

**XIII International Congress
Update!**

The next International Congress on Molecular Plant-Microbe Interactions will be held in Sorrento, Italy in 2007. Preregistration begins July 2006, with abstracts due by February 2007. Details on page 5.

Farewell, Thomas Baum

After two years as member editor of the IS-MPMI Reporter, Thomas Baum will be moving on to chair the Department of Plant Pathology at Iowa State University. Thank you for your hard work and dedication to our Society!

**IS-MPMI REPORTER
DEADLINE****Deadline for submitting items
for the next issue is April 17, 2006.**

Submission of materials as electronic files, either on disk or as e-mail attachments, will speed processing. For information on submitting electronic images contact Joel Berg at jberg@scisoc.org.

**Until a new editor-in-chief
is named, please send your
submissions to:**

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**Mérida Aftermath—
A Message from the Congress Organizer**

Federico Sanchez at the XII International Congress on Molecular Plant-Microbe Interactions.

At last, after two major hurricanes—two of the most destructive in the Caribbean region in decades—and many discouraging incidents, the XII International Congress on Molecular Plant-Microbe Interactions was held from Wednesday, December 14 to Sunday, December 19, 2005, in the beautiful and peaceful city of Mérida in Yucatán, Mexico.

We had around 160 presentations in plenary, concurrent, and minisymposia sessions. Additionally, over 450 posters were displayed during the entire congress.

We had 538 total attendees from around the world: 6 from Argentina, 8 from Australia, 9 from Belgium, 1 from the Czech Republic, 10 from Brazil, 30 from Canada, 2 from Colombia, 3 from Denmark, 1 from Finland, 36 from France, 27 from Germany, 1 from Israel, 6 from Italy, 33 from Japan, 10 from Korea, 65 from Mexico, 3 from New Zealand, 37 from The Netherlands, 1

each from Poland, Peru, and Russia, 10 from Spain, 1 from South Africa, 2 from Sweden, 7 from Switzerland, 41 from the U.K., 185 from the U.S.A., and 1 from Venezuela.

We had a feast of great science with topics including many reports on i) receptors, new and exciting key elements in the signaling pathways leading to plant resistance for viral, viroid, bacterial, and fungal pathogen infections, and the robustness of the plant innate immune system; ii) novel plant receptors, new signaling molecules and downstream signaling elements participating in the establishment of a successful symbiotic relationship of plants with *Rhizobium* with mycorrhizal fungi, and nematodes; and iii) new bacterial and fungal effectors injected into the plant. A plenary session on the animal innate immune response was a highlight.

The fact that this congress actually happened and was a scientific success is due to the strong will and commitment of many members of the IS-MPMI Society and attendees who came to Mérida in spite of added personal and economic costs because of the hurricanes. This is a clear sign of the scientific robustness and maturity of the MPMI community, which defeated extremely adverse conditions and the temptation to surrender.

In fact, this congress represented the integration of valuable individual efforts. Thanks to those who wrote grants for student scholarships; who took as a personal task, far beyond duty, twice printing and pasting the book of abstracts; who enthusiastically organized a workshop for young scientists in careers choices and opportunities; and those who wrote and collected funds from governmental and private, local and international agencies. Thanks to the IS-MPMI headquarters' staff, the authorities of UNAM and CINVESTAV, the two major educational institutions in Mexico who partially supported the Congress and to colleagues from CICY, the local research center in Mérida. Thanks to our local committee, to the excellent secretarial support from Teresa Castillo,

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Images from the XII International Congress on Molecular Plant-Microbe Interactions

Pictures taken by the professional photographer at the Congress are available for viewing online at www.ismpmi.org/meetings/. If you would like a high resolution copy of any of the photos, e-mail Jonathan Walton at walton@msu.edu.



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and to our students and young scientists, who enthusiastically assisted the sessions. Thanks to those colleagues involved in collecting and editing the congress proceedings, and thanks to many heroic individual actions that contributed to the fulfillment of this major task. Last but not least, a special mention to those colleagues, students, and postdoctoral scientists who came to Cancun in July and, in the end, could not make it to Mérida in December because of health, adverse weather conditions, or other personal and economic reasons but who, nevertheless, invested effort, time, and money. In some cases, refunds of registration fees were not requested, as a conscious, altruistic contribution to sustain the congress. All these individual efforts and donations were extremely valuable because this congress experienced double expenses and was produced with half the resources originally planned and received for the Cancun event.

From Jonathan Walton, immediate past president of IS-MPMI:

"It is hard to add anything to Federico's heartfelt synopsis of the meeting. Rarely has one person done so much in the interest of our scientific community. From all of the Congress attendees and members of IS-MPMI, thank you, Federico."

The true success of this congress was the strengthening of the unity and respect that each sector of our community has for each other, the value of which should be conserved, enhanced, and cultivated; we all need to listen and appreciate each other's work, a success in the plant-pathogen interaction field is a success and opportunity for everyone in the plant-symbiotic interaction field.

In summary, I deeply thank each one of you who invested additional effort, with enthusiasm and commitment, to make this congress a successful scientific event and thanks to Carmen Quinto, my wife and colleague—who actively stood by me and not only survived two hurricanes but my temper too!

See you in Sorrento, in two years!
Federico Sanchez.