

# SODEOPEC goes to Disney World

## Brian Moore

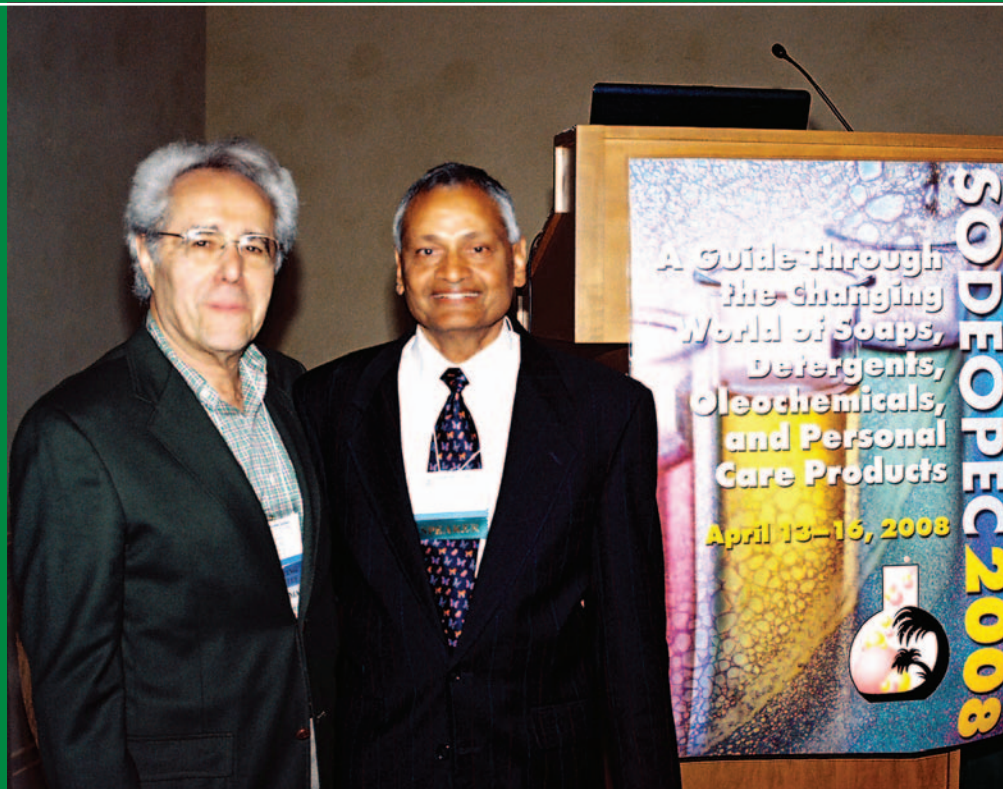
The sixth international SODEOPEC conference—focusing on soaps, detergents, oleochemicals, and personal care products—was held April 13–16, 2008, in Orlando, Florida, USA, at the Hilton in the Walt Disney World Resort.

During the event, industry experts from around the world gave presentations discussing new technologies and services impacting these industries, new restrictions resulting from environmental issues, and innovations expected to change the industry during the next decade. There was also an exhibition area featuring companies from around the world.

The previous five SODEOPEC conferences, which are organized by AOCS, had been chaired by Luis Spitz of L. Spitz Inc. For this conference, Spitz acted as chair emeritus, handing over the title of general chair to Michael Hill, of M. Hill & Associates. Both men have several years' experience in the industry and now are consultants. Other members of the organizing committee included: Kathleen Stanton, The Soap and Detergent Association (SDA); Jesus E. Duenas, Summa Industrial SA, CV; and V.M. Naik, Unilever Research India.

Organizers divided the conference into five half-day sessions, which included: The Impact of Biodiesel on the SODEOPEC Industries; Sustainability, Green Chemistry, and Environmental Issues; a session for exhibitor presentations; SODEOPEC Innovations—Soap and Oleochemicals; and SODEOPEC Innovations—Detergents and Personal Care Products. In addition to the presentations, there was also a display area for poster presentations. Networking and social events included the Sunday evening welcome reception and also a poolside reception on Tuesday evening sponsored by SDA.

Speakers in the biodiesel session chaired by Hill noted that this in-



SODEOPEC 2008 Chairperson Emeritus Luis Spitz, left, stands with Shyam Gupta, president of Bioderm Research (Scottsdale, Arizona, USA). Gupta gave two presentations during the conference, “The Impact of Biodiesel on Personal Care Products” and “Nature Based Oleochemicals for Anti-aging Personal Care.”

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dustry is producing an abundance of glycerine as a by-product, which has brought down the glycerine price and is also adding incentive for formulators to come up with new uses for it. Of course, the food vs. fuel debate remains part of the biodiesel equation and finding a nonfood feedstock for biodie-

sel continues to be on a lot of minds. George Smith of Huntsman (Salt Lake City, Utah, USA) noted in his presentation that he believed that within five years algae oil would impact the market “in a big way.” His comment concerning plant oils—“Eat and drink the best, burn the rest”—received a laugh from audience members.

It’s hard to find any industry conference without some type of “Green” session, and SODEOPEC 2008 was no exception. The Sustainability, Green Chemistry session, chaired by SDA’s Kathy Stanton, brought together speakers from the GreenBlue Institute (who, in 2006, launched the CleanGredients online database of “greener” cleaning chemicals), the Environmental Protection Agency’s Design for the Environment (DfE) Program, NSF International,



A group takes time out to pose for a photo during the SDA-sponsored reception at SODEOPEC 2008. From left to right, Héctor Alviar and Héctor Gonzalez, both of Quimica Basica Colombiana SA; Monica Hillis; Stephen Hillis of Orion Process Technologies, Lakeland, Florida, USA; and Joseph Lopez of Sasol Olefins & Surfactants, Houston, Texas, USA.

and a presentation on green chelating agents for detergents.

Another speaker in the session was Marvin Duncan, senior agricultural economist at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Office of Energy Policy and New Uses, who gave details to the conference delegates about the BioPreferred Program, which is being implemented by the USDA. This program was formerly known as the Federal Biobased Products Preferred Procurement Program.

The program provides that federal agencies must give purchasing preference to biobased products designated by the program. There are various rules and exceptions for the program and more information can be found on the program's website, [www.biopreferred.gov](http://www.biopreferred.gov). Brian Sansoni of the SDA closed out the session with a talk on "Snapshots on Sustainability in the Cleaning Products Industry."

The exhibitor session on Tuesday morning featured company representatives giving presentations more closely

related to the activities of their individual companies, but with industry-wide implications. This included presentations such as the one by Paolo Tovaglieri, vice president, marketing, for Mazzone LB S.p.A. (Italy), who spoke about finishing line technology.

Another exhibitor/speaker was Steve Azzarello of AMCOL International, which is headquartered in Arlington Heights, Illinois, but is now actively expanding into the Americas with its AMCOL Detergent Specialties Division. Azzarello is the commercial development director for AMCOL and said that the company is a relatively new entry into the fabric care and household products industries.

The Tuesday afternoon session was chaired by Luis Spitz, who, after hosting this conference for several years, has now reached near rock-star status at the event. Although an industry veteran, his session focused on recent industry innovations on the soap and oleochemicals side. Innovations in energy savings, soap drying, glycerine re-

moval, processing, and refining were all discussed.

Roberto Berbesi of Oil-Dri Corporation of America (Chicago, Illinois) was the day's final speaker, giving an overview of the practice of reducing production costs by the use of selective silicates in biodiesel water wash elimination. Berbesi noted, "Silicates can eliminate the cost of water washing as they are extremely efficient in the removal of soaps, phospholipids, and trace metals."

The other SODEOPEC innovations session—detergents and personal care products—heard Dave Hempson, senior vice president of business development at Marietta Corp. (Cortland, New York), gave a case history of a contract manufacturer. Hempson said that contract manufacturers are evolving and are now providing innovation as "strategic manufacturing partners" for the personal care industry. Hempson also talked about the Foundation for Strategic Sourcing (F4SS) (<http://foundationforstrategicsourcing.org/>), which is a collaborative, unbiased, non-profit membership organization within the Consumer Packaged Goods (CPG) industry created to enhance the supply chain between branded marketers and suppliers. Hempson is a board member of the organization.

Consultant Joel Houston, president of Colin Houston & Associates (Brewster, New York) told audience members that price is still the top consumer "need" but there is also now strong emphasis on environmentally-sensitive positioning of products and formulating products for sustainability, energy savings, packaging, and water reduction are important.

Plans for the next SODEOPEC have not been finalized.

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