

The 97th SD-APS Meeting in Charleston, SC, Was a Success

Rebecca Melanson



The Southern Division (SD) of The American Phytopathological Society (APS) held its 97th annual meeting February 9-12, 2020, in Charleston, SC, in conjunction with the Southern

Region IPM Center and the Southern Plant Diagnostic Network. Approximately 165 people were in attendance to make it one of the largest SD-APS meetings in recent memory.

Two workshops, sponsored by the Southern Plant Diagnostic Network and organized by **Carrie Harmon** and **Meg Williamson**, were offered prior to the official kickoff of the scientific program. The first workshop, “Why do these pathogens have legs? Disease-like arthropods and their identification,” was led by **Matt Bertone**, North Carolina State University. Bertone discussed numerous insect groups and species whose signs and feeding damage might be encountered on diagnostic samples in the Southeast and provided samples for workshop attendees to practice processing and identifying.

The second workshop, “Tools for *Phytophthora* Identification,” led by **Steve Jeffers**, Clemson University, discussed various tools and tips for working with *Phytophthora* species and had several cultures of various *Phytophthora* species for attendees to examine. Both workshops were well attended and received, and attendees left more knowledgeable and better prepared to identify and work with insects on diagnostic samples and *Phytophthora* in their own laboratories.

The fifth iteration in the Careers 101 workshop series, “Strategic Conversations,” was led by **Nicole Gauthier** during the meeting, with the assistance of a number of

experts from academia and industry. More than 30 graduate students and postdocs learned and practiced conversational skills for those somewhat difficult conversations. Workshop attendees were charged with the task to practice their newly learned skills throughout the rest of the SD-APS meeting. The workshop was sponsored by **Corteva Agriscience**.

The graduate students held their annual Graduate Student and Postdoctoral Meeting and Social. The event, sponsored by **Progeny Ag**, provided a venue for students and postdocs to network with each other, discuss issues relevant to their role in the Southern Division, and elect a new SD-APS Graduate Student Representative.

One of the highlights of the Southern Division meeting has always been the Graduate Student Research Competition. In keeping with past years, this year’s student competition was equally exciting. Twenty students from eight universities from many states within the Southern Division presented their research in the competition. **Tyler Smith**, University of Tennessee, placed first in the competition for his presentation “Fungicide sensitivity screening for *Corynespora cassiicola* and field evaluations.” **Ying-Yu Liao**, University of Florida, placed second for her presentation “Formulated magnesium nanomaterials as novel alternatives to bacterial spot of tomato disease management.” **Madison Stahr**, North Carolina State University, placed third for her presentation “Defining dispersal mechanisms in storage for *Ceratocystis fimbriata*, causal agent of black rot in sweet potatoes.” Honorable mentions were awarded to **Ravi Bika**, Tennessee State University, and **Emily Boak**, Texas A&M University, for their presentations,



2020-2021 SD-APS leadership. Left to right: **Teddy Garcia-Aroca**; **Trey Price**; **Nicole Gauthier**; **Rebecca Melanson**; **Fulya Bayal-Gurel**; **Shaker Kousik**; **Lindsey Thiessen**; **Tracy Hawk**, 2019-2020 SD-APS Graduate Student Representative; and **Nicholas Dufault**, 2019-2020 SD-APS Immediate Past President. Not pictured: **Hope Becton**.

“Comparative performance of fungicides and biorational products in managing post-harvest *Botrytis cinerea* infection on hydrangea cut flowers” and “*Pseudomonas chlororaphis* type VI secretion systems: roles in rhizosphere dynamics and plant microbe interactions,” respectively.

Eight students participated in the student poster competition. **Sandhya Neupane**, Tennessee State University, placed first in the competition for her poster “Control of *Phytophthora* root rot of boxwood with chemical fungicides, biofungicides, fertilizers and host plant defense inducers in field production.” **Misbakhul Munir**, Clemson University, placed second for his poster “Detection of airborne inoculum of *Nothopassalora personata* in peanut fields using impaction spore traps coupled with qPCR assay.” **Cansu Oksel**, Tennessee State University, placed third place for her poster “Identification and biocontrol potential of antagonistic bacterial strains against *Pseudomonas syringae* pv. *Tomato*.”

The **Southern IPM Center** held its annual Project Directors Meeting for the USDA NIFA Crop Protection and Pest Management Grants as the IPM Symposium during the SD-APS meeting. Five project directors presented the results of their funded Applied Research and Development and Extension Implementation projects. This included highlights of the Virginia and Louisiana IPM Programs, advances made in developing an IPM program for rose rosette disease, the use of qPCR for quantifying viable propagules of bacterial spot in tomato seed, and how improved understanding of *Xanthomonas citri* subsp. *malvacearum* is leading to improved management of bacterial blight in cotton.

An additional 65 technical presentations were given at the meeting, including 29 oral

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As FAC, headquarters staff, and APS leadership prepare for FY21, we need to take into account any possible lingering impacts of COVID-19. We anticipate that registration for Plant Health 2020 will be smaller than normal, and consequently, the meeting is budgeted for a loss. Also impacting the FY21 budget is the continued transition of several APS journals from a subscription model to open access.

Given these two significant situations, we anticipate a loss in FY21. To that end, we are streamlining expenditures and assessing the ways in which APS activities support our members and strategic goals. Some activities may be put on hold until we have progressed further in the journals’ open-access transition.

These types of situations are exactly the reason that FAC, headquarters staff, and APS leadership work so hard to build a strong reserve. Because of its financial prudence, APS is well prepared to weather the current storm.

As we make our way through these monumental shifts and strange times, you can contribute by continuing to support the APS community and activities that bring value to you and your work. We strongly encourage you to publish in our journals, attend our meetings, renew your dues on time, and take advantage of the many benefits that your society offers. ■

presentations and 36 poster presentations. Included in these presentations were 12 posters that represented Southern Plant Diagnostic Network projects. In total, 98 abstracts were presented. All technical sessions were moderated by graduate students or postdoctoral researchers, who did an excellent job in keeping presenters on time.

Travel awards to attend the 2020 SD-APS meeting were presented to **Renata Belisario**, University of Kentucky; **Ravi Bika**, Tennessee State University; **Emily Boak**, Texas A&M University; **Noam Eckshtain-Levi**, University of North Carolina; and **Milan Panth**, Tennessee State University.

Judging travel award applications, research presentations, and posters is no easy task, especially when so many are deserving of an award. Many thanks go out to our judges: **Emran Ali**, **Dan Anco**, **Sanjay Anthony Babu**, **Ozgur Batuman**, **Sladana Bec**, **Carla Garzon**, **Heather M. Kelly**, **Rugang Li**, **Inga Meadows**, **Mason J. Newark**, **Terry Spurlock**, **Lindsey Thiessen**, and **Hehe Wang**.

The awards banquet was a highlight of the meeting. Attendees waited in anticipation throughout the evening for their chance at a door prize and for the announcement of the student competition results. The division's highest honor, Outstanding Plant Pathologist, was given to **Anthony P. Keinath**, Clemson University, for his extensive contributions to cucurbit field research and extension, especially on gummy stem blight. The Southern Division's Donald M. Ferrin Memorial Service Award was awarded to **Albert Culbreath**, University of Georgia, for his service to SD-APS and APS over a long and distinguished career.

Many thanks to **Patrick Wechter**, Acting Research Leader, USDA-ARS U.S. Vegetable Laboratory, for welcoming everyone to Charleston, and to **Lindsey du Toit**, APS President, for presenting an update from APS Council.

Many thanks also to our 2020 SD-APS meeting sponsors, whose support was critical for the variety and success of our meetings: **AMVAC Chemical Corporation**, **Corteva Agriscience**, **FMC Corporation**, **Gowan Company**, **Marrone Bio Innovations**, **Nichino America**, **Progeny Ag**, **SePRO**, **Sakata**, **Syngenta**, and **Valent USA**, as well as the **Southern Plant Diagnostic Network** and the **Southern Region IPM Center**. An industry sponsored symposium was held as a part of SD-APS annual meeting, and representatives from many of our sponsors participated and presented information about their companies and products and offered advice to graduate students about working in the industry.

At the end of the awards banquet, the SD-APS Executive Committee officers transitioned to their new duties as part of the 2020-2021 Executive Committee: **Shaker Kousik**, USDA-ARS (Charleston, SC), Immediate Past-President; **Trey Price**, Louisiana State University AgCenter, President; **Fulya Baysal-Gurel**, Tennessee State University, President-Elect; **Lindsey D. Thiessen**, North Carolina State University, Vice President; and **Rebecca A. Melanson**, Mississippi State University, Secretary-Treasurer. **Nicole Gauthier**, University of Kentucky, the newly elected Divisional Forum Representative for the Southern Division, and **Teddy Garcia-Aroca**, Louisiana State University, Graduate Student Representative, will continue in their roles for the upcoming year. **Hope Becton**, Clemson University, also joins the SD-APS Executive Committee as the second Graduate Student Representative. Recognition also goes to **Nicholas Dufault**, University of Florida, and **Tracy Hawk**, University of Tennessee, for their service as the 2019-2020 SD-APS Immediate Past-President and Graduate Student Representative, respectively.

After two long days of presentations on exciting research, a number of meeting attendees took their learning on the road and participated in the U.S. Vegetable Laboratory, USDA, ARS, and Middleton Place Tours. At the U.S. Vegetable Laboratory, **Shaker Kousik** gave tour participants a brief overview of the facility before participants were divided into two groups and led to various research laboratories and locations throughout the facility, where USDA and Clemson University scientists discussed their research at each stop. While some tour participants headed back to the hotel to begin their journey home, many headed to Middleton Place for a wonderful lunch of Low Country selections at the Middleton Place Restaurant before taking a tour of the gardens and rice fields and learning about the history of the plantation. Historian **Bob Sherman** of Middleton Place provided the participants with knowledge of the rice plantation and how volunteers help grow rice at the plantation today.

The 2020 meeting, workshops, and tours were a great success, and positive feedback was received from SD-APS participants. We look forward to another successful meeting in 2021 and invite you to join us for the 2021 SD-APS Meeting in Baton Rouge, Louisiana! ■

APS Representatives at the Indian Phytopathological Society Annual Meeting

Matt Rouse and Jesse Poland

This January we had the honor of representing APS at the Indian Phytopathological Society (IPS) annual meeting in New Delhi. This was made possible through a memorandum of understanding between APS and IPS to facilitate an exchange of scientists to attend the annual meetings of the two sister societies.

APS and IPS have a lot in common. Both societies are quite large and assemble a critical mass of plant pathologists at a sub-continental scale at their annual meetings. Importantly, both societies leverage the discipline of plant pathology to address global issues. The theme of the IPS conference was "Phytopathology in Achieving UN Sustainable Development Goals." Similar to recent APS meetings, several of the IPS plenary and keynote speakers introduced their subject matter in the context of the UN sustainable development goals. Clearly, APS and IPS plant pathology experts are pursuing common goals through research on often common plant pathogens.

But there were striking differences between the IPS annual meeting and a typical APS annual meeting. First of all, IPS is much more formal. This formality was manifested in dress code, abundant awards and honors bestowed, emphasis on experienced researchers, and meeting room adornment. On the first day, the meeting was opened with a Hindi prayer song led by students from the Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI). Though the APS annual meeting takes place a different city each year, the IPS meeting is always held at the IARI headquarters in New Delhi.

Being exposed to the scale and diversity of plant pathology research taking place in and around India was enlightening to us. The excellent research presented by IPS graduate students through an annual competition for prestigious travel awards to APS was inspiring. United by a common discipline and overarching goals, APS and IPS have much to gain by enhancing collaboration and partnerships. We would like to extend our thanks to **Dinesh Singh** of IARI for hosting us in New Delhi and inviting us to speak at the conference. ■



Participants of the Workshop on Rust Diseases of Wheat at the Indian Phytopathological Society annual meeting in New Delhi, January 2020.