



NAPB Newsletter

April 2017

Contents:

- **NAPB Member Benefits – President’s Message**
 - **2017 NAPB Meeting--Registration Open**
 - **NAPB Early Career Working Group**
 - **2017 NAPB Award Nominations**
 - **NAPB Webinar Series**
 - **Graduate Student Spotlight**
 - **NAPB Graduate Student Working Group Insight**
 - **2017 Congressional Visits Day**
 - **NAPB at ASTA “Storm the Hill”**
 - **Other News**
 - **Events and Opportunities**
-

Become a Member of NAPB!

As President of the NAPB, I want to reach out to share with you what makes this association special, and invite you to be part of our growth and success.

We are the only organization in the US that exists solely to bring together plant breeders and people interested in plant breeding, and advocate for the critical work that we do to the wider world.

A young, vibrant organisation, our members come from both industry and academia. Together we represent a fantastic array of plant types, translational research and investigatory techniques. We pride ourselves in having a strong and active representation in our plant breeding Graduate Student community. We also have recently begun an outreach effort with the creation of our Early Career membership group in mentoring.

Our Annual Meeting is one of the highlights of the plant breeding year for networking, continuing professional development, best practices, and lots of fun! In 2017 this unique event will be hosted by University of California, Davis from August 7-10.

We recently introduced a small fee for members to allow us to develop the work of this remarkable community – just \$80 for professionals, \$35 for students. Membership entitles you to a reduced-price registration for the conference, as well as exclusive access to:

- Private/public sector collaboration
- Quarterly newsletter
- Become active and engaged by working in one of our many committees on advancing plant breeding
- Advocacy for plant breeding
- Mentoring
- Education Resources
- “Member-only” job posting

Become a member of the NAPB today at <https://www.plantbreeding.org/>

I'd like to invite you to join us in strengthening the plant breeding community and raising awareness of the essential contribution we make with our work.

Klaus Koehler
President, National Association of Plant Breeders

2017 NAPB Annual Meeting August 7-10, Davis, CA



Registration Open, Deadline July 21



Click here to register: <http://napb2017.ucdavis.edu/registration/>

The 2017 NAPB/PBCC Annual Meeting will be held August 7-10th at the UC Davis Conference Center with our theme being “Diverse Crops – Diverse Challenges”. Speakers from across the US who specialize in row and horticultural crops have been selected and will cover a range of topics including high-throughput phenotyping, breeding for nutritional quality, breeding for organic systems, and gene editing. Highlights include pre- and post-conference field tours to Davis and Salinas, presentations from noted speakers, and integration of USDA/NIFA Project Director meeting. Graduate students will also be the focus in student workshops on management of breeding programs, poster sessions and 1-minute poster introductions. In order for the organizers to properly manage the transportation, meals, and accommodations, registration will close on July 21. You can take advantage of an early bird discount until May 20.

NAPB Early Career Working Group

We are excited to announce the formation of an Early Career Working Group (ECWG). The mission of the ECWG is to help early career professionals successfully transition from students to experienced plant breeders. The ECWG endeavors to provide mentorship, networking and related training opportunities in order to enhance membership quality for NAPB student and professional members alike.

We are intentionally not defining early career and experienced professionals; please self-identify as you see fit.

Early Career Professionals—If you’re interested in joining the ECWG please email our Chair Sarah Potts (SMPotts@dow.com). We are already busy planning a mentoring program to pair early career and experienced professionals, as well as an event at the annual meeting. We welcome other ideas for what this group can do to better serve our Early Career professionals!

Experienced Professionals—We are also looking for volunteers to mentor early career professionals. Please email Deb Liabeuf (Debora.liabeuf@gmail.com) if you’re interested in learning more about our serving as a mentor!

We hope everyone will fill out this survey to help us create the best mentoring program possible: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/V77BLYP>

Call for 2017 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 7th - 10th at the UC Davis Conference Center in Davis, CA. Annual Meeting information can be found at <http://napb2017.ucdavis.edu/>. Information and entry forms for awards can be found at <https://www.plantbreeding.org/awards>. Check this site for deadlines and instructions on submitting award nominations.

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 a member of the Awards Panel, Donn Cummings, donncummings1@gmail.com; Mark Sorrells, mes12@cornell.edu; Jennifer Yates, jennifer.yates@monsanto.com; Bala Pudota BBPudota@dow.com, or chair Jim McFerson, jim.mcferson@wsu.edu.

NAPB Webinar Series-“Building Better Plants for the 21st Century: Updates and Upgrades in HTP, IP and DNA”

Each year, The National Association of Plant Breeders (NAPB) Education Committee organizes and sponsors a series of educational webinars. Three webinars in the 2017 series remain, and recordings are available of others. If you are a professional working in Plant Breeding, these webinars offer an opportunity to learn about new ideas, develop new skills, and stay current with changing technology. 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 are a great way to expand your knowledge and proficiency.

Dr. Kevin Price, Executive Vice President of R&D, AgPixel LLC	March 1 st
Dr. Julie Dawson, Dept. of Horticulture, University of Wisconsin	March 15 th
Dr. Russell Jessup, Perennial Grass Breeding, Texas A&M University	March 29 th
Dr. Philipp Simon, Carrot and Garlic Genetics, USDA-ARS/UWM	April 12 th
Dr. Jim Myers, Vegetable Breeding and Genetics, Oregon State University	April 26 th
Dr. Fred Allen, Soybean Breeding, University of Tennessee	May 10 th

Participants can watch live online at the following link: <https://learn.extension.org/events/upcoming>
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. As with any streaming video, please make sure that the internet connection is strong to ensure the best viewing experience.

Graduate Student Spotlight



Sarah Kuzay
UC Davis, CA
snkuzay@ucdavis.edu

Where do you come from and what is your background?

Before attending college, I did not have any background in agriculture, science, or plants. I was born in Detroit, Michigan; and, spent most of my time growing up in Santa Ana, California. Both of my parents are public school teachers. I received my BS at UC Davis in Plant Sciences, emphasis in Genetics and Breeding. Throughout my undergrad I was focused on Plant Sciences, worked on variety of crops including strawberry, common bean, wheat, and peppers. I pursued multiple on-going internships, usually two internships simultaneously, each lasting 1-3 years. I dabbled in many specialized fields within plant sciences until finally choosing to pursue my PhD in molecular plant genetics and breeding for wheat under Dr. Jorge Dubcovsky.

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

I am currently a first year PhD student at UC Davis under Dr. Jorge Dubcovsky studying wheat genetics. The Dubcovsky lab is focused on genetics and breeding of small grains, namely pasta and bread wheat, barley, oats, and triticale. My research focuses on understanding the genetic basis of spikelets per spike (SPS) in wheat, a trait for yield in wheat. I am also working on breeding jalapeño and bell peppers for organic farming systems under Drs. Allen Van Deynze and Charles Brummer at the UC Davis Student Farm. This project is part of a student-led plant breeding program at UC Davis called SCOPE (Student Collaborative Organic Plant-Breeding and Education). I have been involved with the organic pepper breeding program for ~4 years and, at present, I am the lead student breeder for the SCOPE Pepper Breeding Team.

What would you like to do after graduate school?

After completing my graduate degree, I want to work as a plant breeder for an institute, public university or in the Research and Development of the private sector. Ultimately, I hope to pursue a career path that will give me the freedom to continue researching and understanding the genetic basis of the traits we modify through plant breeding.

What is the biggest plant breeding challenge of our time?

The two biggest challenges facing plant breeders is communication across disciplines and training the next generation of plant breeders. Teaching the art and science of plant breeding in the field is important. Many long-term plant breeders are now reaching retirement age and the demand for the next generation of plant breeders is high. Making selections and running a breeding program is an intensive, long-term education process taught in the field by the mentor (senior plant breeder) to the mentee (junior plant breeder). Finding willing and able participants to tackle multi-disciplinary learning and field breeding techniques is very challenging.

NAPB Graduate Student Working Group Insight



Dr. Leah Ruff
Pioneer, Johnston, IA
leahmaeder1@gmail.com

Where do you come from and what is your background?

My hometown is Farmersburg, Iowa (northeast Iowa). My family has a small farm there where they grow corn and soybeans and where I grew up tending to a garden and raising pigs. I went to Iowa State Univ. for a bachelor's in Agronomy and North Carolina State Univ. for a master's in Crop Science.

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

I attended the University of Nebraska for my PhD where I focused on soybean breeding. I researched soybean heterosis and soybean response to water, specifically looking at yield, yield components, and morphology. My advisor was Dr. George Graef.

Where do you currently work and what are you doing?

I am working in Johnston, IA at Pioneer as a contracted field testing scientist on corn breeding projects.

What did you enjoy most about participating in the NAPB Graduate Student Working Group (GSWG)?

I enjoyed meeting students from other universities and interacting with them at GSWG meetings and at the annual NAPB meetings. It's great to meet fellow students that have common interests and passion for plant breeding. I've enjoyed making what will likely be lifelong connections and memories.

What would you like graduate students to know about the NAPB GSWG and any advice for students that want to get involved?

Participation in the GSWG is a great way to network and grow in personal and professional development. I would highly suggest actively participating as a graduate student liaison for a NAPB committee (i.e. communication, education, recruitment and retention). Not only would you be taking a leadership role in the organization, but also you have the opportunity to interact with members from early career to seasoned professionals from many organizations, universities, and companies. Plus, the committees love graduate student insight to help NAPB meet the needs of graduate students and develop a strong organization.

Do you know a graduate student/recent graduate that we should spotlight? If so, please contact your current Communications Committee Chair, Jane Dever (jdever@ag.tamu.edu).

2017 Congressional Visits

By Derek Barchenger and Matthew Dzeivit

Congressional Visits Day (CVD) is an annual event held in Washington D.C. that brings graduate students, crop advisors, and scientists to Capitol Hill to raise awareness and support for science and research funding. It is also an opportunity for students to develop their research narrative and advocate for plant breeding. CVD is sponsored by the Soil Science Society of America (SSSA), the American Society of Agronomy (ASA) and the Crop Science Society of America (CSSA), and for the second year, NAPB partnered with the Tri-societies to send two NAPB graduate student representatives to CVD. NAPB members, Derek Barchenger (New Mexico State University) and Matthew Dzeivit (Iowa State University), joined researchers from across the country March 13-14 for the event.

In preparation for CVD, the NAPB members had a webinar with Drs. Richard Pratt (Advocacy Committee Chair) and Klaus Koehler (NAPB President) to develop our strategy to be advocates for plant breeding on the Hill. All the participants also received a full day of policy training where we learned about the budget process and the best way to communicate our research. It was important for us to discuss the impact plant breeding has on society without using jargon. We also learned to express why we were involved in research and what increased funding for the competitive grant program, Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) would mean for us in the future. The participants were divided into small groups consisting of students, scientists, and crop advisors all from the same region or state. Each group had a full day of meetings with their Congressional offices to provide education for food, agriculture, and natural resources research.

CVD provides students with the unique opportunity to meet with their elected representatives' members of Congress face to face and learn how policies are developed. It also allows students to identify the impact research has on their community, by discussing their research projects with people who are not familiar with their field. But most importantly it allows us to advocate for, and raise public awareness of, plant breeding (see pictures below).

2017 ASTA “Storm the Hill”

NAPB President Klaus Koehler was at the table during American Seed Trade Association “Storm the Hill” event April 5 in Washington, DC, and delivered a clear message for continued public agricultural research funding, including for plant breeding, in particular for AFRI, the GEM project and the Plant Germplasm Centers. Concern regarding proposed budget reductions for USDA was conveyed. All the politicians, regardless of party affiliation, answered that they understood the need for continued agriculture R&D funding (see pictures below).



NAPB graduate student representatives Derek Barchenger (New Mexico State University) and Matthew Dzievit (Iowa State University)



The Iowa CVD delegation meeting with Iowa Representative David Young (from left to right: Dan Bjorklund, Amy Asmus, Representative David Young, Matt Dzievit, and Dr. Mark Westgate)



The Colorado and New Mexico CVD delegation (left to right: Jessica Davis, Steve Rosenzweig, Derek Barchenger, and Erika Foster)



NAPB President Klaus Koehler (2nd from right) with Representative Susan Brooks, R-IN, at ASTA “Storm the Hill” event April 5, 2017



NAPB President Klaus Koehler (5th from right) with Senator Joe Donnelly, D-IN, at ASTA “Storm the Hill” event April 5, 2017

Other News

NAPB member, Dr. Jim McFerson has recently been appointed to the National Genetic Resources Advisory Council (NGRAC). For more information: <http://www.ars-grin.gov/ngrac/>

Events and Opportunities

6th Annual UC Davis Plant Breeding Symposium will take place **April 24th, 2017** at the UC Davis Conference Center. <http://plantsciencesymposium.ucdavis.edu/>

1st University of Florida Plant Sciences Symposium will take place on **April 13-14, 2017** at the University of Florida, in Gainesville, FL. Themed "Harnessing Plant Diversity to Cope with a Changing Climate". <http://www.ufplants.org/>

1st UGA Plant Sciences Symposium will take place on **May 9th, 2017** at the University of Georgia, Athens. <https://plantcenter.uga.edu/events/symposium/spring-2017-symposium/>

Short course on Operations Research in Plant Breeding at the Iowa State University will take place **May 22 - 26, 2017** in Ames, IA. <http://register.extension.iastate.edu/plantbreeding/register>

2017 NAPB Annual Meeting will take place **August 7-10, 2017** in Davis, CA. <http://napb2017.ucdavis.edu/>

2017 ASA-CSSA-SSSA Annual Meeting will take place **October 22-25, 2017** in Tampa, FL. <https://www.acsmeetings.org>

Other DuPont Sponsored Plant Breeding Symposia: a full list of upcoming DuPont sponsored plant breeding symposium can be found here: <https://www.pioneer.com/home/site/about/research/PlantSciSymposiaSeries/>

Agriculture and Food Research Initiative - Water for Food Production Systems Challenge Area: funding opportunity for plant breeding: <https://nifa.usda.gov/funding-opportunity/agriculture-and-food-research-initiative-water-food-production-systems-challenge>

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, Jane Dever (jdever@ag.tamu.edu). Information will be included in upcoming newsletters.

Please direct any comments and suggestions about the NAPB newsletter to:

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