



BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

First Legume Society Conference
2013: A Legume Odyssey

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Book of Abstracts

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International Legume Society
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Programme

9

Session 1

Achievements and challenges in crop legume research

15

Session 2

Legume genetic resources and phylogenetic relationships

47

Session 3

Legumes in foods and impacts on human health

69

Session 4

Advances in legume breeding concepts and tools

115

Session 5

Legume seed production, meeting market requirements and economic impacts

137

Session 6

Translational omics for legume improvement

185

Session 7

Responses to biotic and abiotic stresses in legumes

225

Session 8

Non-food, non-feed and other alternative legume uses

235

Session 9

Understanding and enhancing the legume cropping environment

275

Session 10

Mechanisms of beneficial legume-microbe interactions

289

Session 11

Legumes in animal feeds: requirements and impacts

305

Session 12

Getting the message out: grow, use, feed and eat legumes

Beauty will save the world, but will the world save beauty? The case of highly endangered *Vavilovia formosa* (Stev.) Fed.

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Vavilovia formosa (Stev.) Fed. is a relict, endangered species from the highlands of Caucasus and Near East. It was described in 1812, with often uncertain status and finally recognised as a separate genus of the tribe Fabeae Rchb. Our informal international group was established in 2007 to revive the interest in this species since it had been seriously neglected for decades. This review gives an overview of the accumulated knowledge on *V. formosa* and presents the results of its most recent multidisciplinary research. Three expeditions were made to two locations in Armenia in 2009, providing the material for anatomical, morphological, chemical and molecular analysis. Unlike previous attempts, *ex situ* conservation in Yerevan and *in vitro* propagation, important for potential *interspecies* hybridisation, are successful. Molecular tools were used to clarify the taxonomical position of *V. formosa*, often considered the closest to the extinct ancestor of the whole tribe. The analysis of four informative regions of chloroplast and nuclear DNA showed that *V. formosa* belonged to the same clade with *Lathyrus* and *Pisum* and with a distinct status. Preservation and maintenance of *V. formosa* remains the only basis for further development of all other scientific aspects, especially breeding and uses in agronomy.

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In the rich world of global agriculture, diverse legumes can play key roles to develop environment-friendly production, supplying humans and animals with the products of high nutritional value.

The Legume Society was initiated in 2011 with two primary missions. One of them was to treasure the rich legume research tradition of the European Association for Grain Legume Research (AEP), with emphasis on carrying out its the triennial legume-devoted conferences. Another one is to fulfill a long-term strategy of linking together the research on all legumes worldwide, from grain and forage legumes pharmaceutical and ornamental ones and from the Old World to the Americas.

We do anticipate that the First Legume Society Conference will be a unique and genuine contribution to our common goals: to promote the legume research and all its benefits into all spheres of the society, linking science with stakeholders and decision-makers, and to demonstrate how an efficient, useful and firm network of the legume researchers of the world is possible and sustainable.

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