Assessment of methane production from shredder waste in landfills: The influence of temperature, moisture and metals - DTU Orbit (22/08/2018)

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In this study, methane (CH4) production rates from shredder waste (SW) were determined by incubation of waste samples over a period of 230 days under different operating conditions, and first-order decay kinetic constants (k-values) were calculated. SW and sterilized SW were incubated under different temperatures (20-25°C, 37°C, and 55°C), moisture contents (35% and 75% w/w) and amounts of inoculum (5% and 30% of the samples wet weight). The biochemical methane potential (BMP) from different types of SW (fresh, old and sieved) was determined and compared. The ability of metals (iron, aluminum, zinc, and copper) contained in SW to provide electrons for methanogens resulting in gas compositions with high CH4 contents and very low CO2 contents was investigated. The BMP of SW was 1.5-6.2 kg CH4/ton waste. The highest BMP was observed in fresh SW samples, while the lowest was observed in sieved samples (fine fraction of SW). Abiotic production of CH4 was not observed in laboratory incubations. The biotic experiments showed that when the moisture content was 35% w/w and the temperature was 20-25°C, CH4 production was extremely low. Increasing the temperature from 20-25°C to 37°C resulted in significantly higher CH4 production while increasing the temperature from 37°C to 55°C resulted in higher CH4 production, but to a lower extent. Increasing the moisture and inoculum content also increased CH4 production. The k-values were 0.033-0.075 yr⁻¹ at room temperature, 0.220-0.429 yr⁻¹ at 37°C and 0.235-0.488 yr⁻¹ at 55°C, indicating that higher temperatures resulted in higher k-values. It was observed that H2 can be produced by biocorrosion of iron, aluminium, and zinc and it was shown that produced H2 can be utilized by hydrogenotrophic methanogens to convert CO2 to CH4. Addition of iron and copper to SW resulted in inhibition of CH4 production, while addition of aluminium and zinc resulted in higher CH4 production. This suggested that aluminium and zinc contribute to high CH4 production from SW by providing H2 for hydrogenotrophic methanogens. Gas compositions with higher CH4 and lower CO2 observed in landfilled SW are thus most likely due to the consumption of existing CO2 in the produced biogas and the produced H2 by biocorrosion of aluminium and zinc by methanogens.

General information

State: Published
Organisations: Department of Environmental Engineering, Residual Resource Engineering
Authors: Fathi Aghdam, E. (Intern), Scheutz, C. (Intern), Kjeldsen, P. (Intern)
Pages: 226-237
Publication date: 2017
Main Research Area: Technical/natural sciences

Publication information

Journal: Waste Management
Volume: 63
ISSN (Print): 0956-053x
Ratings:
BFI (2018): BFI-level 2
Web of Science (2018): Indexed yes
BFI (2017): BFI-level 2
Scopus rating (2017): CiteScore 4.94 SJR 1.456 SNIP 2.059
Web of Science (2017): Indexed yes
BFI (2016): BFI-level 2
Scopus rating (2016): CiteScore 4 SJR 1.407 SNIP 2.159
Web of Science (2016): Indexed yes
BFI (2015): BFI-level 2
Scopus rating (2015): SJR 1.732 SNIP 2.263 CiteScore 4.33
Web of Science (2015): Indexed yes
BFI (2014): BFI-level 2
Scopus rating (2014): SJR 1.763 SNIP 2.49 CiteScore 3.43
Web of Science (2014): Indexed yes
BFI (2013): BFI-level 1
Scopus rating (2013): SJR 1.815 SNIP 2.413 CiteScore 3.39
ISI indexed (2013): ISI indexed yes
Web of Science (2013): Indexed yes
BFI (2012): BFI-level 1
Scopus rating (2012): SJR 1.59 SNIP 2.18 CiteScore 2.91
ISI indexed (2012): ISI indexed yes
Web of Science (2012): Indexed yes
BFI (2011): BFI-level 1
Anaerobic digestion, Biochemical methane potential (BMP), Biocorrosion, Biogenic carbon, End-of-life vehicles, First-order decay kinetic constant

DOI: 10.1016/j.wasman.2016.11.023
Source: FindIt
Source-ID: 2349358359
Publication: Research - peer-review › Journal article – Annual report year: 2017