

Dr. George Piperidis has a PhD in plant breeding and genetics from the University of Queensland in Australia. He started his career in sugarcane over 25 years ago, initially stationed at Meringa near Cairns where his role was to implement DNA markers and Genomic in situ Hybridisation in an introgression programme targeting mainly *Erianthus arundinaceus*. George is now stationed in Mackay where he is responsible for breeding and selection of new varieties for the central region, which produces about 27% of the Australian crop. Over the years George has had leading roles in developing DNA fingerprinting for unique variety identification; Plant Breeder's Rights for all new sugarcane varieties bred and released in Australia; and developing a tissue culture pipeline as a clean source of material for rapid variety propagation and release. He also leads the variety exchange programme with several sugarcane breeding programmes around the world.

Mrs Morexa Martin-Gardiner is the Principal Plant Breeder at West Indies Central Sugarcane Breeding Station Inc. (WICSCBS). She is responsible for making crosses for the countries of the West Indies Sugarcane Breeding and Evaluation Network (WISBEN) which includes the member countries of the Sugar Association of the Caribbean (SAC), the Dominican Republic, Florida and other associate member countries. Dr M Martin-Gardiner have been at WICSBBS for the past 23 years.

Dr Jean Yves Hoarau is a Senior Research Scientist (geneticist and plant breeder) working at CIRAD, in the AGAP Institute (Genetic Improvement and Adaptation of Mediterranean and Tropical Plants). He is on secondment to eRcane company (Réunion Island) and working in its sugarcane breeding department. Dr J Y Hoarau has thirty years of experience in sugarcane breeding, with experience in quantitative genetics, experimental designs, mixed modeling and marker-based analyses (genetic map, QTL and association studies and genomic selection) developed in support of variety development programmes. Today his main research interest is the integration of genomics approaches with sugarcane breeding in view of obtaining enhanced genetic gains.

Dr Danilo Cursi has a Master's degree in genetics and plant breeding and a PhD in crop science. He has more than 10 years of research experience in sugarcane breeding and is currently the Breeding Coordinator of CTC, Brazil. He has expertise in quantitative genetics, parental selection, crossing management, selection strategies, high-throughput phenotyping and statistical genetics.

Dr Anna Hale has been a Research Geneticist with the USDA-ARS Sugarcane Research Unit in Houma, LA since 2007. She leads the Unit's longstanding basic breeding (germplasm enhancement) programme which is aimed at developing parental clones enhanced with traits derived from *Saccharum spontaneum*. She is currently the acting Research Leader and Location Coordinator of the Sugarcane Research Unit, which is comprised of a critical mass of sugarcane scientists and their technical staff and serves as the lead scientist on the Unit's breeding project. She is also the Chair of the National Plant Germplasm System's Sugarcane Crop Germplasm Committee. The committee serves as subject matter experts to guide curatorial staff on best practices and helps review proposals that fund plant exploration and evaluation grants.

Dr Marvellous Zhou is a Senior Plant Breeder and Plant Breeding Project Manager at SASRI and Associate Professor in the Department of Plant Breeding, University of the Free State. He is NRF rated C1 level scientist. Before joining SASRI, he was a Plant Breeder at the Zimbabwe Sugar Association Experiment Station and later PhD Research Fellow in the Sugarcane Genetics Laboratory at Louisiana State University. He graduated from the University of Zimbabwe with a BSc Agriculture Honours, MSc Agriculture from the University of Natal, Masters in Applied Statistics and PhD (Quantitative Genetics) from Louisiana State University. He has published extensively in peer reviewed journals, refereed conference proceedings, book chapters and presented at several conferences including CSSA, SASTA, ISSCT, ASSCT, ASA, SAPBA, SAGS and EUCARPIA. Dr Marvellous Zhou's research interest includes optimising plant breeding programmes, Plant Breeding methodology, Quantitative genetics and Applied statistics. He mentors BSc, MSc, PhD students and Plant Breeders. He provides sugarcane variety advice to sugarcane growers in South Africa, Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Swaziland, Tanzania and several other countries.