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- [News](#)
- [Downloads](#)

> [Homepage](#)

Biobutanol: Butanol from cellulosic Biomass



Introduction

ABE (acetone, butanol, ethanol) fermentation has a great industrial past but has been outcompeted by the petrochemical industry. Due to new developments in biotechnology and the higher oil price, there has been renewed interest in fermentative production of butanol, a platform chemical and alternative biofuel. To date, high substrate costs and low volumetric productivity remain significant bottlenecks that preclude large-scale application of ABE fermentation. By using our combined experience in biomass pretreatment, fermentation, separation technology and energy system design, we are developing new concepts for conversion of cellulosic biomass into butanol. The ultimate goal is to design a new, efficient and economically viable bioprocess for the conversion of low-cost cellulosic feedstocks into butanol.

Objectives

- Reduce substrate costs for ABE fermentation by using lignocellulosic biomass feedstocks
- Improve productivity of ABE by applying high-cell density fermentation and innovative separation techniques
- Develop an efficient and sustainable conversion system for cellulosic biomass into butanol based on:
 - Integration of biomass pretreatment with fermentation
 - In-situ butanol recovery from fermentation broth
 - Energy recovery from non-fermentable byproducts

Achievements to date

- First lignocellulosic hydrolysates tested for fermentability to ABE
- Laboratory bioreactor developed for continuous fermentation and cell retention
- Preliminary system design and Life Cycle Analysis initiated of biomass-to-butanol conversion

Clostridium X meeting in 2008

As part of our on-going involvement in ABE fermentation, we will be hosting the Tenth Clostridium Meeting in 2008 in the Netherlands. More details will soon be placed at our website, please refer to [Clostridium X meeting 2008](#)

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Research Team

Wageningen UR- Biobased Products:

Robert Bakker, Ana Lopez-Contreras, Pieter Claassen, Karin Merck, Jeroen Willemsen, Ed de Jong
contact: robert.bakker@wur.nl

Energy research Centre of the Netherlands

Herman den Uil, Jan Pels, A.R. Boersma and Hans Reith
contact: denuil@ecn.nl

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