FAO International Symposium on

The Role of Agricultural Biotechnologies in Sustainable Food Systems and Nutrition

Symposium side events: Full programme

Note: An international call for side events was opened by FAO in November 2015 with a deadline of 31 December 2015 (http://www.fao.org/about/meetings/agribiotechs-symposium/side-events/en/). All proposals were carefully considered and five side events were chosen based on the pre-defined selection criteria. Side events are arranged by external stakeholders and FAO is not responsible for organization of these side events.

1. Delivering Nutrition, productivity and climate resilience- The Africa Biofortified Sorghum (ABS) project
Monday, 15 February 2016, 12.45-13.45, Iran Room

Organizers:

- Africa Harvest Biotech Foundation International
- DuPont Pioneer
- Global Harvest Initiative

Purpose of the side event:

The Africa Biofortified Sorghum (ABS) project is a multi-stakeholder initiative to fight malnutrition in one of the most food insecure regions of the world. Sorghum is a critical food grain for many of the world's most food insecure people, and is uniquely adapted to Africa's climate, being both drought resistant and able to withstand periods of water-logging. The ABS project is focused on improving seed systems while also improving the nutritional profile of sorghum. Biofortified sorghum has the potential to deliver 50 to 100% of Vitamin A requirements for extended periods of time after sorghum harvest and up to 80% of iron and zinc needs through normal consumption of sorghum. This side event will advance the understanding of how we can unleash sorghum's capacity to be the cornerstone of food and nutrition security in Africa, while continuing to serve as a climate-smart crop.

Programme:

Welcome, introductions, and nutrition for Africa: (2-4 minutes)
Dr. Margaret M. Zeigler, Executive Director, Global Harvest Initiative and Moderator

The critical importance of sorghum and how the ABS project works (8-10 minutes)
Mr. Daniel Kamanga, Director, Communication Program, Africa Harvest

Partnership models to deliver results: Common threads of success (8-10 minutes)
Dr. Firoz Amijee, Head of Global Registration & Regulatory Affairs, DuPont Pioneer

Unleashing the benefits of fortification: A call for action (8-10 minutes)
Margaret Zeigler, Executive Director, Global Harvest Initiative

Interactive questions and answers (20 min)
Moderated by Dr. Margaret M. Zeigler, Executive Director, Global Harvest Initiative

Closing Summary (3-5 minutes)
A brief closing statement by each of the panelists to summarize the session and next steps

2. Helping farmers grow: Climate change, food security, and the technology nexus
Monday, 15 February 2016, 12.45-13.45, Sheik Zayed Centre

Organizers:

- CropLife International, Belgium
- The Borlaug Institute for International Agriculture, Texas A&M University, United States of America

Purpose of the side event:
Over the next 30 years, farmers will be faced with having to produce 70% more food in order to feed a world population that is expected to rise to over nine billion by 2050. They will need to do this as climate change is causing extreme and unpredictable weather patterns and growing environments. This panel will explore how innovations in agricultural biotechnology will provide farmers with the tools needed to maintain and increase crop productivity under climate change conditions, help achieve food security, and improve the livelihoods of smallholder farmers in a sustainable way.

Programme:
Moderator: Howard Minigh, President and CEO, CropLife International

Panelists:

- Julie Borlaug, Associate Director for External Relations, Norman E. Borlaug Institute for International Agriculture, Texas A&M University
- Sir Gordon Conway, Director of Agriculture for Impact, and Professor of International Development at Imperial College London
- Catherine Swodoba, Director of Planning, World Food Prize
- Nicola Cenacchi Research Analyst, International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)

3. The voice of farmers: Biotechnology in the field
Tuesday, 16 February 2016, 13.15-14.15, Iran Room

Organizer:

Canadian Canola Growers Association

Co-organizer:

Brazilian Confederation of Agriculture and Livestock (CNA)

Purpose of the side event:
Farmers play a unique role in the achievement of global food security. This side event brings together farmers from around the world to discuss the role agriculture biotechnology has played on their farms. Farmers from Asia, Latin America, Africa and North America will describe, first hand, their experience with using the technology, the challenges they face and the benefits realized through its use.

Programme:

Opening remarks and introductions
Moderator: Thiago Masson, CNA, Brazil

Speakers:

- Edwin Paraluman, Rice and corn farmer, Mindanao, The Philippines
- Dale Leftwich, Farmer, Canada (Canadian Canola Growers Association)
- Santiago del Solar, Farmer, Argentina (Asociación Argentina de Consorcios Regionales de Experimentación Agricola)
- Mugo Makanga, Farmer, Kenya (Integrated Community Organization for Sustainable Empowerment and Education for Development)

Panel discussion with the audience

Closing remarks

4. New Breeding Technologies for Smallholders' challenges
Tuesday, 16 February, 13.15-14.15, Sheikh Zayed Centre

Organizer:
Ministry of Economic Affairs of The Netherlands

Purpose of the side event:
Smallholders worldwide face multiple challenges in their struggle to make a living in agriculture that exceeds just being able to feed their families. Plant breeding technologies are key to the creation of new useful plant varieties (e.g. bio-fortified orange sweet potato, golden rice). Added value, availability and access are key. They can help to bolster production, supply and market value, as well as nutritional content and value of crops (protein, amino acid, antioxidants, vitamins and micronutrient content). Plant breeding technologies can also increase resistance to major pests and diseases and increase the efficiency of 'post-farm-gate' practices (processing, storage and shelf life). Last, but not least, new plant varieties can also be developed to use more efficiently water, nutrients and sunlight. Any innovative breeding technology must prove its added value at grassroots level and thus be adapted to local circumstances. If so, the new variety will contribute to more sustainable crop management, improved yields and better farmers' income. Improved production in a sustainable way contributes also to Agenda 2030 (SDG2 and others).

In this side event different new plant breeding technologies available to address the needs and challenges of smallholders will be presented and discussed. A private sector company of propagation materials will showcase proven business strategies in developing countries, while CSM/a smallholder farmer will reflect on the work done and identify remaining challenges and opportunities from the viewpoint of the smallholder.

Programme:
Moderator: Gerda Verburg (Permanent Representative of The Netherlands)

Panelists:
- Rene Smulders, Business Unit Manager, Wageningen UR, Plant Breeding *(Science)*
- Niels Louwaars, Director, Dutch association for the plant reproduction material sector *(Private Sector)*
- Walter Quispe Huilcca, Coordinator, Potato Park Participatory Plant Breeding Program, Potato Park, Cusco, Peru (*CSM/Smallholder)*
- Alejandro Argumedo, Program Director, Asociacion ANDES, Cusco, Peru

5. Practical approaches to regulation and oversight of agricultural biotechnology: experiences from developed and developing countries
Tuesday, 17 February 2016, 17.45-18.45, Iran Room

Organizers:
Governments of Canada and the United States of America

Purpose of the side event:
To provide an avenue to discuss and exchange information and experiences regarding establishment of practical and science-based regulatory systems that ensure food, feed and environmental safety and that also facilitate adoption and trade of agricultural biotechnology.

Programme:
Introduction by facilitator: Frédéric Seppey, Chief Agriculture Negotiator, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Canada

Experiences in regulatory and oversight practices; Canada: Veronica McGuire, Executive Director, Program, Regulatory and Trade Policy, Canadian Food Inspection Agency, Canada

Experiences in regulatory and oversight practices; Brazil: Juliana Ribeiro Alexandre (TBC), Federal Inspector, Coordinator of Information Analysis, Brazil

Experiences in regulatory and oversight practices and regional cooperation; Uganda (title TBC): Barbara Mugwanya Zawedde, PhD, Coordinator, Uganda Biosciences Information Center, National Crop Resources Research Institute, Uganda

Successes and challenges in biosafety regulatory systems in Latin American countries: Dr. Pedro Rocha, Biotechnology Coordinator, Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA)

Closing remarks by facilitator: Frédéric Seppey, Canada