

9th INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF PLANT PATHOLOGY
Healthy and safe food for everybody
Torino – Italy
Sunday 24 - Friday 29 August 2008

The 9th International Congress of Plant Pathology (ICPP2008) was held at the Lingotto Conference Centre of Torino (Italy) from the 24th to the 29th of August 2008.

The event attracted almost 2000 delegates from 87 countries from around the world. There were 270 invited speakers at keynote and concurrent sessions and 1638 offered poster papers, some of which were also shortly presented orally at the 51 concurrent sessions. There were 20 evening sessions and a public discussion forum on "Plant Pathology and Global Food Security, with invited speakers from emerging and industrialized countries.

The congress was held under the High Patronage of the Presidency of the Italian Republic and of the European Parliament, and received the Patronage of the Italian Ministry for Environment, Land and Sea, the Italian Ministry of University and Research, the European Food Safety Authority, the Piedmont Region, the Province of Torino, The City of Torino, the University of Torino and the City of Grugliasco.

During the opening, the delegates were welcomed by Richard Falloon, President of the International Society of Plant Pathology (ISPP), Sergio Roda, Vice-Rector of the University of Torino, Giovanni Martelli, President of ICPP2008, Maria Lodovica Gullino, Chairperson of ICPP2008. The congress was opened by the speech of Corrado Clini, General Director of the Italian Ministry for Environment, Land and Sea and by a lecture Timothy Hall, Acting Director of the DG Biotechnology, Agriculture and Food of the European Commission on "Plant health research in European programmes"

The Congress then proceeded to offer a busy and exciting range of presentations, which covered all disciplines within the field of plant pathology. Stimulating discussions occurred in all sessions. This congress was well supported by sponsors. The principal sponsors were Italian Ministry for Environment, Land and Sea, Piedmont Region, Province of Torino, University of Torino, Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio di Torino, Compagnia di San Paolo, Agroinnova – Centre of Competence for the Innovation in the Agroenvironmental Sector, 8th ICPP, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, ISPP and Dow AgroSciences. Other sponsors included the European Commission, the American Phytopathological Society, the Canadian Phytopathological Society, the Chamber of Commerce of Torino, Syngenta Crop Protection, Bayer CropScience, Isagro Italia, Lufthansa and Rijk Zwaan.

Scientific Programme

The theme of the congress was "Healthy and safe food for everybody". The five keynote sessions were from 0900 to 1030 each day with each containing three speakers.

The key topics were from Monday to Friday:

- The role of plant pathology in food safety and food security
- Host-pathogen interactions and molecular plant pathology
- Diseases of Mediterranean crops and forests
- Recent developments in disease management
- Knowledge and technology transfer for plant pathology

During the week, there were 51 concurrent sessions, mostly with four speakers in each session. One special session was the concurrent CS41, related to "Crop and Food Biosecurity" and sponsored by the European Commission. Another concurrent session, the CS20, related to "Risk assessment of plant pathogens, mycotoxins and plant protection products: a scientific approach to food safety in Europe" was organized and sponsored by the European Food Safety Authority. In addition to the 5 keynote sessions and to the opening session, there were three more plenary sessions. One was organized on Monday August 25 from 19:30 to 22:00 by the ISPP Task Force on Global Food Security on "Plant pathology and global food security". The third plenary session was held on Wednesday August 27 to celebrate the "Centennial of the American Phytopathological Society" and organized by James Cook (Washington State University, Pullman, USA) and Paul Peterson (Clemson University, Florence, USA).

The poster-viewing sessions were vibrant, well attended and informative. The formal oral presentations of selected posters gave several delegates the opportunity to discuss the research in some more detail. In total, there were more than 1600 poster presentations over the display sessions during the week. The abstracts of the invited and offered papers were published on a special issue of the Journal of Plant Pathology of 507 pages (Impact Factor: 0.98), available also on CD-ROM.

Workshops

Associated with the Congress were 3 satellite workshops, held at the Hotel Ambasciatori of Torino. The first workshop, organized by Gloria Abad (North Carolina State University), was the 3rd International *Phytophthora* and *Pythium* Workshop: Integration of traditional and modern approaches for investigating the taxonomy and evolution of *Phytophthora*, *Pythium* and related genera". The second workshop, organized by Geoffrey Dixon (GreenGene International, Gran Bretagna), was the "International Clubroot Working Group (ICWG) meeting: Plasmodiophorids and related organisms". The third one, organized by Lavern Timmer (University of Florida), was dedicated to "*Colletotrichum* Diseases of Fruit Crops".

Bursary Scheme

Thanks to the generosity of several international, national and local institutions, 126 bursaries were offered. The countries receiving the highest number of bursaries were India, China, Thailand, Egypt and Brazil. The single bursaries ranged from 800 to 2,300 €. The contributing institutions were European Commission, NATO, ISPP, Piedmont Region, Fondazione CRT and Compagnia di San Paolo.

Newsletter and Social Programme

A daily newsletter was produced to background delegates on the keynote themes for the day. It also provided information on various attractions around Torino, photographs of delegates and any general notices.

Different social events were offered to the delegates. The welcome reception on Sunday evening provided an opportunity for almost 1000 delegates to meet, talk and taste some exciting food. On the Wednesday night, 600 participants took part to the dinner in the Langhe region, enjoying local food and wine. On Friday night, the Congress dinner, after a wonderful Opera show in the Auditorium of Lingotto Congress Centre, provided a range of Italian foods and a great dance band.

Saturday August 30, four technical excursions were organized in scientifically interesting regions around Torino: one in the Aosta Valley on forest pathology, the second one on horticultural crops in the Saluzzo area, the third one in Pellice Valley on organic farming and Alpine botanical gardens, and the last one on viticulture and wine production in Alba, Langhe and Roero.

Concluding Session

The congress concluded on Friday August 29 with a closing session chaired by Richard Falloon, president of ISPP, that during the plenary passed the presidency to the new president of ISPP, Maria Lodovica Gullino of the University of Torino. During the session, the Jakob Eriksson Prize was assigned by the Swedish Academy of Science to Larry Madden, Ohio State University, that offered a lecture on modern approaches to plant disease forecasting: the case of Fusarium head blight. Finally, the ISPP congress flag was passed to the Chinese delegates who have to arrange the tenth ISPP congress in 2013 in Beijing.

Maria Lodovica Gullino
ISPP President
&
the Local Arrangements Committee
ICPP 2008