Pre-harvest sprouting in cereals

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The collection of papers presented in this special issue results from the 11th international symposium on pre-harvest sprouting in cereals which was held in Mendoza, Argentina, in November 2007. Previous meetings were held in Germany (1998), South Africa (2001), and England (2004). The 11th symposium was the first one sponsored by the international society for seed science (ISSS). Other sponsors were the National Research Council (CONICET), the ANPCyT, University of Buenos Aires, Monsanto Argentina, and Cargill Argentina.

Around 60 delegates from different countries attended the symposium, which was divided into five sessions: (1) Agronomic Management, (2) Physiology of Dormancy and Germination, (3) Genetics and Breeding, (4) Molecular Biology of Dormancy and Germination, and (5) Post-Harvest Management. Each session was introduced by a keynote (invited) speaker. Invited talks were presented by Dr Daniel Miralles (University of Buenos Aires, session 1), Dr Peter Chandler (CSIRO, Canberra, Australia, session 2), (ISSS Lecture) Dr Michael Foley (USDA, Fargo, USA, session 3), Prof Michael Holdsworth (University of Nottingham, UK, session 4) and Dr Robert Hill (University of Manitoba, Canada, session 5).

Overall, discussion was very much encouraged by the chairmen and, consequently, there was good participation from attendees.

The symposium format was designed in order to cover all different aspects of the pre-harvest sprouting problem in cereals. Indeed, a lot of effort is being invested in understanding physiological and molecular mechanisms behind pre-harvest sprouting resistance with the evident aim of producing new genotypes displaying resistance to this adversity. However, agronomic management and efficient practices of post-harvest handling should not be disregarded as means of minimizing the incidence of pre-harvest sprouting in cereal crops. I believe that all these aspects are well represented in this issue.

I would like to thank everybody involved in the organization of this symposium and, in particular, to a lot of people that collaborate in the production of this special issue. Most prominent scientists from all around the world kindly acted as reviewers to guarantee the scientific quality of the papers composing the issue. I would also like to thank my co-editor, Dr Joseph Nyachiro, and it is in his name that I invite you to the 12th international symposium on pre-harvest sprouting in cereals that will be held in Alberta, Canada.

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