



SABC NEWS

May 30th 2003 No 2

New Faces in the SABC

Muhammed Saqib has joined the SABC for three months as a visiting researcher from Pakistan. He is working with the Plant Biotechnology Research Group/Steve Wylie on molecular plant virology. Saqib is also a hot shot squash player, and is already coaching the Murdoch University squash team.

Theo Pfaff has joined the GRDC funded CSIRO/ACNFP Medicago project. He has recently completed his PhD supervised by Guenther Kahl, in Frankfurt, where he developed a dense molecular marker map for chickpea with a particular focus on the mapping of genes giving resistance to Ascochyta.

Marta Madrid has recently arrived from Cordoba where recently completed a PhD on pathogenicity genes in the fungal pathogen *Fusarium oxysporum* with Antonio di Pietro and "Rejes" Roncero. She will work on an ARC linkage project with Syngenta as industry partner looking at genomic methods to improve the selection of fungicide lead compounds.

Kasia Rybak, a Murdoch Graduate, has replaced Kerrie Parker as the ACNFP Stagonospora research assistant.

Nola D'Souza, another Murdoch graduate, has joined from CALM and is working with Simon Ellwood and Theo on the Medicago project.

Mike Jones arrives at Parliament House

Because Biotechnology is such a broad topic, at a government level it falls within the

Ministries of Industry, Tourism and Resources; Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry; Health and Ageing; Education, Science and Training; and Environment and Heritage. The five Ministers meet as a Commonwealth Biotechnology Ministerial Council.

Mike Jones has been appointed to the Australian Biotechnology Advisory Council (ABAC), which is an

independent committee set up to advise the five Commonwealth Government Ministers responsible for national biotechnology policy development on future needs for growing biotechnology and biotechnology industries in Australia. Talk to Mike if you have some suggestions for future national policy in biotechnology.

New Glasshouse Up and Running

The new high tech \$900,000 glasshouse (No 7) was commissioned yesterday and is open for business. A small subcommittee of the University glasshouse committee is responsible for space allocation and initial enquiries regarding available space should be directed to either Mike Jones x2424 or Richard Oliver x7404.

Congratulations to Dr Ian Edwards, CEO of Grain Biotech Australia on being awarded an honorary Doctor of Science, Honoris Causa from North Dakota State University. This degree is awarded to give public recognition to persons who have distinguished themselves outside the formal structure of academia. Dr Edwards is recognised worldwide as a leader in the field of wheat improvement and has enjoyed a 35 year career in genetic research in North America, Europe, Africa and Australia.

Good luck to Grace Zawko

Grace Zawko from Saturn Biotech has taken a post-doc position at UWA and Kings Park. The project is: "A biological background for efficient breeding of the Goodenaiceae" (e.g. blue and red Leshenaultias). Grace's last day at the SABC will be Friday 13th June.

Opportunities

Frances Brigg will be away on maternity leave for six months from October 2003. We would like to hear from anyone interested in taking over the sequencing during this time, as people trained previously will all be unavailable.

Publications

Just a reminder, that all SABC researchers should include the SABC name and address on their publications. This can be double badged with your Centre or Division. Publication addresses are checked by the SABC review committee.

Publicity

The SABC has a policy of monthly Press Releases. If you have results, news, or any other item that deserves publicity, please let Mike or Andrea know. Of course it has to include the SABC for the SABC to cover the costs.

Seminars

A good example of inter-institutional collaboration, Grace Chen, who is jointly appointed by the LotteryWest State Microarray Facility and the SABC, gave a talk on 'Automated Gene Library Management: cloning to Microarray'. In this she described the GeneTAC G3 robotic system for library management, colony picking, gridding, cherry picking and microarray production. All researchers interested in this area should contact Grace on 9346 2474 or 9360 6116 or g.chen@arginine.murdoch.edu.au

Environmental Biotechnology CRC (EBCRC)

SABC researchers may be interested to know that Murdoch University is a core partner in the EBCRC. Environmental biotechnology is regarded as the next biotechnology cab off the rank, and Murdoch researchers have an opportunity to contribute new molecular biotechnology to this CRC. The SABC was a major draw for Murdoch's core participation in this CRC.

QUIZ

What scientific discipline is this?
EAT MY LONGO

Successful ARC Grants

Congratulations to the following SABC researchers who obtained second round ARC Grants

Researchers: Dr UM Ryan, Dr S Reid, Dr A Armson
Validating protozoa-specific drug targets using peptides from biodiverse gene fragment libraries.

Funding: Yr 1 - \$110,000, Yr 2 - \$110,000, Yr 3 - \$90,000

Researchers: Professor RC Thompson, Dr W Greene, Dr MG Macnish

Flea Control by Immunological Intervention
Funding: Yr 1 - \$80,000, Yr 2 - \$80,000, Yr 3 - \$80,000

Researchers: Professor D Hampson, A/Professor MI Bellgard

Genomic sequencing and comparative genomic analysis for animal bacterial vaccine discovery
Funding: Yr 1 - \$230,000, Yr 2 - \$230,000, Yr 3 - \$230,000

Researchers: Dr TI Burgess, Dr GE Hardy

Fungal pathogens threatening the sub-tropical eucalypt plantation industry in Australia
Funding: Yr 1 - \$ 28,000, Yr 2 - \$28,000, Yr 3 - \$28,000