COUNCIL'S NEWSLETTER

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Volume 4, Issue 5, January 2017

The Council Organized the "Third International American Moroccan Agricultural Sciences Conference—AMAS Conference III on December 13-16, 2016 in Ouarzazate, Morocco

The High Council of Moroccan American Scholars and Academics — HC-MASA (www.hc-masa.org) and Atlas Publishing, LP (www.atalas-publishing.org) in collaboration with University Ibn Zohr (UIZ) and Hassan II Institute of Agronomy and Veterinary Sciences (IAV) organized the "Third International American Moroccan Agricultural Sciences Conference—AMAS Conference III on December 13-16, 2016 in Ouarzazate, Morocco.

The conference organizers Prof. Dr. Khalid Meksem, Southern Illinois University, USA (Council's President) and Prof. My Abdelmajid Kassem, Fayetteville State University, USA (Council's VP-USA) and the rest of the Organizing and Scientific Committees and all attendees were pleased of the outcome of AMAS Conference III.

The student Ms. Rqia Bourziza of IAV won the prize of the best oral presentation award among all students oral presentations. The value of the prize was 1,000 Moroccan Dirhams (MAD). Ms. Wafaa Mokhtari of IAV won the 1st best poster award of 1,000 MAD and Mr. Ayoub Hallouti won the 2nd best poster award of 500 MAD.

The first edition (AMAS Conference I) was organized on March 18-19, 2013 in Rabat, Morocco; AMAS Conference II was organized on October 18-20, 2014 in Marrakech, Morocco; and AMAS III was organized on December 13-16, 2016 in Ouarzazate, Morocco. During AMAS Conference III, 62 oral presentations and 100 posters have been presented by attendees from 10 countries including Morocco, Algeria, Saudi Arabia, UAE, France, The Netherlands, Germany, and USA.

The Fourth edition (AMAS Conference IV) will be organized on December 18-20, 2017 at the Agropolis of Meknes, Morocco.

The High Council of Moroccan American Scholars and Academics—HC-MASA organizes the Fourth International American Moroccan Agricultural Sciences Conference—AMAS Conference IV on December 18—20, 2017 in Meknes, Morocco

In This Issue

The American-Moroccan and French-Moroccan plant scientists who attended the International Plant & Animal Genome Conference XXV, January 14-18, 2017, San Diego, CA, USA. From left to right: Drs. Kahlid Meksem, Naoufal Lakhssassi, My Abdelmajid Kassem, Mohamed Bendahmane, Mohamed Zouine, and Abdelhafid Bendahmane,

American-Moroccan and French-Moroccan Plant Scientists Thrive at the International Plant & Animal Genome Conference XXV in San Diego, CA

Like always since 2000, American-Moroccan and French-Moroccan Plant Scientists were present at “The International Plant & Animal Genome Conference XXV” that was held January 13–18, 2017 in San Diego, CA. These were:

- Dr. Khalid Meksem, Professor, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL, USA
- Dr. Abdelhafid Bendahmane, Vice-Director, INRA, France
- Dr. Abdelmajid Kassem, Professor and Department Chair, Fayetteville State University, Fayetteville, NC, USA
- Dr. Mohammed Bendahmane, Ecole Normale Supérieure, Lyon, France
- Dr. Mohamed Zouine, Associate Professor, INRA/INP-ENSAT, Toulouse, France
- Dr. Naoufal Lakhssassi, Postdoctoral Fellow, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL, USA

These scientists organized workshops and presented their research findings in oral and poster formats as follows:

The International Plant & Animal Genome Conference Celebrates Its 25th Anniversary (1992-2017)! It is the largest Conference on Plant & Animal Genomics in the world and always takes place in the beautiful city of San Diego, CA.

I. WORKSHOPS:

a. Workshop: Teaching Genetics, Genomics, Biotechnology, and Bioinformatics

Organizer: Abdelmajid Kassem, Fayetteville State University, USA
Date: Saturday, January 14, 2017
Time: 4:00-6:10 PM
Room: Esquire - Meeting House

4:00 PM Genotyping By Sequencing (GBS) Based Approach in Ultra-Density Genetic Mapping, SNP Discovery and Population Evolution. Chen, Noel
4:20 PM Bio-Question Driven Bioimage Informatics Workflow Design Using Bio-TDS. Gnimpieba, Etienne
4:40 PM Teaching Bioinformatics By Social Networking: The Pokémon Factor. Lightfoot, David A.
5:00 PM Teaching Introductory Genetics to Agricultural Science Students. Meksem, Khalid
5:20 PM Educational Materials about Cotton: Genetics, Evolution, and Contig Assembly. Ramaraj, Thiruvarangan

b. Workshop: Genomics of Plant Development

Organizer: Dr. Khalid Meksem, Southern Illinois University, USA
Date: Sunday, January 15, 2017
Time: 4:00-6:10 PM
Room: Pacific Salon 6-7 (2nd Floor)
Time: 4:00 PM-6:10 PM

4:00 PM Identification of Late BLOOMER2 As a Cycling Dof Factor Homolog Reveals Conserved and Divergent Features of the Flowering Response to Photoperiod in Pea. Weller, James.
4:25 PMmicroRNA and Gene Regulatory Networks Governing Soybean Nodule Development. Subramanian, Dr. Senthil.
4:50 PM A New Maize Tassel-Seed Mutant is under the Control of a Two-Locus System. Salvi, Silvio.
5:15 PM Developmental and Gene Expression Programs in Wheat Grain. Datla, Raju.
5:40 PM Chromatin Architecture: A New Dimension in the Dynamic Control of Gene Expression. Benhamed, Moussa.
6:05 PM MicroRNA Roles in Cotton Fiber Initiation and Early Development. Zhang, Baohong

c. Workshop: Sex Chromosomes and Sex Determination

Organizer: Abdelhafid Bendahmane, INRA, France
Date: Sunday, January 15, 2017
Time: 4:00-6:10 PM
Room: Royal Palm Salon 5-6

4:00 PM Rapid Evolution of a Y-Chromosome Heterochromatin Protein Underlies Sex Chromosome Meiotic Drive. Montchamp-Moreau, Catherine.
4:20 PM The Bovine PRAMEY - an Example of Autosome-to-Y-Chromosome Transposition to Enhance Male Reproduction. Liu, Wansheng.
4:40 PM Evolution of Sex Chromosomes in Silene. Filatov, Dmitry.
5:00 PM Genomic Analysis of the Sex Determining Region of the Sex Chromosomes in Spinach. Wadlington, William.
5:20 PM Homologous Sex Determination across Octoploid Strawberry Species via a Conserved Gene with a Shifting Genomic Location. Tennessen, Jacob.
5:40 PM Sex Determination in Date Palm. Aberlenc-Bertossi, Frederique.

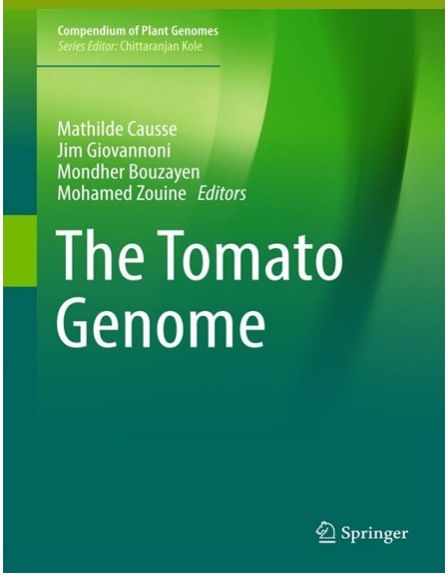
d. Workshop: Mutation Screening

Organizer: Abdelhafid Bendahmane, INRA, France
Date: Saturday, January 14, 2017
Time: 10:30 AM-12:40 PM
Room: Golden West

10:30 AM Identification of Functional Variants in Soybean Using Fast Neutron and CRISPR-Based Mutagenesis. Stupar, Robert.
10:50 AM High-Throughput CRISPR Vector Construction and Mutant Characterization in Plants. Jacobs, Thomas.
11:10 AM CRISPR/Cas9-Mediated Mutagenesis of Floral Termination Genes: A Way to Control Fruit Size. Bollier, Norbert.
11:30 AM Mutational Analysis and in silico Modeling Identify a Novel Molecular Cross-Talk Between SNAP and SHMT in Soybean. Lakhssassi, Naoufal.
11:50 AM Novel Genetic Variation Generated By CRISPR-Cas System for Improving Drought Tolerance in Maize. Shi, Jinrui

Dr. Mohamed Zouine Edits a Book on Tomato Genome

Congratulations to Dr. Mohamed Zouine for his book entitled “The Tomato Genome” that he edited along with Drs. Mathilde Causse, Jim Giovannino, and Monther Bouzayen. The book was published on December 1, 2016 by the giant publisher Springer.



Mohamed Zouine

e. Workshop: Ornamentals

Organizer: Mohammed Bendahmane, Ecole Normale Superieure, Lyon, France
Date: Sunday, January 15, 2017
Time: 1:30-4:00 PM
Room: Esquire - Meeting House

1:30 PM Analysis of the Genome Architectures for Petunia hybrida and its Wild Relatives. Bombarely, Aureliano.
1:55 PM Rose Genome Sequencing Initiative: Challenges and Benefits. Just, Jeremy.
2:20 PM Building Bridges: Integrating in situ HiC and Molecular Cytogenetics to Reconstruct Rosa wichurana Pseudochromosomes. Ruttink, Tom.
2:45 PM High-Density SNP Maps in Rose to Understand the Meiotic Behavior and Determine the Synteny with Fragaria. Smulders, Marinus.
3:10 PM The Development of a Dense SNP-Based Consensus Map and QTL Detection for Black Spot Resistance in Five Diploid Rose Populations. Byrne, David.
3:35 PM Mapping of Botrytis Resistance in Gerbera and Validation of Candidate Genes. Arens, Paul.

II. ORAL PRESENTATIONS:

The following scientists gave oral presentations:

- Teaching Introductory Genetics to Agricultural Science Students. Meksem, Khalid
- Chromatin Architecture: A New Dimension in the Dynamic Control of Gene Expression. Benhamed, Moussa.
- Mutational Analysis and in silico Modeling Identify a Novel Molecular Cross-Talk Between SNAP and SHMT in Soybean. Lakhssassi, Naoufal.
- Sex Determination Pathway in Cucurbits. Bendahmane, Abdelhafid.
- Tomexpress, a Unified Tomato RNA-Seq Platform for Visualization of Expression Data, Clustering and Correlation Networks. Zouine, Mohammed.

III. POSTER PRESENTATIONS:

- QTL Associated with Seed Amino Acids Content in “MD96-5722” by “Spencer” RIL Population of Soybean Using SNP Marker. Abdelmajid Kassem (P062).
- QTL for Seed Sugars Content in “MD96-5722” by “Spencer” Recombinant Inbred Line Population of Soybean. Abdelmajid Kassem (P0663).

Council's Members Published Articles (2016–Present)

Ambrocio Z, S Kantartzi, K Meksem, and **MA Kassem**. Influence of Drought Stress on Several Root Traits and their Correlation with Seed Protein and Oil Contents in Soybean. Atlas Journal of Biology 2016, pp. 267–273. doi: 10.5147/ajb.2016.0140.

Bellaloui N, Y Hu, A Mengistu, HK Abbas, **MA Kassem**, and M Tigabu. Elevated Atmospheric Carbon Dioxide and Temperature Affect Seed Composition, Mineral Nutrition, and 15N and 13C Dynamics in Soybean Genotypes under Controlled Environments. Atlas Journal of Plant Biology 2016, pp. 56–65. doi:10.5147/ajpb.2016.0157.

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Boualem A, Lemhemdi A, Sari MA, Pignoly S, Troadec C, Abou Choucha F, Solmaz I, Sari N, Dogimont C, **Bendahmane A**. The Andromonoecious Sex Determination Gene Predates the Separation of Cucumis and Citrullus Genera. PLoS One. 2016 May 12;11(5):e0155444. doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0155444.

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Gill GS, Haugen R, Matzner SL, **Barakat A**, Siemens DH. Effect of Drought on Herbivore-Induced Plant Gene Expression: Population Comparison for Range Limit Inferences. Plants (Basel). 2016 Mar 11;5(1). pii: E13. doi: 10.3390/plants5010013.

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Council's Members Published Articles (2016–Present)

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Latrasse D, **Benhamed M**, Bergounioux C, Raynaud C, Delarue M. Plant programmed cell death from a chromatin point of view. J Exp Bot. 2016 Oct;67(20):5887-5900.

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The Council Welcomes Its New Members (1)

Education and Career:

2012 « Accreditation to supervise research » (Habilitation à dirriger les recherches : HDR) delivered at Institute Nationale Polytechnique Toulouse

Since 2005 Associate Professor (Maître de conférences)

2001-2005 Post-doc in comparative genomics and transcriptomics of pathogenic bacteria, Pasteur Institute, Paris.

1999-2001 Assistant professor (ATER) in bioinformatics, University Paris XI, France

1999 PhD in Molecular Genetics, University Paris XI, France

1994 Master (DEA) in Genetics and Microbiology, University Paris XI, France

1992 BS in Plant Biology, Mohamed V University, Rabat, Morocco

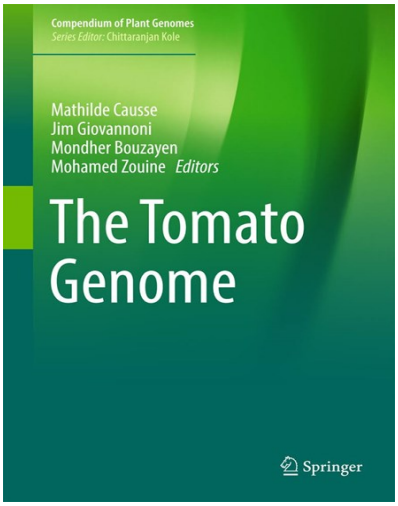
Dr. Mohamed Zouine
Associate Professor
INRA/INP-ENSAT

Recent Publications:

Breitel DA, Chappell-Maor L, Meir S, Panizel I, Puig CP, Hao Y, Yifhar T, Yasuor H, **Zouine M**, Bouzayen M, Granell Richart A, Rogachev I, Aharoni A. AUXIN RESPONSE FACTOR 2 Intersects Hormonal Signals in the Regulation of Tomato Fruit Ripening. PLoS Genet. 2016 Mar 9;12 (3):e1005903. doi: 10.1371/journal.pgen.1005903.

Corso M, Vannozzi A, Ziliotto F, **Zouine M**, Maza E, Nicolato T, Vitulo N, Meggio F, Valle G, Bouzayen M, Müller M, Munné-Bosch S, Lucchin M, Bonghi C. Grapevine Rootstocks Differentially Affect the Rate of Ripening and Modulate Auxin-Related Genes in Cabernet Sauvignon Berries. Front Plant Sci. 2016 Feb 9;7:69. doi: 10.3389/fpls.2016.00069.

Liu M, Lima Gomes B, Mila I, Purgatto E, Peres LE, Frasse P, Maza E, **Zouine M**, Roustan JP, Bouzayen M and Pirrello J. (2016) Comprehensive profiling of Ethylene Response Factors expression identifies ripening-associated ERF genes and their link to key regulators of fruit ripening in tomato (Solanum lycopersicum). Plant Physiol. 2016 Jan 6. pii: pp.01859.2015. [Epub ahead of print] PubMed PMID: 26739234



We Welcome & Thank All Our New & Existing Members!

The Council Welcomes Its New Members (2)

Moussa Benhamed
Assistant Professor
Institute of Plant Sciences Paris-Saclay

Dr. Moussa Benhamed
Assistant Professor
Institute of Plant Sciences Paris-Saclay

Research Interests:

Dr. Benhamed's research interests are in the area of plant development processes, plant adaptation to biotic and abiotic stresses, non coding RNAs, understanding the role of chromatin remodeling and epigenetic regulation of plant stress responses.

Recent Publications:

- Veluchamy A, Jégu T, Ariel F, Latrasse D, Mariappan KG, Kim SK, Crespi M, Hirt H, Bergounioux C, Raynaud C, Benhamed M. (2016). LHP1 Regulates H3K27me3 Spreading and Shapes the Three-Dimensional Conformation of the Arabidopsis Genome. PLoS One. 11(7):e0158936. doi : 10.1371/journal.pone.0158936.
- Pedroza-Garcia J.A., Domenichini S., Bergounioux C., Benhamed M., Raynaud C. (2016). Chloroplasts around the plant cell cycle. Curr Opin Plant Biol. 34:107-113. doi : 10.1016/j.pbi.2016.10.009.
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- Ramirez-Prado J.S., Rodriguez-Granados N.Y., Ariel F., Raynaud C., Benhamed M. (2016). Chromatin architecture : A new dimension in the dynamic control of gene expression. Plant Signal Behav. 11(10):e1232224.
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The Council Welcomes Its New Members (3)

Dr. Hajar El Hilali, Pharmacist

Meknes, Morocco

Dr. Hajar El Hilali
Pharmacist
Meknes, Morocco

Dr. Hajar El Hilali was born in Meknes in 1983, a wonderful city in Morocco. Dr. Hajar earned Associate degree in General Biology at Moulay Ismail University, Meknes, Morocco in 2003. Dr. Hajar is a researcher, her doctoral research project was about Noninvasive markers for liver fibrosis with extensive studies in pharmacology, pharmacognosy, medicinal chemistry, galenic, biochemistry, analytical chemistry, nutrition, semiology, clinical biochemistry, hematology, parasitology, microbiology. After graduation, she joined Faculty of medicine and Pharmacy, Mohamed V University, Rabat.

After that, She was hired Head of the Hospital Pharmacy Department at Region Fes-Meknes.

In 2013, Dr. Hajar enrolled in the PhD program in Cancer at Moulay Ismail University, Meknes.

She is member of the Moroccan association of Doctor pharmacists of the public sector.

AMAS Conference IV Announcement

The High Council of Moroccan American Scholars and Academics (HC-MASA; www.hc-masa.org) and Atlas Publishing, LP (www.atlas-publishing.org) in Collaboration with Agropolis-Meknes are organizing the Fourth International American Moroccan Agricultural Sciences Conference (AMAS Conference IV) on December 18-20, 2017 at the Agropolis, Meknes, Morocco.

Call For Abstracts: Oral & Poster Presentations

Conference Organizers

Khalid Meksem, Professor, Southern Illinois University, USA
My Abdelmajid Kassem, Professor and Chair, Fayetteville State University, USA

In Collaboration With

National School of Agriculture, INRA, Meknes, Morocco
Hassan II Institute of Agronomy & Veterinary Sciences (IAV), Rabat, Morocco

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El Hassan Achbani, National School of Agriculture, Meknes, Morocco

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