention of landfilling of food waste from January 2005, ocean dumping of wastewater, generated from food waste treatment facilities, has increased, causing serious environmental pollution.
- Due to this reason, the Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries has tightened up the management and supervision on the food waste disposal facilities, promoting revision of the prevention law on the ocean pollution to reduce the ocean dumping of food wastewater.
- According to the revised law, food wastewater containing less than 95% of water should not be discharged into the ocean from '06.3.21.
- If this law put into practice, the treatment of food wastewater will be faced on the serious

**disturbance and difficulty, because most private food-waste businesses are small-scale ones, having no money to improve and rebuild the treatment facilities satisfied by this law.**

## **2) Measures by the Ministry of Environment**

- Requires the MMAF to extend the effective date of the revised law from `06.3.21 to `07.3.21**
  
- Introduces financial supporting system or governmental subsidy for the improvement of the food waste treatment facilities.**
  
- Increases the number of public facilities**
  
- Promotes research projects for recycling of food wastewater (e.g. development of environmentally benign flocculants)**
  
- Stimulates the demand for recycled products and formulate various recycling methods to internalize the recycling project.**