



Pig Genome Update

No. 50 September 1, 2001

A symposium on genomic applications to improve meat quality was among the several featured symposia at the International Animal Agriculture and Food Science Conference, July 24-28, 2001, Indianapolis, Indiana. This was a joint annual meeting of the American Dairy Science Association, American Society of Animal Science, Poultry Science Association, Reciprocal Meat Conference of the American Meat Science. The venue was excellent and the many symposia, talks and posters provided evidence of the continuing progress in gene discovery and application in the animal industry.

Cattle and Pig Genome Coordinators recently spoke at the 14th Brazilian Congress on Animal Reproduction in Belo Horizonte, Brazil. A crowd of over 1,000 attendees from several countries attended this large five day event which covered animal reproduction from various vantage points. Jim Womack presented a talk on comparative genomics and Max Rothschild presented a talk on genes controlling reproduction in the pig. Papers from the meeting can be obtained from the speakers. As usual, the Brazilians were superb hosts!!

Sequencing new genomes was the subject of a recent meeting at NIH. On July 9-10, NIH hosted a workshop on "Developing Guidelines for Choosing New Genomic Sequencing Targets". The meeting was co-chaired by Robert Horvitz, Professor of Biology at MIT and David Botstein, Chair of Department of Genetics at Stanford. This was a relatively small group of selected participants and included many of the key people, Eric Lander among others, in the human genome program. Francis Collins was an active participant throughout the Workshop. Dick Frahm attended the Workshop. It was an interesting free ranging discussion. Many seemed to be lobbying for their favorite organism. Much discussion centered on selecting organisms based on evolutionary significance. The point was made by Dick Frahm that strong consideration should be given to include at least one agriculturally important species. It was suggested that information gained from associating gene sequences with specific traits in agricultural species should have great benefit to the human genome program. Plus, it would have the added benefit for direct application to agriculture with high economic impact. It is clear that the pig genome community must be alert and respond to opportunities if and when they occur (kindly provided by Dick Frahm).

Activities are increasing relative to the Alliance for Animal Genome Research which is a non-profit corporation established as a vehicle to coordinate and fund an initiative supporting increased federal funding for animal genome research on food and companion animals. Kellye Eversole is the Executive Director. This group has convinced the National Academy of Sciences to organize and host a Workshop titled "Exploring Horizons for Domestic Animal Genomics". The National Academy requested \$100,000 in funding from USDA to support the Workshop. USDA has agreed to provide this funding (\$50,000 from CSREES and \$50,000 from ARS). The dates for the Workshop are yet to be determined but Jim Womack has been involved with this activity.

A group met at the International Animal Agriculture and Food Science Conference to discuss moving this along. To date several universities and companies have contributed funds for this initiative. For more information, please contact the Alliance at 415 591 5416 or 301 951 3345.

Ideas for support materials are needed. The Pig Genome Coordinator is looking for more suggestions of items that can be made available to swine committee members and pig genome researchers. Please send your ideas to Max Rothschild at mfrothsc@iastate.edu.

Neal Jorgensen Travel Award for Swine will be offered again. Only graduate students from US labs are eligible. Please send abstract and cover letter to Max Rothschild at mfrothsc@iastate.edu.

Interagency Working Group on Animal Genomics. Dr. Joseph Jen, the new Under Secretary for REE, has shown an early interest in animal genomics. At a recent meeting that Dr. Jen had with Colien Hefferan, CSREES Administrator, and Floyd Horn, ARS Administrator, he indicated there was a need for an Interagency Work group on Domestic Animal Genomics, and he wished to request that the Office of Science and Technology (OSTP) establish such a workgroup. Caird Rexroad and Dick Frahm have prepared a letter to OSTP for Dr. Jen's signature requesting the establishment of this Interagency Workgroup. There is a successful precedence for this with Interagency work groups established by OSTP for plant genomics and microbial genomics. (kindly provided by Dick Frahm).

Planning is already well underway for PAG-X next year. Please see www.intl-pag.org/pag for more information. Dr. Francis Collins, "Czar" of the Human Genome Program at NIH, has agreed to give one of the plenary talks. Several changes are on tap for next year. PAG-X will again be at the Town & Country Convention Center in San Diego, CA, running from Sat., Jan. 12, through Wed., Jan. 16, 2002. The PAG-X meeting will include plant, animal and agricultural microbe genomics all in one meeting. A weekend-only registration rate (\$175) will be made available in addition to the usual student (\$225), non-profit (\$425 early/\$525), and industry (\$550 early/\$650) full week registrations. Registration badges will be required to participate in any workshop. As is the usual case, the swine committee will be meeting during the first few days. Jon Beaver, chair, is planning the swine sessions and is happy to accept suggestions for speakers. Please note that some support will be available from the Pig Genome Coordinator for member and student participation, including the Neal Jorgensen Travel Award for Swine. Contact Max Rothschild at mfrothsc@iastate.edu for details.

Upcoming meetings (for more details see: <http://www.genome.iastate.edu/community/meetings.html>)

4th International Meeting on SNPs and Complex Gene Analysis, Stockholm, Sweden October 10-13, 2001. For more information see: <http://snp2001.cgr.ki.se/>

Plant and Animal Genome X January 12-16, 2002 at the Town and Country Convention Center, San Diego, CA. For information please contact D. Sherago, Sherago International at darrins@scherago.com.

International Society of Animal Genetics, Göttingen, Germany, August 11-15, 2002. See <http://www.gwdg.de/~bbrenig/ISAG2002.html> for further information.

7th World Congress of Genetics Applied to Livestock Production, August 19-23, 2002, Montpellier, France. See <http://www.wcgalp.org> for more information.

Items for *Pig Genome Update 51* can be sent to me by no later than October 10 please.

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Paid for by funds from the NRSP-8 USDA/CSREES sponsored Pig Genome Coordination Program.