



Cost Action 853

Agricultural Biomarkers for Array Technology

**Management Committee Meeting
and combined
Meeting of Working Groups 1 and 3**

September 26 – 28, 2002

Swiss Federal Research Station for Fruit-Growing, Viticulture and Horticulture
Wädenswil, Switzerland



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Draft Minutes of the Management Committee Meeting

1. Welcome to participants

The Management Committee Meeting was opened by Chairman Jürg E. Frey on Thursday evening, September 27. The MC Meeting was attended by Management Committee Members and MC Delegates representing 18 countries: Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. Representatives from Bulgaria were unable to attend the meeting because of difficulties concerning VISAs. The names and addresses of all MC members will be updated from the list circulated at the MC meeting and are available from the COST office on request (the list will be posted on our website <http://www.COST853.ch>)

2. Adoption of agenda

The draft agenda for the meeting in Waedenswil was approved unanimously.

3. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the first MC Meeting held in Brussels on March, 7 – 8, 2002 were adopted with no further requests.

4. Report from the Scientific Officer

News from the Commission: John Williams informed on the reorganisation of the scientific secretariat of COST.

Status of the action: The regularly updated status of the action can be accessed on the internet under <http://www.COST853.ch>

Number of signatories: Until the day of the meeting out of 33 COST countries and one associated country, 19 countries had signed the action (see <http://www.COST853.ch>)

Budget status, budget allocation process: For details see below (chapter 5: Budget planning 2003 and chapter 6: STSM status, applications).

5. Budget planning 2003

Scientific secretary John Williams stressed that, because of a delay in the opening of the budget for FP6, the chance for financial support on any meetings or other activities during the first half of year 2003 will be small and therefore suggested to plan the next meeting in fall 2003.

The status of running applications to Short Term Scientific Missions was still pending at the time of the meeting but John Williams was able to confirm a forthcoming signature of the contract by the end of this year, which will secure the STSMs for the following 14 months.

6. STSM status, applications

Günter Adam introduced this subject by giving an outline on the procedures and restrictions of STSMs. He then announced that application forms may soon be viewed on the COST853 homepage, together with a short description of the chosen topic as well as the location of planned visits. Special interest of the participants for further STSMs applied to the field of protein arrays.

7. Publications, annual report

The activity reports of the Working Groups are listed in appendix 1.

8. Evaluations

No evaluation of the action is due at the present time.

9. Request for new members

Co-Chair Günter Adam informed the meeting about a request received from Israel to participate in the COST 853 action.

10. Non-COST participations

No requests have been received

11. Web news <http://www.COST853.ch>

The COST853 homepage (<http://www.COST853.ch>) will soon be extended to include

- a link to STSM applications
- an assortment of posters and talks presented at this Meeting in Wädenswil from September, 26 – 28, 2002
- a list of interesting meetings to come
- a poster for general use to all COST853 participants to inform about COST853 action on conferences and meetings.

12. Progress report of working groups

It was resolved that the decision process of how to proceed with the action should be worked out within each Working Group. A written report of the planned activities for the next 12 months will be assembled by the Working Group coordinators and distributed to the chairman of the COST 853 action.

13. Long-term planning

During the meeting many suggestions for coming activities in 2003 were made. They included the proposal for an intensified collaboration with scientists or industrial companies (i.e. Roche) performing hybridisations on glass slides to increase the number of tests, thereby lowering the price per unit. Several members gave notice of forthcoming conferences that could be of interest to COST853 collaborators (e.g. the Cambridge Healthtech Institutes Meeting on “Lab-on-a-Chip and Microarrays” in Zürich in 2003) and WG3-leader Peter von Rohr proposed to put a list of pertinent meetings on the web. Günter Adam proposed submitting a poster explaining COST Action 853 at such meetings and suggested that if Action members give talks at such meetings, that they refer to the Action. A further impulse came from Josef Spak who reminded the MC Members of the possibilities of using this COST Action as a platform for proposals to the EU’s Sixth Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development. Xavier Nesme contributed constructively to the proposal of intensified collaboration with his generous offer, within the capacity of his group, to print coated slides on commission in his printing facilities at the academic research tariff.

14. Time and place of next meeting

The Management Committee Members decided to meet again in September, 24-26, 2003, at the Research Station of Wood Technology in the eastern part of Hamburg, Germany. As the hotel intended has limited space the request of host Günter Adam was that bookings will have to be made as soon as the approval to the meeting is given by Brussels.

15. AOB

There was no other business

Annex

Meeting of WG1 and WG3 - Reports

WG1: Nucleic-Acid based Micro-Arrays - Peter Bonants

Within COST 853 WG1 is focussing on diagnostic nucleic acid micro-arrays.

A meeting of WG1 was organized on Friday 27 September 2002 in Wädenswil (Switzerland) at the Swiss Federal Research Station for Fruit-Growing, Viticulture and Horticulture.

17 presentations were given covering probe design, hybridization systems, diagnostics, random oligo chip and more plant pathogen related topics. Also people with plans for diagnostic micro-arrays contributed to the program. Several Experts from related fields were invited to give a lecture on their expertise, e.g. Prof Ludwig from the University of Munich gave a presentation on ARB, a software package for sequence database handling and probe design. A fruitful discussion closed the whole day program.

This first meeting of WG1 was a good opportunity of interested people to get an impression of the possibilities of diagnostic nucleic micro-arrays for plant pathology.

Program, abstracts and proceedings of this meeting will be published on the website of COST 853, <http://www.COST853.ch>

I want to thank Jürg and Beatrice Frey and Monika Pfunder for their excellent organization of this COST 853 meeting.

WG 3: Bioinformatics and Information Dissemination - Peter von Rohr

1. Experts

Hubert Charles and Ulrich Wagner gave the two expert talks in this meeting. Hubert Charles presented the software program called ROSO. This software program is devoted to design optimal oligonucleotide probes for microarrays. It allows the user to choose types of probes, their size and location on the genome, and different hybridization parameters. The optimization process is based on the following four steps: (1) specificity, (2) secondary structure, (3) melting temperature, and (4) stabilizing criteria.

Ulrich Wagner started out with a description of the bio-computational needs in a multi-user environment using the example of the Functional Genomics Center Zurich. Based on the described needs he showed that they can be met best by the use of a commonly agreed standard on minimum amount of information stored for a given experiment and on commonly agreed definitions and terminologies. The latter two are called an ontology in computer science. MIAME is a proposal for an ontology and a data model which was published by the Microarray Gene Expression Data group.

2. Delegates

Only delegates from Austria, Italy and Switzerland reported actively on progresses in the area of bioinformatics in their countries. The Austrian delegate Zlatko Trajanoski summarized the rapid increase in available data in the area of genomics. He then pointed out very nicely the need for integrated information management systems for functional genomics. It also became obvious that building such systems requires substantial financial investments.

Patrick DeMarta from Biodiversity out of Brescia (Italy) presented a software program called ALISCAN. This program is an interactive tool to assist in the design of probes based on sequence alignments. The software is web-based and runs on Biodiversity's web-server.

Jürg Frey (Switzerland) outlined the current status of the project that aims to design a random chip for diagnostic purposes. He emphasized on the topic of oligonucleotide design.