

Foreword

Robert (Bob) A. Henson

Received: 9 November 2006 / Accepted: 20 November 2006 / Published online: 2 February 2007
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We dedicate this special issue to our friend and colleague Dr. Bob Henson who unexpectedly passed away during the first international workshop on *Ascochyta* blight entitled 'Ascochyta 2006.' Dr. Henson of Carrington, North Dakota, USA was noted for his research on management for *Ascochyta* blight and was also instrumental in establishment of mist nurseries for evaluation of several crops for resistance to *Sclerotinia* white mold in collaboration with plant breeders. Dr. Henson's degrees include a B.A. in Chemistry from Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota, and a Master of Agriculture in Plant and Soil Technology and Ph.D. in Agronomy from the University of Minnesota, St. Paul. He was an active member of the American Society of Agronomy, the Crop Science Society of America and the Soil Science Society of America as well as numerous industry organizations. He was a member of the North American Pulse Improvement Association and was currently serving on the Board of Directors. Prior to joining the Carrington Research and Extension Center in 1998, he worked as a bean Agronomist and Physiologist in Brazil and Ecuador and as a consultant to the

World Bank in Mexico and Bolivia. Bob was well recognized as a hard worker and productive researcher with a friendly outgoing manner and smile for everyone. He is survived by his wife Soraia, two sons, Robert and Peter, and a daughter, Gabriella. Bob was a good friend of the *Ascochyta* and *Sclerotinia* communities and will be sorely missed.



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Ascochyta blights of grain legumes

Ascochyta blights of the cool season food legumes (peas, lentils, chickpeas and faba beans) are important production constraints in all regions where these crops are grown and in severe cases result in complete crop loss. The global importance of Ascochyta as a production constraint to these legumes is well documented. To review past research and to develop plans for overcoming this production constraint, the first international workshop on Ascochyta blight entitled 'Ascochyta 2006' was organized and conducted at Le Tronchet, France during the week of 2–6 July 2006. The workshop brought together experts on all aspects of the problem to review current knowledge and to formulate plans for future research and collaboration. Plenary sessions were devoted to pathogen biology, plant resistance, epidemiology and integrated disease management. Presentations of posters of current research complimented these sessions and provided additional insights into the disease. Four additional talks followed by informal round tables were given in order to enlarge the thematic sessions: interest in *Medicago truncatula* for disease resistance in grain legumes (Alain Baranger, INRA, France); the *Ascochyta* genus (Ivan Satche, INRA, France); grain legume research and extension (Robert Morrall, University of Saskatchewan, Canada); the place of legumes in crop rotations (Raphaël Charles, University of Chagnins, Switzerland). The goal of the workshop was to identify gaps in knowledge, identify new

research approaches and to establish collaborative relationships among Ascochyta blight researchers. Sixty-five participants from 13 countries were in attendance. Most of the participants reported on their current research on Ascochyta on one or more of the cool season food legumes.

The workshop was very successful in achieving its goals set out by its organizers, and the participants enjoyed the venue and hospitality provided by the local organizing committee. This special issue will serve as a useful reference for years to come. Recommendations of the group were formulated to stimulate future collaborative research on the Ascochyta blight problem as it affects the cool season food legumes. A committee was established for developing a follow-up workshop to be held at Washington State University in Pullman, Washington, USA in June of 2009 entitled 'Ascochyta 2009.'

This special issue of EJPP contains invited presentations and contributed papers by workshop participants. The workshop was organized by INRA (French National Institute of Agronomical Research), Agrocampus Rennes (College of Agronomy), AEP (European Association of Grain Legumes), USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) and SFP (French Plant Pathology Society).

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