



3rd ISTA WORKSHOP ON SEED VIGOUR TESTING

COODETEC, Cascavel, Brazil, May 1 - 3, 2007



Participants of the 3rd ISTA Workshop on Seed Vigour Testing

The 3rd ISTA Workshop on Seed Vigour Testing was held in Cascavel, Brazil between May 1 - 3, 2007, hosted by the Cooperativa Central de Pesquisa Agricola (COODETEC). The local organizer was Dr. Leopoldo Baudet (University of Pelotas, Brazil) and the presenters of the workshop were Dr. Alison A Powell (Chair of ISTA Vigour Committee), Dr. Stan Matthews (University of Aberdeen, UK) and Dr. Roberval Vieira (Sao Paulo State University, Jaboticabal, Brazil). Fifteen participants attended the 3 day workshop. The majority came from different regions of Brazil, with others from USA, Paraguay and Israel. They were from seed testing labs and seed companies, and also included a number of PhD and MSc university students.

The central laboratory of COODETEC hosted the workshop in their new facilities near Cascavel. The workshops, which had only been opened one month before our visit, were very impressive, and gave us plenty of room for our practical work. The staff of the seed testing lab had prepared samples of tests in advance and provided all our needs. Their assistance, support and availability, made a significant contribution to the success of the workshop.

The workshop began with a video “What is Seed Vigour?” prepared by Dennis TeKrony (previous Chair of the Vigour Committee), followed by a lecture from Alison “Introduction to Seed Vigour”. Her diction and clear language as well as her profound knowledge in seed vigour was remarkable. The programme continued with a mix of lectures and practical work. The lectures (9 in total) comprised theoretical basis of vigour, practical aspects, as well as critical aspects of the tests. The lecturers Alison, Stan and Roberval were interesting, didactic and knowledgeable. Their talent, experience and personalities were highly appreciated by the participants.

During the practical work the participants compared several relevant vigour methods and studied the advantages and limitations of each one. Among the many methods of vigour testing, the most important ones were presented and demonstrated, namely: the accelerated ageing test, conductivity test, controlled deterioration test, cold test and rate of germination. A new way of approaching rate of germination in vigour testing, using physiological germination, was introduced to us by Stan, with his unique sense of humor and terminology (MGT and MJGT). This made us think that maybe, after all, a universal, quick and uncomplicated method for vigour testing will be possible, when the Vigour Committee has completed further studies on this test.



Stan and the Seed Survival Curve

On our second day, Dr. Ivo Cararo Executive Director of COODETEC welcomed us with an interesting lecture about the background and role of COODETEC for the farm co-operatives. This was followed by a visit to the COODETEC laboratories and trials, which allowed the participants to get acquainted with the research carried out there.

The Brazilian spirit in organizing the official dinner as well as an informal dinner at a brewery with “paying by weight food” and their friendly hospitality made these unique events. Our official dinner took place at a ‘colonial style’ restaurant. This is how the Brazilians describe farms and restaurants owned by immigrants who continue to maintain their traditional production and cuisine. We enjoyed quail, presented in many different styles, as well as other delicacies, and good company.

One unexpected event in the workshops was the appearance of a TV film crew who filmed both in a lecture and practical session and interviewed some of us. The participants will not forget seeing themselves on the local Brazilian TV on the 7 o'clock news!

We are very grateful to COODETEC for providing us with such a good setting for our workshop, for their hospitality, and for sponsoring our lunches. We are also grateful to Syngenta for their financial support at the workshop dinner. Last but not least, many thanks to our local organizer, Leopoldo for his professional attitude, kindness and generosity in organizing the workshop and for the superb accommodation in the Bourbon Cascavel Express Hotel. Leopoldo drove to Iguassu Falls airport (140 km –one way) to pick us up and ensure that we would not get lost. We appreciated this very much! **“Muito Obrigada”** to all of you.

Lea Mazor, Head of the Official Seed Testing Laboratory, ARO- Volcani Center, ISRAEL