



Pig Genome Update Special

No. 118 September 25, 2013

Great news! The NRSP 8 project has been reviewed and now has been approved. The Experiment Station Directors met on September 25 and approved it for another 5 years beginning October 1, 2013.

Congratulations and best wishes go to Chris Tuggle, ISU and Cathy Ernst, MSU, who have been chosen to be the next swine genome co-coordinators starting October 1. Congratulations also go out to all the new co-coordinators: Mary Delaney and Hans Cheng, Poultry; Ernie Bailey, Molly McCue and Samantha Brooks, Horse; John Liu and Caird Rexroad III, Aquaculture; Noelle Cockett and Stephen White, Sheep and Small Ruminants; Juan Medrano, Alison Van Eenennaam, and Jerry Taylor, Cattle; and Jim Reecy, Sue Lamont, Chris Tuggle, Max Rothschild and Fiona McCarthy, Bioinformatics. Please help them be successful by contributing to the NRSP8 plans and activities.

I announced earlier this year I had decided that after 20 years it was time for someone else to take this important position of Swine Genome Coordinator. This is my last newsletter and, hence, I have a few comments in departing.

Most importantly, there are many people to thank for their contributions, hard work and support. There is always the danger that when one starts naming names some are forgotten and there are hard feelings. I apologize in advance if I have missed someone. First, I thank all the scientists here in the US and worldwide who participated in the pig genome project. The advice, help and support provided by my colleagues in the US have been outstanding, and the collaborations with organizers and participants of the former PiGMaP consortium and the International Swine Genome Sequencing Committee have also been superb. Second, I thank all my colleagues and database experts (Lizhen, Yuandan and Zhiliang) who have helped at ISU in organizing the early database activities and later transferring them to the bioinformatics coordination effort. Third, the other genome coordinators, Noelle, Jim, Ernie, Hans, Jerry, Juan, James, John and Caird, have been great to work with. We also have had an outstanding group of administrative advisors from the various experiment stations and USDA leaders who have supported our efforts and they deserve a big thanks also.

Many of you know that over the past eight years or so I have been redirecting my genomic research efforts in two ways. I have taken on more projects in other species, which now include pigs, cattle, shrimp, sheep, goats, chickens, dogs, cats and horses. Furthermore, I have been working more and more in developing countries, especially Sub-Saharan Africa, on food security issues. My year at USAID, which concluded just over a year ago, helped me to focus my efforts. I am drawn by the enormous challenges that exist in feeding an estimated 9.6 billion people in the near future with dwindling resources and the need to maintain sustainability. Certainly modern genomics can provide some answers if we devote our abilities to understanding native livestock and poultry and production systems in harsh environments.

I am far too young to retire, and there is far too much still to do to help contribute to efforts to feed a hungry world. Here at Iowa State University we have initiated a new Global Food Security Consortium which combines researchers from around the globe and efforts both in plants and animals to look for ways to find solutions to a hungry world. New partnerships are always welcome, and I hope many of you will devote part of your research efforts to broader uses of genomics, especially those related to improving food security for the world's poorest crop livestock and aquaculture producers. **It has been a great 20 years for livestock genomics.** We in swine and other species have accomplished a great deal and helped to unlock the black box that confronted us. Still much is to be done, and I challenge all of you to continue to work together and contribute. Finally, I again thank all of you for your support and contributions and wish each of you well!

NIFA-USDA is one the members of the Animal Genomics Program Officers working group that has members from various federal agencies (USDA (NIFA and ARS), NIH (NHGRI, NCI, NICHD, NIGMS), NSF (DBI, MCB, IOS), DOE (BER), and USAID (BFS)). This working group has explored common scientific areas of interest that are within the mission for the individual federal agencies. NIFA wishes to solicit your inputs to develop activities across agencies that are relevant to animal agriculture. The working group considered cyber-infrastructure to be one of the areas of common interest to all federal agencies. During a recent teleconference, one of the program officers from NIH highlighted the RFAs (given below) that would bring the biomedical and animal agriculture communities together.

<http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfa-files/RFA-HG-13-009.html>

<http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfa-files/RFA-RM-13-013.html>

Please consider collaborating with the biomedical community and possibly developing a proposal on a comparative genomics data center that supports systems biology efforts. Please contact Lakshmi Matukumalli, National Program Leader, if you would like to discuss more about this or to help connect with the other program officers from NIH on the working group who are also managing these programs.

Kindly provided by (Lakshmi Matukumalli)

Upcoming meetings (see: <http://www.animalgenome.org/pigs/community/meetings.html>)

Plant & Animal Genome Conference, PAG XXIII, Jan. 11-15, 2015, Town & Country Resort & Convention Center, San Diego, CA. Information is available at <http://www.intl-pag.org/>.

PAG ASIA, May 19-21, 2014, Grand Copthorne Waterfront Hotel, Singapore. Details at www.intlpagasia.org

International Society for Animal Genetics, July 27 – Aug. 1, 2014, Xi'an, China. See <http://isag2014.com> for more information.

10th World Congress on Genetics Applied to Livestock Production, August 17-22, 2014, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. See <http://wcalp.com/>

Plant & Animal Genome Conference, PAG XXIII, Jan. 10-16, 2015, Town & Country Resort & Convention Center, San Diego, CA. Information is available at <http://www.intl-pag.org/>.

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