

**International Research Initiative for Wheat Improvement
Kick-off meeting, Paris, September 15, 2011
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The official launch of the International Research Initiative for Wheat Improvement (hereafter called Wheat Initiative), adopted by the G20 agricultural ministers last June, took place on the 15th of September at the French Ministry of Agriculture. This meeting brought together 125 attendees coming from 24 different countries (see list of attendees in appendix 1), including 56 scientists, 46 representatives from countries or institutions, 22 representatives from private companies and other stakeholders, and one science journalist. This very large audience illustrated the interest of the different categories of stakeholders worldwide (research community, funding and research organisations, agro-industry, growers associations), as well as of different countries that send representatives to the meeting. The organisers and speakers of the meeting were thanked and congratulated for the quality of the organisation, talks and discussions.

After a welcome address by the French Ministry of Agriculture, Bruno Le Maire, and a general introduction given by Marion Guillou (INRA CEO) on the future of agricultural research, 6 scientific leaders from different countries and background (HJ Braun, CIMMYT-Mexico; I. Sharma, ICAR-India; J. Dubcowsky, Uni. Davis-USA; C. Feuillet, INRA-France; I. King, Uni. Nottingham-UK; P. Langridge, ACPFG-Australia) gave very inspiring talks on the challenges faced by the world scientific community working on wheat (see programme in appendix 2). These talks insisted on the urgent need to increase wheat production at the world level to answer the needs of the growing population and ensure food security despite of global change. They identified major bottlenecks to overcome in the years to come and addressed the main areas of research necessitating cooperation between countries, i.e. genetics, genomics and agronomy. They insisted on the importance of collaborative research at the international level and the need to share genetic resources, data, methods and knowledge to answer the challenges more efficiently. They also emphasized the need for a more significant funding of wheat research globally to diminish the discrepancy between the importance of wheat as a major staple in the world and the current low investment in wheat research and development. Each talk was followed by a short but very lively discussion with the audience.

Hélène Lucas (INRA, France) presented then the rationale of the Wheat Initiative, its aims and scope, and how it will complement and add value to the ongoing research efforts on wheat in different countries and in the frame of the CGIAR global WHEAT programme. A governance framework and means to ensure self-funding of the initiative were proposed for discussion to the assembly (see presentation in appendix 3). The originality of the Wheat Initiative lies on the links it will create between the research community and the funders at the international level. In addition to a better understanding of the strategic orientations and funding needs recommended by the research community, improved knowledge among the funders of their current investments and future plans and the opportunity to work together will add value and is likely to enhance long term funding of wheat research.

The general discussion was opened by S. Visscher (BBSRC, UK), G. Riba (INRA, France) and H. Braun (CIMMYT, Mexico), who expressed their expectations for the Wheat Initiative and their views on how it will help wheat research on a global scale. The participants to the meeting underlined the importance of the Wheat Initiative and agreed with its general objectives and the organisation framework. It was stated that the private and public research shared common interest and that the Wheat Initiative provided an interesting framework to collaborate more closely despite of the concerns raised by ownership and intellectual property.

The composition of the Interim Scientific Board was not questioned, although it seemed important to complete it with an expert in agronomy/cropping systems. Farmers/growers associations were asked to be included in the Research Committee, and it was mentioned that it would be important to find ways to involve the chain value industry into wheat research funding.

Specific contributions from the audience emphasized the need to identify major gaps to set up a truly international strategy and to focus on specific points at the beginning of the Wheat Initiative in order to achieve results in the five first years of its existence. Free data access and the building of a centralised information system for wheat research were identified as a one of the areas in which an international effort with long-term commitment should be made immediately. An Expert Working Group dedicated to this topic will be set up rapidly.

The need for a specific budget for the Wheat Initiative was recognised, covering in particular the running costs of the Scientific Board and the organisation of workshops, in addition to the creation of a website (that will be used as a means of communication and will provide work space for the different committees) and the salaries of the scientific coordinator and assistant(s) that will be provided as in-kind contribution by INRA, BBSRC and CIMMYT in the first 4 years of the initiative. The contributions suggested per participating country and per year (10 000 € for G20/OECD countries and 2 000 € for non G20/OECD countries) was found appropriate. It was suggested that private companies should contribute according to their size (20 000 – 5 000 €).

Due to the large differences in the organisation of the national research and funding systems in different countries, it was decided to let each participating country decide which organisation will contribute financially to the Wheat Initiative, given that this financial contribution will open access to representation in the Research Committee and in the Institutions' Coordination Committee. A request will be addressed by the Scientific Coordinator to the G20 Agricultural Ministries to identify the national organisation(s) that will contribute the annual membership fee to the Wheat Initiative, and to which an invoice will be addressed. A scientific leader who will represent the collective view of the national research community in the Research Committee will be identified in each country, the name and contact address of whom will have to be sent to the Scientific Coordinator with an official letter of designation by the competent authorities before the end of 2011.

Appendix 1: WHEAT iNITIATIVE kick-off meeting , Paris, September 15, final list of attendees

First Name	Last Name	Country	Organisation	Position
Viviana	ECHENIQUE	Argentina	CERZOS (CONICET)	Principal Investigator
Marcelo	HELGUERA	Argentina	National Institute of Agricultural Technology (INTA)	Researcher in applied wheat genomics
Arturo José	MARTINEZ	Argentina	National Scientific and Technological Research Council (CONICET)	Global Programs Coordinator
Peter	LANGRIDGE	Australia	Australian Centre for Plant Functionnal Genomics	Director
Bruce	LEE	Australia	CSIRO	Director, Food Futures Flagship
Vince	LOGAN	Australia	Grains Research Developpement Collaboration	Executive Manager Commercial
Matthew	MORELL	Australia	CSIRO	Theme Leader (future Grains) Food Futures Flagship
Alastair	ROBERTSON	Australia	CSIRO	Group Executive
Deb	CARSTOIU	Belgium	CropLife International	Director of Communications
Pieter	OUWERKERK	Belgium	Bayer CropScience	Groupleader Genetics
Gijs	SCHILTHUIS	Belgium	European Commission DG AGRI	Market officer
Annette	SCHNEEGANS	Belgium	European Commission, DG Research and Innovation	
Ana Christina	SAGEBIN ALBUQUERQUE	Brazil	Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation – Embrapa Wheat	Head of Research and Development
Chris	BARKER	Canada	Genome Prairie	Project Manager
Gilles	SAINDON	Canada	Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada	Director General, Science Centres, Research Branch
Dongxin	FENG	China	Department of International Cooperation Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CAAS)	Deputy Director General
Huajun	TANG	China	Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CAAS)	Vice President
Xueyong	ZHANG	China	Institute of Crop Sciences, Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CAAS)	Professor
Jaroslav	DOLEZEL	Czech Republic	Institute of Experimental Botany, Olomouc	Head of Research Centre
Ivana	PAVLICKOVA	Czech Republic	Ambassade de la République tchèque	European affairs
John	PORTER	Denmark	Department of agriculture and ecology	Professor of Agroecology
Erkki	TRUVE	Estonia	Tallinn University of Technology	Vice rector
Michael	ALAUX	France	INRA	Wheat bioinformatics project manager
Gilles	AUMONT	France	INRA	Head of International Scientific Partnerships
François	BALFOURIER	France	INRA	Scientist
Evelyne	BARBIN	France	INRA	PA Head of Genetics and Plant Breeding Division
Pascal	BERGERET	France	Ministry of Agriculture	Sous Directeur de l'Innovation
Grégoire	BERTHE	France	Pôle de compétitivité Céréales Vallée	General Director
Antoine	BESSE	France	INRA	Adjoint au Directeur
James	BULLOCK	France	Australian Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries	Advisor (Agriculture)
Gilles	CHARMET	France	INRA	Scientist
Lidia	CHAVINSKAIA	France	INRA	International Relations
Anne	DELAUNAY	France	INRA	Manager
Caroline	DESSELAS	France	Ministry of Agriculture	Chargée de Minissson "Coordination Recherche"
Jean-Charles	DESWARTE	France	Arvalis	Crop Physiologist
Pierre	DEVAUX	France	Florimond Desprez	Head, Biotechnology Department
Raphaël	DUMAIN	France	Bayer CropScience	Global Project Manager - Wheat
Sylvie	DUTRIEZ	France	Caussade Semences	Wheat breeder
Sébastien	FAURE	France	BIOGEMMA	Scientist
Philippe	FELDMANN	France	ANR	Programme Officer
Catherine	FEUILLET	France	INRA	Principal Investigator
Pascal	GIRAUDEAU	France	SECOBRA Recherches	Research Manager - Wheat Breeder
Jacques	GUEGUEN	France	INRA	Head of BIA Research Unit
Laurent	GUERREIRO	France	ARVALIS institut du vegetal	Head of the biotechnology department
Fabienne	GUILLO	France	INRA	Scientist
Marion	GUILLOU	France	INRA	CEO
François	HOCHEREAU	France	INRA	Senior Researcher
François	HOULLIER	France	INRA	Deputy Director General
Benoit	JALLAIS	France	INRA	Scientist
Crystel	L'HERBIER	France	ARVALIS Institut du végétal	Chargée d'études
Xavier	LACAZE	France	Arvalis	Engineer
Stéphane	LAFARGE	France	BIOGEMMA	Project leader
Jacques	LE GOUIS	France	INRA	Scientist
Elise	LECLERCQ	France	GNIS	International relation service
Josiane	LORGEOU	France	ARVALIS Institut du végétal	
Hélène	LUCAS	France	INRA	Head of the Genetics and Plant Breeding Division
Valérie	LULLIEN-PELLERIN	France	INRA	Scientist
Jenetha	MAHLANGU	France	South African Embassy	Minister-Councillor : Agriculture
Pierre	MARTRE	France	INRA	Scientist
Jean-Yves	MERCHEZ	France	Dow AgroSciences	European Seeds & Traits R&D Leader
Mathias	MONDY	France	Bayer CropScience	Global Market Acceptance Manager
Alain	MURIGNEUX	France	Limagrain Europe	Head of Native Trait and Genetic resources
Etienne	PAUX	France	INRA	Junior scientist
Philippe	PIPRAUD	France	Ministry of Agriculture	"Development and international organisations" unit
Véronique	PLANCHOT	France	INRA	Scientist
Hadi	QUESNEVILLE	France	INRA	Head of research unit in genomics info (URGI)
Guy	RIBA	France	INRA	Vice President
Olivier	ROBERT	France	FLORIMOND DESPREZ	Directeur Centre Innovation et integration des Biotechnologies (C2iB)
Pierre	ROUMET	France	INRA	Durum Wheat Geneticist
Philippe	ROUX	France	FSOV Gnis	Secrétaire général
Gérard	THOMAS	France	Syngenta	Technical Director
Nicolas	TRIFT	France	Ministry of Agriculture	Conseiller technique
Martin	GANAL	Germany	TraitGenetics GmbH	Managing Director
Victor	KORZUN	Germany	KWS LOCHOW GMBH	Head of cereals Biotechnology
Friedrich	LONGIN	Germany	University of Hohenheim	Head of Wheat Breeding and Research

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First Name	Last Name	Country	Organisation	Position
Frank	ORDON	Germany	Julius Kuehn-Institute (JKI), Federal Research Centre for Cultivated Plants, Institute for Resistance Research and Stress Tolerance	Director and Professor
Marion	RÖDER	Germany	Leibniz Institute for Plant Genetics and Crop Plant Research (IPK)	Research group leader
Nils	STEIN	Germany	IPK Gatersleben	Principal Investigator
Zoltan	BEDO	Hungary	Agricultural Research Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences	Director
Indu	SHARMA	India	Directorate of Wheat Research	Project Director
Ratan	TIWARI	India	Directorate of Wheat Research	Principal scientist
Rita	ACQUISTUCCI	Italy	National Institute of Research on Food and Nutrition	Senior Technologist
Pier Giacomo	BIANCHI	Italy	INRAN-ENSE	Head General Affairs
Marina	CARCEA	Italy	National Research Institute on Food and Nutrition (INRAN)	Senior Technologist, Director of the Cereals Programme
Luigi	CATTIVELLI	Italy	CRA Agricultural Research Council of Italy	Director Genomics Research Centre
Patrizia	GALEFFI	Italy	ENEA	Senior scientist
Hirokazu	HANDA	Japan	National Institute of Agrobiological Sciences	Professor, Head of Research Planning Section
Masaru	IWANAGA	Japan	Japan International Research Center for Agricultural Sciences (JIRCAS)	President
Shuhei	NASUDA	Japan	Kyoto University	Assistant professor
Shunsuke	ODA	Japan	National Institute of Crop Science	Wheat and Barley Research Division Director
Yasunari	OGIHARA	Japan	Kihara Institute for Biological Research, Yokohama City University	Professor
Abdullah	ALSALMAN	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	King Abdulaziz City for Science and Technology	Scientist
Majed	ALBOKARI	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	King Abdulaziz City for Science and Technology	Head of Research Centre
Pedro	BRAJCICH	Mexico	NATIONAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE FOR FORESTRY, CROPS AND LIVESTOCK	Director general
Hans-Joachim	BRAUN	Mexico	CIMMYT	Director Global Wheat Program
Salvador	FERNANDEZ-RIVERA	Mexico	National Institute for Forestry, Crops and Livestock Research	Coordinator of Research, Innovation and Partnerships
Jong-Nae	HYUN	Republic of Korea	RDA(Rural Development Administration)	Senior researcher
Liudmila	BESPALOVA	Russia	Krasnodar Scientific Research Institute of Agriculture named after P.P. Lukyanenko (KSRIA)	Chief breeder
Anatoly	SIMONOV	Russia	Russian Academy of Agricultural Sciences	Chief specialist of Foreign Relations Department
David	NEVILL	Switzerland	Syngenta	Head of Cereals R&D
Michael	BAUM	Syria	International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA)	Director, Biodiversity & Integrated Gene Management (BIGM) Program
Hikmet	Budak	Turkey	Sabanci University	Professor
Emin	DONMEZ	Turkey	General Directorate of agricultural Researches	Head of Breeding Department
Rukiye	SAHIN	Turkey	Turkish Grain Board (TMO)	Expert
Ali Osman	SARI	Turkey	General Directorate of agricultural Researches and politics	Head of Field Crops
Sacha	ALLEN	UK	University of Bristol	Post-doctoral researcher
Farhana	AMIN	UK	Department for Environmental, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)	Higher Scientific Officer
Mario	CACCAMO	UK	The Genome Analysis Centre	Head of Bioinformatics
Simon	GRIFFITHS	UK	John Innes Centre	Project leader
Julie	KING	UK	University of Nottingham	Lecturer in crop genomics
Ian	KING	UK	University of Nottingham	Scientist
Rowan	McKIBBIN	UK	BBSRC	Deputy Head International Relations Unit
Maurice	MOLONEY	UK	Rothamsted Research	Director
Donal	O'SULLIVAN	UK	National Institute of Agricultural Botany	Research Programme Leader
Martin	PARRY	UK	Rothamsted Research	Head of Dept of Plant Science
Anna	PETHERICK	UK	Nature Climate Change	Writer and editor
Jane	ROGERS	UK	The Genome Analysis Centre	Director
Peter	SHEWRY	UK	Rothamsted Research	Director Centre for Crop Genetic Research
Richard	SUMMERS	UK	RAGT 2N	European Cereal Breeding Manager
Steeve	VISSCHER	UK	BBSRC	Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Operating Officer
Jane	DE MARCHI	USA	National Association of Wheat Growers	Director of Government Affairs for Research and Technology
Jorge	DUBCOVSKY	USA	Univ. California, Davis	Professor and leader of the wheat breeding programme
Kellye	EVERSOLE	USA	IWGSC, International Wheat Genome Sequencing Consortium	Executive Director
Kay	SIMMONS	USA	Agricultural Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture	Deputy Administrator, Crop Production and Protection, Office of National Programs
Mark	SORRELLS	USA	Cornell University	Professor of Plant Breeding & Genetics

**Launch of the International Research Initiative for Wheat
Improvement**

**Ministry of Agriculture, Food, Fisheries, Rural Development
and Territorial Planning**

**78 rue de Varenne, Paris, France
15th September 2011, 9:30-17:30**

Gambetta Conference room

- Final programme -

9h00 - Registration and coffee

9h30 - Welcome

Bruno Le Maire (French Agricultural Minister)

9h40 - Introduction : What future for Agricultural Research

Marion Guillou (INRA CEO, France)

Major challenges for wheat research – Session 1

Chair: *Michael Baum (ICARDA)*

10h00 - Wheat to feed the world

Hans-Joachim Braun (CIMMYT, Mexico)

10h30 - Wheat production in South-Asia and adaptation to climate change

Indu Sharma (ICAR, India)

11h00 - What has wheat to offer to the general science community?

Jorge Dubcosky (University Davis, USA)

11h30 - What genomics can contribute to wheat research

Catherine Feuillet (INRA, France)

12h00 – 13h30 : Lunch

Major challenges for wheat research – Session 2

Chair: *Mark Sorrels (Cornell University, USA)*

13h30 - Exploiting wheat genetic diversity in science and breeding

Ian King (University of Nottingham, UK)

14h00 - Measuring and assessing wheat phenotypes - Future of wheat breeding

Peter Langridge (ACPF, Australia)

15h00-15h15: Coffee break

How will the International Research Initiative for Wheat Improvement (IRIWI) address these challenges?

Chairs: Steve Visscher (BBSRC, UK), Guy Riba (INRA, France), Hans Braun (CIMMYT)

15h15: Presentation of the International Research Initiative for Wheat Improvement - propositions for governance structure and first actions

Hélène Lucas (INRA, France)

15h45: General Discussion

17h30: End of the meeting.