Plant Breeding and Genomics Online Resource Reaches Milestone

Growth in the global population is placing an increased demand on the world's resources to sustain our society for food, feed, fuel, fibre, and environment, underscoring a need for safe and efficient crop production systems. To date, traditional plant breeding methods have served well to meet increased demands. Projected increases from 7 billion to 9 billion people in the next 40 years will require continued progress. Improvements in the efficiency and cost of DNA sequencing technologies are providing vital information on the genetics and genomics of crop plants. This information is paving the way for new plant breeding strategies to meet global food demands.

Earlier this year, a group of researchers and educators from America's land-grant universities, government agencies, and industry banded together to create the first-ever internet resource aimed at quickly putting basic research on crop genomes into practice. The resource is housed at eXtension (pronounced E-extension) at www.extension.org/plant_breeding_genomics. Less than one year from its launch, the resource reached a milestone of 100,000 views this month.

Researchers and Extension personnel regularly contribute webinars, videos, informational articles, reviews, blog entries, and tutorials to the resource. The effort is led by the Solanaceae Coordinated Agricultural Project (SolCAP), a USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA)-funded program. SolCAP recruited a community of experts from a wider range of Coordinated Agricultural Projects (CAPs). Members of the Conifer Translational Genomics Network (CTGN) partnered with SolCAP to publish a multi-part series of online learning modules that cover topics from introductory genetics and genomics to the applied use of genomics tools in tree breeding and ecosystem management. Content previously supported by the NIFA funded Barley CAP are now supported by the Institute of Barley and Malting Sciences (IBMS) at North Dakota State University. Other educational materials include modules developed by the Rosaceae CAP (RosBREED), a project funded through NIFA's Specialty Crop Research Initiative.

Plant breeding professionals, researchers, educators, students, and the general public are encouraged to follow development of this resource by subscribing to PBG's newsletter (PBG News) at http://pbgworks.org.

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