

Minutes of the Third Aspergillus Meeting

The Third Aspergillus Meeting (alias Asperfest3) took place April 8, 2006 in Vienna, Austria at the University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences (BOKU). There were 165 participants representing 24 countries. The scientific program featured 10 talks and 87 posters presented by scientists at all career stages.

Community discussion: a brief update on microarrays was presented. Several at the meeting had used the PFGRC *A. nidulans* arrays (version 1) and the *A. fumigatus* arrays (version 2). All who had so far used them so far indicated that they were working well.

After a brief discussion the following were approved as genome sequencing priorities:

- 1) *A. versicolor*, one of the most common species in air, allergenic and occasional cause of disease;
- 2) *A. sydowi*, a close relative of *A. nidulans*, a coral pathogen, occasional pathogen of man and source of echinocandin antifungal Aminocandin;
- 3) *Eurotium chevalieri* suggested by Jens Frisvad since this xerophile is the first example of a real extremophile in *Aspergillus* (and maybe in fungi in general) it may cause disease and allergy and is used in Japan to ferment fish for consumption.
- 4) *A. aculeatus* suggested by Scott Baker, *A. aculeatus* is a source of several industrial enzymes and is closely related to *A. niger*. Sequencing *A. aculeatus* will aid in annotation of the existing *A. niger* genome and may allow the discovery of gene regulatory sequences common to both. Genome sequence for *A. aculeatus* may also aid in taxonomy of the black aspergilli.

Steve Osmani, chair of the *A. nidulans* Action committee, gave an overview of ideas for community resources including knockouts, GFP-fusions, etc. In the discussion that followed there was great enthusiasm for generation of these community resources. There was also a clear consensus was that many of the proposed approaches require good annotation for success. Claudio Scazzochio made the suggestion that cDNAs for better annotation must be a top priority. There was general agreement with this idea. Cees van den Hondel presented a brief overview of the Eurofung plans for an *Aspergillus* annotation jamboree. Noting the strong international participation in the meeting, Michael Hynes asked if there was any program for US/European cooperation to which we might apply for funding. Kevin McCluskey suggested that we communicate with the *Neurospora* group both to learn from their efforts and to possibly share some resources.

Miguel Penalva brought up the variation in transformation efficiency resulting from variation in lysing enzymes. He and Berl Oakley suggested that we try to identify a company willing to make lysing enzymes for *Aspergillus* research if we bought in bulk as a group.

Poster prizes: The DSM student poster prizes went to Abigail Leeder (University of Sheffield) for “Genetic control of hyphal morphology in *A. nidulans*” and Leena Ukil (Ohio State University) for “Isolation of an *Aspergillus* specific nucleolar protein as a copy number suppressor of *nimA1*.” Poster judges were Linda Lasure and Hein Stam.

Elections: Terms ended for AGRPC members Masayuki Machida, Michelle Momany, and Cees van den Hondel. Six candidates were voted on by those at the meeting. There was a tie in the number of votes for two of the positions so four new AGRPC members were added: Scott Baker, Masayuki Machida, Michelle Momany and Arthur Ram.

After the close of Asperfest, the newly elected 2006 AGRPC took the following actions:

- 1) Michelle Momany was re-elected AGRPC Chair.
- 2) Gary Payne was elected Program Chair for Asperfest4 to be held at the Asilomar Conference Center, CA immediately prior to the Fungal Genetics Conference.

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