

13TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON PLANT PATHOGENIC BACTERIA

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The 13th International Conference on Plant Pathogenic Bacteria (ICPPB) was held during June 2014 in Shanghai, China. This was a conference where phytobacteriologists from all over the world come together, shared their research findings and knowledge, networked and established new collaborations. The theme of this year's conference was on the control of plant pathogenic bacteria for healthy food and life.

The conference had four sessions, namely, 'Omics and evolution', 'Pathogenesis and Regulation', 'Disease resistance and Effector Biology' and 'Taxonomy, Ecology and Control'. Many of the presentations focused on those bacterial species that are of significant importance agriculturally and economically. These included *Pseudomonas syringae*, *Ralstonia solanacearum* and *Xanthomonas scampetris*. However, other notable bacteria such as *Pectobacterium* spp., *Pantoea* spp., *Clavibacter* spp. and *Erwinia* spp., to name a few, were also mentioned in many of the talks. The FABI attendees included Professors Fanus Venter and Teresa Coutinho, Dr. Lucy Moleleki, Tania Weller-Stuart, Phathie Sibanda and Gabrielle Carstensen. Together the FABI contingent gave two oral and five poster presentations at the conference.



Left to right: Pathie Sibanda, Prof. Fanus Venter, Tania Weller-Stuart, Prof. Teresa Coutinho, Gabrielle Carstensen and Dr. Lucy Moleleki

FABI was also well represented at the 3rd *Erwinia* workshop which was held in the two days preceding the ICPPB conference. The focus of the workshop was on soft rot Enterobacteriaceae and related organisms. There were five themes which included 'Taxonomy and Diagnostics', 'Comparative Genomics', 'Molecular Plant-Pathogen Interactions', 'Epidemiology and Ecology' and 'Control and Breeding'. It was a highly informative workshop with specialists in soft rot bacteria from all over the world gathered in one room, sharing ideas and offering advice on ongoing projects and problems.

On one of the days during the conference, the organisers treated the attendees to a sightseeing trip. The day consisted of a visit to Xikou which is the birthplace and home town of the former President of the Republic of China, Chiang Kai-shek. On the way to Xikou the bus drove over one of the longest transoceanic bridges in the world known as the 'Hangzhou Bay Bridge' which is 35.6 km long and is of a fascinating design. The day was spent with delegates and enjoying the beautiful sights near Shanghai.

The conference ended with a very enjoyable and entertaining gala dinner. The entertainment at dinner included the famous mask changer, a ventriloquist and a talented magician. It was clear from all the smiles and cheerful goodbyes that everyone had enjoyed the conference and that we were all leaving Shanghai not only with fresh ideas and new perspectives but also with new friends from all over the world.



Group photo of ICPPB 2014 attendees