



# SABC NEWS

July 29, 2003 No. 4

## Congratulations go to.....

**Nari Anderson** (PhD Phil O'Brien) for winning the MAFF Award for 2003 for Western Australia. This is an award from the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food which enables young scientists in rural industries to develop ideas that will have long term benefits to industry. The awards, which are sponsored by the Commonwealth Government and Australia's rural R&D corporations, are to provide an opportunity for young scientists in rural industries to pursue a project of long-term benefit to their industry. Nari was awarded the prize for her project entitled "**The Development of a New Molecular Method for the Detection of Soil-Borne Plant Pathogens**". The funds will contribute towards the cost of a visit to Plant Research International in Holland to work with the group of Drs P Bonants and P van den Boogert. This group are using a novel 3D microarray system for detection of Phytophthora and Rhizoctonia species in soil.

**Simon Ip-Cho** on receiving a first in his honours, and also to Rob Lee who was his main support.

**Richard Oliver** on his appointment to the panel of experts reviewing the way DEST gives out research infrastructure money. Further details can be found by visiting [www.dest.gov.au/higher/ki\\_reforms/default.htm](http://www.dest.gov.au/higher/ki_reforms/default.htm)

## International Congress of Genetics

By Carina Marshall

The International Congress of Genetics is held just once every five years. In July 2003 the XIX International Congress of Genetics was held in Melbourne, Australia. Several SABC researchers were there to get in on the action and absorb the fame, including Carina Marshall, Linda McInnes, Kate Bryant, Mehmet Cakir, and Duncan Sutherland (apologies to anyone that I didn't see...there were a lot of people there!).

A total of 300 elite, invited speakers addressed the Congress. The remarkable lineup of special guests and speakers at the 2003 Genetics Congress included six Nobel Laureates – Sydney Brenner, Peter Doherty, Robert Horvitz, John Sulston, Susumu Tonegawa and Eric Wieschaus. Carina managed to get pictures of herself with several of the baffled famous people.

The Congress also celebrated the 50th anniversary of the discovery of the structure of DNA. James D. Watson had to withdraw from the Congress due to the illness of his son. However, an in depth interview with Dr. Watson, prepared just prior to the Congress, was screened at the Opening

Ceremony as well as a live interview with four other luminaries who made seminal discoveries in molecular genetics, including Seymour Benzer, Sydney Brenner,

Robin Holliday and Charles Yanofsky. A second interview with Dr. Watson, as well as an interview with Francis Crick, were screened at the DNA Discovery Dinner. The dinner was attended by Carina, Linda, and Mehmet, who enjoyed the interviews, as well as a performance by the Johnny Young Talent Time Dancers, doing the "Molecule Mambo"! Linda and Carina with the DNA 'cake'



## New member in SABC garden

The latest addition to the SABC garden is a quenda or Southern brown bandicoot (*Isodon obesulus*). Apparently quendas are quite common around Murdoch but they are an endangered species.

They have the shortest gestation period of any mammal - only 12.5 days. The female mates at night so she can give birth during the day in her nest. They eat insects, worms fungi and underground plant material-also apples, bananas and Marta's suede walking boots if given the chance! For more info visit

[www.wa.gov.au/tiac/forum/2000/blair/index.htm](http://www.wa.gov.au/tiac/forum/2000/blair/index.htm) and on Murdoch web <http://guild.murdoch.edu.au/activities/QuendaWetlands/QuendaWetland.html>.



Picture by Marta P Madrid.

## QUIZ CORNER

*The "fluttering" of a flag is an illustration of what principle ?*

1. Archimedes'
2. Bernoulli's
3. Pascal's
4. Torricelli's
5. Venturi's

**ANSWER TO OUR GUESS WHO PHOTOGRAPH**  
**David Hodgson from the DAWA lab**

### Request from Admin:

Could supervisors please advise Andrea Tongue when students, visiting researchers or staff, are no longer working in the SABC, so email address can be removed from the SABC mailing list and security can be notified to remove access to the SABC.

### Dr Mohammed Hussein Sanati update:



Hussein Sanati completed his PhD with Prof. Pat Carnegie in 1995, and is now the Director of the National Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology of Iran, based in Tehran.

Hussein recently visited the SABC and gave a seminar on the activities and research of the Centre, including new buildings which will house about 1,000 researchers. Work covers biomedical, plant and fermentation technologies.

### Special Seminars:

Diane Mather (a Canadian Researcher) will be visiting the DAWA labs the week of the 11<sup>th</sup> August and has agreed to give two special seminars.

**“QTL analysis in barley: experiences from the North American barley genome project”**  
and

**“Linkage disequilibrium and population structure in barley: prospects for association mapping”**

Seminars will be held in the SABC large seminar room, times and dates to be advised.

### SABC Major Equipment Wishlist

Please send ideas for equipment, with costs and a couple of sentences justification to Mike Jones at [mjkjones@murdoch.edu.au](mailto:mjkjones@murdoch.edu.au)

## GM Debate - what do you think?

After a recent trip to the UK and Spain, Mike Jones saw “GM Nation, The Public Debate”, the UK Government Questionnaire in the Daily Telegraph. Out of curiosity we have included a copy of it in this newsletter to see what the responses of our researchers is to this topical issue. We have added one additional question to identify if you are an animal or plant researcher. Completed questions can be returned anonymously to Andrea Tongue and if we receive sufficient responses we will publish the results in the next newsletter.

- A - Agree Strongly  
B - Agree  
C - Disagree  
D - Disagree Strongly  
E - Don't know/unsure

Are you currently working in

A) Animal Research, B) Plant Research or C) Other

A O B O C O

1. I believe GM crops could help provide cheaper food for consumers in Australia

A O B O C O D O E O

2. I am concerned about the potential negative impact of GM crops on the environment

A O B O C O D O E O

3. I believe that GM crops could improve the prospects of Australian farmers by helping them to compete with farmers around the world

A O B O C O D O E O

4. I am worried that this new technology is being driven more by profit than by public interest

A O B O C O D O E O

5. I would be happy to eat GM Food

A O B O C O D O E O

6. I think GM crops could benefit the environment by using less pesticides and chemical fertilisers than traditional crops

A O B O C O D O E O

7. I think that some GM crops would mainly benefit the producers and not ordinary people

A O B O C O D O E O

8. I don't think we know enough about the long term effects of GM food on our health

A O B O C O D O E O

9. I believe that some GM non-food crops could have useful medical benefits

A O B O C O D O E O

10. I am confident that the development of GM crops is being carefully regulated

A O B O C O D O E O

11. I am worried that if GM crops are introduced it will be very difficult to ensure that other crops are GM-free

A O B O C O D O E O

12. I feel that GM interferes with nature in an unacceptable way

A O B O C O D O E O

13. I believe that GM crops could benefit people in developing countries.

A O B O C O D O E O