

## NOTE FROM THE SECRETARIAT

As summer makes place for fall and we mark the passage of another quarter, I can say with certainty that the highlight of the past three months was the World Seed Conference that took place in early September 2009 at the FAO Headquarters in Rome, Italy.



The Organising Committee with representatives from ISF, FAO, ISTA, OECD and UPOV – the five main stakeholders in the field of seed – was pleased to see that attendance was higher than expected. Of the 320 participants from 66 countries many were from developing countries.

Prof M S Swaminathan, winner of the first World Food Prize in 1987, gave the keynote address (see photo). The presentations aimed at sending a clear message to governments that an enabling environment was needed to advance the seed industry, still not yet the case in a lot of countries.

The résumés of and presentations made by the speakers, the main conclusions from each session of the conference, the general conclusions and the press statement released by the organisers can be found on the conference website ([www.worldseedconference.org](http://www.worldseedconference.org)). Each session was followed by in-depth discussions and it is planned to capture their essence in the conference proceedings to be released later this year. You will find the press release issued on 10 Sept 2009 in the supplement to this issue of *ISF Info*.

Most of the ISF Crop Section Boards and Committees will meet towards the end of October for their traditional 'midterm' meeting. The venue this time is the beautiful city of Krakow in Poland and attendance as always is going to be good. There are some very interesting topics on the agenda of these meetings such as access to germplasm, adventitious presence, essential derivation and GM vegetables, just to name a few.

The midterm meetings always generate a lot of good ideas and much progress is made with regard to position papers and other working

documents. Thanks are due to all the companies and national seed associations who have made it possible for their staff to actively participate in the activities of the Federation.

Even as the report of the Antalya Congress was being finalised, plans for the next in Calgary have been in full swing. I am pleased to announce that the post-congress workshop on 3 Jun 2010 in Calgary will be on adventitious of GM material in seed and its impact on international trade. More and more GM varieties of several crops are released in a growing number of countries each year. As minute levels of GM material in so-called conventional seed is technically unavoidable during seed production, cultivation, harvest, transport, or processing it is more necessary than ever to develop risk assessment procedures and tools. The workshop is aimed at creating awareness among ISF Members on how to manage adventitious presence of GM material in seed.

The results of the survey after the Antalya Congress have provided the Secretariat insight into what delegates look for in ISF Congresses. Naturally, we will be doing our best to meet your requirements as we go ahead with preparations for Calgary but I feel it necessary to point out that it may not be easy to please everyone!

In an enduring tradition the National Organising Committee is sparing no efforts to make the Congress interesting and entertaining. Calgary is in the heart of the Canadian Wild West and so I encourage you to come equipped with cowboy and cowgirl attire. You will need it!

Reserve the dates 31 May - 3 Jun 2010 for the Congress. And if possible take a few days off to enjoy the spectacular surroundings of the Rocky Mountains. See you in Calgary.

Marcel Bruins  
Secretary General, ISF

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## WORLD SEED CONGRESS 2010



Come to Canada! The Canadian Seed Trade Association and the ISF Secretariat invite you to the ISF World Seed Congress 2010 in Calgary, Alberta from 31 May -2 Jun 2010.

Online registration at [www.worldseed2010.com](http://www.worldseed2010.com) begins on 4 Jan 2010. Early-bird registration fee will be on offer from 4 to 29 Jan 2010.

## INTERNAL MATTERS

The **Tree and Shrub Seed Group** met in Hamburg on 23-25 Aug 2009 and 31 participants from 15 countries attending the meeting.

The topics on the agenda included forest seed crop information, a single document with regulations on marketing tree seed, hybrid tree seed, phytosanitary problems with *Chalara fraxinea* in *Fraxinus*, and the upcoming OECD meeting of the Forest Schemes. The Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM) is currently working on Specification 47 on 'Reducing pest risks in the international movement of seeds of forest tree species' and the participants decided to closely follow developments.

The Secretariat presented the results of the survey of ISF Tree and Shrub Group Members on how to improve the quality of their meetings.

In the afternoon of the first day there were two interesting presentations on 50 years of provenance research of main forest species and phytosanitary problems in seed and nursery production of *Pinus*, *Fraxinus* and *Alnus*.

On the second day an excursion took the participants to two nurseries for container and barefoot seedling production of forest and ornamental seedlings and plants, and to a nursery research centre and arboretum.



The participants also went to see several provenance trials showing research field testing with *Fagus sylvatica* and *Quercus*, and visited old seed stands of *Fagus sylvatica*.

Next year's meeting would take place in the second half of August 2010 in the region of Ithaca, NY.

The **Working Group on GM Vegetables** met in Chavannes-de-Bogis in Switzerland on 27 Aug 2009 under the chairmanship of Bruno Carette. The participants discussed the goals of the working group and the scope of its activities. They agreed that with the release of GM vegetable crops, managing adventitious presence (AP) of transgenes in vegetable seed was its major goal and the situation was best addressed if the industry took collective action. The working group recognised that while advocating for or against the development of GM vegetables was not its goal, meeting customer and consumer expectations should remain at the centre of its strategy.

The working group also discussed the difference in the terms adventitious and low-level presence, the importance of having quality assurance systems in place and access to information on field trials of GM crops, commercial production sites, traits and trait management, and protocols (markers etc.) for testing.

The working group will be working on developing a quality management guide and a code of conduct for virus-resistant squash and Bt eggplant.

### Farewell and Thanks



Thirty five years after joining the French Forage and Turf Seed Association Jean-Pierre Saleyron bade goodbye to the seed sector in June 2009.

His first Congress was in Madrid in 1974 on the 50th anniversary of the founding of FIS. He was active in the FIS Herbage and Turf Seed Section and in the Trade and Arbitration Rules Committee (second from right in photo of the FIS Rules and Usages Committee (Herbage Seeds) in 1975). He was Chairman of the Organising Committee for the 1998 FIS/ASSINSEL Congress in Monte Carlo.

Jean-Pierre Saleyron can be contacted at [jpsaleyron@yahoo.fr](mailto:jpsaleyron@yahoo.fr).

## INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS



The **Third Meeting of the Governing Body** held in June 2009 in Tunisia was attended by around 350 people. Anke van den Hurk represented ISF and provided this report that highlights aspects of the

meeting that touch the seed industry directly.

**Funding strategy** It consists of three elements:

1. Core administrative budget of the Secretariat: 50% from FAO, 50% from voluntary contributions
2. Benefit sharing fund: voluntary contributions (USD 500,000 made in 2009) and 'income' from obligatory benefit sharing (expected only from 2013-14)
3. Fund for agreed purposes: There is no money in this fund yet

There was no decision on how to finance the deficit in the core budget, and the topic was postponed for the next Governing Body meeting.

A strategic plan was drafted for the benefit sharing fund that would be used for

- Information exchange, technology transfer and capacity building,
- Managing and conserving plant genetic resources on farm
- Sustainable use of plant genetic resources

Although there was scepticism that a sum of USD 116 million could be reached in the coming 5 years, it was considered necessary to have a target so that discussions on compliance could begin. Seventy five to eighty five percent of this money is expected to be raised from the Parties to the Treaty and 7-11% from the private sector.

**Implementation of the SMTA** It was concluded more material and accompanying information was needed in the Multilateral System, and an assessment how this could be achieved would be made at the next meeting of the Governing Body. A review would be undertaken to assess if payment should be made obligatory for products that are available without restriction to others for further research and breeding.

The decision of the Norwegian Government to contribute 0.1% of the value of all seed sold in the country annually to the Benefit Sharing Fund was welcomed. Other Parties were requested to consider a similar approach.

In order to have a continuous flow of income from the date of signing the SMTA, users were requested to opt for the "alternative payment" system of the SMTA (see Article 6.11 and Annex 3 of the SMTA).

To get a better understanding of all benefit sharing activities that take place, Parties as well as other stakeholders were requested to provide this information in time for the next Governing Body meeting.

The technical committee on the SMTA and the multilateral system will continue to resolve problems with their implementation.

During the opening ceremony Jean Beigbeder of

Pro-Mais in France announced the contribution of 500 accessions of maize to the multilateral system. This first instance of a private sector contribution was warmly welcomed.

**Farmers' Rights** Due to time constraints there was only a short discussion on this topic. Some Parties wished to put more effort in implementing this provision within the Treaty while others preferred to leave it subject to national legislation. A more detailed discussion was deferred to the next meeting of the Governing Body. The ISF position on Farmers' Rights adopted in Antalya was distributed to delegates during the session.

[www.planttreaty.org](http://www.planttreaty.org)



The **Technical Working Party for Agricultural Crops (TWA)** took place in Seoul, South Korea from 31 Aug – 4 Sept 2009. Forty seven participants representing 20 countries, including observers from ISF, ESA, FAO and IRRI attended. Bert Scholte represented ESA and ISF.

B Scholte informed the participants of the inclusion of a new paragraph on DNA markers in the position paper *ISF View on Intellectual Property* and a copy will be annexed to the minutes of the TWA. The TWA was also informed of the debate in breeders' circles on the interface between Plant Breeders Rights and patents, and the meeting with EPO patent examiners (reported in the July 2009 issue of *ISF Info*). He also briefed participants on the anticipated evaluation of the EU framework on Plant Breeders Rights.

A considerable amount of time was set aside to finalise the Test Guideline Procedure (TGP) 8 on Trial Design and Techniques used in the examination of DUS. With respect to molecular techniques, it was decided to organise a meeting of the subgroup on soybean and potato in conjunction with the next meeting of the Working Group on Biochemical and Molecular Techniques,

and DNA-Profiling in Particular (BMT) in May 2010 in Canada. In addition, it was proposed to organise a meeting of the subgroup maize in the USA in 2010. The UPOV office will contact ASTA for this purpose.

#### Note to Readers

*ISF Info* seeks to give readers an overview of key seed related issues and activities. As such the Editor tries to find a compromise between coverage and detail.

If you wish to know more about any article featured in this newsletter, contact the ISF Secretariat.

Several countries reported on developments in relation to implementing an electronic application system. ISF's interest in having a simple electronic application form and its willingness to contribute to its development was reiterated.

The Technical Guidelines (TG) for pea were adopted. TGs for pearl millet and sweet potato will be sent to the Technical Committee in 2010 for approval. Following a proposal from New Zealand

and Australia to revise the TG for wheat and triticale it was decided to postpone this decision to 2010 and not to start work before 2011 so as not to overload the DUS experts in cereals.

Technical guidelines for numerous other crops were discussed and will continue at the next TWA meeting on 24–28 May 2010 in Osijek, Croatia.

ESA and ISF were requested to inform the UPOV Secretariat of the TGs they were interested in so they could receive the drafts in advance of the next meeting.

[www.upov.int](http://www.upov.int)

## REGIONAL NEWS



The **Second Seed Congress of the Americas** on 29–30 Sept 2009 was an opportunity for participants from the Americas and elsewhere to share experiences and learn more about important aspects affecting the seed business: phytosanitary matters, intellectual property (IP) and adventitious presence.

Radha Ranganathan representing ISF was among the 175 odd delegates in Atibaia, Brazil who participated in the Congress and enjoyed the hospitality of ABRASEM, the Brazilian Association of Seed Producers. She presented a report on ISF's activities in the area of phytosanitary matters and the industry view point on some aspects of phytosanitary requirements that regulate the movement of seed (see box).

The Congress provided an excellent venue for regulators and official bodies from the Americas to interact with representatives of the seed industry. At the session on phytosanitary matters, both national and regional plant protection offices were well represented, and took the floor to present country and regional reports. The session on IP gave speakers from the industry in the region the occasion to talk of the importance of IP protection, while the session on adventitious and low-level presence of biotech material in seed and food encouraged an exchange of views on regulatory issues and risk assessment.

All the presentations are on the SAA website.

[www.saaseed.org](http://www.saaseed.org)



The **European Seed Association** (ESA) held its annual meeting from 12–13 Oct 2009. Orlando de Ponti, Marcel Bruins and Piero Sismondo represented ISF.

The meeting saw the participation of well over 500 participants from 33 countries.

In the Maize Section there were presentations on the GM Maize situation in Europe, thresholds for adventitious presence of GM material in

conventional seed, and seed treatments. The EU Commission presented different scenarios for containing the spread of Diabrotica. The use of GM maize varieties was not included as it was not in the scope of the study.

The Sugar Beet Section was converted to an ad-hoc Working Group (WG) which would be activated only when the need arose. The WG is chaired by Rob van Tetering. In the Cereal and Pulses Section, updates on the Farm Saved Seed project by the Community Plant Variety Office and the International Wheat Genome Sequencing Consortium were provided.

The Section on Oil and Fibre Plants dealt with topics on oilseed rape, sunflower and mustard, while the Forage Plants and Amenity Grasses Section discussed a code of conduct for the monitoring of illegal activities in forage plants and heard a proposal to regulate awned perennial ryegrass seed. The Sections established priorities for the coming year.

Christoph Amberger took over the presidency of the European Seed Association from François Desprez, and Gerard Backx was elected Vice President. Four presentations on seed treatments were made during the General Assembly and ESA members were encouraged to co-finance a two-year project on an EU-wide chain management approach to seed treatment quality assurance.

[www.euroseeds.org](http://www.euroseeds.org)

### Do all seed borne pathogens transmit disease?

The presence of a plant pathogen on seed does not necessarily mean that it transmits a disease. In the absence of seed specific disease transmission studies, not surprisingly many regulators apply a plant quarantine restriction on the movement of seed that may be a carrier of a pathogen. Often such restrictions are not justified but it takes a long time to remove or modify them.

As a first step, it is important to make the distinction:

**Seed-borne pathogen:** a plant pathogen that can be isolated from the surface and/or interior of the seed but which does not necessarily transmit disease or disease symptoms to the resulting seedlings or plants

**Seed-transmitted disease:** a plant pathogen initially present on or in the 'infected' seed and manifests itself as a disease in the resulting seedlings or plants

The ISF Phytosanitary Committee plans to do a pilot study for one or two crops on 'reclassifying' seed-borne pathogens by their potential to transmit disease.

## MISCELLANEOUS

### Survey on ISF Info

*ISF Info* is issued every quarter and contains news on and reports of seed related events in ISF and

elsewhere. Early in August, 97 readers responded to a survey on the newsletter. The table below provides a snapshot of the results.

Question	Answer - %
Do you read <i>ISF Info</i> regularly	Yes - 94%
How do you rate the coverage	Just right - 84%
How many issues per year	4 per year - 71%
Are special features interesting	Yes - 89%
8-9 pages per issues is	About right - 77%
Do you like the layout	Yes - 87%

Some of you wanted things to be different from how they are done today.

Ten percent thought the reports were too detailed and 6% felt they were too broad. Twenty percent wanted the number of issues to be increased from 4 to 6 per year, while a same percentage were of the view that 8-9 pages of the newsletter were too long.

These results underline that it is a thin line, indeed, between coverage and detail.

On the layout, the constructive critique offered has been taken to heart - more pictures (except in those instances where a picture doesn't replace a thousand words!), 'lighter' pages, shorter reports, clear sign posting to interesting articles on first page and highlighting key points. With one exception at the moment - moving the newsletter away from the two-column to an electronic format!

Special features and other such articles will be added as a supplement that the reader can choose to read or ignore.

Hope you have enjoyed this issue of *ISF Info*!

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Smallholders need access to technology and knowledge – Achieving food security by 2050



Together with other stakeholders ISF issued a press release on the occasion of World Food Day on 16 Oct 2009 calling on policy makers to support farmers worldwide and invest in sustainable agricultural technologies and knowledge networks.

Contact the ISF Secretariat for a copy.

### Farewell to Norman Borlaug

Norman E. Borlaug died on 12 Sept 2009 at the age of 95.

As he worked in CIMMYT as a wheat breeder and research director for nearly four decades, and

was a CIMMYT scientist at the time he received the Nobel Peace Prize, CIMMYT has prepared a special section on its website dedicated to him (see [www.cimmyt.org](http://www.cimmyt.org)).

### ISTA Accreditation Policy

A revised version of the Scope of Accreditation Policy has been posted on the ISTA website (<https://www.seedtest.org/stream/nl-l---1--%404a0ea4c10671--164.pdf>). The document provides guidance to laboratories on defining the scope of the activities for accreditation and issuing ISTA Certificates.

Some aspects that the update takes into consideration are:

- New tests and species in the ISTA Rules 2009 and 2010
- Species for which the uniform seed blower method can be applied
- Crop groups for viability tests using the tetrazolium method.

### First ECOSA International Seed Trade Conference

The establishment of a regional seed association (ECOSA) in the ECO region was formally announced in July 2009 by 10 Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) member countries - Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Turkey and Uzbekistan. Membership is also open to all private and public seed companies and service providers within and outside the ECO region.

The First Annual Congress will be held on 1 Dec 2009 and will be followed by an International Seed Conference on 2-4 Dec 2009 in Antalya, Turkey. The Conference is aimed at exploring and promoting seed trade within the ECO region and beyond. The ECO region has a population of more than 350 million and an area of 800 million ha with a rich variety of agro-climatic conditions suitable for agricultural and horticultural crop and livestock production. Agriculture has a significant share in GDP of the ECO countries ranging from 11-50% and employs 39% of the economically active population.

For more information and registration see ([www.ecosaseed.org](http://www.ecosaseed.org)).

### CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2009-10

Date	Event	Place
Oct 26	ISF: Sustainable Agriculture Committee	Krakow (PL)
Oct 26	ISF: Intellectual Property Committee	Krakow (PL)
Oct 27	ISF: Breeders Committee	Krakow (PL)
Oct 28	ISF: Vegetable and Ornamental Crops Section Board	Krakow (PL)
Oct 28	ISF: Executive Committee	Krakow (PL)
Oct 29	ISF: Forage and Turf Crop Section Board	Krakow (PL)
Oct 29	ISF: Field Crops Section Board	Krakow (PL)
Oct 30	ISF: Board of Directors	Krakow (PL)
Nov 4-6	OECD: Extended Advisory Group	Paris (FR)
Nov 8-12	APSA: Asian Seed Congress	Bangkok (TH)
Nov 8-10	EESNET: Annual Meeting	Krakow (PL)
Nov 17	ISF: Working Group on Pathogen Coding	Maastricht (NL)
Nov 18-20	ISF: International Seed Health Initiative for Vegetable Crops (ISHI-Veg)	Maastricht (NL)
Dec 2-4	ECOSA: First International Seed Trade Conference	Antalya (TR)
Dec 8	ISF: Seed Treatment and Environment Committee	Chicago (US)
<b>2010</b>		
Feb	ISF: Intellectual Property Committee	United States
Feb 8-9	ISF: Trade and Arbitration Rules Committee	Madrid (ES)
Mar 1-5	AFSTA: Tenth Annual Congress	Bamako (ML)
Mar	ISF: Meeting of the Secretaries of National Seed Associations	Switzerland
Mar	ISF: Breeders Committee	Switzerland
Mar	ISF: Executive Committee	Switzerland
Mar 22 -24	UPOV: Technical Committee	Geneva (CH)
Mar 25	UPOV: Administrative and Legal Committee	Geneva (CH)
Mar 26	UPOV: Consultative Committee	Geneva (CH)
Mar 22-26	OECD: Annual Meeting of the Seed Schemes	Christchurch (NZ)
Mar 22-26	IPPC: Fifth Session of the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures	Rome (IT)
May 11-13	UPOV: Working Group on Biochemical and Molecular Techniques, and DNA-Profiling in Particular (BMT)	Ottawa (CA)
May 24-28	UPOV: Technical Working Party for Agricultural Crops (TWA)	Osijek (Croatia)
<b>May 31-Jun 2</b>	<b>ISF: World Seed Congress</b>	<b>Calgary (CA)</b>
Jun 3	ISF: Workshop on Adventitious Presence/Low Level Presence: Impact on International Seed Trade	Calgary (CA)
Jun 16-22	ISTA: Twenty Ninth Congress	Cologne (DE)
Jul 5 - 9	UPOV: Technical Working Party for Vegetables (TWV)	Veliko Tarnovo (Bulgaria)
Oct 18-19	UPOV: Administrative and Legal Committee	Geneva (CH)
Oct 20	UPOV: Consultative Committee	Geneva (CH)

NOTE: The ISF Secretariat tries its best to confirm the date and location of a meeting before listing it. Occasionally, however, dates and/or locations have not yet been decided or change at short notice.

## SUPPLEMENT

### Press Release - Second World Seed Conference, 10 Sept 2009

#### World food security: urgent measures on seed needed

Rome - Urgent government measures and increased public and private investment in the seed sector are required for the long term if agriculture is to meet the challenge of food security in the context of population growth and climate change. This was the declaration of the Second World Seed Conference held at the FAO Headquarters in Rome, 8-10 Sept 2009.

Governments are strongly encouraged to implement a predictable, reliable, user friendly and affordable regulatory environment to ensure that farmers have access to high quality seed at a fair price.

In particular, FAO member countries are urged to participate in the internationally harmonized systems of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV), the International Treaty on Plant and Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) and the International Seed Testing Association (ISTA).

Participation in those systems will facilitate the availability of germplasm, new plant varieties and high quality seed for the benefit of their farmers, without which their ability to respond to the challenges ahead will be substantially impaired.

The Conference emphasized the important role of both the public and the private sectors to meet the challenges ahead and the benefits when the two work together.

The Second World Seed Conference emphasized that agriculture needs to provide sustainable food security and economic development in the context of current and future global challenges.

The Conference highlighted the critical role of new plant varieties and high quality seed in providing a dynamic and sustainable agriculture that can meet those challenges. It concluded that governments need to develop and maintain an enabling environment to encourage plant breeding and the production and distribution of high quality seed.

The global seed market has grown rapidly in recent years and is currently worth around US\$ 37 billion. Cross border seed trade was estimated to be worth around US\$ 6.4 billion in 2007.

The Second World Seed Conference was held at FAO headquarters from September 8-10 and

organized in collaboration with the OECD, UPOV, ITPGRFA, ISTA and ISF.

#### Conference conclusions

- Plant breeding has significantly contributed and will continue to be a major contributor to increased food security whilst reducing input costs, greenhouse gas emissions and deforestation. With that, plant breeding significantly mitigates the effects of population growth, climate change and other social and physical challenges.
- ITPGRFA is an innovative instrument that aims at providing food security through conservation, as well as facilitated access to genetic resources under its multilateral system of access and benefit-sharing. The multilateral system represents a reservoir of genetic traits, and therefore constitutes a central element for the achievement of global food security.
- Intellectual property protection is crucial for a sustainable contribution of plant breeding and seed supply. An effective system of plant variety protection is a key enabler for investment in breeding and the development of new varieties of plants. A country's membership of UPOV is an important global signal for breeders to have the confidence to introduce their new varieties in that country.
- Seed quality determination, as established by ISTA, on seed to be supplied to farmers is an important measure for achieving successful agricultural production. The establishment or maintenance of an appropriate infrastructure on the scientific as well as technical level in developed and developing countries is highly recommended.
- The development of reliable and internationally acceptable certificates, through close collaboration between all stakeholders along the supply chain for varietal certification, phytosanitary measures and laboratory testing, contributes substantially to the strong growth in international trade and development of seed markets to the benefit of farmers.

