

ISF News Bulletin

June/July 2015

Message from Michael Keller, ISF Secretary General

This is a prototype of the ISF News Bulletin, developed in response to member feedback which told us that you wanted regular, concise and accessible news from ISF. We tested the first version during our March meetings in Lausanne and will continue to refine the present version in response to your comments. Please let us know what you think – we want to continue to act in line with your expectations.

Promoting the interests of our industry at a global level is one of those expectations. I'm pleased to inform you that ISF has finalized a second discussion paper, its contribution to the current discussion in the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group to Enhance the Functioning of the Multilateral System (MLS) of Access and Benefit-sharing. This discussion paper aims to improve understanding of real-world commercial practices, making the standard Material Transfer Agreement (sMTA) more attractive to users and thereby enhancing the benefit-sharing provisions of the MLS. As stated in previous ISF positions, commercial breeders cannot sign a sMTA if it creates a competitive disadvantage such as tracking and tracing and payments in perpetuity. This paper makes concrete proposals on termination and on the minimum level of incorporation of material or an identifiable phenotype in a product.

In all our discussions at a global level, ISF is taking a proactive approach to acting in the interests of its members to increase our impact.



An ISF workshop in the Netherlands (1 June) brought together 30 representatives of vegetable breeding companies and public-private initiatives working in the area of disease resistance with the aim of fostering cooperation. Disease resistance is a major goal in breeding new varieties and plays a key role in vegetable crop production and integrated pest management practices. The ISF Disease Resistance Terminology Working Group (DRT WG) has dealt with the consistent use of terminology surrounding disease resistance since 2000.

The objectives of the workshop were to identify the industry's need and the gaps, and collaborative ways of working to increase efficiency and avoid duplication. The message from participants was clear: there is a crucial role for the ISF WG DRT in not only coordinating, but also identifying areas where more efforts should be taken. A follow-up draft action plan is being prepared, setting out the key objectives and the DRT WG's new way of working.



UPOV Working Party for Vegetables

54 experts from 19 countries attended the UPOV Technical Working Party for Vegetables (TWV) in Angers, France (15-19 June), among them were Astrid Schenkeveld (Rijk Zwaan), Maria José Villalon Robles (Monsanto) and Jan Knol (Bayer) representing ISF, and Szabolcs Ruthner (ISF Regulatory Affairs Executive).

Input from ISF members on crop guidelines was discussed and it was agreed to submit the following draft Test Guidelines to the Technical Committee for adoption in March 2016: Lettuce, Basil (full revision), Brassica Spp., Radish, Spinach, Tomato Rootstocks (partial revision). The TWV selected the following draft Test Guidelines to be discussed at its next session in Brno, Czech Republic (27 June – 1 July 2016): Agaricus, Sprouting Broccoli, Brown Mustard, Leaf Chicory, Onion, Pepino, Tomato Rootstock, Turnip, Watercress, Witloof Chicory.



OECD

Meeting

Among the technical items on the agenda of the OECD meeting in Paris (2-5 June) was the mixture of varieties of the same species,

supported by ISF to facilitate trade. The proposal was reduced to maize only and to management of insect resistant hybrids.

ESA's proposal to modify the standards for hybrid CMS barley and spring oil-seed rape from 90% to 85% was partially approved, gaining agreement to lower the purity standard for hybrid barley on a temporary basis until December 2020.

Regarding the proper use of official labels, ISF supported the development of innovative solutions to safeguard integrity but warned they may not be affordable to all seed companies. The Ad-hoc Working Group will prepare a proposal on the prevention of illegal use that includes the creation of a central database.

Senegal's request to join the Seed Schemes was accepted; requests from Tanzania and Zambia are being considered; China, Korea, Indonesia and Azerbaijan have expressed an interest. Looking ahead, following an ISF presentation by Piero Sismondo (ISF Technical Director) OECD will be evaluating its arbitration system to resolve disputes with a preliminary report due to be presented at the next Technical Working Group meeting.



ISTA

Annual

Meeting

ISTA opened its Annual Meeting in Montevideo, Uruguay (14-18 June) with a one-day seminar on molecular tools applied to seed quality and seed health, which provided an update on the latest research and development of the technology used for varietal identification, GMO testing and seed health. The next two days were dedicated to the reports of the Technical Committees.

It was announced that ISTA has evaluated the creation of a new accreditation for sampling only and a new ISTA Sampling Certificate Associated with it. Additionally, a change in the payment schedule of the audit fee for accredited laboratories was presented. From 2016, the fee will be invoiced in annual instalments instead of every three years, making budgeting easier for the laboratories. Another development of this year's annual meeting was the first use of electronic voting during the Ordinary General Meeting, which replaced the old manual card raising method.



Inside ISF

If the ISF World Seed Congress 2015 seems like a distant memory you can remind yourself of your time in Krakow by watching the official Congress film '[The Experience](#)' on our You Tube Channel.

Since the Congress we've been collaborating with contributors on the Congress Report which we'll be sending out in August.

We'd like to take this opportunity to thank the 300 delegates who completed the online survey – this valuable feedback is already being used to inform our planning for next year's Congress.

The ISF website development project is now well underway with launch scheduled for September. The project includes a new Members' Area where meeting minutes, agendas and related documents will be uploaded.

As Michael mentioned, as part of the ISF communications upgrade we will be issuing this regular bulletin to keep you informed of ISF activity. If you have any feedback on the type of news you would like to read and how often, please email ISF Communications Manager [Jennifer Clowes](#).

