

IS-MPMI Reporter

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IS-MPMI REPORTER DEADLINE

The deadline for submitting items for the next issue is May 9, 2014.

Share your news, accomplishments, and upcoming meeting details with your colleagues. Submit articles, announcements, and any ideas you may have for the next issue. You can send an e-mail (ismpmireportereditor@scisoc.org) or submit your item online (www.ismpminet.org/newsletter/submissionform.asp).

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A Letter from the President



Sophien Kamoun,
President

Gained in Translation

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Interactions with the biota are critical to plant life. In nature, every plant is closely associated with a diversity of organisms. How these mutualistic and parasitic organisms interact with plants is the central question addressed by our community. It has proved to be an extremely productive theme to investigate. Plant-microbe interactions are a remarkable source of biological innovation, and their study has yielded far-reaching discoveries in plant biology and beyond. Our community has contributed to advancing the knowledge of hormones, development, receptors, epigenetics, and much more. Recently, the TALEN technology, which stemmed from basic studies of the bacterial plant pathogen *Xanthomonas*, has emerged as a novel genome-editing method with applications in biotechnology and human therapeutics.

Despite these undeniable successes of the plant-microbe interactions community, most of the research remains confined to the laboratory and has yet to reach the farm. Only a few among us can point to a crop grown on a farm and claim that the gene, technology, or concept underpinning the variety or agricultural system has originated from their lab. However, there is a sense that the tide is about to turn. Our understanding of plant-microbe interactions has matured and coalesced around robust principles. Technological developments, from marker-assisted and genomics-enabled crop breeding to genome editing, are ushering in a new era of plant breeding. This renewed sense of excitement about the applications of our science is encapsulated in the March 2014 *Molecular Plant-Microbe Interactions (MPMI)* Focus Issue on Translational Research. The issue highlights how fundamental research on plant-microbe interactions is producing a variety of novel and promising applications. I am grateful to Guest Editors **John M. McDowell**, **John Carr**, and **Matteo Lorito** for their efforts and for raising awareness about this important topic. Many thanks also to Editor-in-Chief **Jane Glazebrook** and the *MPMI* Editorial Board for spearheading the effort. You can find out more about Glazebrook's perspective on the topic in a Q&A published in this issue of *IS-MPMI Reporter*.

As Nobel prize winner **Barry Marshall** once said, he did not set out to cure ulcer by studying *Helicobacter pilori*. "You don't know where you'll end up. You don't know what you'll cure..." he quipped. Indeed, in science, we often set out to discover something only to end up solving a different problem. But the opposite holds true too. I hope some of you will be inspired by the *MPMI* Focus Issue to engage in projects with more applied goals or seek collaborators who do so. Who knows what such activities might lead you to? They might end up impacting an important real world issue, or they could enrich your basic knowledge of the system under study. More often than not, such a project would uncover a gap in our knowledge and lead to more research questions.

Surely, we should continue to probe mechanisms and pathways of plant-microbe interactions, but our community needs to engage in a broader spectrum of activities. We have much to offer to help address the issue of food security for the world's growing population. ■

MPMI Survey Results Coming Soon

Thank you to all IS-MPMI members who participated in the *Molecular Plant-Microbe Interactions* journal satisfaction survey. Nearly 25% of the IS-MPMI members responded to the survey. IS-MPMI values your opinions, since they will help guide improvements to *MPMI*. Watch for a report of the survey results from *MPMI* Editor-in-Chief **Jane Glazebrook** in the next issue of *IS-MPMI Reporter*. ■