



Pig Genome Update

No. 108 July 5, 2011

Swine sequence latest version nearly ready. A special edition of Pig Genome Update will be sent when the sequence is completed and checked. The hard work and extraordinary efforts of Mario Caccamo and many others in this process is greatly appreciated.

New honorary members will be named. ISAG has the privilege of recognizing scientists who have made significant contributions to the area of Animal Genetics research with its highest honor, Honorary Membership. At the ISAG Executive Committee meeting Jim Womack and Morris Soller were nominated and voted to receive this honor. The election will be formally presented at the business meeting on July 20, 2012 in Cairns.

Summer time means meetings. Some highlights of meetings and upcoming meetings are listed below.

British Pig Breeders Roundtable was held in Canterbury, UK. in June. More than 40 researchers and industry personnel from around the world discussed recent advances and issues relating to swine breeding. The role of genomics and the pig sequence was included in many of the presentations. The "closed" format of the meeting provided a platform for some interesting debate around the opportunities and options. Although many of the traits (meat quality, piglet mortality, boar taint, health/disease) discussed would be recognized from recent meetings there was definitely an optimistic view of progress.

The 64th Reciprocal Meat Conference of the American Meat Science Association was held June 19-22 on the Kansas State University campus. The core purpose of the American Meat Science Association is to “foster community and professional development among individuals who create and apply science to efficiently provide safe and high quality meat.” Nowhere is this purpose more evident than at the RMC. This meeting continues to be the venue for explorations of discoveries and ideas that will lead to innovation in meat science and the meat industry. This year’s hosts were Kansas State University and Cargill Inc. The motto for the 64th RMC was “Developing Our Future”. Sessions focused on the future demands on agriculture to produce a plentiful safe food supply, produce a high quality product, and ensure that the processes we use are efficient all while we continue to meet the rising expectations of our domestic and global markets. Dr. John Floros from Penn State University provided a keynote talk entitled “Feeding the World - The Role of Science and Technology in Addressing the Challenges”. Mr. Frank Yiannas, Vice-President for Food Safety for Wal-Mart Stores Inc., provided a keynote talk centered on developing a food safety culture. Dr. Edgar Chambers from Kansas State University helped to cap the conference with a presentation entitled “Consumer Views on Food Safety”. Technical program topics included meat safety with an emphasis on non-O157 STECs, proteomic applications in meat science, sustainability of food and meat production, and best practices in meat product development. In addition, 52 different reciprocation sessions were held to develop discussion and collaboration in areas related to meat safety, meat quality, and meat value as well as traditional and extension education. One hundred twenty abstracts from the meeting will be published in Meat Science (<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/journal/03091740>). Program highlights, proceeding papers, and presentations can be found on the home page of the American Meat Science Association: www.meatscience.org. Follow the link entitled “RMC Info” (kindly provided by Steven Lonergan).

Moshe Soller's 80th birthday symposium was held June 30. Following up on the special session at January's Plant and Animal Genome XIX meeting, an International Symposium celebrating Professor Moshe Soller's 80th Birthday was held on June 30th at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem's Institute of Life Sciences. Professor Soller has made many seminal contributions to both animal and plant breeding. Speakers included colleagues, former students and a Nobel laureate. For some pictures of the event please see <https://picasaweb.google.com/114821795473813999681/SollerSymposium?authkey=Gv1sRgCPX-x6jmtrqYFQ#>

Still time to register and attend the American Society of Animal Science and American Dairy Science joint annual meeting, July 10-14, 2011, New Orleans, Louisiana. For details please see <http://adsa.asas.org/meetings/2011/>

Still time to register and attend the Swine in Biomedical Research Conference 2011. It will take place from July 17th to 19th, at the Chicago Mart Plaza Holiday Inn. If you are interested in learning more about the utility of pigs as biomedical models, please plan to attend. Go to <http://www.dbs.illinois.edu/comparativegenomics/> for all the details on the meeting and to www.conferences.illinois.edu/sbr for registration and abstract submission. See you in Chicago.

Washington update. As noted previously, the National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA) took one of the largest cuts, \$125.9 million, within USDA in the recent FY2011 Continuing Resolution passed by the U.S. Congress. While the AFRI competitive grant program did receive a small increase, this was far below the President's request and compromises their ability to meet commitments made in previous grant cycles (see <http://www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/rfas/afri.html> for RFA information). Accordingly, AFRI will be reducing the 2011 allocation to all grants awarded in FY 2010 on a continuation basis by 5 percent. These include Coordinated Agricultural Project (CAP) grants and most grants made in challenge area programs. NIFA also states that they anticipate making fewer AFRI CAP grants in FY 2011 and that these grants will not be as large. To date, Challenge Grant RFAs have been issued only in the Childhood Obesity and Food Safety areas. It seems unlikely that an RFA will be issued this year in the Global Food Security area due to the need to provide downstream year support for last year's awarded Feed Efficiency grants. If and when there will be another round of the NIFA (Pre- and Postdoctoral) Fellows Program applications is not yet known. In even bleaker news, the U.S. House Agriculture Appropriations Committee FY 2012 budget mark-up cuts AFRI by nearly \$40M (15%) from this year's budget and by nearly \$100M from the President's request. While the final outcome is not yet known, significant AFRI cuts are nearly certain, which will further compromise the FY 2012 RFA, as much of the budget remains committed to long term grants first approved in the FY 2010 RFA. On a perhaps not an unrelated note, Dr. Roger Beachy resigned as Director of NIFA, effective May 20, 2011, returning to the Danforth Institute in St. Louis. Undersecretary Catherine Woteki has named Dr. Chavonda Jacobs-Young as Acting Director of NIFA (kindly provided by Jerry Dodgson).

A data repository was set up by the NRSP-8 Bioinformatics Team for the pig genome research community to share data. It can be seen at (<http://www.animalgenome.org/repository/pig/>). Currently available data sets are the Illumina 60K SNP locations for build 10 contributed by Martien Groenen. Those who wish to share data, please contact the Swine Genome Coordinator Max Rothschild (mfrothsc@iastate.edu), or Bioinformatics Coordinator Jim Reecy (jreecy@iastate.edu), or send an email directly to the NAGRP Bioinformatics Team (bioinfo-team@animalgenome.org).

New publishing format for *Pig Genome Update* in force. Starting January 1, 2011 the *Pig Genome Update* will be published 4 times a year instead of 6. Some special editions are possible. Your input and ideas are always welcome. Please contribute.

Upcoming meetings (see: <http://www.animalgenome.org/pigs/community/meetings.html>)

American Society of Animal Science and American Dairy Science joint annual meeting, July 10-14, 2011, New Orleans, Louisiana. For details please see <http://adsa.asas.org/meetings/2011/>

Swine in Biomedical Research, July 17-19, 2011, Chicago IL, for details contact Larry Schook at schook@uiuc.edu

8th Transgenic Animal Research Conference, August 7-11, 2011, Granlibakken Conference Center, Lake Tahoe, CA. See <http://conferences.ucdavis.edu/confreg/index.cfm?confid=521&webid=2725>

4th International Symposium on Animal Functional Genomics, October 10-12, 2011. Dublin, Ireland. See <http://www.isafg2011.org>.

Plant & Animal Genome Conference, PAG XX, Jan. 14-18, 2012, Town & Country Hotel, San Diego, CA. Information available at <http://www.intl-pag.org/> .

Human Genome Meeting (HGM2012), March 11-14, 2012, Sydney, Australia. See <http://www.hgm2012.org>

Items for *Pig Genome Update 109* can be sent to me by no later than June 15 please.

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