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First prize in DSM Science & Technology Awards (South) 2008 goes to German researcher Andreas Walther

German researcher Andreas Walther has won the first prize in the DSM Science & Technology Awards (South) 2008. An international judging committee, chaired by Dr Manfred Eggersdorfer, R&D Director at DSM Nutritional Products, selected Andreas Walther, who will obtain his doctorate from the University of Bayreuth (Germany), for his PhD research in the field of polymeric materials.

Andreas Walther has succeeded in developing new classes of polymeric materials with unusual properties based on so-called Janus particles. These particles, named after the two-faced Roman god, are characterized by surfaces with distinctive properties, which enable specific and different interactions with other materials. They form an ideal toolbox for nanotechnology applications and materials science, paving the way for the construction of novel types of advanced biochemical sensors, drug-delivery vehicles, multi-component storage and release devices, or highly surface-active particles. Looking to the future, a multitude of current problems in biomedicine, materials science and other disciplines can efficiently be tackled by the materials enabled by Andreas Walther's research.

Andreas Walther was presented with an award trophy and a certificate by Mr Stephan Tanda, member of DSM's Managing Board on Tuesday, June 17. As the winner of the first prize he will also receive a cash prize of EUR 7,500.

The winner of the second prize, Irene Maier of the University of Vienna (Austria), will receive a cash prize of EUR 5,000 for her PhD research on the development of analytic methods for allergens in food matrices. The winner of the third prize, Christoph Dumelin of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich (Switzerland), will receive a cash prize of EUR 2,500 for his PhD research on the development of protein binders from DNA coded libraries. The other nine finalists will each receive a cash prize of EUR 1,250.

The DSM Science & Technology Awards form part of the DSM Innovation Awards Program sponsored by the DSM Innovation Center. They are granted for outstanding PhD research by doctoral students from Switzerland, which is the home base of DSM Nutritional Products, and the neighboring regions of Austria, Northeastern France and Southern Germany.

The awards presentation event was held at Park Hotel Vitznau in Vitznau (Switzerland). Speaking on the occasion, Mr Tanda said: *'The excellent quality of the PhD research carried out by the contestants clearly demonstrates the power and the potential of the younger generation. These young scientists will pave the way for innovations that will contribute to a healthier and more sustainable world.'*

Report of the judging committee

In its report about the winner of the first prize, the judging committee said it was impressed by the outstanding quality and high impact of the research carried out by Andreas Walther: 'He has not only synthesized the basic building blocks but also assembled these into various 1-, 2-, and 3-dimensional structures, which he then characterized physically and functionally. In this way he has made a major breakthrough in a highly competitive field, based on an innovative new concept.' According to the judging committee, the outcome of the research may prove useful in a variety of applications, e.g. in the medical area or in the development of new photovoltaic devices.

The judging committee commended the high quality of the work of all the other finalists.

The winners of the first, second and third prizes

Andreas Walther conducted his research at the Institute for Molecular Chemistry II, University of Bayreuth (Germany), under the supervision of Professor Axel Müller.

Irene Maier conducted her research at the Department of Biochemistry, University of Vienna (Austria), under the supervision of Professor Fritz Pittner.

Christoph Dumelin conducted his research at the Institute for Pharmaceutical Sciences, Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich (Switzerland), under the supervision of Professor Dario Neri.

Other winners

The other nine prize-winners are:

Jonathon Beves	Department of Chemistry, University Basel (Switzerland)
Andrey Buryak	Institute of Sciences and Chemical Engineering , École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (Switzerland)
Dany Gaillard	Laboratory of Nutrition Physiology, INSERM U866 'Lipides, Nutrition, Cancer', Ecole Nationale de Biologie Appliquée à la Nutrition et à l'Alimentation (ENSBANA), Dijon (France)
Victoria Gessner	Institute for Anorganic Chemistry, University of Würzburg (Germany)
Martin Kietzmann	Institute for Microbiology, Graz University of Technology (Austria)
Mathias Schelwies	Institute for Organic Chemistry, Ruprecht-Karls-University of Heidelberg (Germany)
Konrad Tiefenbacher	Institute of Organic Chemistry, University of Vienna (Austria)

Christophe Travelet Laboratory of Polymer Engineering for High Technologies,
University Louis Pasteur Strasbourg (France)

Allison Walter Faculty of Pharmacy, University Louis Pasteur Strasbourg (France)

Two parallel awards schemes

DSM launched the Science & Technology Awards twenty-three years ago. Until 2006, the awards were open to doctoral students from the Netherlands, Belgium and the German state of Nordrhein-Westfalen (DSM Science & Technology Awards – North). In view of the high reputation and popularity the awards had gained in academic circles, in 2007 DSM introduced a parallel contest for PhD researchers from universities in Switzerland, Austria, Northeastern France and Southern Germany (DSM Science & Technology Awards – South).

Encouraging pioneering research

DSM performs a great deal of its R&D work in close collaboration with universities. Through its Science & Technology Awards DSM wants to encourage young research scientists to undertake creative, pioneering research. This is important because this kind of research often provides the basis for the development of new, knowledge-intensive industrial processes and innovative products.

DSM – the Life Sciences and Materials Sciences Company

Royal DSM N.V. creates innovative products and services in Life Sciences and Materials Sciences that contribute to the quality of life. DSM's products and services are used globally in a wide range of markets and applications, supporting a healthier, more sustainable and more enjoyable way of life. End markets include human and animal nutrition and health, personal care, pharmaceuticals, automotive, coatings and paint, electrics and electronics, life protection and housing. DSM has annual sales of almost EUR 8.8 billion and employs some 23,000 people worldwide. The company is headquartered in the Netherlands, with locations on five continents. DSM is listed on Euronext Amsterdam. More information: www.dsm.com.

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