MEMBER COMMUNICATIONS

Members receive communications from the AAB by e-mail, or if requested, in printed form. If you would prefer to receive information in printed format, contact the AAB Office or e-mail Bernadette@aab.org.uk.

Funding opportunities from the Wellcome Trust

Technology Transfer at the Wellcome Trust is a committed funder of translational research, the process by which innovations are translated into new health products. Helping to bridge the gap between fundamental research and commercial application, it supports both academic researchers and companies by funding applied research or development projects to a stage where they are attractive to a follow-on funder.

With the support of a Wellcome Trust Translation Award, Profs Simon Jones and Nicholas Topley of Cardiff University are developing a chimeric IL-6–sIL-6R fusion protein; the proposed use of this Resolution Therapeutic™ is in bacterial infections. The group has received funding from the Wellcome Trust to progress the chimeric protein through formal preclinical evaluation.

The properties of IL-6 are critical for the successful resolution of acute inflammation. Many of the biological activities assigned to IL-6 are mediated via a naturally occurring soluble IL-6 receptor (sIL-6R), which plays an integral role in controlling transition between innate and acquired immune responses. This immunological switch is essential for the successful resolution of any inflammatory event.

For further information about the awards available, and for more examples of past funding, contact: T +44 (0)20 7611 8202. E techtransfer@wellcome.ac.uk. www.wellcome.ac.uk/techtransfer/obnnews

AAB Member Nagib Nassar - "Breeding Cassava to feed the Poor"

"The diet of more than 800 million people revolves around neither wheat, nor corn, nor rice. Instead in many countries the main staple consists of the starchy roots of a plant variously called cassava, tapioca, manioc or yuca (not to be confused with the succulent plant yucca). Indeed, cassava contributes more to the world's calorie budget than any other food except rice and wheat, which makes it a virtually irreplaceable resource against hunger. Throughout the tropics, families typically cultivate it for their own consumption on small parcels of land, although in Asia and in parts of Latin America the plant is also grown commercially for use in animal feed and starch-based products. The root's nutritional value, however, is poor: it contains little protein, vitamins or other nutrients such as iron. Better varieties of cassava could thus effectively alleviate malnutrition in much of the developing world."

Geneticist, Botanist, Plant Breeder and AAB member professor Nagib Nasser and his colleague Rodomiro Ortiz take a look at where the genus originated, hybrids of the root and improvements that can be made to increase crop yields around the world.

You can read the article here - http://www.geneconserve.pro.br/boletim/scientificamerican_geneconserve.pdf