



PlantBio

National Innovation Centre for Plant Biotechnology

PlantBio Trust Newsletter

Volume 7 February 2007



PlantBio says goodbye to Professor Sagadevan Mundree

SAGADEVAN G. MUNDREE

BPaed(Sci) (UDW) BSc(Hons) (UDW) PhD (Auburn, USA)
H.Dip. Bus Man. (Dam) MBA (UCT)

Sagadevan Govindasamy Mundree (known to many as Saga), was born in Durban in 1965. He graduated from the University of Durban-Westville (UDW) in 1988 with a B Paed(Sci) degree and began his working career teaching biology at Arena Park Secondary in Chatsworth. Continuing his studies while teaching, he completed his BSc(Hons) degree in the Botany Department at UDW. Saga was awarded the Fulbright Scholarship in 1992 and traveled to the USA where he spent four years pursuing his PhD studies at Auburn University. While studying in America, Saga received a number of accolades which included being placed first in the Graduate Student Research Forum Platform Presentation at Auburn University for the presentation of his PhD research. He received First Prize for his poster presentation at the Annual Spring Colloquium at Auburn University, Outstanding Achievement in Academic Excellence from the Office of Special Programs, as well as the recipient of the "Outstanding Graduate Teaching Award" from the College of Science and Maths at Auburn University.

Returning to S.A. in 1997, Saga took up a Post-Doctoral position in the Botany Department at the University of Cape Town, and began a lectureship with them a year later. The following year he moved to the Microbiology Department where he developed his research on the molecular dissection of abiotic stress tolerance in plants using the monocotyledonous resurrection plant *Xerophyta viscosa* as a model system. He progressed to Associate Professor in the Department of Molecular and Cell Biology, and received the Distinguished Teacher Award. In his quest for more knowledge, Saga completed his MBA (UCT) in 2003.

In May 2004, Saga joined PlantBio Trust as CEO and relocated his family to Pietermaritzburg, coming home to KwaZulu Natal. Saga has played an integral role in developing PlantBio and its team into a major role player in the South African Biotech Industry. Never wavering at a challenge, Saga has always undertaken whatever was thrown at him, be it an invitation to participate in the Science Council, give a lecture, host international visitors or motivate fellow colleagues, he still found time for his family and to pursue his personal goals. In 2005 he climbed Kilimanjaro with a group of friends, and is currently training for the Comrades Marathon.

The Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries in the State of Queensland have offered Saga a position in their Senior Executive Team and in his drive for more knowledge and self growth, he has accepted their offer and will be leaving PlantBio on the 16th February. Saga's commitment to the Plant Biotechnology Industry has been an inspiration to all and the PlantBio team will miss his unwavering support and encouragement. It is with a sad heart that we have to say goodbye to Saga, his wife Clara, and daughters Sahuri and Tanushri. South Africa's loss is definitely Australia's gain.

PlantBio Trust



science
& technology

Department:
Science and Technology
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

PostNet Suite 201, Private Bag X6, Cascades, 3202

Pietermaritzburg, 3202

Tel: +27(0)33 846 1980 Fax: +27(0)33 846 1990

www.plantbio.org.za



PlantBio

National Innovation Centre for Plant Biotechnology



Dr Jaleh Daie to visit South Africa

Dr Jaleh Daie, the managing partner of Aurora Equity in San Francisco will be visiting South Africa in February at the invitation of PlantBio. Dr Daie is well known in the biology/biotechnology world, having been a former Professor and Department Chair as well as former head of science at the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, she has published a number of papers and served on a number of committees. Dr Daie has given numerous invited speeches in the US and abroad as well as being a keynote speaker to varied audiences from policy makers to school children

As a member of the PlantBio's Distinguished Speaker Programme, Dr Daie will be giving a series of lectures in Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and The Western Cape later this month.



You are cordially invited to attend any of the following lectures which Dr Daie will be giving while in South Africa

Gauteng:

University of Pretoria, FABI Auditorium — Monday 19 February at 10h30

University of Witwatersrand, Gatehouse 600, East Campus — Tuesday 20 February at 13h20

Title: The Biology Century: Biotechnology for Health, Wealth and Social Harmony

R.S.V.P. Helen@plantbio.co.za before 15 February 2007

National Research Foundation Auditorium, Meiring Naude Rd, Pretoria — Monday 19 February at 14h30

Title: Investment Opportunities in Biotechnology and the long term economic value

R.S.V.P. Denise@nrf.ac.za before 15 February 2007

KwaZulu Natal:

Durban University of Technology, Lecture Room LC017, Steve Biko Campus — Wednesday 21 February @ 11h00

University of KwaZulu Natal, John Bews Building, Pietermaritzburg Campus — Thursday 22 February @ 14h00

Title: The Biology Century: Biotechnology for Health, Wealth and Social Harmony

R.S.V.P. Melody@plantbio.co.za before 18 February 2007

Cape Town:

Graduate School of Business, Lecture Theatre, University of Cape Town — Monday 26 February @ 13h00

Title: Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Venture Investing

Contact Khumbuzi for more details events@gsb.uct.ac.za

Winelands BioBuzz, Stellenbosch University — Wednesday 28 February @ 17h00

Title: The Biology Century: Biotechnology for Health, Wealth and Social Harmony

R.S.V.P. Genevieve@capebiotech.co.za before 26 February 2007

During her visit, Dr Daie will visit some of our Science Centres and schools where she will present to students and teachers. Dr Daie will also meet with members of our Department of Education, academia and business communities.



African Science Communication Conference

The South African Agency for Science and Technology Advancement (SAASTA) one of the core business units of the National Research Foundation (NRF) and part of Department of Science and Technology organized the first ever African Science Communication Conference. Approximately 150 delegates from various parts of Africa, as well as countries such as India, Australia and the United Kingdom (UK) attended the conference. The objective was to involve stakeholders from all over Africa to promote and achieve public and society engagement with science and technology as well as for capacity development in the area of science communication.

The Deputy Minister of Science and Technology, Minister Derek Hanekom officially opened the conference following an interesting speech by the newly appointed President of National Research Foundation (NRF) Professor Mzamo Mangaliso.

Various topics were discussed including, the role of science communication in building research human capital as well as using it as an essential tool for African researchers and policy makers and so forth. The highlight of the conference was a lecture given by Dr Himla Soodyall. She's known for her outstanding contribution and her active role

in the public understanding of science and she is currently serving as a director of the Human Genomic Diversity and Disease Research Unit at Wits. Delegates were treated to participating and taking a DNA test to trace their origins which everyone looked forward to.



At the end of a hectic two days it was quite clear that a lot of issues still needs to be addressed to establish Africa as an international role player in the field of science communication but at the same it was enlightening to see that Africa is heading in the right direction. Ms Masego Mokgoro, Mrs Melody Dlamini and Helen Hingle who heads the communication and marketing portfolio at PlantBio attended the Conference and all of them agreed that it was worth attending.

Event Diary

13-15 March	Biotechnology Business Forum, Southern Sun Greyston, Johannesburg	Wwww.iir-conferences.co.za/biotech Tel: 011-7717000
5-9 March	Science Unlimited 2007, Hall C at the Tshwane Business & Agricultural Chamber, TSHWABAC Exhibition Centre, Soutter St, Pretoria	Wwww.scienceunlimited.co.za 012-8038438
21-27 March	Sascol SciFEST, Grahamstown	Wwww.scifest.org.za 046-6031106
6-9 May	2007 BIO International Convention,	Wwww.bio2007.org



PlantBio Trust CEO Post

PlantBio Trust is a national Plant Biotechnology Innovation Centre, established by the Department of Science and Technology, in terms of the National Biotechnology Strategy. Its role is to foster plant biotechnology platforms and projects in South Africa. PlantBio seeks a dynamic, energetic and multi-skilled CEO to manage PlantBio and its portfolio of projects.

The successful candidate will:

- be a self starter who flourishes under pressure, with clear vision and balanced judgement
- have the ability to efficiently negotiate small to very large contracts, and to manage a large budget
- lead a management team to identify and manage suitable projects. Hence, good management skills are essential
- have the ability to deal with the media on a routine basis over controversial issues
- have the ability to deal with international liaison, the media, high level political networking, complex business arrangements, advanced scientific details, academics and entrepreneurs.
- Understand the processes involved in commercialising technologies in the Plant Biotechnology Sector

Requirements

- a degree in plant or microbial biotechnology, or a related area of plant or microbial sciences
- a postgraduate degree in plant or microbial sciences, or in law or business (e.g., an LLB or MBA)
- at least four years of business or research management at a senior level, including budget management
- a drivers licence (unendorsed Code 08)
- no criminal record
- no bankruptcy record

Experience in the setting up of spin-off companies and start-up companies will be an added advantage.

The successful candidate will be interviewed and sit a profiling test to determine their suitability.

A remuneration package will be negotiated within set parameters and will include a performance bonus.



Reply to Mrs Helen Hingle at: Helen@plantbio.co.za

Send the following:

- a letter of application, which specifies who the candidate meets ALL of the Requirements of the advertisement above;
- a detailed CV;
- a list of five referees with their postal addresses, fax numbers and telephone numbers

Application Deadline : 15.00hours, 13th February 2007



Nuts about South Africa!

South African breeders produces a world winner in the Nelmac_D macadamia cultivar. A new macadamia cultivar was developed by Mr. Dannie Nel and Prof Kas Holtzhausen in the Nelspruit region. The cultivar has been awarded South African Plant Breeders Rights.

Macadamias only contribute 1-2% of the total volume of nuts produced in the world at present. Macadamias, however have the most favorable health profile. It is expected that macadamia consumption and world wide demand will continue to grow.

Macadamias are planted in Australia, USA, Kenya, Mozambique, Israel, Colombia and South Africa

Large volumes of macadamias have been planted in South Africa to date (4 000 000

trees). The volume of macadamias produced and supplied from South Africa is expected to double over the next two to three years.

The most important criteria for the choice of a variety are tonnage, nut crack out percentage, nut abscission and precocity of bearing. The Nelmac_D fulfills these requirements and is set to make an impact around the world in all major macadamia nut producing countries. 250 000 trees of Nelmac_D have already been established in the industry.

Citrogold has the management rights to the commercialisation of the cultivar. The variety will be introduced to all the most important macadamia producing countries of the world by the Biogold International subsidiaries.

The involvement of Citrogold and Biogold

Meet our new Finance Officer—Bonginkosi Mabaso



PlantBio Trust recently welcomed Bonginkosi Mabaso into our family as a Finance Officer. Bonginkosi recently qualified as a Certified Professional Accountant, CPA(SA), and holds a B.Com (Acc) from the University of Zululand. For the past two years, he has previously been involved in the public sector audits with The Auditor General, before which he was an accountant at ChiliMzimela & Co, a consulting firm based in Durban. Bonginkosi is originally from oGobandlovu, a residential area in the Richard's Bay metropolis, where he was born and raised.

Apart from counting beans (that's what accountants are known for), he has been involved in indoor and beach volleyball at a professional level, having represented his province in the SASSU indoor and World Series Qualifiers beach volleyball tournaments.

As a person Bonginkosi has proven to be a sociable person who is career focused and promises to add considerable value at PlantBio.

We at PlantBio are looking forward to a protracted and fruitful professional relationship with Bonginkosi.

PlantBio Trust

PostNet Suite 201, Private Bag X6, Cascades, 3202

Pietermaritzburg, 3202

Tel: +27(0)33 846 1980 Fax : +27(0)33 846 1990

www.plantbio.org.za

