

Agricultural Research Connections - 2010

May 2010: Biotic Stress in Crop Plants

The Biosciences eastern and central Africa – International Livestock Research Institute (BecA-ILRI) Hub, the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) are collaborating to host the Agricultural Research Connections (ARC) workshop on Biotic Stress in Crop Plants May 2nd through May 7th, 2010, in Nairobi, Kenya. This unique workshop will bring together scientists based in sub-Saharan Africa, the United States, and the United Kingdom to foster scientific collaborations with the potential to create new pathways out of poverty for African farming families by addressing issues related to biotic stress in crop plants.

In addition to learning about agriculture in Kenya, participating scientists will be given the opportunity to describe their own areas of expertise and explore with other workshop participants possible collaborations that could contribute to the advancement of agriculture in sub-Saharan Africa for the benefit of smallholder farmers. The goal of this workshop is to catalyze new research partnerships among high-caliber scientists in the US, UK, and Africa who could then compete for funding through calls for proposals such as the U.S. National Science Foundation's Basic Research to Enable Agricultural Development (BREAD) program, and BBSRC.

Participants will tour regional laboratories and facilities, visit local farmers, and attend workshop discussion sessions in Nairobi and the surrounding area. Workshops will include presentations on agricultural challenges in Africa, highlighting crop biotic stress research programs. We expect participants to play an active role in seeking and developing new research partnerships, including developing proposal outline ideas for future competitive funding opportunities.

The focus of the 2010 ARC workshop is biotic stresses in crop plants. Participants will be selected based on criteria including scientific excellence (for career stage), and potential for developing collaborative projects relevant to Africa. Prior international experience is not required and first-time visitors to Africa and early career scientists are especially encouraged to apply. We hope to include scientists from a range of disciplines, with varying levels of experience, transformative ideas, and a shared passion for the potential of science to alleviate poverty among smallholder farming families. If you are interested in participating, please complete the online application at <http://gf.forumone.com> by February 26th, 2010.

BecA-ILRI Hub

The BecA-ILRI Hub is located on the campus of the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) in Nairobi, Kenya. The BecA-ILRI Hub is a modern biosciences research and training facility that supports eastern and central African countries to address agriculture-related problems of the highest priority for alleviating poverty and promoting development.

BBSRC

BBSRC is one of 7 Research Councils that work together as Research Councils UK (RCUK). Its mission is to promote and support, by any means, high-quality basic, strategic and applied research and related postgraduate training relating to the understanding and exploitation of biological systems.

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

Guided by the belief that every life has equal value, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation works to help all people lead healthy, productive lives. Based in Seattle, Washington, the foundation is led by CEO Jeff Raikes and Co-chair William H. Gates Sr., under the direction of Bill and Melinda Gates and Warren Buffett.