

Friday - February 27, 2009



Bayer CropScience and Nature Source Genetics Announce Collaboration for Cotton Enhancement

Partnership expected to bring essential improvements in cotton breeding and variety development

Monheim (Germany) / Ithaca (USA), February 27, 2009 – Bayer CropScience and Nature Source Genetics have entered into an exclusive five year collaboration involving the pre-breeding and enhancement of cotton germplasm. The goal of the collaboration is to identify and to incorporate previously inaccessible genes of interest by making use of innovative technologies to create substantially improved cotton varieties. Financial terms were not disclosed.

The partnership will focus on combining the expertise of Bayer CropScience's cotton breeders and molecular biologists with Nature Source Genetics' technical know-how and their new proprietary bioanalytical platform to identify and utilize the full range of promising genetic material.

Currently, cotton breeders are limited to using only a very small portion of genetic diversity in the cotton genus to develop improved varieties. Identifying useful genetic material from wild and early domesticated forms of cultivated cotton and incorporating it into elite breeding programs is difficult. This cooperation, however, will provide Bayer CropScience researchers with the opportunity to identify high value genes in previously unused genetic material and, more importantly, the opportunity to develop methods for incorporating these new genes into commercial germplasm. It is expected to greatly expand the genetic diversity breeders can incorporate into their programs while minimizing the difficulties that have previously made it impossible to access this unused germplasm.

Bayer CropScience will initially concentrate on the areas of yield improvement, stress resistance – both biotic and abiotic – and fiber quality. However, more traits will be added as the program expands.

"The collaboration between Bayer CropScience and Nature Source Genetics takes cotton breeding to a completely new level, and marks a significant expansion in the strategic scope of our cotton breeding program", said Mike Gilbert, Cotton General Manager at Bayer CropScience. "We have long been committed to making high performing, top quality varieties and state of the art technologies available to the cotton grower. With this partnership, we now have access to tremendous new and valuable sources of genetic diversity in cotton that we can incorporate into our already robust breeding program to further expand and improve the products we offer growers worldwide."

"We are very pleased to be entering into this joint venture with Bayer CropScience for the genetic improvement of cotton. Nature Source Genetics brings to this partnership unique expertise and proprietary algorithms developed within its bioanalytical platform encompassing diverse competencies from life and computational sciences. These competencies will significantly expedite the identification and incorporation of new and useful genetic variation into Bayer Crop Science's cotton breeding material for the development of improved commercial varieties" said Professor Steven D. Tanksley, CEO and Chief Scientific Officer of Nature Source Genetics.

About Bayer CropScience

Bayer is a global enterprise with core competencies in the fields of health care, nutrition and high-tech materials. Bayer CropScience AG, a subsidiary of Bayer AG with annual sales of about EUR 5.8 billion (2007), is one of the world's leading innovative crop science companies in the areas of crop protection, non-agricultural pest control, seeds and plant biotechnology. The company offers an outstanding range of products and extensive service backup for modern, sustainable agriculture and for non-agricultural applications. Bayer Crop-Science has a global workforce of about 17,800 and is represented in more than 120 countries. This and further news is available at: www.newsroom.bayercropscience.com

About Nature Source Genetics

Nature Source Genetics is a company based in Ithaca, New York co-founded in 2006 by Professor Steven D. Tanksley and Dr. Theresa M. Fulton from Cornell University with Dr. Vincent Pétiard, the former Head of Plant Sciences and Technology at Nestlé. Nature Source Genetics offers exclusive services on a crop per crop basis, and is currently working on different field crops and vegetables with agro-seed companies to optimize the benefits of natural genetic diversity in target crops.