The World Vegetable Center Newsletter
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Thinking Big: The International Seed Sector on the Move

The latest step made by **Monsanto**, the world's leading enterprise in agriculture technology, is very likely to shake up the private seed sector. As disclosed to the media this week, Monsanto signed an agreement to acquire De Ruiter Seeds Group B.V., a Dutch holding company that owns and operates De Ruiter Seeds, for approximately $800 million.

For that hefty price, Monsanto expects big benefits from the synergy between the two companies as they merge expertise from individual backgrounds. Monsanto will combine its skill in marker-assisted breeding with De Ruiter Seeds' pool of seeds and germplasm — one of the largest in the world. De Ruiter works with crops such as tomatoes, cucumbers, melons, peppers and rootstock (used for tomato culture purposes) and focuses on breeding novel varieties for the protected-culture segment, commonly known as greenhouse or plastic house agriculture. By its own account, De Ruiter currently holds the number one global sales position for tomato and rootstock within the protected-culture segment, as well as a top-five position for cucumbers and peppers in this segment.

"Monsanto's molecular breeding tools will allow us to accelerate the rate of improvement in our seeds, and that will mean faster development of new innovative varieties for the benefit of our customers," states Biense Visser, CEO of De Ruiter Seeds.

The protected-culture segment is the fastest growing sector within the vegetable seed industry today. The steep increase is closely linked with the increased demand for high quality fresh produce in North America and Europe. Demand is rising in Asia as well; the market potential of the world's most populous continent has not escaped Monsanto's notice.

The new merger aims to deliver products for advanced agricultural production environments typically found in developed countries. It's doubtful any impact will be felt in developing countries, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, where key constraints are the widespread reliance on old varieties or imported seeds, which often are poorly adapted to local conditions.

The merger activity in the international seed sector calls to mind the role of the World Vegetable Center. We already have combined state-of-the-art science, such as molecular marker-assisted breeding, with the world's largest not-for-profit collection of vegetable germplasm. As a nonprofit institute developing global public goods in partnership with the private and public sectors, major activities like the vBBS program have the potential to trigger positive effects not only in establishing a productive and sustainable seed sector in Africa, but also in tackling broader development goals such as combating malnutrition and alleviating poverty.

Learn more:

www.deruiterseeds.com

www.freshplaza.com - Monsanto Company Announces Agrement to Acquire De Ruiter Seeds, a Leading Global Vegetable Seed Company (1 April 2008)

- Communications

The Library

New publications

Latest publication from the Center's staff

Lumpkin, T.A. (2007). Energizing global horticultural research for the developing world. ACTA HORTICULTURAE. no.759:15-28.

New Publications (Articles & Books) received by the Library

Galloway, J. (2008). Effective management of soyabean rust and frogeye leaf spot using a mixture of flusilazole and carbendazim. CROP PROTECTION. v.27(3/5):566-571.

Park, P.H. (2008). Multiplication and characterization of vegetable germplasm: development of molecular markers associated with disease resistance in tomato. Shanhua, Tainan : AVRDC - The World Vegetable Center. 21 pp.

Dkogo, R.V.C., Wydra, K. (2007). Silicon-induced basal resistance in tomato against Ralstonia solanacearum is related to modification of pectic cell wall polysaccharide structure. PHYSIOLOGICAL AND MOLECULAR PLANT PATHOLOGY. v.70:120-129.

Kawasaki, T., Satsuma, H., Fujie, M., Usami, S., Yamada, T. (2007). Monitoring of phytopathogenic Ralstonia solanacearum cells using green fluorescent protein-expressing plasmid derived from bacteriophage RSS1. JOURNAL OF BIOSCIENCE AND BIOENGINEERING. v.104 (6):451-456.

Lemessa, F., Zeller, W. (2007). Screening rhizobacteria for biological control of Ralstonia solanacearum in Ethiopia. BIOLOGICAL CONTROL. v.42 (3):336-344.

Otto, S.B., Rall, B.C., Brose, U. (2007). Allometric degree distributions facilitate food-web stability. NATURE. v.450 (20/27):1226-1230.

Irikiin, , Y., Nishiyama, M., Otsuka, S., Senoo, K. (2006). Rhizobacterial community-level, sole carbon source utilization pattern affects the delay in the bacterial wilt of tomato grown in rhizobacterial community model system. APPLIED SOIL ECOLOGY. v.34(1):27-32.

Li, M., Wang, Y.Q., Tian, S.B., Luo, Z.Y., Wang, X.J. (2006). Genetic analysis of resistance to bacterial wilt and identification of an associated AFLP marker in eggplant (Solanum melongena). ACTA HORTICULTURAE SINICA. v.33 (4):869-872.

Shepherd, A.W. (2006). Quality and safety in the traditional horticultural marketing chains of Asia. Rome : FAO. vii, 46 pp.

Paroda, R.S. (2003). Sustaining our food security. Delhi : Konark Publishers Pvt Ltd. xxiii, 775 pp.

Web Link of the Week

ActionBioscience.org

"**ActionBioscience.org**" is a noncommercial, educational web site providing articles by scientists and science educators on issues related to seven bioscience challenges: environment, biodiversity, genomics, biotechnology, evolution, new frontiers in science and bioscience education.

Please visit:

http://www.actionbioscience.org

At the Newsstand: Popular New Magazines in the Library

The Economist - All Change? A 14-Page Special Report on the Future of American Foreign Policy - 29 March - 04 April 2008

Scientific American (US/International edition) - The Shocking Colors of Alien Plants - April 2008

Scientific American (Chinese edition - Issue No. 74 - April 2008

Time: The Clean Energy Myth – 7 April 2008

Business Weekly (Chinese) -

PC Home (Chinese) - April 2008

- Fang-chin Chen/Communications

People

En route

Dr. Jackie Hughes, 07 April-12 April 2008, to Uttarakhand, India, to implement and supervise survey activities for the TATA Uttarakhand project.

Dr. Manuel Palada, 13 April-01 May, to assist in conducting training workshop on statistics and experimental design for project collaborators under the ACIAR-AVRDC HORT/2005/077 – Integrated Crop Management Package for Sustainable Smallholder Gardens in Solomon Islands; to monitor the progress of the project; to follow up on the establishment of project office; to review and finalize a draft of a drip irrigation training manual with Dr. Surya Bhattarai at Central Queensland University; to give a seminar on AVRDC.

Dolores Ledesma, 14 April-26 April 2008, to conduct a training course on Experimental Design and Data Analysis in Honiara, Solomon Islands.

Dr. Peter Juroszek, 11-17 April, on annual leave.

Dr. Remi Kahane, Executive Secretary of GlobalHort, 10-17 April 2008 to attend the ISHS joint Council and Executive Committee meetings in Agadir, Morocco.

— Yvonne Ting/ASU

— Maggie Shiu/CEM

Lost

Missing without a trace: the bicycle of Ms. Lin Yueh-huei, of the CEM unit. The yellow bicycle was left unlocked in the parking lot of the Research building three weeks ago. It has the word "Soil" printed in black on the rear fender. If anyone finds it, please contact Ms. Lin at ext. no. 412/415. Thank you.

作管組林月惠小姐遺失黃色腳踏車,有人拾獲請聯絡分機 **412/415，謝謝。**

— Maggie Shiu/CEM

Welcome!

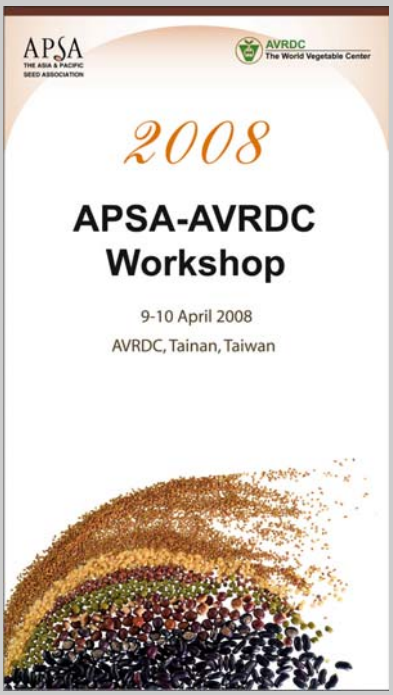
Dr. Dyno Keatinge

Dr. Dyno Keatinge, the Center's new Director General commencing from 14 April 2008, will arrive at the Center on Wednesday, 9 April 2008. Dr. Keatinge will be accompanied by his wife Rosi and will stay in the DG's House.

The management requests the necessary preparation by the respective staff/units (a checklist has been sent out to individual staff).

We all look forward to giving Dr. and Mrs. Keatinge a warm reception as the newest members of the AVRDC family. Thank you for your kind attention and cooperation.

- Dr. Yin-Fu Chang/DDG Administration & Services



The **2008 APSA-AVRDC workshop** will be held next week at the center's headquarters. The workshop will last 1.5 days and include an extensive seminar program as well as a field trip. We will keep you informed about the ongoing research and cooperation.

- Communications

FOCUS:Latest GlobalHort e-letter

news@globalhort.org

January-March 2008

Features

Second Annual Board of Directors Meeting

Dec. 8, 2007

For GlobalHort, 2008 marks the start of a new era with a strengthened Board of Directors, growing staff and activities, including research projects needing to be facilitated or coordinated, global events on horticulture to be organized and convened and new resources to be acknowledged.

Staff News

GlobalHort welcomes its first webmaster

Jerry Miner has taken a year's assignment from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) to be GlobalHort's first Webmaster in Charge of Communications starting January 7, 2008.

Executive Secretary gives update on activities for 2008

Remi Kahane: “So far 2008 has revealed itself to be a very active one for the Executive Secretary. Africa, Asia, and Europe have been travelled to link as many partners and initiatives as possible.”

PROFEL Workshop in Yaounde, Cameroon, Oct. 23-25, 2007

GlobalHort held a prominent facilitating role at this conference promoting horticulture for health.

Network and Community Themes

GlobalHort aims to provide knowledge management in key horticultural thematic areas:

- Herbal, Medicinal & Aromatic Plants
- High-Value Crops Challenge Program
- Promotion of Fruit & Vegetable Consumption
- Tropical Fruits
- Underutilized Crops
- Urban Horticulture

MediaWatch

The latest news from our partners and other news sources.

Coming Events

Keeping track of international horticultural events

Recipes and interesting facts about horticultural crops

Hot Pineapple Drink from Peru

Nightshade with Green Soybean from Tanzania

HortLinks of Note

“From the Ground Up: Organic Gardening Fuels a Food Revolution”

A quiet revolution is pulsing through the huge residential areas spread out on the edges of Cape Town. An All-Africa special feature, illustrated with video clips and photo galleries, provides coverage on a movement fuelled by vegetables and led by grandmothers.

Try-African-Food.com

Felix Muchiri Waweru is a student presently enrolled in the Masters of Plant Breeding and Genetics Program at the University of Nairobi. He has come up with a very informative and entertaining website that showcases the vast assortment of African food. He says that there are many "lost varieties" that have healthy nutritive values.

Book Review

In Defense of Food by Michael Pollan. New York: Penguin, 2008

Humans used to know how to eat well, Pollan argues. But the balanced dietary lessons that were once passed down through generations have been confused, complicated, and distorted by food industry marketers, nutritional scientists, and journalists -- all of whom have much to gain from our dietary confusion.

Looking for High-Quality Horticultural Information?

We have the Knowledge Base just for you.

Note:
If you would like to receive a regular copy of the GlobalHort e-letter, please contact Jerry Miner, GlobalHort Webmaster and Communication Officer: news@globalhort.org

www.globalhort.org