



# NAPB Newsletter

January 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.

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## Plant Breeding Success Story

### Kent Bradford Honored as Top 100 Founder of the Seed Industry

Seed World recently named Dr. Kent Bradford as one of the top 100 founders of the seed industry during the last 100 years. Dr. Bradford founded the Seed Biotechnology Center at University California Davis. The center has many important projects including the Plant Breeding Academy (<http://pba.ucdavis.edu>). The Plant Breeding Academy helps connect professionals in the seed industry in the United States, Asia, Europe and Africa. In addition to his work with the Seed Biotechnology Center, Dr. Bradford is Distinguished Professor of Plant Sciences at UC Davis.



Dr. Kent Bradford  
Professor, UC Davis  
Founder Seed Biotechnology Center  
[kjbradford@ucdavis.edu](mailto:kjbradford@ucdavis.edu)

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](mailto:todd.campbell@ars.usda.gov)). Success stories will be shared in upcoming NAPB newsletters.

## Graduate Student/Recent Graduate Spotlight



Dr. Virginia Sykes  
University of Tennessee  
[vsykes@utk.edu](mailto:vsykes@utk.edu)

### ***Where do you come from and what is your background?***

My background is probably not that of your typical plant breeding Ph.D. I earned a B.S. in Marketing Management from Virginia Tech but quickly discovered a love for horticulture when filling free time with plant science electives. By the time I was ready to graduate, I was only a few credits shy of earning a second B.S. in Horticulture. After an internship at the Hampton Roads Education and Extension Center, Dr. Brandon Horvath convinced me that I should skip the second B.S. and go straight for an M.S. in his Turfgrass Pathology program. My M.S. research involved screening tall fescue germplasm for resistance to fungal pathogens in collaboration with a USDA breeder. This work inspired me to then pursue a Ph.D. in Plant Breeding at the University of Tennessee where I concurrently earned an M.S. in Statistics and served as the Research Associate for the Agronomic Variety Testing Program.

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

I earned my Ph.D. in Plant Breeding from the University of Tennessee in December of 2014 under Dr. Fred Allen. I worked with biofuels switchgrass with a focus on determining quantitative genetic parameters of traits associated with biomass and ethanol yield, assessing the impact of switchgrass rust on ethanol yield, and evaluating the efficacy of selection in different years and under different competitive conditions.

### ***What would you like to do after graduate school?***

I am currently serving as the Interim Coordinator for the Agronomic Variety Testing Program at the University of Tennessee and looking for an industry or academic plant breeding opportunity.

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

I would like the public to understand the goals of plant breeding: to develop varieties that taste better, look better, ship more easily, store longer, resist pathogens, use fewer resources, and feed more people. Too often, the public see plant breeders as forcing products on them, when, in reality, consumer demand ultimately drives the goals of plant breeding.

### ***What is the biggest plant breeding challenge of our time?***

I think the biggest plant breeding challenge of our time is not water use efficiency or yield, but public perception of plant breeding. We are in an era of global communication and dealing with a society that is largely ignorant or misinformed about what we do. Unless we can change that, we are going to face increasingly significant challenges in attaining the resources we need, as plant breeders, to create improved products.

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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](mailto:todd.campbell@ars.usda.gov)).

## Mark Your Calendars!

Join us August 15-19, 2016 for the 6th annual NAPB and 10<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Plant Breeding Coordinating Committee in Raleigh, North Carolina, hosted by Cotton Incorporated and North Carolina State University.



## Events and Opportunities

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

**2016 NC State Plant Breeding Club Symposium** will take place **February 4th** at the Talley Student Union. The topic is “Looking to the Future: Integrating Insights and Innovations in Plant Breeding”. <http://www.plantbreedingcenter.ncsu.edu/symposium/>

**2016 University of Minnesota Plant Breeding Symposium** will take place **March 27** in the North Star Ballroom of the St. Paul Student Center. <http://www.plantbreedingsymposium.umn.edu>

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

**NABP Video Competition Extended** until **Jan 31, 2016**. See the description below or visit the link to view our flyer and additional competition details. <https://www.plantbreeding.org/files/napb/2015-video-competition.pdf>

**AAAS Symposium:** The Plant Breeding Coordinating Committee will sponsor a symposium on the use of plant genetic resources for crop improvement at the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. The 90-minute symposium is entitled ‘Unlocking Plant Genetic Diversity for Food and Nutritional Security’ and will take place **Saturday, Feb. 13** in Washington, D.C. Speakers were chosen to highlight the meeting theme of Global Science Engagement and include Paula Bramel on global efforts for crop genetic resources conservation; Chiedozie Egesi on bringing cassava breeding into the 21st century; and Walter Trevisan on increasing genetic diversity in public- and private-sector maize breeding. Paul Heisey of USDA’s Economic Research Service will lead the discussion. More details are available at <https://aaas.confex.com/aaas/2016/webprogram/Session11885.html> or by contacting Pat Byrne at [patrick.byrne@colostate.edu](mailto:patrick.byrne@colostate.edu).

**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](mailto:todd.campbell@ars.usda.gov)). Information will be included in upcoming newsletters.

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Please direct comments and suggestions about the NAPB Newsletter to:

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