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The Council Elects Members of Its New Board of Directors

The Council elected the new Board of Directors who will lead its operations for the next two years (2013-2015). The new team is composed of highly qualified professionals who are committed to take the Council to the next level.

The newly elected team is:

- **President:** Khalid Meksem, Ph.D.
Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL, USA.
- **Vice-President:** Abdeslem El Idrissi, Ph.D.
The City University of New York, Staten Island, NY, USA.
- **Treasurer:** My Abdelmajid Kassem, Ph.D.
Fayetteville State University, Fayetteville, NC, USA.
- **Secretary:** Saadia Bihmidine, Ph.D.
University of Missouri, MO, USA.

The other members are:

- **Member at Large:** Mohammed Soutto, Ph.D.
Vanderbilt University Medical Center, Nashville, TN, USA.
- **Member at Large:** Mohamed Boutjdir, Ph.D.
SUNY Downstate, New York, NY, USA.

The Council still has to elect two VPs; one for Europe and one for MENA Region.

By A. Kassem

Biographies of the New Board of Directors

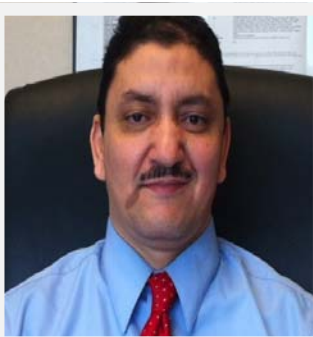


Dr. Khalid Meksem received a BS degree in Biology from University Hassan II, Morocco in 1989, an MS degree in Plant Molecular and Cell Biology at the University of Paris XI, France, and a PhD in Genetics, Biochemistry, and Botany in 1995 at the University of Colon and Max Planck Institute, Germany. In 1996, Dr. Meksem joined the Department of Plant, Soil, and Agricultural Systems, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL, USA as a Postdoctoral Fellow where he worked from 1996 to 2000. Dr. Meksem served as an Assistant Professor from 2000 to 2004 then as Associate Professor from 2004 to 2009, and was promoted to full Professor in 2009. Dr. Meksem's research interests cover both structural and functional genomics, and his long time area of interest is the molecular dissection of plant disease resistance mechanisms to nematodes and fungi. Dr. Meksem is serving as Editor-in-Chief of Plant Genome and Systems Biology, as an Associate Editor of the International Journal of Plant genomics, and as a reviewer for a number of international scientific journals as well as for several granting agencies.



Dr. Abdeslem El Idrissi received a BS degree in Physiology and Neuroscience from University Mohammed V in Rabat in 1988, an MS degree in Neuroendocrinology from Brooklyn College in 1993, and a PhD degree in Physiology and Neuroscience from CUNY graduate school in year 1999. Dr. El Idrissi joined the Department of Human Genetics at New York State Institute for Basic Research in Developmental Disabilities as a post-doctoral fellow where he worked 1999 until 2003. Dr El Idrissi joined the College of Staten Island of the City University of New York in 2003 as an Assistant Professor in the Biology Department. In 2005 he was promoted to Associate Professor and to full Professor in 2010. During his tenure, Dr El Idrissi also served as a Co-Coordinator of the Neuroscience Program at the College of Staten Island, from 2008 to 2010 and a Deputy Director of the Macaulay Honors College from 2007-2010. Currently, Dr El Idrissi is a professor and chair at the Neuroscience Subprogram at CUNY Graduate School since 2010. Dr El Idrissi's research interests are focused on the developmental maturation of the inhibitory neurotransmitter system in the brain and how alterations to this system leads to neurodevelopmental disabilities with specific emphasis on Autism and Fragile X syndrome. In addition Dr El Idrissi is a member of the New York Academy of Science, The Society for Neuroscience and a Member of the editorial board of "Intelligence and Behavior". He has also served as reviewer for a number of international scientific journals as well as for several granting agencies.

Biographies of the New Board of Directors



Dr. Abdelmajid Kassem received a BS degree in Plant Biology from Mohamed V University, Morocco in 1992, an MS degree in Enzymatic Engineering, Bioconversion, and Microbiology from the University of Picardie Jules Verne, Amiens, France in 1995. In 1999, Dr. Kassem joined the Center for Excellence in Soybean Research, Teaching, and Outreach, Department of Plant, Soil, and Agricultural Systems, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL, USA where he earned his Ph.D. in Plant Genetics, Genomics, and Physiology in December 2003. Dr. Kassem joined Kean University, NJ in 2004 and Fayetteville State University, NC in 2006. He was promoted in 2006 and 2009. Dr. Kassem's research is focused on genetic and quantitative trait loci (QTL) mapping of important agronomic traits in soybean and other plant species such as disease resistance, yield, and phyto-pharmaceuticals. Dr. Kassem co-authored several peer-reviewed articles in well respected international journals and received several grants. Dr. Kassem serves as an Editorial Board and a Review Board member of Scientific Journals International (SJI), an Associate Editor of 'Journal of Forestry, Horticulture, and Soil Science', a member of the Editorial Board of 'Journal of Biotech Research', and a reviewer for several international journals. Dr. Kassem is a Co-Founder and Managing Editor of Atlas Scientific Publishing, LP and serves also as Editor-In-Chief of Atlas Journal of Biology.



Dr. Mohammed Soutto is an instructor scientist at Vanderbilt University Medical Center, he had hold post-doc position since 2001 until 2008 in several field (Immunology, Proteomic Neuro immunology and Cancer Immunology. His actual field of research is Cancer Immunology in Gastric.. He obtained his PhD in 2000 in Spain. Dr. Soutto is a member of several scientific organizations such as the American Gastroenterological Association (AGA), HC-MASA and others, he has been an active member of HC-MASA and has served as the treasurer two times in a row. He is a former board member of MASLS (Moroccan American Society for Life Science). Note that both HC-MASA and MASLS are major Moroccan scientific association in the US.

Biographies of the New Board of Directors



Dr. Saadia Bihmidine was born in Tafraout, Morocco, where she attended primary, middle, and high school. She attended the University of Cadi Ayad for her undergraduate program. In 2004, she received a full scholarship from the International Center for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies (I.C.A.M.A.S), France, which allowed her to attend the Mediterranean Agronomic Institute in Chania (MAICH), Greece, and earned an MS degree in 2005. In 2006, she worked as a post-graduate research assistant in MAICH and then received a full graduate assistantship to pursue a PhD at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL). She obtained her PhD in Natural Resource Sciences in 2012 and is currently working as a postdoctoral research fellow at the Division of Biological Sciences at the University of Missouri in Columbia. Saadia enjoys research, teaching, and serving the academic community. While doing her PhD, she participated in diverse outreach and education programs. Saadia is currently a board member of the University of Missouri Post-doctoral Association (MUPA), where she serves as the chair of the travel awards committee. Saadia has been an active member of HC-MASA since 2010 and she served as the secretary during the 2011-2012 term.



Dr. Mohamed Boutjdir is a Professor at the Department of Medicine at NYU School of Medicine and Associate Chief of staff for R&D at the VA New York Harbor healthcare system. He is also a Professor at the Departments of Medicine, Anatomy & Cell Biology and Pharmacology & Physiology at SUNY Downstate Medical Center. Dr. Boutjdir serves in several advisory boards for cardiovascular study sections for many granting institutions such as NIH and American Heart Association. Dr. Boutjdir is funded by NIH and VA grants, and he serves as a reviewer for many National and European journals. Dr. Boutjdir is also an active member of journal editorial boards and has been invited to lecture nationally and internationally. Dr. Boutjdir serves as a member of Joint Deans' Advisory Council for both NYU School of Medicine and SUNY Downstate Medical Center. He is also a member of the Clinical Executive Board at VA NY Harbor Health Care System, NY and a member of Board of Directors for the non-profit Narrows Institute for Biomedical Research, NY. Dr. Boutjdir has also interest and plays a significant role in training and mentoring. He regularly provides research training to medical students, residents, cardiology fellows, graduate students, Post-Doctoral and technicians. The majority of his trainees went on to become independent clinicians/scientists at prestigious institutions such as Harvard and Yale. Administratively, Dr. Boutjdir is known for his proactive leadership in establishing successful research programs with budgets over \$15 million.

Council Members Publish in Prestigious International Journals

In Nature:



Dr. Khalid Meksem, professor at the Department of Plant, Soil Sciences, and Agricultural Systems at Southern Illinois University Carbondale, and our council's president, published a paper in "Nature", a prestigious international journal, where they report their successful identification of a soybean cyst nematode (SCN) resistant gene. These results, will help generate soybean varieties resistant to SCN.

This work was in collaboration with Dr. Melissa Mitchum, Associate professor of plant sciences at the university of Missouri in Columbia.

Here is a link to the paper:

<http://www.nature.com/nature/journal/v492/n7428/full/nature11651.html>

A soybean cyst nematode resistance gene points to a new mechanism of plant resistance to pathogens

Shiming Liu, Pramod K. Kandoth, Samantha D. Warren, Greg Yeckel, Robert Heinz, John Alden, Chunling Yang, Aziz Jamaï, Tarik El-Mellouki, Parijat S. Juvale, John Hill, Thomas J. Baum, Silvia Cianzio, Steven A. Whitham, Dmitry Korkin, Melissa G. Mitchum & Khalid Meksem

[Affiliations](#) | [Contributions](#) | [Corresponding authors](#)

Nature **492**, 256–260 (13 December 2012) | doi:10.1038/nature11651

Received 04 June 2012 | Accepted 27 September 2012 | Published online 15 October 2012

Council Members Publish in Prestigious International Journals

In Science:

A science paper was published by one of our members: **Youssef Aachaoui** from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

The group reports that Caspase-11, a protein important in cell response to apoptosis and inflammation, is necessary for immunity to cytosolic bacteria and their findings demonstrated the importance of this enzyme for surviving exposure to environmental pathogens.

Here is a link to the paper:

<http://www.sciencemag.org/content/early/2013/01/23/science.1230751.abstract>

Published Online January 24 2013

[< Science Express Index](#)


Science DOI: 10.1126/science.1230751

[Read Full Text for Comments \(0\)](#)

REPORT

Caspase-11 Protects Against Bacteria That Escape the Vacuole

Youssef Aachaoui^{1,2,†}, Irina A. Leaf^{3,†}, Jon A. Hagar^{1,2,†}, Mary F. Fontana^{4,‡}, Cristine G. Campos¹, Daniel E. Zak³, Michael H. Tan⁴, Peggy A. Cotter¹, Russell E. Vance⁴, Alan Aderem³, Edward A. Miao^{1,2,‡}

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 [‡] These authors contributed equally to this manuscript.

Members Achievements



Aziz Hirich, one of our active members in Morocco, have been selected to represent Morocco as a young scientist at the BIOVISIO, the world life science forum, that will be held in Lyon in March, 2013.

Here is a link to the forum: <http://www.biovision.org/>

Aziz, received a grant to participate in the International Conference on Agricultural Engineering, New Technologies for Sustainable Agricultural Production and Food Security, to be held on 24-26 February 2013 in Muscat, Oman. His talk is entitled: Quinoa (*Chenopodium quinoa* Willd.) Responses to Irrigation Water Salinity.

For more information about this conference, check out the following link:

<http://www.agengineeringconf.com/program.html>

Aziz has also been selected as a Young Environmental Scientist in the 13th World Wide Workshop for Young Environmental Scientists (WWW-YES-2013) to be held in Paris from 3 to 7 June 2013.

Following is a link to the workshop: <http://leesu.univ-paris-est.fr/yes/>

Great job Aziz!



On October 2012, Dr. Amal Korrida has successfully defended her PhD thesis in Genetics. Amal passed her defense with high honors (Mention: Très honorable avec félicitation orale de jury).

The title of her thesis is:

Houbara bustards "*Chlamydotis undulata*" and Macqueen's bustards "*Chlamydotis macqueenii*": Genetic, morphometric and phylogeographic studies.

Her research project was in the frame of an international collaboration between Agadir Faculty of Sciences (University Ibnou Zohr, Morocco), the University of Georgia Athens (UGA, USA), and the former HRH Prince Sultan Bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud International Foundation for Conservation & Development of Wildlife (IFCDW, Morocco).

Congratulations Dr. A. Korrida!



AMAS Conference I
The First International American Moroccan
Agricultural Sciences Conference I
Rabat, Morocco, March 18-19th 2013

Dear Colleagues,

We have a great honor to invite you to attend “**The International American Moroccan Agricultural Sciences Conference I**” that will be held in the beautiful capital of the **Kingdom of Morocco, Rabat on March 18-19, 2013.**

Rabat is famous for its historic monuments such as the Hassan Tower, the Oudayas, the old town (Medina), and much more.

The Scientific Committee which is composed of world known scientists in various fields of Agricultural Sciences developed an attractive program with sessions in the Plant and Animal Genomic Sciences, and Higher Education.

The conference will host a variety of speakers including internationally recognized experts in their fields, young scientists, graduate students, in addition to Dr. Lahcen Daoudi, Minister, Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research of Morocco.

The program is now published:

<http://www.moroccan-american-agri-sci.org/program>

Please check the conference website for more details about the meeting.



AMAS Conference I

The First International American Moroccan Agricultural Sciences Conference I

Rabat, Morocco, March 18-19th 2013

Organizing Committee

Abdelmajid Kassem, Ph.D.

Fayetteville State University, NC, USA

Khalid Meksem, Ph.D.

Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, IL, USA

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USDA-ARS, USA

Abdelmalek El Meskaoui, Ph.D.

National Institute of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants,
Morocco

Abdelhamid El Mousadik, Professor

Ibn Zohr University, Morocco

Sponsors

Atlas Publishing, LP, is the main sponsor of "The International American Moroccan Agricultural Sciences Conference" which is going to be a biannual international conference that will be organized in Morocco. However, the conference is also co-sponsored by Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, the National Institute of Agronomic Research (INRA), and several other entities.



المعهد الوطني للبحث الزراعي
Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique

Welcome To the Beautiful Morocco!



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

Members Participation at the Plant & Animal Genome Conference XXI in San Diego, CA

Dr. Meksem and Dr. Kassem attended the Plant and Animal Genome conference XXI that was held January 12-16th, 2013, in San Diego, CA. Dr. Meksem organized the "Genomics and Plant Development" workshop, and he also gave a talk entitled: A Soybean Cyst Nematode Resistance Gene Points to a New Mechanism of Plant Resistance to Pathogens

Authors:

Khalid Meksem *Southern Illinois University*, Shiming Liu *Southern Illinois University*, Pramod K. Kandoth *University of Missouri*, Samantha D. Warren *University of Missouri*, Greg Yeckel *University of Missouri*, Robert Heinz *University of Missouri*, John Alden *University of Missouri*, Chunling Yang *Iowa State University*, Aziz Jamaï *Southern Illinois University*, Tarik El-Mellouki *Southern Illinois University*, Parijat S. Juvale *Iowa State University*, John Hill *Iowa State University*, Thomas J. Baum *Iowa State University*, Silvia Cianzio *Iowa State University*, Steven A. Whitham *Iowa State University*, Dmitry Korkin *University of Missouri*, Melissa G. Mitchum *University of Missouri*

Following is a list of the poster presentations by both Dr. Kassem and Dr. Meksem:

Title:

Quantitative Trait Loci for Moisture, Protein, and Oil Content in Soybean [*Glycine max* (L.) Merr.]

Authors:

Masum Akond *Fayetteville State University*, Bobby A. Ragin *Fayetteville State University*, Richard Bazzelle *Fayetteville State University*, Stella Kantartzi *Southern Illinois University*, **Khalid Meksem** *Southern Illinois University*, **Abdelmajid Kassem** *Fayetteville State University*

Title:

Quantitative Trait Loci (QTL) for Seed Isoflavones Contents Mapped in the PI 438489B by 'Hamilton' Recombinant Inbred Line Population of Soybean [*Glycine max* (L.) Merr.]

Authors:

Richard Bazzelle *Fayetteville State University*, Bobby A. Ragin *Fayetteville State University*, Stella Kantartzi *Southern Illinois University*, **Khalid Meksem** *Southern Illinois University*, Masum Akond *Fayetteville State University*, **Abdelmajid Kassem** *Fayetteville State University*

Title:

Row Spaces can affect Agronomic Traits in Soybean [*Glycine max* (L.) Merr.]

Authors:

Masum Akond *Fayetteville State University*, Bobby A. Ragin *Fayetteville State University*, Willsheana L Clark *Fayetteville State University*, Stella Kantartzi *Southern Illinois University*, Khalid Meksem *Southern Illinois University*, Abdelmajid Kassem *Fayetteville State University*

Title:

Soybean Cyst Nematode Resistance Gene Points to a New Mechanism of Plant Resistance to Pathogens

Authors:

Shiming Liu *Southern Illinois University*, Pramod K. Kandoth *University of Missouri*, Samantha D. Warren *University of Missouri*, Greg Yeckel *University of Missouri*, Robert Heinz *University of Missouri*, John Alden *University of Missouri*, Chunling Yang *Iowa State University*, Aziz Jamaï *Southern Illinois University*, Tarik El-Mellouki *Southern Illinois University*, Parijat S. Juvale *Iowa State University*, John Hill *Iowa State University*, Thomas J. Baum *Iowa State University*, Silvia Cianzio *Iowa State University*, Steven A. Whitham *Iowa State University*, Dmitry Korkin *University of Missouri*, Melissa G. Mitchum *University of Missouri*, **Khalid Meksem** *Southern Illinois University*

Title:

Identification of Quantitative Trait Loci for Resistance to Sudden Death Syndrome in a Recombinant Inbred Population of Soybean (*Glycine max* (L.) Merr.)

Authors:

James Anderson *SIU*, M Humberto Reyes-Valdes *Universidad Autónoma Agraria Antonio Narro*, Jia-zheng Yuan *Michigan State University*, Dechun Wang *Michigan State University*, **Khalid Meksem** *Southern Illinois University*, Stella Kantartzi *Southern Illinois University*

The council Welcomes All the New Members

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The Council's Committee Members Welcomes Your Feedback and Questions

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Secretary	Saadia Bihmidine
Member at Large	Mohamed Boutjdir
Member at Large	Mohamed Soutto