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Up Coming Events :-

- **6th Symposium of the Southern African Plant Breeders' Association** Club Mykonos, Langebaan 13–15 March. Contact Dr Francois Koekemoer 058-3034690
- **Proteomics Conference**, Cape Town 6-7 March. Contact M du Preez mgdupreez@uwc.ac.za
- **Bio 2006**, North America's biggest biotechnology Conference, to be held in Chicargo, 9–12 April 2006
- **South African Society of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology Conference**, UKZN Pietermaritzburg Campus. 2-5 July 2006. www.sasbmb.org.za
- **Fundamental Intellectual Asset Management**, 1-3 March, KZN
- **LIFEsparks BIObasics, Sandton**
10 March, www.lifesparks.co.za

PlantBio is very pleased to announce that our new website is up and running. After many hours of collaboration from all our staff and interns and numerous changes our new site was finalized at the end of 2005. Our new site covers a wide range of information about PlantBio, from our focus areas and Governance through to all the information required for proposal submissions, and news articles.

We would like to thank everyone for their valued input and extend our special thanks to Pilotfish for all their assistance and hard work.

To view our new site go to www.plantbio.org.za

Do you have a Biotech event coming up, which you would like us to include in our Newsletter?

If you are not on our mailing list, and would like to be ...

Forward your information, together with the relevant contact details to:

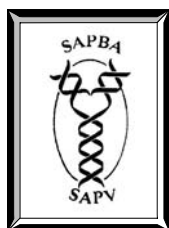
Helen@plantbio.co.za

PlantBio CEO speaks at International Conference on "GM Crops: Ten Years On"

Sagadevan Mundree (PlantBio CEO) was invited by the Association of Applied Biologists to present an overview of the status of GM Crops in South Africa and the progress that we have made towards the development of drought tolerant maize. This conference was held at Cambridge University (14th-16th December 2005) where there were close to a hundred delegates in attendance from across the world. Sagadevan pointed out that the diversity of attendees and the topics covered was superb and this created a fertile environment for vibrant discussions on the current status of GM Crops across the globe and the issues that should be addressed in the next decade. Clearly, the technology has developed considerably since the first GM crops were grown commercially. This includes the use of a variety of technologies to contain the flow of genes through pollen and seed dispersal. In addition, the identification of tissue-specific and inducible promoters for a variety of crops has been a significant development.



6TH SYMPOSIUM OF THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN PLANT BREEDERS' ASSOCIATION



Breeding of crops have been important in South Africa for many decades, because the science of plant breeding has played a very important role in helping our country to maintain primary production of its crops and improve the nutrition of its people. A global awareness of the need for sustainable agricultural development has brought about many exciting changes, therefore South African breeders have adapted well to these changes and made many new discoveries and significant contributions towards strengthening the discipline worldwide.

it is important that this commitment to plant breeding be continued and it is within this context that the Southern African Plant Breeders' Association (SAPBA) will be hosting its 6th Symposium at Club Mykonos, Langebaan from 13 -15 March 2006. Dramatic changes in our weather patterns due to the effect of global warming are challenging plant breeders to develop crops that can withstand severe stress. To address advances in breeding for yield, quality, water use efficiency, disease and pest resistance in a changing environment, the theme of for the symposium is stress. Two international and four keynote speakers are addressing topics ranging

form weather patterns, water toxicity, disease resistance and drought gene transfer.

Normally the plant breeding symposium held bi-annually is a social event most plant breeders do not miss and this year the venue promises to be a hit. Except interesting talks and posters already received, the registration fee includes all meals and conference fees as well as sundowner boat trip, Greek evening and dinner at a Farm Kitchen where the food is prepared in black pots which include seafood as well other typical traditional South African dishes. A workshop on plant Breeders Rights is going to be held and is included in the registration fee. Registration fees include:

Student	R300-00
Members	R600-00
Non-member	R800-00
Late registration (after 15 January)	R100-00

For registration Contact Cornel Bender

Email: BenderCM.SCI@mail.uovs.ac.za

Tel: +27-51-401 2948 Fax: +27-51-444 5945

BioCareers

The SA Biotech Careers portal has been re-branded as Bio Careers and will be launched this week. The new site has an enhanced digital recruitment system which will offer employment opportunities for career seekers and employers.

If you have a post which you would like to advertise, or if you would like to join the mailing list, please contact Sean Alborough on salborough@h-alliance.co or visit <http://www.sabiotechcareers.co.za>



PROF. PETER AGRE PROVIDES FEEDBACK ON VISIT TO SOUTH AFRICA



DUKE UNIVERSITY HEALTH SYSTEM

Peter Agre, MD
 Vice Chancellor for Science and Technology
 Professor of Cell Biology
 Walter Kempner Professor of Medicine

December 27, 2005

Re: Visit to the Republic of South Africa

Dear Friends,

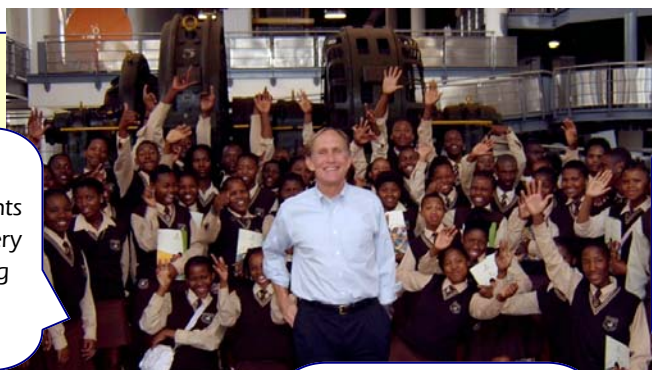
Two years have passed since I shared the 2003 Nobel Prize in Chemistry. Life since then has been exhilarating but exhausting. During that interval I have made nearly 200 presentations [keynote lectures, after dinner speeches, visiting professorships, school visits, meetings and other special events]. Every one of the trips was interesting and enjoyable, but one stands out as particularly special—my first trip to the Republic of South Africa. This trip was supported by generous contributions from the South African Biotechnology Regional Innovation Centres [BRICs] and Merck-South Africa.

First suggested by my friend and colleague Stephan Hohmann from University of Göteborg, the trip was planned for this past autumn between a lecture in Copenhagen and a lecture in Seattle. Despite a tight schedule, the program was incredibly informative and personally rewarding for me. Everything was a delight—visits to the township schools and the university campuses, the delicious dinners and the quaint inns, the magnificent Hluhluwe Game Reserve, and most of all the people.

As I sit in my quiet laboratory at the end of the year, I wish to remember some of the high points, and I wish to thank all of my hosts. I am especially grateful to those who accompanied me during this time—Stefan, Ruben, and Dominique Hohmann, Florian Bauer, Alex Fraser, Georgie Hawke, and Grace Baloyi. You really made this an unforgettable experience. I hope my visit was a boost to your biotech efforts. I am really impressed by what you are all doing.

Sincere best wishes,

Peter Agre, M.D.
 Vice Chancellor of Science and Technology
 Professor of Cell Biology



Peter Agre with students at the SciBono Discovery Centre, Johannesburg

Jonathan Blackburn (UCT & UWC), Greg Gilbert (CEO Shimoda Biotech), Peter Agre and Mark Fyvie (MD Cape Biotech) at the Frontiers in Biotechnology Lecture UCT



Peter Agre with Laura Vatta, Ciara Metccalfe and Anthony Mills. Winners of the SAASTA Young Science Writers Competition



BIOSAFETY & REGULATORY PLATFORM IN SOUTH AFRICA

Apart from establishing adequate measures and procedures to guarantee biosafety, one cannot disregard the importance of public acceptance of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO's) and GM products. The public needs assurance from the government that it will implement adequate safety controls in the development, application and release of GMO's in South Africa.

On the 18th of January 2006, Ms Kelebohile Lekoape gave a presentation on behalf of PlantBio to the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Agriculture and Land Affairs on the Genetically Modified Organisms Amendment Bill (B34-2005). Ms Lekoape is currently driving an initiative to develop a Biosafety and Regulatory Platform in South Africa. This initiative is also supported by the National Department of Agriculture and the Innovation Fund.

Various stakeholders who are dealing with GMO's in their field of study have been invited to participate in the discussions. One of the objectives is to determine if there are organizations/ institutions or systems in place that will help coordinate and regulate different aspects of food safety and seek to develop the capacity to test the safety of these GM products. Ms Lekoape assured the Parliamentary Committee members that it is indeed our intention to establish a biosafety and regulatory platform. The platform will provide advice and assistance in relation to unanswered questions related to food and environmental safety of modern GM products, as well as to develop the required expertise to assess and manage potential risks associated with these products.



PlantBio is pleased to be co-hosting the LIFESPARKS BIOBASICS

Investment opportunities in South African biotechnology.

Investor education course & 5 elevation pitches for funding.

- Date : 10 March 2006,
- Time: 14h00–17h00
- Venue: JSE Auditorium, 1 Exchange Square,
- Gwen Lane, Sandton

Contact : www.lifesparks.co.za for more details

FUNDAMENTAL INTELLECTUAL ASSET MANAGEMENT



LES (Licensing Executives Society of SA) will be conducting an Intellectual Asset Management course presented by both international and local intellectual property experts. The course will be held over three days and is recommended to anyone interested in licensing, commercialisation and management of Intellectual Property, who wants to increase his/her knowledge and raise his/her professional skill levels.

Course Content:

- IAM 101: The Basics of Intellectual Property and Licensing (including language and principles).
 IAM 102: Filling and Managing the Portfolio (including planning, tech transfer criteria and strategies)
 IAM 103: The Deal (including valuation issues, valuation methods and negotiation techniques and principles)

Date: Wednesday 1 March to Friday 3 March 2006.

Venue: Orion Mont Aux Sources Hotel, Bergville, KwaZulu Natal.

(For more information – <http://www.orion-hotels.co.za/mont-overview.html>)



PlantBio Trust

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science
& technology

Department:
Science and Technology
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

