

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

National Association of Plant Breeders Honors Graduate Students for Plant Breeding Research at Annual Meeting

June 10, 2013—This year's joint annual meeting of the National Association of Plant Breeders (NAPB) and the Plant Breeding Coordinating Committee was held in Tampa, FL from June 2 through June 5. Nearly 170 public and commercial plant breeders and student attendees discussed innovations and needs as the profession seeks to address issues related to the genetic improvement of crops, productivity, sustainability. In addition to multiple topical sessions, which included two tours and two workshops, six plant breeding graduate students were honored for outstanding research contributions.

Three students were chosen on the basis of their research potential to give oral presentations as NAPB sponsored speakers on Tuesday, June 4. Carmille Bales of Michigan State University presented her work on the *rag3* gene found in soybean accession PI 567598B, which provides resistance to aphids. Jozer Mangandi of the University of Florida discussed his research on strawberry resistance to two pathogens that cause significant crown diseases. Rebecca Nitcher of the University of California at Davis described the effects of the FT-B1 allele on heading time and agronomic traits in wheat.

The achievements of three other students were recognized in the poster competition. First prize was awarded to Steve Becker, Colorado State University at Fort Collins, for his work on improving the diversity and yield potential of bread wheat. Second prize was awarded to Jill Recker of North Carolina State University for work on the effects of genetic introgressions from the maize progenitor, teosinte, on improving resistance in corn to gray leaf spot disease, and Gerardo Nunez of the University of Florida received the third place award for his poster describing breeding for root traits in blueberry. Student awards were supported by RAPiD Genomics of Gainesville, FL.

Honorable mention in the poster competition went to Alan Chambers, Dario Chavez, Duke Pauli, and Steve Thornton. Chambers, Chavez, and Thornton all study at the University of Florida. Their work emphasized flavor quality in strawberry, genetic variation in peach, and disease resistance in peanut, respectively. Duke Pauli of Montana State University used association mapping techniques to link DNA sequence variation to important traits in barley.

The Plant Breeding Coordinating Committee serves as a forum regarding issues and opportunities of national and global importance to the public and private sectors of the U.S. national plant breeding effort.

The National Association of Plant Breeders was begun as an initiative of the Plant Breeding Coordinating Committee and is the advocacy group that represents plant breeders in federal, state, commercial, and non-government organizations.

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Steve Becker, Colorado State University, receiving his first place poster certificate from Dr. Jamie Sherman (right).



Jill Recker, North Carolina State University, placed second in the 2013 NAPB graduate student poster contest. Shown with Dr. Jamie Sherman (right).



Gerardo Nunez, University of Florida, receiving third place in the 2013 NAPB graduate student poster contest from Dr. Jamie Sherman (right).