Bioenergy Innovation Award 2015

Vincent Eijsink

The award committee's citation:
The effort of this year's winner has been crucial to the development of bioenergy in Norway. His work has been important to the bioenergy field and has also contributed to the question of optimal biomass utilization.

This year's winner scored high on the three criteria that are the pillars of the Bioenergy Innovation Award, i.e. innovative thinking, research-based development and commercial potential.

The winner has through many years been instrumental in building a scientific research group with an international reputation within the field of enzyme technology and biogas processes. The winner excels at linking fundamental scientific research and industrial interests; he has great credibility in the industry and contributes to the creation of long-term opportunities for his partners.

His core activity is focused on developing biogas solutions of direct relevance to industrial actors. The biogas research has been focused on the development of biogas processes that are robust, fast and readily implementable. These technological developments have been carried out through close collaboration with Cambi, TINE, Seaweed, Energy Solutions and R&D partners at the Ås campus. His group has also tight cooperation with Borregård within enzyme technology and the development of a new process, as well as with the world's largest enzyme manufacturer.

The winner shows innovative thinking and boldness within enzyme technology. He is developing holistic approaches anchored in fundamental enzymatic knowledge, in order to describe, assess and analyze possible improvements of the biogas production process. One year ago he started to use "ultra-high throughput" sequencing methods to gain better understanding of the micro biology behind biogas production, a process that was a black box prior to this groundbreaking work.

The winner has developed fast enzyme-based methods to test the biogas production potential of various feedstocks mixtures. He is also at the forefront within production of biogas from seaweed, a field with substantial commercial potential. The related fundamental enzyme work, which was published in Science in 2010, has led to several patent applications, some of them have been acquired by international enzyme actors.

The winner has nurtured and developed an outstanding research group highly attractive to the industry, a unique achievement. His participation has had great, lasting and decisive positive impact on the biogas sector in Norway. He has shown that scientific knowledge can be exploited commercially.

The 2015 Committee:

Andreas Bratland	The Research Council of Norway	Arnold K. Martinsen	NoBio
Bergny Irene Dahl	Innovation Norway	Rune Holmen	Enova
Berta Matas Güell	CenBio / SINTEF	Odd Jarle Skjelhaugen	CenBio / NMBU

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