

Minutes of the NRSP-8 Aquaculture Business Meeting

Time: Saturday January 14, 2006, 4:00-5:30 pm

Place: Pacific Salon 3 & 4, Towne and Country Hotel, San Diego, CA

- I. Call to order. Chair, Dr. John Liu, called the business meeting to order at 4 pm, following the Aquaculture Workshop.

Dr. Caird Rexroad distributed the travel award certificates to the 12 recipients: Jun-ichi Hikima (Medical University of South Carolina), Nuala O'Leary (Medical University of South Carolina), Raviv Shaul (BGU), Valerie Barbosa (INRA), Charlene Couch (North Carolina State University), Amber Garber (North Carolina State University), Avner Cnaani (University of New Hampshire), Bo-Young Lee (University of New Hampshire), Peng Xu (Auburn University), Takashi Koyama (TUMST), Yongping Wang (Rutgers University), Lingling Wang (Rutgers University). Congratulations to the students on their awards and their fine presentations. Dr. Liu mentioned that travel awards are taxable U.S. income for domestic students and have been adjusted for that.

II. Old Business

1. Species Coordinators' Reports: With exception of the bioinformatics coordinator, all other reports were deferred to 11:00 a.m.-12:00 noon Sunday afternoon (1-15-06).
 - a. Bioinformatics coordinator: James Reecy, Iowa State University, recounted improvements to the Animal Genome web site (<http://animalgenome.org>)
 - i. Linkage maps integrated with RH, BAC, sequence information
 - ii. Standardizing trait names and protocols for measurement; developing an ontology editor
 - iii. To link QTL across species is a goal
 - iv. Database of genetic and genomic software programs with descriptions and links
 - v. Dr. Reecy reiterated the standing offer by the National Animal Genome Research Program (NAGRP) Bioinformatics Coordination Team to discuss aquaculture applications or collaborative grants.
2. Administrator and Industry Rep Reports
 - a. Dr. William Trumble, Administrative Supervisor.
 - i. NRSP projects reviewed in 2005; all were funded; NRSP-8 funded at full level for 5 years (most others are being decreased)
 - ii. Create 21, response to proposed new mechanisms for allocating state and federal AES resources; a consulting group has been hired to create an NIH-type National Agricultural Research Institute, including base funding for the AES.
 - iii. Reminder to get reports to the Coordinator in a timely fashion
 - iv. New investigators are invited to participate; contact bill.trumble@unh.edu
 - b. Dr. Muquarrab Qureshi, CSREES National Program Leader, Animal Genomics

- i. Compliments to speakers; NAGRP is the premier U.S. program with >2000 academic and industry scientists; NRSP-8 top-rated; Aquaculture team is good.
 - ii. CSREES has had turnover of staff; Joe Chen, Under-Sect. of REE replaced by Gail Buchanan, awaiting Senate confirmation; recruiting a new leader in Agro Security
 - iii. Stakeholder workshop on animal protection soon, another in April on animal production, including aquaculture.
 - iv. Budget flat
- c. Peter Burfening, NRI Animal Genome update
- i. 2007 RFA will appear in July or August
 - ii. Climate change in D.C. under Bush administration
 - iii. Anna Palmisano, NRI Deputy Administrator, is a great supporter of genomics
 - iv. OMB starting program assessments (acronym PART); planning process uses “logic model” to develop goals for assessment; impact is the key
 - v. Handout: short-, mid- and long-term goals of Animal Genome; concern about success rate, 23% (139/583) overall, 12% in functional genomics
 - vi. Handout: Average award size in NRI is \$386K. NAS has recommended an increase in this but with static budgets, the only way to increase average award size is to focus the program and decrease the number of projects. Proposals that don’t match areas will be returned unreviewed.
 - vii. Handout: Species breakdown shows aquaculture with 22% success rate (23/106), 19% of proposals received and 20% of awards made.
 - viii. Handout: only 59% of proposals rated as “high priority” by panel were funded. Program would need \$6M more to fund 100% of these projects.
 - ix. Decision to limit functional genomics RFA to species with 5X genome sequence coverage follows decision to focus programs
 - x. Q: Who decides areas of focus? A: stakeholder workshops. Participation of aquaculture stakeholders in these workshops is therefore critical; work with Meryl Broussard and Gary Jensen on this.
 - xi. Comment from Bill Trumble: Logic model is a bad one for discovery research. A. No choice; told to use it.
- d. Industry reports
- i. Roger Yant retired and recommended Dr. Nagaraj Chatakondi as catfish representative; Dr. Chatakondi says that disease is a priority.
 - ii. John Benzie, shrimp industry is focused on genetic improvement, and there are companies that are in a position to use genomic information
 - iii. Mark Westerman, striped bass industry is still small (11-12 million lbs per year) but is optimistic about future impact of genomics; he is pleased with progress beyond markers, to function and phenotype (e.g. sex determination).
 - iv. Dr. Liu reiterated the importance of industry support.
3. Future Workshop
- a. Group commended Dr. Caird Rexroad for his efforts in organizing this year’s Workshop.
 - b. Dr. Hedgecock will organize next year’s workshop. Please send suggestions for invited speakers or ideas about the format to him (dhedge@usc.edu).

III. New Business

1. Travel Awards:
 - a. 15-16 applications distributed to Species Coordinators for ranking; worked OK this year since 12 were awarded.
 - b. Problem: For some species, a few labs receive repeated awards.
 - c. How to distribute more equitably? Give awards to minor species? Put more weight on merit? Ongoing discussion of Executive Committee.
2. A formal complaint about 2006 NRI Functional Genomics RFA being limited to species with 5X genome coverage was circulated by Dr. Tom Kocher; a copy of the letter is available at <http://www.animalgenome.org/aquaculture/updates/newsletter7.html>). Signed letters should be sent to Tom (Tom.Kocher@unh.edu).
3. Budget. Request copy from Dr. Liu if interested. Because we didn't use funds in first year, they rolled over to second year. We have a balance of about \$60K. Funds can't roll over two years, so we must spend \$15K before Sept. 2006. A priority is to enhance representation of Aquaculture Genomics on various panels and workshops. Funds will be made available for this type of activities. Please make requests to the coordinator as appropriate.
4. Dr. Liu informed participants about three successful proposals to the Joint Genome Institute's Community Sequencing Program for cichlids (0.1x genome coverage for 5 species), catfish (300K ESTs, both ends), and Pacific oyster (50-100 BACs and 300K ESTs, both ends). These projects will yield good resources for the aquaculture group.
5. Geoff Waldbieser was elected as Secretary (Chair-elect) for 2006 and will be the chair and organizer of the workshop in 2007.

IV. Adjourn.