Introduction

The first international symposium on *Antimicrobial Peptides: Food, Veterinary and Medical Applications* was organized and presided over by Dr. Djamel Drider and his colleagues Dr. Nathalie Caroff (Nantes University), Dr. Marie-France de la Cochetière (Inserm Nantes), Dr. Gunnar Fimland (Oslo University), Dr. Ismaïl Fliss (Laval University), Dr. Charles Hétru (CNRS Strasbourg), Dr. Pablo Hernandez (Madrid University), Dr. Nacer Lounis (John Hopkins University), Dr. Hervé Prévost (ENITIAA Nantes) and Dr. Françoise Vovelle (Orléans University). This first symposium took place at the Ecole Nationale d'Ingénieurs des Techniques Agricoles et Alimentaires (ENITIAA; National School for Engineers in Agricultural and Food Science, Nantes, France), from 21 to 23 June 2006.

This conference provided an excellent balance, combining fundamental and applied seminars. For this first meeting, more than 170 participants attended from different continents and countries, in order to discuss and illustrate future prospects of antimicrobial peptide science. A new avenue is open in terms of fundamental and applied purposes, and new challenges remain to be overcome, such as the study of resistance mechanisms, the mode of action, and the relation between the structure and function of antimicrobial peptides. There is also a

growing and urgent interest in food areas to find new peptides with potential applications, mainly against *Campylobacter jejuni*, a leading cause of food-borne illness in many developed countries. In the medical arena, there is also a need to investigate more antimicrobial peptides and find novel therapeutic agents that could be used to complement conventional antibiotic therapies.

Naturally, the success of this conference was possible thanks to financial support obtained generously from private companies (Biohit, France; Novozymes, Denmark; Bio-Rad, France; Karger, Switzerland; Blackwell Publishing, UK), intellectual groups (The European Peptide Society, French Microbiology Society) and local institutions (ENITIAA Nantes, La Region des Pays de la Loire, Nantes Métropole).

The president of this symposium would like to express his gratitude to the organizers, scientific committee, reviewers, participants, ENITIAA Nantes, who provided materials, and especially to Ms. Béatrice Hélie, for making this conference successful and wishes to update the participants, in due time, on the organization of the second international symposium on antimicrobial peptides.

Dr. Djamel Drider