



## BIGMAP HOSTS INTERNATIONAL EXPERT CONSULTATION

by Regina Hendrickson

**T**wenty-six participants from around the world attended the Proposed Knowledge Base on Genetically Modified Agricultural Products Expert Consultation held April 19-20, 2007, in the High Tech Room of the Seed Science Center at Iowa State University.

Scientists and industry leaders from Tanzania, Kenya, Brazil, China, Argentina, Canada, Italy, the United Kingdom, and the United States took part in the event, which consisted of a series of open discussions directed towards assessing the value of developing a comprehensive Knowledge Base (KB) on Genetically Modified Agricultural Products (GMAPs). Focusing on transformed plants and animals, the proposed database would provide information about the expressed traits and products of GMAPs. It would also serve as a tool to communicate knowledge about the safety and utility of GMAPs to scientists, breeders, regulators, universities, industry, and the public.

Presentations during the two-day event were given by Philippe Leblond, Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity; David Carlander, European Food Safety Authority; Peter Scott, Iowa State consultant and former director, Programme Development, CAB International; Adelaida Harries, BIGMAP scientist; and Yuh-Yuan Shyy, BIGMAP scientist.

During the consultation, participants discussed coverage, components, and processes for developing, sustaining, and accessing the proposed Knowledge Base. They examined existing GMO databases and discussed ways that a variety of clients utilize the information these databases provide.

“The Expert Consultation developed an authoritative Knowledge Base that will facilitate awareness and understanding of genetic manipulation in relation to agricultural production, quality, and food security, while recognizing the need for appropriate safeguards in its utilization,” said Adelaida Harries.

“BIGMAP is dedicated to providing information to help safeguard consumers and the environment,” said BIGMAP Director Manjit Misra. “This consultation provided an opportunity for persons from all over the world to come together to discuss ways that the Center can provide a dynamic source of independent science-based information in a timely manner to those who need it the most.”

