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*Now more than ever, there is a need to rapidly improve perennial crops to meet the challenges of climate change, scarcity of labor, the desire for reduced chemical inputs, the spread of exotic pests and pathogens, and increasing demands for product quantity and quality. Yet breeding of these long-generation-cycle crops remains a slow, arduous process that has changed little over time. Limitations include long juvenility periods, requirements for extensive breeding plots with significant field costs, and yearly limitations on flowering and fruiting related to chill and heat requirements. Research has focused on marker assisted selection, germplasm characterization, and genetic engineering as means to advance breeding, and significant successes have been achieved. However, the successes of these strategies are still limited by lengthy generation cycles. There is a critical need for the development of systems to reliably shorten breeding cycles in order to take full advantage of advances in genetic knowledge for crop breeding. Strategies to reduce generation cycles have been based upon horticultural and environmental manipulations. While these practices have been useful in specific cases, there is also a need to explore alternative approaches with broad applications such as the manipulation of genes that regulate juvenility, flowering, and seed production. This conference seeks to gather experts in the fields of plant breeding, genetics, molecular biology, horticulture, forestry, plant physiology and related fields to discuss approaches and present the latest findings related to the shortening of breeding cycles in long-generation cycle crops in order to more efficiently and effectively face the challenges of improving the world’s production of food and fiber.*

**Conference: First International Conference on RAPID CYCLE CROP-BREEDING**

**When: January 7-10, 2014**

**Location: The National Conference Center**

**18980 Upper Belmont Place**

**Landsdowne, Virginia http://www.conferencecenter.com/index.cfm**

**Purpose: To bring together researchers, breeders, regulatory authorities and others interested in accelerating breeding cycles.**

**Meeting**

**Contents: The meeting will consist of two days of invited and contributed talks, round table discussions and posters; a half-day excursion to view a rapid cycle breeding program; and a half-day program on interacting with the public on Biotechnology.**

**Reservations Process & Booking Website:** [**https://resweb.passkey.com/go/usda27929**](https://resweb.passkey.com/go/usda27929)

**Keynote Speakers include:**

**Albert Abbott**

Clemson University, USA

**Pace Lubinsky**

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service- New Technologies and Production Methods Division

**Magda-Viola Hanke**

Julius Kühn-Institut, Federal Centre for Cultivated Plants (JKI)

Institute for Breeding Research on Horticultural and Fruit Crops

Dresden, Germany

**Leandro Peña**

IVIA Valencia, Spain

**Steve Strauss**

Oregon State University, USA

**Ralph Scorza**

USDA, Kearneysville, WV, USA

**Registrations: Due November 1st, 2013**

[**https://resweb.passkey.com/go/usda27929**](https://resweb.passkey.com/go/usda27929)

**Abstracts and Presentations**

Presentations are being solicited either in the form of short talks or posters. Please submit an abstract (Microsoft Word or text please) that includes Title, Authors, Affiliations and whether you would prefer an oral presentation or a poster presentation. Please limit the abstract to 400 words. Final formatting will be done by organizers. Abstracts to be considered for oral presentation are due by October 1, 2013. Acceptance for an oral presentation will be given by October 15th, 2013. **Submit abstracts to:** [**rapidcyclecropbreeding@yahoo.com**](mailto:rapidcyclecropbreeding@yahoo.com)

Accommodations and Meals

The National Conference Center has an inclusive package that includes room, three meals a day, and conference break refreshments, priced at $169/person/night. Reservations can be made on-line at [*https://resweb.passkey.com/go/usda27929*](https://resweb.passkey.com/go/usda27929)

Conference Fee

A conference fee of $250. will cover all other expenses (AV equipment, banquet, box lunches, bus trip to USDA , reception, etc.). This is also paid on-line at [*https://resweb.passkey.com/go/usda27929*](https://resweb.passkey.com/go/usda27929)**Meal choices for banquet and for the ½ day trip to the USDA Appalachian Fruit Research Station are also made at this site.**

Transportation

There is a scheduled shuttle bus that will pick up and return conference participants to Dulles International Airport (IAD) located ~ 12 miles from the NCC. The cost is $20 each way. Reservations can be made at the time of room reservations.

Single Day Registrations

A conference fee of $125./day is required for attendees participating for only part of the conference. **The fee includes parking, three meals/ day, and conference break refreshments.**

If desired one can also sign-up for bus tour, reception and/or banquet. These options are also available at the registration site, [*https://resweb.passkey.com/go/usda27929*](https://resweb.passkey.com/go/usda27929) ***.***

Preliminary Schedule:

Day 1    Tuesday January 7

10 a.m.-4:00 pm  Chartered bus visit to the USDA-ARS Appalachian Fruit

Research Station, Kearneysville, WV, Box lunches provided.

The mission of the Appalachian Fruit Research Station (AFRS) is to identify critical problems of temperate fruit production; develop the science, technology, and genetic base needed to maximize productivity and quality of fruit crops; and minimize the adverse effects of biotic and environmental factors on these crops <http://www.ars.usda.gov/main/site_main.htm?modecode=19-31-05-05>

Presentation of the rapid cycle plum and apple breeding programs including greenhouse, and field tours. Additional research at the Station such as on the Brown Marmorated Stink Bug and utilization of genomics tools for breeding will be presented.

5:30 p.m.—8:00 p.m. Dinner

7:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m. Evening social

Day 2   Wednesday January 8

6:30 a.m.-8:00 a.m. Breakfast

8:00 a.m. –12:00 p.m.   Oral presentations  poster sessions and discussions

12:00 p.m.—1:00 p.m. Lunch

1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.  Oral presentations  poster sessions and discussions

Daily sessions will include time for Round table discussions  regarding relevant issues

5:30 p.m.—8:00 p.m. Dinner

Day 3  Thursday January 9

             6:30 a.m.-8:00 a.m. Breakfast

 8:00 a.m. –12:00 p.m.   Oral presentations  poster sessions and discussions

12:00 p.m.—1:00 p.m. Lunch

1:00 p.m.– 5:00 p.m. Oral presentations, poster sessions and discussions

Daily sessions will include time for Round table discussions regarding relevant issues

7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. Conference dinner

Day 4 Friday January 10

8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.   Plant Biotechnology Communication Workshop

           The International Food Information Council (IFIC) Foundation ([www.foodinsight.org](http://www.foodinsight.org)) will facilitate a half-day workshop on “Communicating About Food Biotechnology to Consumers.”At this workshop, participants will be provided with an overview of the food biotechnology landscape, as well as media training on top food biotechnology issues, to help facilitate accurate and balanced media stories on various aspects of food biotechnology.

The workshop will include two sessions. First, a panel of experts will share insights on the food biotechnology issue, including:

* Consumer awareness and perspectives of plant and animal biotechnology, including insights from the IFIC 2012 Food Technology Survey and IFIC Foundation 2013 *Food & Health Survey*;
* The state of the science on safety and benefits of food biotechnology; and
* Approaches to practicing effective risk communication on food biotechnology.

Next, IFIC Foundation staff will lead a short media training exercise, beginning with a discussion of the current media environment and top food biotechnology issues receiving attention in traditional and social media. They will provide tips on how to successfully engage with journalists and bloggers using these channels. This will set the stage for an interactive exercise in which participants will develop talking points on commonly reported aspects of food biotechnology, which they will use to test and hone their skills in a realistic interview scenario.

The workshop will conclude with a summary of key takeaways and examples of how to apply the workshop information in dialogues with consumers.

12:30 p.m.-1:30 p.m. Lunch

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