



NAPB Newsletter

April 2016

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How to Become a Member of NAPB!

Membership is now fee based and required in order for you to receive NAPB's benefits.

\$80 for Professionals

\$35 for Students

Use our link <https://www.plantbreeding.org/> and click on the Membership tab. It only takes a minute to join.

Call for 2016 NAPB Award Nominations

The National Association of Plant Breeders (NAPB) is pleased to announce availability of three professional awards. Awardees will be recognized at our Annual Meeting on August 15th - 18th at the Raleigh Marriott City Center in Raleigh, NC. Annual Meeting information can be found at <https://www.plantbreeding.org/annual-meeting-2016>.

Nominations are currently being accepted for 2016 and **the final deadline is May 22, 2016 (11:59 pm Central time)**. In addition, nomination packages that were submitted but not awarded will be considered for two subsequent years, provided that nominees remain eligible for the specific award category (Early Career Award nominees must be within specified dates of PhD). Nominators are encouraged to resubmit such nomination packages; letters of support can be used for up to three years. For inquiries, questions and submissions, please contact the Awards Panel Chairperson, Rita Mumm, 217-244-9497, ritamumm@illinois.edu. **Nomination packages can be submitted to Rita Mumm in pdf format through email.**

NAPB Webinar Series-“Science of Crop Improvement”

Each year, the NAPB organizes and sponsors a series of educational webinars. Information for our 2016 series can be found in the attached document and by clicking [here](#). If you are a professional working in the field of plant breeding, these offer an opportunity to learn about new ideas, develop new skills, and stay current with the changing sciences. For undergraduate or graduate students in plant breeding, this is a chance to broaden your current learning and applied skill level. Either way, these webinars brought to you by NAPB are a great way to expand your knowledge and proficiency.

Dr. Stephen Baenziger-Small Grains Breeder-March 2nd
Dr. David Byrne-Prunus and Rosa Breeder-March 16th
Dr. Larry Grauke-Pecan and Hickory Research Geneticist-March 30th
Dr. Arron Carter-Winter Wheat Breeder -April 6th
Dr. Michael Havey-Allium and Cucurbit Research Geneticist-April 13th
Dr. Kevin Murphy-Barley and Alternative Crop Breeder -April 20th

Participants can watch live online at the following link: <http://carmenconnect.osu.edu/napb>
Each webinar will be held at 1:00 pm Central time.

SPECIAL NOTE:

It has come to our attention that some of those attempting to view the live webinars were experiencing connection issues. It is recommended that in order to ensure connection, web browsers other than Google Chrome be used and that the newest versions be installed. The Adobe Connect plug-in should also be installed on the device that the webinar is to be viewed on. As with any streaming video, please make sure that the internet connection is strong to ensure the best viewing experience. If you have any further issues, please first see the Adobe Connect troubleshooting guide at https://carmenconnect.osu.edu/common/help/en/support/meeting_test.htm, and if you are still experiencing issues, contact Valerie Childress at childress.39@osu.edu.

AAAS Symposium on Plant Genetic Resources

The importance of conserving and exploiting plant genetic resources was highlighted in a symposium at the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. The symposium, held on February 13 in Washington, DC, was sponsored by the Plant Breeding Coordinating Committee and NAPB. The symposium was organized by NAPB members Dr. Patrick Byrne, Professor of Plant Breeding and Genetics at Colorado State University, Dr. Ann Marie Thro, National Program Leader for Plant Breeding and Genetic Resources at USDA-NIFA, and Dr. Wayne Smith, Professor of Plant Breeding and Genetics at Texas A&M University. A summary is posted on the National Association of Plant Breeders website, under 'Hot Topics': <https://www.plantbreeding.org/>.

2016 NAPB Annual Meeting August 15-18, Raleigh, NC



Registration Open, Deadline July 15



Click here to register: <https://www.plantbreeding.org/annual-meeting-2016>

The 2016 NAPB/PBCC Annual Meeting will be held August 15-18 at the Raleigh Marriott City Center with our theme being "Improving Efficiency in Breeding Programs". Speakers from across the US who specialize in row, horticultural, and tree crops have been selected and will cover topics ranging from CRISP-Cas9 to high throughput phenotyping. A pre-conference field tour will be held on Monday to feature the breeding programs of numerous crops important to North Carolina, two of which are sweet potatoes and peanuts. Presentations from noted speakers, NAPB Award recipients, and graduate students will be held Tuesday and Wednesday. Graduate students will also be the focus in poster sessions and mini-presentations. A tour of SAS and Cotton Incorporated will conclude the meeting on Thursday morning. Monday and Thursday tour space is limited, so sign up early as both are on a first come basis. In order for the organizers to properly manage the transportation, meals, and accommodations, the registration deadline is July 15.

Plant Breeding Success Story

Donn Cummings

Mentoring emerging plant breeders has been a clear and very rewarding highlight of my 37 years in a professional capacity as a plant breeder in the private sector. It is one that I did not fully anticipate that I would have the opportunity to pursue as robustly as I did during the latter years of my career. My enthusiasm for mentoring emerging plant breeders ensued from being well mentored into the profession by enthusiastic, experienced plant breeders during my graduate education and early career.

As a Biology major I was accepted into Dental School, but lacked connectivity to that profession other than occasional visits to my family dentist. I decided instead to pursue Genetics and Plant Breeding because of the influence of caring mentors. I was drawn to the application of the science of genetics for improving our global food supply by excellent academic and professional mentors. Others will recognize some of the names of my early mentors at a time when I was particularly impressionable: Wayne Keim, John Axtell, Deon Stuthman, John Geadelmann, Forrest Troyer, Ron Phillips, Norman Borlaug, and many others (including many at Dekalb and Monsanto) who guided me in to Plant Breeding, and who trained and inspired me to encourage others regarding the uniquely rewarding profession of plant breeding. You may not recognize all of these names, but you will recognize many, especially if you have been a plant breeder for as long as I have been.



Dr. Donn Cummings
NAPB Advocate
donncummings@gmail.com

I highlight some of my notable mentors in this note to encourage others to include mentoring as a significant part of your goals as a plant breeding professional. It may not be listed in your job description, but it is totally worthwhile and personally rewarding.

The National Association of Plant Breeders (NAPB) is rapidly becoming the “go to” place for graduate students seeking strong mentors. Graduate students eagerly engage in NAPB, and make up a very important sector of our membership. What we need is more plant breeding professionals to join NAPB and engage in our growing mentoring opportunities, thus supporting the future of our very noble profession. Encourage a fellow plant breeder to join NAPB today!

Do you have a plant breeding success story that you would like to share? If so, please send a brief description or a link to your current Communications Committee Chair, Todd Campbell (todd.campbell@ars.usda.gov). Success stories will be shared in upcoming NAPB newsletters.

Graduate Student/Recent Graduate Spotlight



Dr. Kari Hugie
USDA-ARS, Florence, SC
kari.hugie@ars.usda.gov

Where do you come from and what is your background?

I was born and raised in Greenville, MS. I earned a B.S. in Biology at Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches, TX, where I also had the opportunity to play collegiate softball. I moved to St. Paul, MN to pursue an M.S. in Plant Breeding/Molecular Genetics at the University of Minnesota working under Dr. Eric Watkins in the Turfgrass Breeding program. My thesis research involved the evaluation of several alternative turfgrass species under low-input management, including two species native to North America, and additionally assessing their economic potential. I then earned my Ph.D. in Plant Breeding from Texas A&M University, where I worked under Dr. Wayne Smith at the Cotton Improvement Laboratory. A major component of my dissertation research was identifying QTL for cotton fiber quality traits stably expressed across diverse genetic backgrounds.

What institution do you attend, and what is the focus of your research? Who is your advisor?

I am currently a Postdoctoral Research Associate and Cotton Incorporated Postdoctoral Fellow at the USDA-ARS Coastal Plains Soil, Water, and Plant Research Center in Florence, SC working for Dr. Todd Campbell. We are working to characterize the phenotypic and genotypic diversity among naturally day-neutral exotic cotton accessions using high-throughput phenotyping technologies and genotyping-by-sequencing (in collaboration with Dr. Andrew Paterson at the University of Georgia). We plan to use these data to identify and utilize economically important genetic variation present within exotic cotton germplasm.

What would you like to do after graduate school?

I would like to continue to grow as a plant breeder with a focus on conservation, characterization, and efficient utilization of genetic diversity.

What would you like the public to know about plant breeding?

I feel that increased dialogue between scientists and the public about the goals of plant breeding programs as well as a more comprehensive view of the breeding process would improve public understanding and ultimately peak interest in research on food and fiber crops.

What is the biggest plant breeding challenge of our time?

I believe that a major challenge to plant breeders is communication, not only as it applies to our ability to relate to the public but also to foster collaboration with scientists from other disciplines.

Do you know a graduate student/recent graduate that we should spotlight? If so, please contact your current Communications Committee Chair, Todd Campbell (todd.campbell@ars.usda.gov).

2016 Congressional Visits Day

By Leah Ruff and Vivian Bernau

For the first time, NAPB teamed with ASA-CSSA-SSSA to send two NAPB graduate student representatives for the 2016 Congressional Visits Day (CVD) in March. The CVD was an opportunity for students to join their colleagues on Capitol Hill to raise awareness and support for science and research funding. It was also an opportunity for students to develop their research narrative and advocate plant breeding. NAPB members, Leah Ruff (University of Nebraska-Lincoln) and Vivian Bernau (The Ohio State University), joined 22 other graduate students from across the United States for the event.

The event started with a full day of training with speakers such as Sonny Ramaswamy, Director of USDA NIFA, and Congressional Science Fellows. We reviewed the President's budget request and learned how the appropriation process works. We also learned how to make the "ask" for support of funding the USDA competitive grants program, the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI). It was important for us to learn how to make an effective request to our congressional delegates so they could also see the scientific need for the funding. We also practiced our "science storytelling" to talk about why we are involved in research and what increased funding would mean for us in the future. It was important for us to practice our story because not only did we want to be succinct, but also a personal story helps to illustrate the value - in our case, the value of plant breeding.

Scientists and certified crop advisors paired with the students to form teams for visits to congressional offices--a representation of how the research we do makes its way to farmers across the country. The day on Capitol Hill was filled with back-to-back meetings with senators, representatives, and their staff. Meetings were quick, sometimes only 10 minutes, so it was important that we were prepared and that we did our homework about the Member's relevant committees or issues they care about. We were prepared with a handout illustrating our 'ask' and exchanged business cards at each meeting. It was fun communicating what we do and why support for plant breeding is so important. Throughout our two-day adventures, we utilized social media with the twitter hashtag: #supportagresearch. Check out our tweets to see pictures and messages from the participants!

The CVD opportunity was invaluable for networking and making lifelong connections with students and scientists that may someday be congressional staff. As future leaders and seekers of research grant money, it was also important for us to learn about the appropriations process and how funding works. The CVD was a great experience especially if you have any interest in a career in science policy.



Group photo of ASA-CSSA-SSSA and NAPB participants



Deb Hamernik, Salvador Ramirez, and Leah Ruff with Deb Fischer, United States Senator for Nebraska at the Russell Senate Office Building



Vivian Bernau with ASA-CSSA-SSSA CEO, Ellen Bergfeld



NAPB student participants Leah Ruff and Vivian Bernau at the Capitol



Ellen Bergfeld, Vivian Bernau, and Cecilia Lokai-Minnich with Ohio Senator Sherrod Brown's Legislative Correspondent, Tommy Brown

Other News

Congratulations to NAPB member Dr. David Stelly!! Dr. Stelly recently received the Lifetime Achievement Award at the National Conference on Genetics and Cytogenetics at the University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad in Karnataka, India. <http://today.agrilife.org/2016/03/20/stelly-recognized-with-lifetime-achievement-award-in-india/>

Events and Opportunities

5th Annual UC Davis Plant Breeding Symposium will take place **April 18** at the UC Davis Conference Center. <http://plantbreeding2016.ucdavis.edu>

5th International Conferences in Quantitative Genetics will take place in Madison, WI **June 12 to 17, 2016**. Fellowships are still available for students of US institutions working in quantitative genetics related to plant research. Four short courses will also be offered the week prior to the conference (June 6 to 10). <http://www.icqg5.org/#!register/mainPage>.

2016 Short Course on Marker-Assisted Plant Breeding will take place **June 20-23** in Saint Paul Minnesota: <https://mapb2016.eventbrite.com>

2016 NAPB Annual Meeting will take place **August 15-18, 2016** in Raleigh, NC. <https://www.plantbreeding.org/annual-meeting-2016>

2016 ASA-CSSA-SSSA Annual Meeting will take place November 6-9, 2016 in Phoenix, AZ. <https://www.acsmeetings.org>

AGRA Consultancy: AGRA is seeking a consultant to refine and align courses for plant breeding e-learning for Africa (PBEA). <http://www.agra.org/opportunities/consultancies>

Other DuPont Sponsored Plant Breeding Symposia: a full list of upcoming DuPont sponsored plant breeding symposium can be found here: <http://www.pioneer.com/home/site/about/template.CONTENT/guid.1E31353B-AE47-AC0D-027C-652DA4E01A32>

If you have an upcoming event you would like to include in the NAPB newsletter, please send a description and link to any important information to your current Communications Committee Chair, Todd Campbell (todd.campbell@ars.usda.gov). Information will be included in upcoming newsletters.

Please direct comments and suggestions about the NAPB Newsletter to:

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