



Improving Plants to Improve Lives
National Association of Plant Breeders
2022-23 Annual Report
Commercial Plant Breeders Committee

This year's committee: Commercial Plant Breeders Committee

Officers	Other members
Chair – John Gill, AgReliant Genetics Vice Chair – Liana Nice, Nature Source Improved Plants Secretary – Chibwe Chungu, BASF	Rick Harrison, Driscoll's Klaus Koehler, Corteva Clint Steketee, Syngenta Brian Pfeiffer, Innovative Seed Solutions Ben Beyer, Advanta Seeds Brittney Jones, Bayer Jordon Pace, Corteva John Zwonitzer

Major Goals for the Year 2022-23

1. Plant Breeder of the Future

- a. This topic has been a priority of the committee for the last several years as we are uniquely positioned to provide insight into what companies are needing in newly recruited breeders. We will work with the executive committee to determine if a white paper is still desired, and if so, what specifically they would like it to focus on. The last white papers on this topic were published around ten years ago, so an update would be beneficial.
- b. We are planning to hold at least one webinar on the topic of plant breeder of the future, although more may be possible since it is such a broad topic. We may work in collaboration with the Graduate Student Working Group on tailoring a webinar to our graduate student audience.
- c. Working scenarios have changed for most people after the pandemic, and it would be good to address these changes and how breeders can adapt while still running effective breeding programs. Quite a few breeders work remotely now, and with that comes advantages in productivity and challenges in collaboration. Several of our committee members have experience with this and can provide insight in how to make it work. This can likely be a standalone webinar topic or can be done in conjunction with other plant breeder of the future topics.

2. Global/International Breeding and how it relates to US Breeders

- a. Gene editing has been a hot topic for the past several years, and the regulatory hurdles are complex across the world. We are planning to identify a speaker for a webinar that can address some of the complex issues surrounding



acceptance of gene edited crops in Europe and in other parts of the world. Pairwise does quite a bit of work in gene editing, and KWS and Limagrain can provide perspective on the international status of gene edited crops.

3. Training Initiatives for Graduate Students

- a. This series of outreach programs is intended to bring information to plant breeding students from a commercial breeding perspective on topics our committee feels are often missing from university curricula but are also of high value to industry and important for graduate students and aspiring plant breeding candidates to understand. The plan is to hold a soft skills workshop at the University of Minnesota and Iowa State University.

4. Maintain connections with other NAPB committees

- a. Our committee has a great relationship with the Graduate Student Working Group and the Education Committee. We worked on several webinars this past year in collaboration with them and want to build on that success this year. We will reach out to the two committees and see what initiatives they have planned for the year and how we can assist them in their goals.

5. Maintain a time slot at the 2023 Annual NAPB Meeting

- a. We plan to hold a session at the 2023 annual meeting on a topic of interest to the membership. We will work over the next several months to identify what that topic will be.

Major Highlights / Accomplishments for the Year 2022-23

- Klaus, Rick, and Chibwe held workshops for graduate students at Iowa State University and the University of Minnesota. The topic was Behavioural Based Interviewing and each workshop was well attended with lots of engagement.
- Brittney Jones created a Google account for our committee where all meeting minutes, annual reports, and other relevant documentation could be stored.
- We worked with the Executive Committee (EC) to determine what they would like to see contained in a white paper addressing the topic of Plant Breeder of the Future. After discussion, it was determined that the Plant Breeding Coordinating Committee (PBCC) is working on a similar publication. It was determined that we should collaborate with the PBCC on their project and not try to duplicate the work that they are doing. This is an ongoing project and the PBCC is waiting for funding before further action is taken. Our committee is ready to help when needed.
- Our committee secured two speaker slots at the 2023 annual meeting. We will have Lolita Mathew from Pairwise and Mei Yu from KWS talk about how their companies are utilizing gene editing. They will also discuss regulatory hurdles and any new products they are bringing to market.
- Chibwe created a newsletter article that showcased the workshops held at Iowa State and the University of Minnesota. This article was included in the newsletter that went out in early May.



- We held a webinar in March on genomic selection. We had Hsiao-Yi Hung from Driscoll's and David Habier from Corteva as the presenters. It was well attended and lots of questions were asked. The Zoom account that was used capped participation at 100 people, but 327 people had registered.
- We will be hosting a second webinar in June with the title Plant Breeder of the Future. Klaus Koehler from Corteva will discuss talents needed by the ag industry now and in the future. Brittney Jones from Bayer will talk about her experiences as a recent graduate beginning a career in plant breeding and what she has learned that may help graduate students preparing for a career in industry.
- Klaus Koehler will co-host a soft skills workshop for graduate students at the annual meeting in July. This is a collaboration between Corteva and Bayer and is held every year.
- Several companies hosted internships for graduate student members of NAPB.

Lessons learnt [eg that will benefit the wider NAPB or other committees]

- The Zoom account that was used for our March webinar capped attendance at 100 participants. Make sure that the platform that is used has sufficient capacity for all interested participants.

Loose ends &/or Goals for Next Year 2023-24

- Send a survey out to members to determine what value they see in being a member of NAPB. Target committee activities to the areas where members find value. Determine what areas would be of value to people that would entice them to join NAPB and target those areas as well.
- Soft Skills Workshops – Continue improvement of framework put together by Klaus, Rick, and Chibwe. Potentially make it a network that will provide opportunities across various graduate programs. A workshop at the University of Nebraska is already scheduled for November 2023. Other future possibilities are Cornell, NC State, and Purdue.
- Have a mixer between graduate students and commercial company employees at one of the annual meeting lunches or suppers in 2024.
- Continue the graduate student internships at private companies.
- Continue holding webinars in conjunction with the Education Committee and the Graduate Student Working Group.

Incoming Secretary [name & affiliation *or* process & date for appointing new secretary]

- Brian Pfeiffer, Innovative Seed Solutions
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Details on any collaborations between committees



- We collaborated with the Education Committee for our March Webinar. They hosted it for us and ensured that the recording made it onto the NAPB YouTube channel.
- We collaborated with the Graduate Student Working Group on topics they wanted to see for a webinar. They are also hosting our June webinar for us and handle all the advertising for our webinars.
- We maintain contact with the advocacy committee and the membership committee in order to help them in their initiatives as needed.