

for fruit reverse genetics. Bjorn Kloosterman (Wageningen University) presented an integrative-omics approach for studying potato tuber quality traits. He showed that network reconstruction after data integration can be used to visualize pathways of individual components associated with a trait of interest. Raymond Campbell (SCRI) spoke about the understanding of carotenoid accumulation in potato tubers. His group has developed transgenic potato plants by silencing the best candidate gene, a carotenoid cleavage dioxygenase (CCD4), resulting in increased levels of tuber carotenoids and unexpected effects on tuber morphology that mimic a heat-sprouting phenotype. Heejin Jeong (Seoul National University) described how high resolution melting method can detect natural variation and EMS-induced mutation in *Capsicum*. He showed that this strategy can be used for

the identification of molecular diversity of agriculturally important genes.

Other presentations focused on metabolomics, proteomics, functional genomics and systems biology. Asaph Aharoni (The Weizmann Institute of Science, Rehovot) mentioned how silencing of the *TOMATO AGAMOUSLIKE 1 (TAGL1)* MADS-box gene results in altered fruit pigmentation. Ryan P. McQuinn (Cornell University) showed that apricot is not solely a carotenoid-specific mutation, rather a mutation in a more general regulator of tomato fruit ripening. Mireille Faurobert (National Institute for Agricultural Research, Montfavet Cédex) discussed the proteomic database (SOLstIS: <http://w3.avignon.inra.fr/solstis>). Wilco Ligterink (Wageningen University) talked on unravelling the complex trait of seed quality in tomato by genetic genomics approach. Tamas Dalmy (University of

East Anglia, Norwich) discussed the role of short RNAs in fruit development and ripening. He described how his group has identified targets of miRNAs at a genomic scale using the 'degradome' approach and then compared the expression profiles of miRNAs and their targets following mRNA expression analysis at the same time-points using Affymetrix arrays. He concluded by saying that some miRNA/target pairs showed the expected negative correlation, but surprisingly a high percentage showed mixed or positive correlation. During the closing session, it was announced that the next conference in this series will be held at Tsukuba, Japan in 2011.

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New hopes from new minister

In January 2011, the Prime Minister of India, Dr Manmohan Singh reshuffled portfolios of his ministers. Shri Ashwani Kumar took charge as Minister of State for Science and Technology and Earth Sciences. While taking charge of his ministry, he gave a lot of new hopes in the form of, The Biotechnology Regulatory Authority of India Bill, the DNA Profiling Bill, Public Funded Research and Development (Protection, Utilization and Regulation of Intellectual Property) Bill, and the Regional Centre for Biotechnology Bill.

He also stated that the scientific temper needs to be inculcated among more and more students in the country. In a brief media interaction, he underlined the

need to make the benefits of research available to the masses, particularly to the farmers. He further stated that the research and development in biotechnology must help farmers to get more yield and that the Meteorological Department must help them to get timely information to deal with the vagaries of drought or heavy rains.

The Minister stressed on the need to work for reverse brain-drain and ensure that the best Indian talent gets the right atmosphere to work in the country. 'We need to provide them a positive atmosphere and work-place for technical and scientific research,' he added.

The Academy of Scientific and Innovative Research Bill 2010 is pending in

Parliament. Ashwani Kumar said it would be the endeavour of the ministry to introduce four bills in Parliament in the Budget session.

'The Biotechnology Regulatory Authority of India Bill, the DNA Profiling Bill, Public Funded Research and Development (Protection, Utilization and Regulation of Intellectual Property) Bill, and the Regional Centre for Biotechnology Bill are in the pipeline,' he said.

To a question on commercial introduction of GM crops, the minister said the Government would take a 'collective and correct decision'.

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