

The Top 100 People in Bioenergy 2011-12: #76 through #100

**The Top 100 People in Bioenergy – what are the stories behind the list?
Today, we look at the personalities ranked #76 through #100.**

by Jim Lane

In Florida, US Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack headed the “Top 100 People in Bioenergy” as voted by the readers of Biofuels Digest and the Digest’s editorial board, just edging out BP Biofuels chief Philip New, and the heads of Raizen, POET, Solazyme and Amyris. In today’s Digest, we profile the Final 25 in depth.

76. Neal Gutterson, CEO, Mendel Biotechnologies

Miscanthus has been growing in visibility and credibility all year, thanks to BP’s strong backing of the feedstock, and also the progress of Mendel Biotechnologies towards providing seed and performance suitable for scale. The long-time chief of Mendel, Neal Gutterson, has not been as visible as many on the industry conference circuit while shepherding his company towards scale, but picked up a surge in support from the voters this year as cellulosic biofuels gets closer to scale, and feedstocks of near-term promise become more and more important.

77. Sean O’Hanlon, Executive Director, American Biofuels Council

As well as being one of the best-known and respected of the biofuels Twitterati, Sean has been advocating at the grass-roots, and offering advanced bioenergy insight on a consulting basis, for a number of years. One of the most far-sighted of the “bioneers”, and always a “most-follow” for those tracking the industry’s path. “I can’t think of anyone who taught me more about the potentials and pitfalls in biofuels,” says Digest editor Jim Lane.

78. Pramod Chaudhari, Executive Chairman, Praj Industries

The #1 figure in the Indian subcontinent is Praj Industries chairman and founder Pramod Chaudhari, as a late surge in voting this year propelled him to another Top 100 appearance. As we wrote last year, “Pramodh Chaudhari gives a crystal clear analysis of the sugar/molasses problems India has experienced recently and the two regulatory steps necessary to fulfill the E20 mandate. He also gives a very interesting description of how Praj solved the ethanol wastewater problem, and of the environmental education, conservation and outreach programs the company is running for its own employees, schools and its home city of Pune.”

79. Bob Mayer, CEO, Cobalt Technologies

The new chief at Cobalt is the former chief of Genencor, lured back into a CEO role by Cobalt’s near-term opportunities to scale, and the overall emerging promise of biobutanol. A legend in the industry, all eyes are on how he will be able to top a superb tenure as CEO by predecessor Rick Wilson. His trump card? As much successful experience as anyone in the chicken-and-egg world of scale-up.

80. Kef Kasdin, CEO, Proterro, Mike Hamilton, CEO, Renmatix, Andrew Richard, CEO, Comet Biorefining

This year, we paired three leaders developing low-cost sugars as feedstock for biofuels and materials. Which will succeed? Renmatix’ supercritical process, Proterro’s magic bug making sugars from sunlight, CO2 and date, or Comet’s synthetic biology approach to extracting sugars from biomass? Too soon to tell, but the contenders are more important, more organized and more impressive than ever.

81. Todd Taylor, Partner, Fredrickson & Byron

One of the more popular of the biofuels Twitterati as well as chairman of the program at next year's Algal Biomass Summit, Todd's overall perspective runs across a gamut of cleantech technologies, but he's best known in the algae field, where he is an ubiquitous presence both online and offline, and a go-to source for the scoop on what's hot, smart and getting traction.

82. Kelly Tiller, CEO, Genera Energy

Feedstock providers were surging across the board this year – a perennial favorite among the voters is Genera Energy – figuring out the logistics and science of switchgrass at Scale. Kelly's been a popular leader down in Tennessee for quite some time. Expectations are high for this venture to become a major player for partners such as Dupont Cellulosic Ethanol.

83. Jim Dumesic, PhD, University of Wisconsin-Madison

If you've read much about Virent Energy Systems, the direct sugar-to-diesel technology known as bioforming, or the entire field of the catalytic conversion of feedstocks directly into hydrocarbon fuels, you've been well exposed to the work from the Dumesic lab at the University of Wisconsin. Jim himself generally makes appearances at scientific conferences and is known to make technical presentations on new science, rather than grand pronouncements on biofuels policy. For that reason, it was a delightful surprise to see the Digest readership get behind Dumesic and elevate him to #52 in our poll. Though microbial fermentation approach to direct conversion to hydrocarbons get the lion's share of publicity, the catalytic approach is attracting serious partners like Cargill Ventures and Honda.

84. Kevin Berner, CEO, Phycal

One of the most interesting emerging approaches to algal biofuels and materials at scale? Phycal's hybrid model in which they grow "skinny algae" in ponds, then fatten them up in reactors by feeding them cassava sugar. Phycal plans to design, permit, build and operate a 34-acre pilot farm near Poamoho Camp in Wahiawa, Oahu that will use carbon dioxide from industrial producers on Oahu. The algae will then be harvested and their oils extracted, using Phycal's patented processes, and converted into renewable biofuel. Phycal expects to break ground for the pilot farm in late 2011 or early 2012.

85. John Plaza, CEO, Imperium Renewables

A lot of obits were written for Imperium Renewables back in 2008 when the market for biodiesel began to implode. John Plaza kept the company alive by finding markets in Canada, and managing costs down to a minimum. Lately, he's partnered with Pacific Northwest National Laboratory to develop a catalytic process that converts biomass-based alcohols into renewable drop-in jet fuels. Imperium entered into the project in July 2010 through a collaborative research agreement with Battelle, the nonprofit research organization that manages PNNL for DOE. The ultimate goal is to use the process at a commercial plant such as Imperium's Grays Harbor biodiesel refinery near Hoquiam.

86. Barry Cohen, Executive Director, National Algae Association

Since establishing the NAA several years ago, Barry Cohen has been a consistent advocate for commercial-ready fuels, and moving emphasis from R&D to commercialization, right down to establishing a NAA-sponsored algal testing facility.

87. Daphne Preuss, CEO, Chromatin

One of the prime movers in the surge of advanced feedstocks, Chromatin's Daphne Preuss has been guiding her company into effective partnerships in corn and sugar with major players like Syngenta, while retaining sorghum as its own playing field. This fall, Chromatin announced completion of a \$10 million first closing of its Series D financing round that included two strategic investors — BP Ventures and Unilever Technology Ventures. Drawing on capital raised in earlier rounds of venture funding, as well as revenue from its seed and technology sales, Chromatin has launched production-scale tests in electricity-generating plants of its specially bred non-food sorghum crops that can grow on marginal land using less water and fewer chemicals than other energy crops.

88. Joanne Ivancic, Executive Director, Advanced Biofuels USA

One of the most visible of the NGOs working on popularizing advanced biofuels, Joanne has been a high-value advocate and information distributor for the niches as it begins to educate consumers about the opportunities in

advanced feedstocks, processing technologies and fuels,

89. Philip Pienkos, PhD, NREL

One of the respected movers and shakers in algae at the National Renewable Energy Laboratory are Phil Pienkos – a regular at industry conclaves like the Algal Biomass Summit, where he plays spotlighted roles, and organizing the effort at NREL on algal-based biofuels, which has gone from a near standing (re)start to a fast-moving, evolving machine in recent years. Though algae's focus has shifted from fuels to feed and food, fuels remain a major market opportunity and Pienkos continues to be a widely-admired principal in the drive-towards commercialization.

90. Rafael Garofalo, Secretary General, EBB

One of the higher-ranked European industry leaders, Garofalo has been leading not only the EBB but also pioneered the establishment of the European Algal Biomass group. Along with eBIO, he led a controversial walk-out from the Roundtable of Sustainable Biofuels, saying that the RSB's principles were incompatible with the needs of his membership. Occasionally controversial but always an entertaining industry presenter.

91. Arnold Klann, CEO, Bluefire Renewables

Arnie Klann and Bluefire Renewables have been fighting the good fight for a long, long time. Best known for putting together one of the most complete DOE Loan Guarantee package applications in history, lately BlueFire has formed SucreSource, LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary that will manufacture cellulosic sugars from biomass for Biofuel, Bioplastic and Specialty Chemical markets. Established in November 2011, SucreSource will utilize BlueFire's proven and patented high yield process of economically unlocking cellulosic sugars from biomass to produce multiple sugar streams for these growing markets.

92. John Benemann, PhD, CEO, Benemann Associates

The "Doctor No" of the algae industry, if he spends a lot of his time talking down the hype around algae, its more to do with the hype than a problem with algae. A co-author of the close-out report of the DOE's Aquatic Species Program, he's been instrumental in the formation of the Algal Biomass Organization. If John says its good, that's rare, but it's gold.

93. Chas Eggert, CEO, OPX Biotechnologies

A first time appearance for Eggert in the Top 100. During remarks this fall at the National Clean Energy Summit 4.0 in Las Vegas, Vice President Joe Biden highlighted five innovative companies that have attracted more than \$100 million in outside private capital investment since receiving seed funding from ARPA-E. Biden highlighted OPX Biotechnologies, which received ARPA-E funding of \$6 million, and subsequently raised private funding of \$36.5 million. Scientists at OPX Biotechnologies are developing bacteria to produce a liquid biofuel using electricity and carbon dioxide. This liquid biofuel is being designed to replace petroleum fuel at a competitive cost.

94. Thomas Maschmayer, co-founder, Ignite Energy

A first-time appearance in the Top 100, Maschmayer is a godfather of thermocatalytic technologies Down Under. Most recently, Ignite subsidiary Licella announced the opening of its demonstration plant, a JV with Norsk Sko called Licella Fibre Fuels to commercialize the technology, and MOUs with Virgin Australia and Air New Zealand to develop aviation fuels from Licella's bio-oil. The process has been developed over the past three and a half years at Licella's Pilot Facility in Somersby on the NSW Central Coast with guidance from Maschmayer. Meanwhile, "Ignite Energy Resources uses a proprietary Super Critical Water (SCW) reactor to convert low-valued feedstocks into high-valued oil and coal products.

95. Philip Wolfe, Chairman, Ownergy

Philip Wolfe, a recognised pioneer of the renewables sector since founding BP Solar in the 1970s, is Ownergy's chairman and business development director, and continues to be a popular face among Digesterati. In six high-profile years as Director General of the Renewable Energy Association (REA) he became the voice of renewable energy in the UK. Philip was a leading light of the campaign for the Tariffs and authored the first design blueprint presented to Ministers soon after the Energy Act was passed. He continues to work with many others in the industry through participation in the Energy Saving Trust's Microgeneration Advisory Board and the REAL Code Panel, and his ongoing non-executive directorship of the REA.

96. Xiucui Liu, CEO, Cathay Industrial Bioetchnology

The company is the largest biobutanol producer with active capacity of 21 million gallons of biobutanol per year. Other key products are long-chain dicarboxylic acids. Since 1997, Dr. Xiucui Liu has been guiding the company as CEO and founder, after several years as founder and CEO of Unistone Pharmaceutical Co., Ltd. From 1991 to 1994, he was a senior scientist of The Sandoz Research Institute. One of the companies driving attention away from, say Brazil, and towards China.

97. Jim Stewart, Chairman, Bioenergy Producers Association

One of the sleepers in this year's poll, the unabashedly modest Jim Stewart who has been leading the fight in California on the policy front for the Bioenergy Producers Association. Jim writes: "We have been fighting major battles in California on behalf of this industry and encountering "head in the sand" opposition in the legislature and with environmental organizations in this state for the past six years, while, at the same time, weighing in on national issues. However, I had no idea that our efforts would have a high enough profile nationally for my name to appear on this list." Ah, grasshopper, Digest editors are remarkably fallible, but Digest readers know all.

98. Riggs Eckelberry, CEO, OriginOil

The always quotable Riggs Eckelberry writes: It's official: we came in 49th out of the top 100 people in Bioenergy worldwide! I share this amazing rank with my able CTO, Brian Goodall. We are honored and thankful. Editor Jim Lane told us yesterday: "kudos – you had an amazing outpouring of support from the US-based Digest readership, and pretty good votes from Australia too, indicating that your Australian partnership has drawn attention there. If you voted, thank you – because it was no simple process, signing up for Biofuels Digest and then following your personalized link to vote for the Top 100. Whew!"

99. Mark Emalfarb, CEO, Dyadic

A first-timer in the Top 100, another of a new generation of technologists focusing on enzymes and feedstocks that moved into this year's rankings., In "Dyadic International: From Doom to Dawn — What's Next?", published by Logos Press . the authors note that "Dyadic was reduced to 31 employees from 125," the authors wrote. "Its cash dwindled by a factor of 9, from \$27 million to just about \$3 million; the value of its stock fell from \$5.30 to a mere 50 cents. But founder Mark Emalfarb returned as CEO and led a resurrection of the company, including a key deal with Codexis, and a vision that "he who can make proteins in large tanks affordable is going to rule the world."

100. Susan Pond, Director, Dow US Studies Center, University of Sydney

A first-time appearance in the Top 100, in part due to her role as a catalyst of industrial biotechnology in Australia, and part for her role in fostering US-Australian ties in aviation biofuels. Dr. Pond recalls: "After Avalon, we had the idea of an MOU or an agreement between the US and Australia, which I presented to the Australian government in Canberra including people at the Ministry of Resources Energy & Tourism and Ministry of Transport. CAAFI, myself, FAA and Austrade had a meeting towards a more formal agreement at the Advanced Biofuels Leadership Conference in DC earlier this year, and as another part of the process we went to a prep meeting for APEC and put it on the APEC agreement agenda, and it was signed of the margins of the APEC meeting."

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