

Happy 5th Anniversary HC-MASA!

The council board members would like to thank all those who dedicated their time, money, and other resources to make the Council a real success. The membership grew over the past 5 years and is still growing. The Newsletter was published on a semi-annual basis (January and July) without interruption and two major international meetings have been organized:

1. The First International HC-MASA Meeting, January 15, 2008, Town & Country Resort and Convention Center, San Diego, CA, USA
2. A Family Gathering Meeting in Orlando, FL
3. The First International Moroccan American Agricultural Sciences Conference, March 18-19, 2013, Rabat, Morocco. <http://www.amas-conference.org>.
4. Participated in the First AMCN Meeting in New York City, June 23, 2012, NY, USA. <http://www.amcnusa.org>.
5. Participated in the 2nd AMCN Meeting in Rabat, June 15, 2013, Rabat, Morocco. For more information, please visit: <http://www.hc-masa.org/index.php>.

And several other activities that you will find in our Newsletters here: <http://www.hc-masa.org/newsletters.php?mainpage=news>.

The High-Council of Moroccan American Scholars and Academics (HC-MASA) is a non-profit scientific organization registered and incorporated in North Carolina on June 6, 2008.

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The First International American Moroccan

Agricultural Sciences Conference

(AMAS Conference I)

March 18-19, 2013

Rabat, Morocco

Atlas Publishing, LP organized “The First International American Moroccan Agricultural Sciences Conference - AMAS Conference I” in the capital of the Kingdom of Morocco, Rabat on March 18-19, 2013.

Atlas Publishing, LP was the main sponsor of AMAS Conference I; however, the conference was also co-sponsored by the High Council of Moroccan American Scholars and Academic (HC-MASA), The Moroccan National Institute of Agriculture (INRA), and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The Conference took place at the Hassan Tower Hotel in Rabat which is a "Prestigious Moorish-Andalusian style 5* Hotel in Rabat city center. This prestigious hotel is close to Hassan Tower, Mosque and Mausoleum of Mohammed V. 15 minutes from the Dar Es Salem Royal Golf course, and the international airport” (1).

Approximately 100 scientists, faculty members, and students from most Moroccan universities, Europe, and the US attended the conference and attested to its high quality and professionalism. Colleagues from the US visited the INRA and the ‘Centre de Recherche Scientifique et Technique (CNRST)’ in Rabat on Wednesday March 20th and tied collaborations with Moroccan scientists. This was a great achievement because the goal of the conference is to facilitate and tie such collaborations. Research teams are formed between Moroccan and US institutions and as a result, several students and scientists are coming from Morocco to be trained and/or finish their studies in the US.

All US and Moroccan colleagues and students agree to make the conference an annual event where research projects can be presented, new ideas exchanged, and collaborations can be tied; however, the funds are very limited and the organizing and scientific committee is still debating the idea and will take a decision shortly as to when and where the next AMAS Conference II will take place.

(1) The Hassan Tower Hotel website.

By Abdelmajid Kassem

Poster session winners

First Place: Chentoufi Safae

Poster title: *Implication of the Endogenous Nitrogen to Water Stress Tolerance of Luverne: Methodology of Use of the Stable Isotopic Tracer ^{15}N .*

Comments from the judges:

- “Good presentation.”
- “Knew her research very well. Good job!”
- “Excellent presentation and very interesting study!”

Second Place: Lagram Khalid

Poster title: *Initiation to Micropropagation of Selected Saffron Cultivars (*Corcus sativus*) of Taliouine*

Comments from the judges:

- “Clear statement of study objective and procedures.”
- “Did a good job in referencing the poster during the presentation.”

Third Place: Baz Mohamed

Poster title: *Evaluation of Actinobacteria Isolates for their Potential Bioprotect soft Rot of Potato Caused by *Petrobacterium carotovorum* and *Pacterobacterium atrosepticum*.*

Comments from the judges:

- “A complex and multifaceted project., Explanation was clear and concise despite the challenging nature of the project.”
- “By far the most advanced research I have seen during the two poster sessions.”

Congratulations and good job to all the poster presenters!

Many Thanks to Our poster judges

Karen Midden, USA.
Alan Walters, USA.
Silvia R. Cianzio, USA.
Badiaa Lyoussi, Morocco.
John Groninger, USA.
Abdelhai Guerouali, Morocco.
Nadine Ali, France.
Saadia Bihmidine, USA.

Judges' comments about the posters

- *Very interesting pharmaceutical research, she spoke clearly and obviously had great interest in her research and outcomes.*
- *She did a great job of promoting her project.*
- *Poster organized very well.*
- *Started presentation by stating objective clearly. Good job!*
- *Very enthusiastic.*
- *Nice placement of images and colors used.*
- *Good use of subtitles and images.*
- *Good overall concept and explanation of why the research project is important*
- *Excellent!! poster presented very good.*
- *Easy to read, good presentation. Very good!*
- *Really excited about her project and really good promoter of her project*
- *Nice, clean and clear poster*
- *Good discussion of the data.*
- *Very good Summary.*
- *Very good presentation.*
- *Good research and nice poster.*
- *Very nice informative poster. English was great in presentation.*
- *Good objective relating to Morocco green plan.*
- *Very knowledgeable about topic. You presented professionally.*
- *you know your information well. Great job!*
- *Poster has good information.*

Suggestions

- *When relevant, show statistical data and procedures.*
- *Show more confidence .*
- *Increase title size.*
- *Use larger font.*
- *Be very concise: do not overload the poster with lot of information.*
- *Be ready to give main points when presentation.*
- *State problem and objectives.*
- *When presenting, keep the explanation simple.*
- *Need to improve presenting in English.*
- *Practice presenting the poster and show enthusiasm.*
- *Need to have adequate materials & methods.*
- *Poster should be very well organized.*
- *Use pictures when possible.*
- *Graphs should be designed specifically to support presentation.*
- *Don't include lot of graphs and figures.*
- *Focus on justification and scientific merits.*
- *Data could be presented as a simple graph rather than as a table.*
- *Add borders around sections to dress it up.*

Reflections from the attendees about AMAS-I meeting

Some of the attendees (**Fig 1.**) kindly participated in a survey to let us know about their opinion about AMAS-I. Their input and suggestions are greatly appreciated.

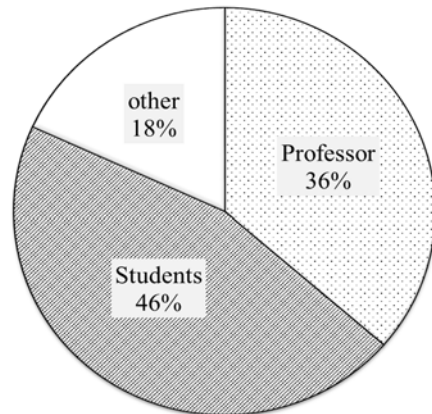


Fig 1. Percent of attendees that participated in the survey post-meeting

All of the survey participants rated highly the different sessions held at the meeting. The majority rated all the sessions from good to excellent. (**Fig 2.**). These data shows their satisfaction of the session diversity and topics selected.

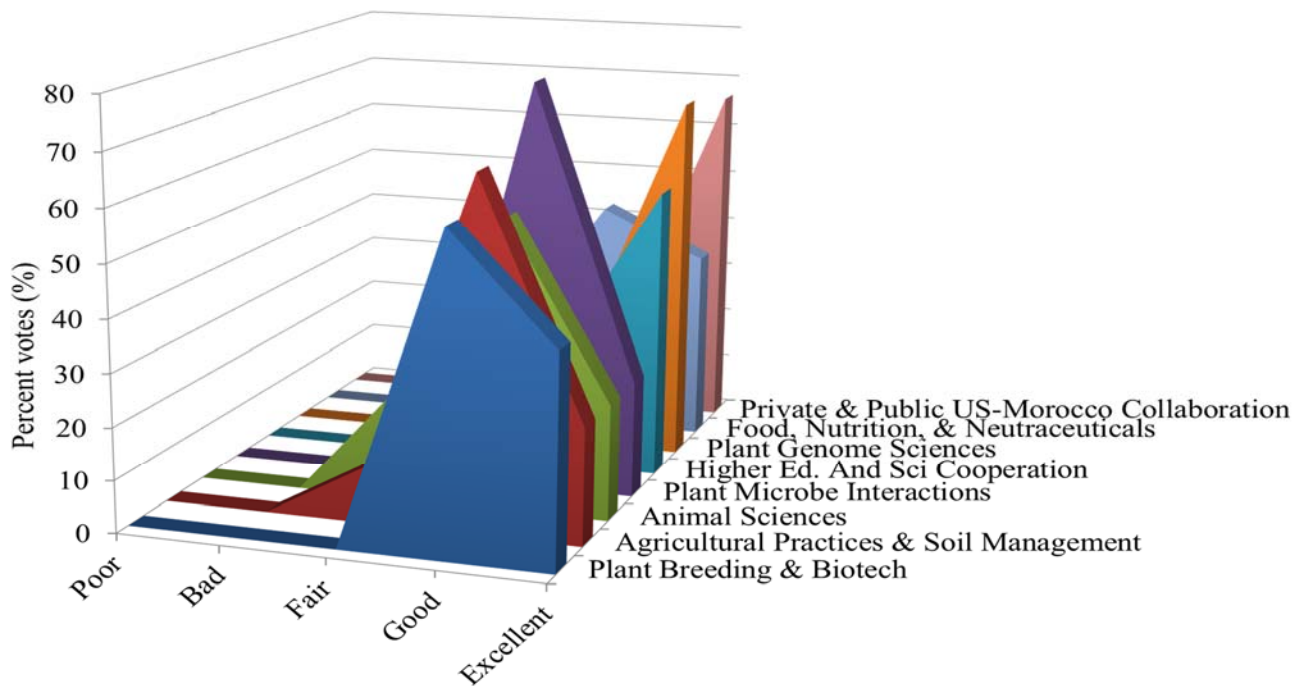


Fig 2. Rating of the different sessions held at the meeting

Reflections from attendees about AMAS-I meeting

The majority of the participants were very satisfied with the different aspects of the conference (location, sessions, registrations, meals, etc) (**Fig. 3**).

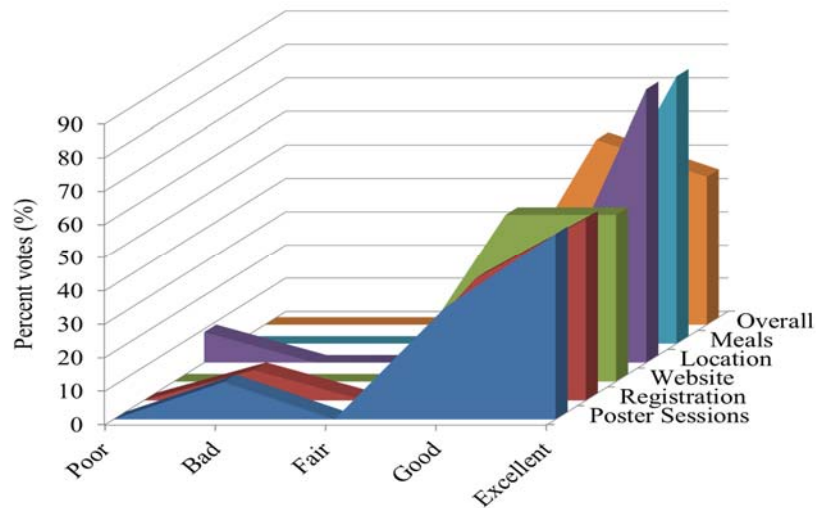


Fig 3. Rating of the poster sessions, registration, meeting website, location, meals, and the overall quality of AMAS-I conference

Here are few of their comments about the meetings:

- ◆ *Excellent session choices & speakers.*
- ◆ *High quality work presented.*
- ◆ *excellent meeting.*
- ◆ *Fabulous hotel & food.*
- ◆ *Great combination of interests & inclusion of outside agencies & individuals.*
- ◆ *It was nice that the meeting was condensed.*
- ◆ *Great 1st conference,.*
- ◆ *Food, coffee, etc. were extremely good. The meeting ambient was very friendly.*
- ◆ *Very interesting and truly enjoyable and educational meeting. I know that is a tremendous task (climbing up the event in winter) but try to repeat it in the future: congratulations!*
- ◆ *See you in 2014, 2015, ...*
- ◆ *Thank you. You did well.*
- ◆ *All participants were very glad to share results & discussions with American people.*
- ◆ *Session I was very interesting .*
- ◆ *Session VI answered so many questions I had.*
- ◆ *Session VII was very informative.*
- ◆ *Thank you for this great opportunity you offered us.*

Announcements

~ COMING SOON ~

The Second International American Moroccan

Agricultural Sciences Conference

(AMAS-II)

Prospective date: September 2014

Location, exact dates, plenary speakers and information about the registration and abstract submission will be determined and announced in the first half of 2014.

The number of the council goes up!

The number of the members of the council increased and we now reached **100** members.

Thank you all for your continuous support.

Welcome New Members!

Members News

HC-MASA member, Aziz Hirich, represented Morocco at several meetings:

International Conference on Agricultural Engineering, New Technologies for Sustainable Agricultural Production and Food Security, 24-26 February 2013, Muscat, Oman

*Hirich A., H. El Omari, Jacobsen S.-E., Lamaddalena N., Hamdy A., Jelloul A. et Choukr-Allah R. (2013). Quinoa (*Chenopodium quinoa* Willd.) responses to irrigation water salinity.*



International conference on Sustainable Water Use for Securing Food Production in the Mediterranean Region under Changing Climate, 10–15 March, 2013, Agadir, Morocco

Hirich A., El Omari H., El Youssfi L., Jacobsen S.-E. et Choukr-Allah R. (2013). The combined effect of organic matter amendment and deficit irrigation with treated wastewater on quinoa and pea.
Hirich A., El Omari H., El Youssfi L., Lamaddalena N., Hamdy A., Jacobsen S.-E., Jelloul A. et Choukr-Allah R. (2013). Quinoa and Chickpea responses to irrigation water salinity.
Hirich A., El Omari H., El Youssfi L., Fahmi H., Rami A., Laajaj K., Jacobsen S.-E. et Choukr-Allah R. (2013). Using deficit irrigation with treated wastewater to improve crop water productivity.



The 13th World Wide Workshop for Young Environmental Scientists (WW-YES-2013), 3 to 7 June 2013, Paris, France

Hirich, A., & Choukr-Allah, R. 2013. Wastewater reuse in the Mediterranean region: Case of Morocco. In D. Thevenot (Ed.), 13th World Wide Workshop for Young Environmental Scientists WW-YES-2013 Urban waters: resource or risks?: 175-185. Paris, France: University Paris-Est.

Members Recent Publications

- Adrien Moreau, Andrew D. Krahn, Pascal Gosselin-Badaroudine, George J. Klein, Georges Christé, Yohann Vincent, **Mohamed Boutjdir**, and Mohamed Chahine. Sodium overload due to a persistent current that attenuates the arrhythmogenic potential of a novel LQT3 mutation.
- Akond M, B Ragin, R Bazzelle, SK Kantartzi, **K Meksem**, and **MA Kassem**. Quantitative Trait Loci Associated with Moisture, Protein, and Oil Content in Soybean [Glycine max (L.) Merr.]. *Journal of Agricultural Science* 4 (11): 16-25, October 2012.
- Akond M, B Ragin, R Bazzelle, W Clark, SK Kantartzi, **K Meksem**, and **MA Kassem**. Effect of Two Row Spaces on Several Agronomic Traits in Soybean [Glycine max (L.) Merr.]. *Atlas Journal of Plant Biology* 1 (2): 18–23, 2013.
- Akond M, R Bazzelle, B Ragin, H Herrera, U Kaodi, C Akbay, SK Kantartzi, V Njiti, A Barakat, **K Meksem**, DA Lightfoot, and **MA Kassem**. Additional Quantitative Trait Loci and Candidate Genes for Seed Isoflavone Content in Soybean. *J. Agricultural Science* 5 (11): 20-33, October 2013.
- Bellaloui N, A Mengistu, and **MA Kassem**. Effects of Genetics and Environment on Fatty Acid Stability in Soybean Seed. *Food and Nutrition Sciences* 4 (9A1): 165–175, 2013.
- Bellaloui N, Y Hu, A Mengistu, **MA Kassem**, and CA Abel. Effects of foliar boron application on seed composition, cell wall boron, and seed $\delta^{15}\text{N}$ and $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ isotopes in soybean are influenced by water stress. *Frontiers in Plant Science, Plant Nutrition*, Article 270: 1-12, 2013.
- Eddy Karnabi, Yongxia Qu, Yunkun Yue, **Mohamed Boutjdir**. Calreticulin negatively regulates the surface expression of Cav1.3 L-type calcium channel, *Biochemical and Biophysical Research Communications. Front Pharmacol.* 2013; 4: 126.
- **Kassem MA**, L Ramos, L Leandro, G Mbofung, DL Hyten, SK Kantartzi, RL Grier, VN Njiti, S Cianzio, and **K Meksem**. The ‘PI 438489B’ by ‘Hamilton’ SNP-Based genetic linkage map of soybean [Glycine max (L.) Merr.] identified quantitative trait loci that underlie seedling SDS resistance. *Journal of Plant Genome Sciences* 1 (1) 18–30, 2012.
- Ragin B, R Bazzelle, W Clark, S Kantartzi, **K Meksem**, and **MA Kassem**. QTL for Yield and Yield Components Mapped in the PI 438489B By ‘Hamilton’ Recombinant Inbred Line (RIL) Population of Soybean [Glycine max (L.) Merr.]. *Journal of Agricultural Science* 4 (9): 98-105, September 2012.
- **Saadia Bihmidine**, Charles T. Hunter, III, Christine E. Johns, Karen E. Koch, and David M. Braun. Regulation of assimilate import into sink organs: update on molecular drivers of sink strength. *Front Plant Sci.* 2013; 4: 177.
- **Saadia Bihmidine**, Jiusheng Lin, Julie M. Stone, Tala Awada, James E. Specht and Tom E. Clemente. Activity of the Arabidopsis RD29A and RD29B promoter elements in soybean under water stress. *Planta*, 2013, Volume 237, Issue 1, pp 55-64
- Salvador V, M Pagan, M Cooper, SK Kantartzi, **K Meksem**, and **MA Kassem**. Genetic Analysis of Relative Water Content (RWC) in Two Recombinant Inbred Line Populations of Soybean [Glycine max (L.) Merr.]. *Journal of Plant Genome Sciences* 1 (2): 46-53, 2012.
- Williams B, SK Kantartzi, **K Meksem**, and **MA Kassem**. Genetic Analysis of Root and Shoot Traits in the Soybean [Glycine max (L.) Merr.] ‘Essex’ By ‘Forrest’ Recombinant Inbred Line Population. *Journal of Plant Genome Sciences* 1 (1): 1–9, 2012.



The American Moroccan Competencies Network (AMCN)

The American Moroccan Competencies Network (AMCN) is a non-profit organization registered in the state of New York. It was officially launched on June 23, 2012. AMCN is structured as a virtual network that provides a platform to bring together the Moroccan Diaspora from all different regions of the U.S. AMCN includes associations and/or individuals with occupations spanning a wide variety of complementary expertise and knowledge to the development of the home land, Morocco.

Moroccan competencies in the US as encouraged to register at:

<http://www.amcnusa.org/membership/register/>

The AMCN executive committee members are:

- **President:** Dr. Mohamed Boutjdir;
Director at VAMC
- **Secretary General:** Nadia Serhani-Eltobgi –PHR;
International HR at Abt Associates
- **Treasurer:** Houda Rabah - PMP;
Finance Manager at Guardian Life Insurance
- **Vice President:** Dr. Amine Chigani;
Research Scientist at GE Global Research

More about AMCN activities can be found in their newsletter at: www.amcnusa.org

Their first newsletter was published in January 2013, in which there was an article about Dr. Aziz Abbassi, a Moroccan sociolinguist residing in the US, and another about Leila Hanafi, JD, LLM, a Moroccan-American international Lawyer from Washington DC.

For more information, check out the newsletter:

http://www.amcnusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/newletter_1_1.pdf

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**Contact**

HC-MASA

971 Pepperwood Drive

Fayetteville, NC 28311

USA

(910) 584 1515

saadia.bihmidine8@gmail.com

*The Council's Committee Members Welcomes Your
Feedback and Questions*

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