



Electrodialytic recovery of phosphorus from chemically precipitated sewage sludge ashes

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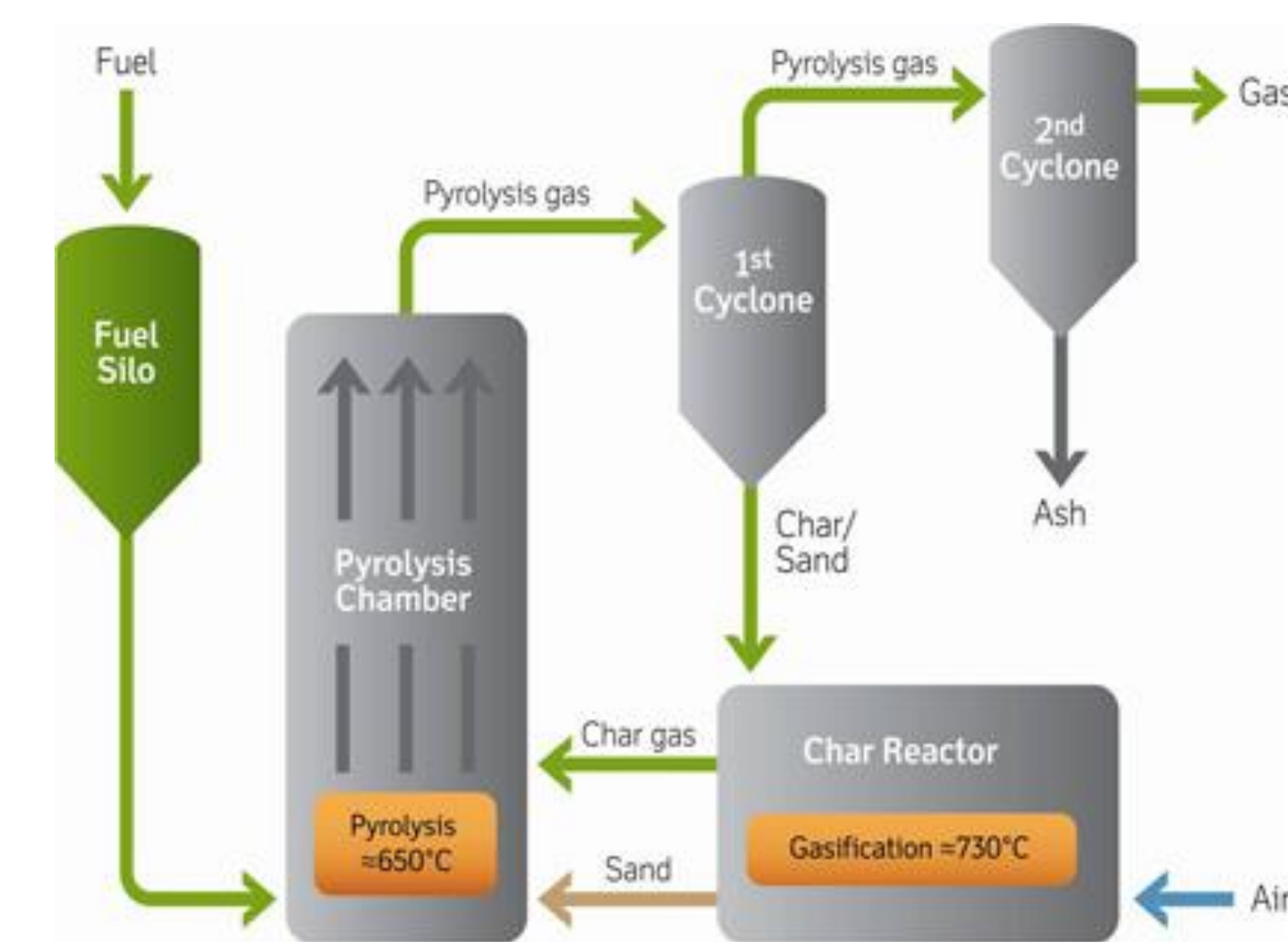


IWARR 2015

Aim: Phosphorus

- Phosphorous is a limited resource and an **essential nutrient**.
- Phosphate rock (P-rock) reserves are foreseen to be **depleted in 300-400 years** [1].
- In the last decade, the **EU imported around 90 % of the P-rock** that it consumed (IFA).
- In the EU there is a flow of 182,000 t of **non-recycled P yearly in sewage sludge**, around 20% of the EU P-rock consumption (Van Dijk et al. (submitted)).
- A common practice in some countries (AT, BE, CH, DE, DK, NL, US, JP, HK) is **incineration** of sewage sludge. In recent years, **gasification** has gained attention.

Low-temperature gasification technology



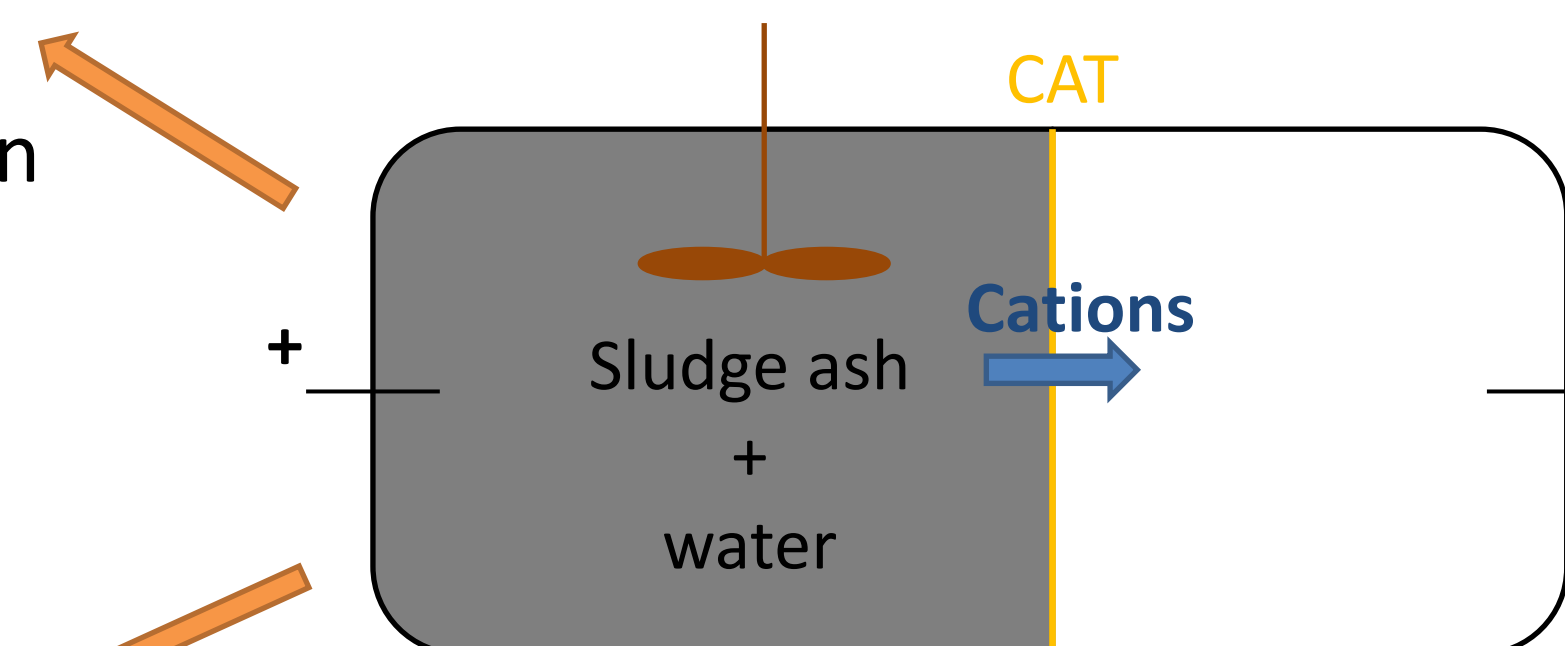
- Due to the low temperature it is possible to use high alkaline fuels. Examples: straw, sewage sludge, etc.
- The resulting ashes, might have a high content in heavy metals or have a poor P-plant availability

Electrodialysis: a technology to recover P from sewage sludge ashes

- A patent has been filed from DTU (WO 2015/032903) for the 2-compartment Electrolytic (ED) cell.

Anolyte liquid:

- P-rich
- Acidic (H⁺ generated in the anode)
- Low in heavy metals



Bulk ash: can be reused in construction industry

Catholyte liquid:
Mostly Ca and heavy metals

Figure 1. Two-compartment ED cell

- With this setup (Figure 1), it is possible to recover up to **90% of P from incineration sewage sludge ashes**, in the anolyte liquid with low content in heavy metals (Cd, Cr, Cu, Ni, Pb, Zn) [2].
- **Only 26% of P** was recovered with the same setup at the same conditions (liquid-to-solid ratio, current density and experimental time) with **gasification sewage sludge ashes** [3]. Most likely, due to the presence of **Fe-P bindings** (Figure 2). Poor results were previously observed for ashes with high Al content [4].
- **Up to 70% of P** was eventually recovered for the same ashes with an innovative ED setup. The recovered P-liquid has a content in heavy metals **comparable to the one of wet phosphoric acid** (Figure 3). The new setup is currently being drafted for a patent filing.
- Further work will focus on sewage sludge ashes containing both **high content of both Fe and Al**.

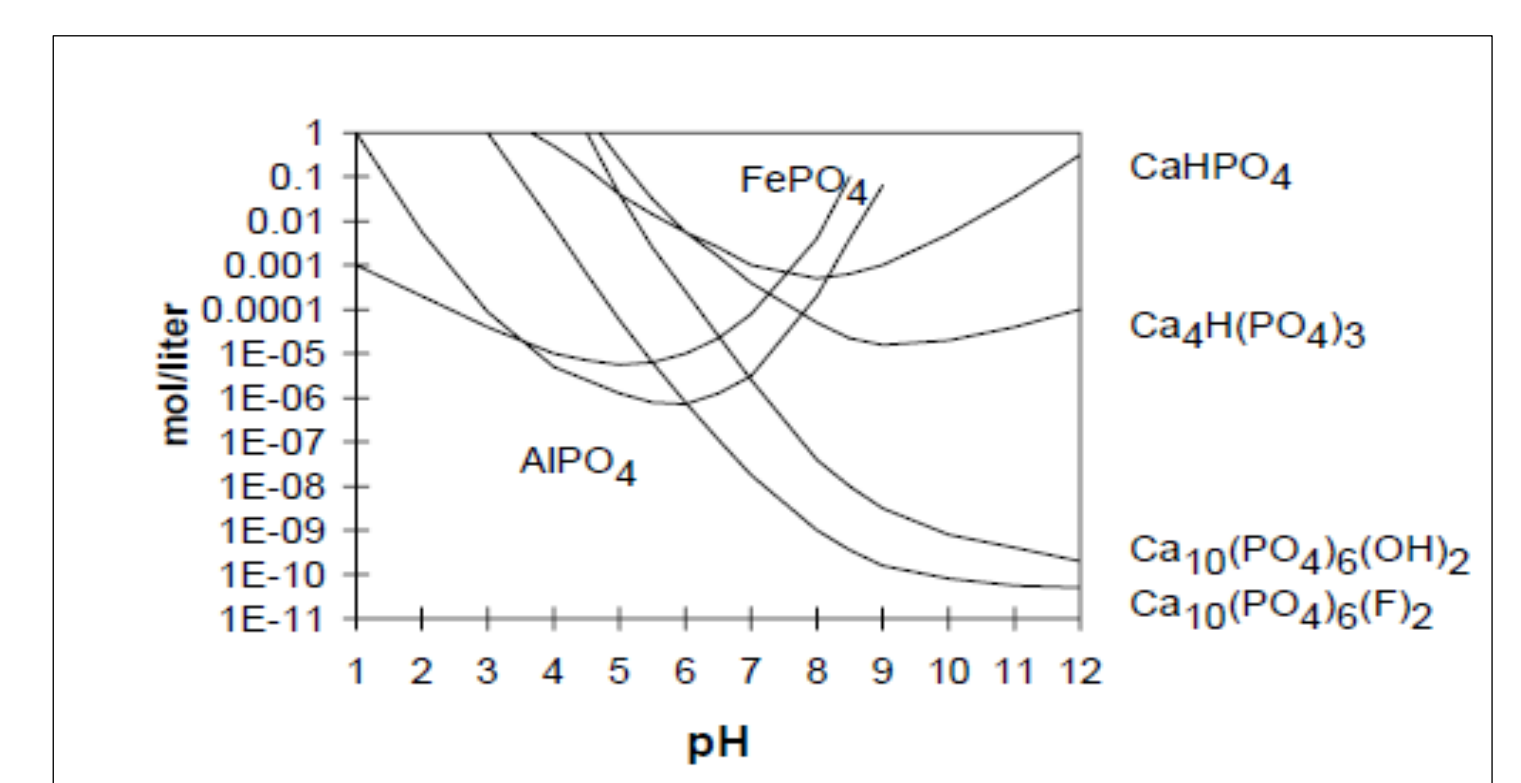


Figure 2. Solubility of Al-P, Ca-P and Fe-P compounds

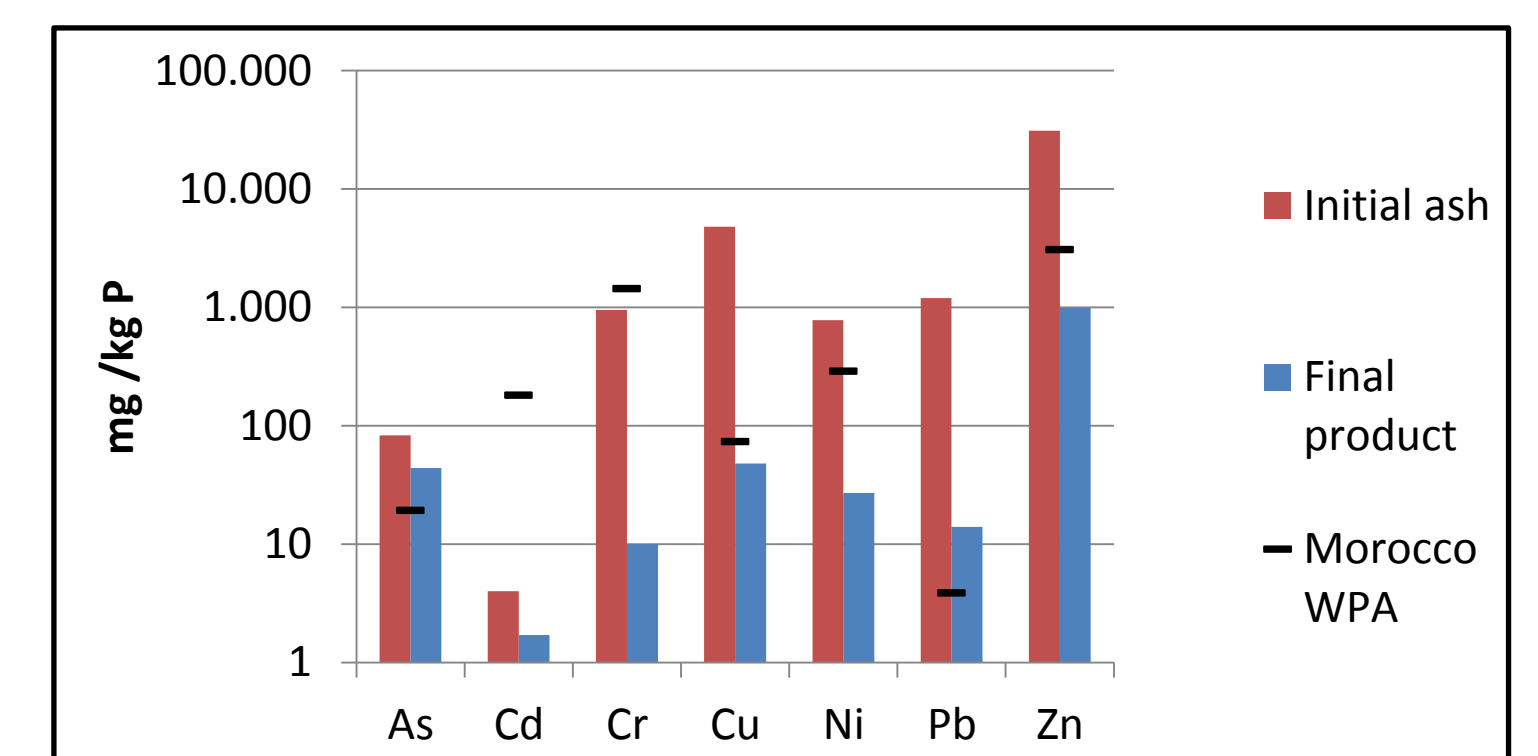


Figure 3. Heavy metal to P ratio of the ash, anolyte liquid (final product) and wet phosphoric acid



Figure 4. Different sewage sludge ashes

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