A Young and Gifted Scientist

Dear JEQ Readers,

In January 2013, Maria Elena Grimmett of Palm Beach Gardens, FL, published her first paper as a sole author, in the Journal of Environmental Quality, titled "Removal of Sulfamethazine by Hypercrosslinked Adsorbents in Aquatic Systems". That she was only 14 years old when the paper was published astonished everyone who had reviewed and read her paper. This issue contains her second sole-author publication, in which she reports on her continued research to evaluate a remediation method that effectively removes sulfamethazine, a prominent agricultural antibiotic that contaminates groundwater, across a wide range of environmentally relevant operating conditions using hypercrosslinked polystyrene polymers.

Last year, Maria Elena traveled from her home in Florida to present both an oral presentation and a poster at the ASA, CSSA, SSSA Annual Meetings in Long Beach, CA. I attended both and took the opportunity to talk to Maria Elena about her research. It quickly became clear that she is highly motivated, driven by a strong intellectual curiosity. Testament to her drive and success as a researcher are the many honors and awards she has already garnered, often in competition with PhD students. The American Chemical Society gave her their Emerging Leader Award in 2014, and in 2013–2014, she delivered 11 presentations at scientific conferences. But aside from her early success in the field of research, I was also struck by her strong desire to direct her work at improving the environment. I am both encouraged and inspired by her goal because it bodes well for future environmental science to have someone so young and accomplished interested in and committed to solving environmental problems.

I am pleased to invite you to read Maria Elena’s paper in this issue, titled “Adsorption of Sulfamethazine from Environmentally Relevant Aqueous Matrices unto Hypercrosslinked Adsorbent MN250.”

Ed Gregorich
Editor, Journal of Environmental Quality