

Dear Members,

Please find below for your information a report from the UC Davis Plant Breeding Academy regarding the enormous success of BreedWise, a company specialized in education and consultancy in the plant breeding sector:

BreedWise Reaches Milestone in Plant Breeding Education - Over 2000 Students Trained.

Today, too few students are training for careers in plant breeding to meet current demands. Concomitantly, the number of university plant breeding programs is declining. There are few programs available for educating students in this field outside of the traditional graduate-level education system. In order to alleviate this situation, universities are reemphasizing classical plant breeding training. To aid this, a small number of programs have been developed in recent years, focusing on education of professionals while working in their plant breeding organizations.

One person and a small company from The Netherlands have done more than their fair share of training plant breeders. Ms. Idy van Leeuwen has taught plant breeding for the last 18 years, starting with the Plant Breeding Institute in Wageningen. In the beginning of 2004, she founded BreedWise; a company specialized in education and consultancy in the plant breeding sector. In this relatively short period, BreedWise organized a variety of courses that were attended by over 2,000 professionals working in the seed industry. The courses range from very basic that are offered to non-technical management to very advanced technical courses.



It is hard to measure the impact BreedWise and Idy have on raising the competency in the plant breeding industry, especially in The Netherlands. Kees Reining, the research director of Rijk Zwaan sums it up, "Idy van Leeuwen has a long time experience in teaching plant breeders. With her company, BreedWise, she is the preferred (in company) teacher of most of the Dutch seed companies. Her plant breeding course has boosted the professional career of many of our breeders."

In 2009, the Plant Breeding Academy at UC Davis partnered with BreedWise to bring the Academy to Europe. The European Plant Breeding Academy (EPBA) was successfully launched in March of 2010, with participants from six European countries, Thailand and Israel.

The UC Davis Seed Biotechnology Center is pleased to have BreedWise as the principal partner in Europe: "It has been a pleasure leveraging Idy's expertise to develop the European Plant Breeding Academy. Her professionalism and dedication to ensuring plant breeders are trained in The Netherlands and now across Europe is unmatched. Idy is a welcomed partner to the Plant Breeding Academy" says Allen Van Deynze, SBC Research Director and one of the Plant Breeding Academy founders.

"Idy is an ultimate professional when it comes to teaching plant breeding. She has a unique ability to adjust the level of teaching, catering to a variety of students that range from having non-technical backgrounds all the way to advanced post-graduate level experiences." - Rale Gjuric, Director of the Plant Breeding Academy.

While the primary focus is still plant breeding, BreedWise recently offered an International Course on Seed Physiology that attracted participants from a number of countries. Kent Bradford, Academic Director of SBC UC Davis, was an invited instructor in that course, and was highly impressed with the overall organization and high level of the course content: "While Idy's BreedWise courses are well known in The Netherlands, her involvement in the European PBA is bringing her talents to a broader audience throughout Europe."

The BreedWise and UC Davis European Plant Breeding Academy cooperation continues by offering its second class, beginning in October 2011. For application information please visit www.pba.ucdavis.edu.

Congratulation to Idy van Leeuwen and BreedWise on a significant milestone in plant breeding education. To learn more about BreedWise visit: www.BreedWise.nl.

The Plant Breeding Academy was developed by the Seed Biotechnology Center in direct response to industry concerns over the reduced number of plant breeders being trained in academic programs. To- date, 36 plant breeders have completed the PBA and 30 additional students are participating in the Plant Breeding Academies. The director of the Plant Breeding Academy is Dr. Rale Gjuric. More information on the Plant Breeding Academy can be obtained at <http://pba.ucdavis.edu>.

