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Dear ISPMF Members

Preparations for the June 2018 ISPMF conference in Helsinki are well underway. The conference [program](#) is now available on our website, and has a great line up of speakers. [Submissions for poster abstracts](#) are still open (until the **4th May**) and from those we will select about 5 to be presented as short elevator talks. **Registration deadline being 14th May.**

The committee is also currently reviewing the 15 excellent bursary applications that were made for this conference, and successful applicants will be notified in the next couple of weeks.

Thanks to all members who have renewed their membership fees for 2018, and a warm welcome to all new members. Please note ISPMF members will qualify for a discount

in registration fees for the ISPMF conference, so please ensure your membership is up to date to qualify.

To find out how your membership fees are used, we welcome all members to join us at the ISPMF Annual General Meeting to be held on the 12th June, during the ISPMF Helsinki conference. During this meeting we will update members on the society's activities and expenditure, hold elections for positions on the society's serving committee, invite comments on how members can get more involved with the society and open discussion on the next location for the 4th ISMPF conference in 2020!

If you would like to nominate anyone for committee membership for 2018-2020, add an agenda item to the AGM, or to

volunteer to host the 2020 ISPMF conference please email [George Lomonosoff](#) (President) at least a week before the meeting.

The current serving Committee Members 2016-2018 have been:

President [George Lomonosoff](#)

Secretary [Joachim Schiemann](#)

Treasurer / Membership Secretary
[Julian Ma](#)

Communications Officers [Penny Hundleby](#) and [Inga Hitzeroth](#)

Website manager [Heribert Warzecha](#)

Biennial meeting organizer: [Kirsi-Marja Oksman-Caldentey](#)

Society awards manager [Ann Depicker](#)

3rd ISPMF International Conference

HELSINKI, FINLAND,

June 11th – 13th, 2018

Helsinki is the precious jewel of the Baltic Sea, conveniently reached with direct flights from most of the European metropolis, making it an excellent location to host the 3rd ISPMF conference.

The conference program has been structured to cover both plant-produced biopharmaceuticals and other protein groups as well as the latest achievements in biotechnology of natural products.

A great line up of speakers includes key note speakers **Kirsi-Marja Oksman-Caldentey** (VTT, Espoo, Finland), who will talk about 'Plant biotechnology beyond genome era in the dawn of synthetic biology'; **Stefan Schillberg** (Fraunhofer IME, Aachen, Germany) who will provide 'A critical view on the business potential of recombinant protein production in plants'; **Paul Christou** (University of Lleida, Spain) will take us 'from genes to products: A plant biotechnology product portfolio for human and animal health and nutrition';

Dominik Mojzita (VTT, Espoo, Finland) 'On-demand gene expression in plants: New frontiers set by the new synthetic expression System'; while **Jochen Schiemann** (Julius Kühn Institute, Quedlinburg, Germany) will have the opportunity to give his final ISPMF conference talk before his retirement on 'Genome Editing: challenging our views and interpretation of the current regulatory systems'; **Marc-André D'Aoust** (Medicago Inc., Quebec, Canada), will talk us through the 'Development of the next generation influenza vaccine' and **Frank Petersen** (Novartis Pharma AG, Basel, Switzerland) will discuss 'Natural product based molecules for target and drug discovery in pharmaceutical research' **Kazuki Saito** (Chiba University and RIKEN, Japan) will talk on 'Phytochemical genomics: from *Arabidopsis* to medicinal plants' and **Jennifer Bromley** (British American Tobacco, Cambridge, UK) will discuss 'A multi-omics approach to harness tobacco biochemistry'.

The full list of speakers can be found on the conference program page of our [website](#).

The conference venue is located in the heart of Helsinki at Helsinki Congress Paasitorni: www.paasitorni.fi
The venue is a culturally and architecturally interesting granite

Jugend building dating back to 1908.



In connection to the conference venue there are several suitable hotels (Scandic Paasi, Cumulus Hakaniemi, Hilton Helsinki Strand and Arthur) and we have made a preliminary booking in them. More information is available on the conference web page.

Important dates:

4 th May, 2018	Deadline for submission of poster abstracts only
11 th May, 2018	Notification of ISPMF bursaries
14 th May, 2018	Deadline for registration
25 th May, 2018	Notification of poster acceptance and selected elevator talks
1 st June, 2018	Final program released
11 th - 13 th June, 2018	Conference

Upcoming meetings:

International Association for Plant Biotechnology Congress: 19th -24th August 2018, Dublin Ireland. Covering the latest innovations in precision breeding, in vitro culture and morphogenesis, food security, plant nutriomics, biopharmaceuticals, roots and tubers, and many more.



FOR ATTENDEES ▾ IAPB PROGRAMME ▾ ABSTRACTS SPONSORSHIP REGISTER ▾ CONTACT

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR PLANT BIOTECHNOLOGY CONGRESS

19th – 24th August 2018
VENUE: CCD, DUBLIN IRELAND

Register Now

Please note that **bursary opportunities** may be considered for ISPMF members wishing to attend conferences – not specifically aimed at molecular farming, where justification for attending and/or promoting the society can be made. For further details please contact [Ann Depicker \(who oversees Bursery awards\)](#).



The figure above represents the tumor-inducing Ti plasmid in an electron microscopy moon raised among old buildings photographed during the Ghent light festival.

The “*Agrobacterium* 2018” symposium is a joint event of the **39th American Crown Gall meeting** and the **2nd European *Agrobacterium* conference** that will be hosted by the VIB institute and Ghent University in Ghent, Belgium on the 12th and the 13th of September 2018.

Agrobacterium 2018

A joint event
of the 39th American Crown Gall meeting
and 2nd European *Agrobacterium* conference

Ghent, 12-13 September 2018

The tentative schedule and confirmed invited speakers can be found on: www.psb.ugent.be/agro

The “*Agrobacterium* 2018” symposium should present timely perspectives on the cell biology of *Agrobacterium*, on *Agrobacterium* as a pathogen (ecology, diversity, treatment), on horizontal gene transfer between bacteria and eukaryotic cells, on plant responses upon *Agrobacterium* infection, and on the use of *Agrobacterium* as an essential tool in plant biological sciences and crop genome editing.

Workshop Report

BIOTECHNOLOGY SECTOR STAKEHOLDERS MEETING TO EXPLORE POSSIBILITIES OF A PILOT PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURING FACILITY IN SA

27 November, Cape Town, South Africa – at the end of 2017, the Biopharming Research Unit (BRU) at the University of Cape Town (UCT) organised the first Molecular Farming Workshop in South Africa (SA). The primary aim was to explore the possibility of the construction of a pilot pharmaceutical manufacturing facility in South Africa (SA).

The two-day workshop, hosted by Prof. Edward Rybicki, Director of the BRU in partnership with Dr. Barry Holtz, President of the American based bio-manufacturer iBio Inc., drew in over 60 participants from across South Africa, and several from America. Participants included members from the academic, government, business and biologics fields; these were students, academics, researchers, legal practitioners, commercialization experts, investors, producers of candidate biologics, and producers of human and animal vaccines.

The core objectives of the workshop were to:

1. explore the landscape of molecular farming endeavors in South Africa

(SA); from bio-products to Intellectual Property (IP), and biosafety and operations-related issues,

2. determine the level of support for an initiative of this nature from government funding agencies and the private venture capital community, and
3. explore the possibility of SA entities partnering with iBio Inc. to establish a Current Good Manufacturing Practice (cGMP) pilot plant-made pharmaceutical manufacturing facility in SA.

According to Prof. Rybicki, countries on the African continent have unique animal and human-related disease challenges that also provide unique opportunities for plant-made drug development on the continent. *"There are many advantages that plant-made pharmaceuticals hold to combat life-threatening diseases. In short, developing therapeutic proteins in plants is safe, efficient and cost-effective. It is an imperative to explore the possibility of a plant-made pharmaceutical manufacturing facility on the continent,"* Prof. Rybicki says. At UCT, his group spearheads projects producing candidate vaccines for pandemic and potentially pandemic influenza viruses, bluetongue virus of ruminants, African horse sickness virus (AHSV),

emerging "One Health" virus threats, and chimeric papillomavirus vaccines.

An international expert on design and construction of pharmaceutical facilities, Dr. Holtz presented his concept (model for success) for a pilot plant-made pharmaceutical production facility in SA. The engagement sparked valuable, productive and solutions-driven debates and discussions among the various representatives, about the feasibility and viability of establishing a commercial plant-made pharmaceutical facility in SA at this stage. Questions for further exploration in future molecular farming and other biotechnology-related conferences and events were highlighted.

"I am encouraged by the willingness of South Africa's key biotechnology sector stakeholders to embrace the idea that biologics are necessary for SA, and that there is a consideration for a plant-made pharmaceutical facility in SA as a vehicle to make biologics. All of the good work in developing new opportunities and biologics does no good unless it gets to a patient," Dr. Holtz concluded.

Overall, the idea for a pilot plant-made pharmaceutical manufacturing facility in SA was welcomed, but further development of the business plan is needed.

Would you like to contribute to the next ISPMF newsletter?

- ◆ Share news with the ISPMF research community
- ◆ Write an article or review
- ◆ Advertise a meeting
- ◆ Promote your research



We welcome and encourage contributions from all members.

Please [email](#) us using the header 'ISPMF news'
