

SIXTH FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME
THEMATIC PRIORITY 5
FOOD QUALITY AND SAFETY



ResistVir

Co-ordination of Research on genetic resistance to plant Pathogenic Virus, and their
Vectors in European Crops

Project number: FOOD-CT-2005-006961

Co-ordination Action

Analysis of effectiveness of the International Conference on
“Genetic control of plant pathogenic viruses and their vectors:
Toward new resistance strategies”

Organisation name of lead contractor: **CSIC**

1. Antecedents

The International Conference (IC) on "Genetic control of plant pathogenic viruses and their vectors: towards new resistance strategies" was celebrated in El Puerto de Santa María, Cádiz, Spain, from 23 to 27 November 2008.

The IC was part of the activities of the Co-ordination Action (CA) ResistVir, funded by the European Commission under the Framework Programme Six, Priority Area Food Quality and Safety (Contract No: FOOD-CT-2005-06961. Start: 1st February 2005, end: 31st January 2009).

Additional support was provided by the following sponsors:

- Ministerio de Ciencia e Innovacion (Spain). <http://web.micinn.es>
- Instituto Nacional de Investigación y Tecnología Agraria y Alimentaria (INIA). <http://www.inia.es>
- Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Cientificas (CSIC). <http://www.csic.es>
- Junta de Andalucía. <http://www.juntadeandalucia.es>
- Ayuntamiento de El Puerto de Santa Maria. <http://www.elpuertodesantamaria.es>
- Patronato Provincial de Turismo de Cádiz. <http://www.cadizturismo.com>
- Zeta Seeds. <http://www.zetaseeds.com>
- Seminis Vegetables Seeds. <http://www.seminis.es>

Information about the project can be found in the project webpage (<http://www.resistvir-db.org/index.htm>), where a page with specific information about the IC is also included (http://www.resistvir-db.org/conference_2008.htm).

2. International Conference Organisation

The organisation of the International Conference was responsibility of ResistVir partner 36 (CSIC) with assistance from the rest of ResistVir partners.

An Organising Committee composed by local scientists with expertise in the area and with the participation of Dr. Florence Poey (INRA-Avignon) was appointed in January 2008, with the task of assisting the three CSIC participants in charge of the organization (Dr. Alberto Fereres, CCMA-CSIC, Dr. Miguel Aranda, CEBAS-CSIC, and Dr Juan Jose López-Moya, IBMB-CSIC). The Organising Committee was composed by:

- Alberto Fereres, *Chair*
- Miguel Aranda
- Juan José López-Moya
- Eduardo Rodríguez Bejarano
- Fernando Ponz
- Jesús Navas-Castillo
- Ana Grande-Pérez
- Florence Poey

A Scientific Committee with participation of ResistVir members as well as other distinguished scientists with broad experience was also appointed in January 2008. They have dealt with the elaboration of the programme, the acceptance of submitted abstracts, the selection of oral communications and other scientific aspects of the organisation, including chairing of sessions. The following scientists constituted the Scientific Committee of the Conference:

- Carole Caranta
- John Carr
- Denis Fargette
- Victor Gaba
- Margit Laimer da Camara Machado
- Hervé Lecoq
- Olivier Le Gall
- Andy Maule
- Emanuela Noris
- Peter Palukaitis
- Alan Schulman
- Mark Tepfer
- Lesley Torrance
- Jari Valkonen
- Michael Wasseneger
- Alberto Fereres
- Juan José López-Moya
- Miguel Aranda

A list of specialists in the different topics selected for the scientific programme of the Conference were invited to deliver keynote lectures to introduce the different sections or talks in specific topics of outstanding interest. The invited speakers list included the following names:

- David Baulcombe
- Stéphane Blanc
- Carole Caranta
- Santiago F. Elena
- Nam Hai Chua
- Owain Edwards
- Fernando García-Arenal
- Peter Moffett
- Enrique Moriones
- Marcel Prins
- Uwe Sonnewald

International Conference indicators

Number of attendants to the Conference: 157 from 17 countries (See annex 1 for a list of attendants).

Number of symposia: 5, distributed into 9 sessions. Each session consisted in one keynote lecture (40 minutes) and 5 talks (20 minutes). The list of symposia includes the following topics:

- i-Important/emergent plant virus diseases
- ii-Factors required for virus multiplication and spread
- iii-Plant responses to viruses and their vectors
- iv-New approaches to control plant viruses and their vectors
- v-Resistance durability

Number of keynote lectures: 9, plus one invited talk (Dr. Santiago Elena), one lecture in the Technology Transfer Round Table (Dr. Marcel Prins), and one presentation of ResistVir document (Dr. Andy Maule).

Total number of scientific oral communications scheduled: 46.

Two poster sessions were also celebrated to present and discuss the rest of communications (46 posters distributed in the different symposia).

A Technology Transfer Round Table was also celebrated, with participation of 5 companies that presented their activities.

The Conference included at the beginning a presentation of the ResistVir project and database to the audience, and the presentation of the ResistVir document on "Suggested guidelines and recommendations for future research policy" at its conclusion.

Post-Conference survey

A survey consisting of three questions with quantifiable answers (0 to 5 rank) and a free-style query about the IC was sent to 136 e-mail addresses of participants. The questions included in the survey were:

1 - Have you found interesting for your work this IC?

(please rank from 0=no interest to 5=maximum interest)

2 - Could you evaluate the overall quality of the scientific contributions to the IC?

(from 0=little value to 5=outstanding)

3 - Would you consider appealing for your activities to continue interacting with colleagues/partners in this sort of conferences?

(from 0=of no interest to 5=of greatest interest)

4 - Please add your comments and overall assessment of the IC

Forty six replies were received during the first fortnight after the meeting and were included in the numerical analysis. Although some participants preferred to express their opinions by other means, mainly direct conversation with the organisers after the Conference, only formal messages answering the questions indicated above were considered in the analysis.

The quantification of the responses to the three rankeable questions is listed in the following table:

Question	Ranking position (5-0)						Average score
	5	4	3	2	1	0	
1	32	13	1	-	-	-	4.67
2	24	19	3	-	-	-	4.45
3	39	7	-	-	-	-	4.84

Categorizing the answers in three groups, the proportion of answers is distributed as follows:

Interest of the IC (question 1):

98 % of the respondents considered it a Conference of high interest (ranking 5-4), with near 69 % giving the higher rank (maximum interest). Only 1 of the respondents (< 2%) considered a medium interest (3-2) for the IC, and none of the respondents found the IC of low interest (1-0).

Quality of the contributions (question 2):

93 % of the respondents believed that the contributions were of high quality, distributed in 56-44% for the two higher categories (ranking 5-4, respectively), followed by 7 % of

respondents that believed that the average quality of the Conference was medium (3-2). None considered the option of low quality (1-0).

The appealness of possible future conferences with similar format and topic was inquired through the question 3. In this case, all respondents (100%) considered of high interest for them a future conference similar to the present one, with 85% of them selecting the maximum interest option.

Regarding the free-style comments offered in the fourth point, only a few respondents included a short paragraph, with rather variable comments ranging from acknowledgment to the organizers, explicit mentions to the best lectures, or suggestions for improving the format of the Conference. Interestingly, a few answers compared the IC with other scientific events in the past (e.g. EMBO meetings on Plant Virology), highlighting its overall comparative quality.

Analysis of the responses to the post-conference survey

As mentioned, the interest of the Conference for the different participants (question 1) was very high, but some minor differences were observed attending to the specialization of some of the respondents: whereas most virologists found the interest of the IC to be maximum, the evaluation was slightly lower for other scientist, such as more general plant biologists or breeders. This difference probably reveals that the focus of the Conference could have been slightly deviated towards virology, a logical consequence of being organised in the framework of the ResistVir project. Nevertheless, the question about possible future events (question 3) is valued for the whole group of respondents (100%) as very useful, and this clearly indicates that the interaction with other scientists in the field, in this case both virologists and plant biologists/breeders as well as stakeholders from the industry, is considered highly positive and should be encouraged.

The question about quality (question number 2) also revealed a high overall rank for the presentations, but in this case some minor differences existed. Particularly some of the invited speakers' talks were cited as outstanding for some respondents, a fact which might preclude giving an overall top assessment to other oral or poster presentations. Considering that the format of the Conference included both keynote speeches, carefully selected in terms of quality to be delivered by top scientists and shorter presentations chosen from the submitted abstracts, we can conclude that the task of the Scientific Committee in selecting oral communications was accomplished with reasonable success, a fact that has contributed to the general fulfilment of expectations.

Concluding remarks

The answers to the survey offered a global positive evaluation of the IC from the participants that responded. This was evaluated in terms of interest (question 1) and quality (question 2), both headings receiving ranks indicative of a high satisfaction. The possibility of participation in a similar event in the future (question 3) was evaluated even better, emphasizing the readiness of the scientific community involved in the topic to continue interacting in case there are further opportunities to do so.

Although a systematic bias toward favourable responses could have been introduced by the fact that the answers were not anonymous (respondents answered the survey using their e-mail identification, and directly to the organisers), the high number of responses and their coincidental assessment suggests that the satisfaction after the conference was almost general. Indeed a few of the free-style comments identified minor weaknesses in the organisation according to the authors of the comment (such as the shortness of breaks between sessions, for instance), that did not affect the high expression of interest, quality and future prospects for the same attendants.

The effectiveness of the Conference in terms of future collaborative works is probably too early to be evaluated, but there are at least several points that deserve to be mentioned: firstly, the role of the European scientific community among the leading forces in the field was confirmed; and also, the ResistVir project has been situated after the Conference in a pivotal position to gather the scientific efforts in the field of research on resistance against plant viruses and their vectors in Europe.

Annex 1

List of participants in the International Conference

SURNAME	NAME
Abad Martín	Jesús
Accotto	Gian Paolo
Adcock	Mike
Aguilar	Juan
Albar	Laurence
Amari	Khalid
Anfoka	Ghandi
Aramburu	Jose
Aranda Regules	Miguel
Arroyo Mateos	Manuel
Ashby	Jamie
Baulcombe	David
Bellón Doña	Daniel
Bencharki	Bouchaib
Blanc	Stéphane
Bonnet	Grégori
Bragard	Claude
Brown	Judith
Burgyan	Jozsef
Caciagli	Piero
Canto	Tomás
Cañizares Nolasco	Carmen
Caranta	Carole
Carr	John
Castillo Mateo	Paloma
Cillo	Fabrizio
Decroocq	Véronique
Degli Esposti	Giovanna
Desbiez	Cecile
Díaz Pendon	Juan Antonio
Dintinger	Jacques
Dogimont	Catherine
Donaire	Livia
Drechsler	Nadine
Drucker	Martin
Edwards	Owain
Elena Fito	Santiago
Ertunc	Filiz
Fabre	Frédéric
Faoro	Franco
Farasch-Hamacher	Fariba
Fargette	Denis
Fereres	Alberto
Fernández-Calvino	Lourdes
Fernández-Fueyo	Elena

Fraile Pérez	Aurora
Gaba	Victor
Galipienso Torregrosa	Luis
Gallitelli	Donato
Gal-On	Amit
García Andrés	Susana
García-Arenal Rodríguez	Fernando
German- Retana	Sylvie
Giner Rubio	Ana
Gómez	Gustavo
Gómez Aix	Cristina
Gómez López	Pedro
Gonçalves	Marcos
González Ibeas	Daniel
Hai Chua	Nam
Hamacher	Joachim
Hanssen	Inge
Havelda	Zoltan
Hebrard- Vasseur	Eugenie
Heinlein	Manfred
Hernando Saiz	Yolanda
Hristova	Dimitrinka
Inoue-Nagata	Alice Kazuko
Jupin	Isabelle
Kassem	Mona
Koning	Sonja
Kooter	Jan M.
Krczal	Gabi
Kuehne	Thomas
Laimer	Margit
Lapidot	Moshe
Lázaro	Asunción
Lecoq	Hervé
Legall	Olivier
Legorburu	Javier
Lemaire	Olivier
López Abella	Dionisio
López-Moya Gómez	Juan José
Lozano Cubo	Gloria M ^a
MacFarlane	Stuart
Mansilla	Carmen
Martínez Arias	Germán
Martín-Hernández	Ana Montserrat
Mascia	Tiziana
Maule	Andrew
Mayor	Patricia
Mazier	Marianne
Medina	Vicente
Mendonça	Duarte

Moffett	Peter
Monci	Francisco
Moreno	Aranzazu
Moriones	Enrique
Morrioni	Marco
Moury	Benoit
Navarro Bohigues	José Antonio
Navarro Sempere	Raquel
Navas-Castillo	Jesús
Noris	Emanuela
Ordon	Frank
Ouibrahim	Laurence
Pallas Benet	Vicente
Palukaitis	Peter
Pantaleo	Vitantonio
Pérez Luna	Ana Isabel
Poey	Florence
Polák	Jaroslav
Ponz	Fernando
Poulicart	Nils
Prins	Marcel
Pujol	Marta
Quilis	Jordi
Resende	Renato
Revers	Frédéric
Revollon	Sébastien
Ritzenthaler	Christophe
Rodríguez Bejarano	Eduardo
Rodríguez Hernández	Ana Margarita
Salava	Jaroslav
Sánchez	Florentina
Sánchez Pina	M ^a Amelia
Sardo	Luca
Schellenberger	Pascale
Schulman	Alan
Schurdi-Levraud	Valerie
Shaw	Jane
Simón Mateo	Carmen
Sonnewald	Uwe
Spak	Josef
Staniulis	Juozas
Sturbois	Benedicte
Taliansky	Michael
Tavazza	Mario
Tepfer	Mark
Torrance	Lesley
Touriño	Ángeles
Truniger	Verónica
Truve	Erkki

Valkonen	Jari
Velders	Renate
Walsh	John
Wassenegger	Michael
Westwood	Jack
Wetzel	Thierry
Yin	Zhimin
Ziegler-Graff	Veronique
Zimnoch-Guzowska	Ewa