

ACGT Achieves Breakthrough in Oil Palm Research

Plant Genomics Company Announces Successful Completion of Ganoderma Genome Project

KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA, NOVEMBER 2, 2010 – ACGT Sdn Bhd (ACGT), a subsidiary of Genting Plantations Berhad, the plantation arm of the Genting Group today announced the completion of the sequencing, assembly and annotation of a Ganoderma reference genome. The completed project represents another significant milestone in ACGT's ongoing research in oil palm. This announcement marks the completion of the world's first Ganoderma genome sequence.

Ganoderma is a white rot fungus and its pathogenic strains cause one of the most threatening diseases in oil palm, Basal Stem Rot (BSR). In turn, this can result in serious economic losses for the palm oil industry. Studies have shown that the disease becomes increasingly prevalent with every replanting.

The Ganoderma genome data enables scientists to better understand the disease. This paves the way for development of early detection, treatment and prevention solutions for oil palm plantations.

"ACGT takes a holistic approach in its oil palm R&D; and this extends beyond studying the oil palm genome to include analysing the plant's environment and its diseases. Our Ganoderma work will benefit the industry, especially now that oil palm estates are progressively moving into their second and third replanting. With improved plant health, we will have better oil yield," said Derrik Khoo Sin Huat, Chief Executive Officer, ACGT.



ACGT, with its strategic partner, Synthetic Genomics Inc. (SGI) sequenced a Ganoderma pathogenic to oil palm. The genome is approximately 50 million base pairs in size. The partners used Roche 454 and Illumina sequencing technology to produce a 14 times coverage of the genome. ACGT will continue to sequence additional Ganoderma strains in order to have a broader understanding of the fungus.

ACGT and SGI have also completed the sequencing, assembly and annotation of the oil palm and jatropha genomes in May 2008 and May 2009, respectively.



About Genting Plantations Berhad (“Genting Plantations”)

Genting Plantations, a 54.6%-owned subsidiary of Genting Berhad, commenced operations in 1980. It has a total landbank of around 133,000 hectares, with operations in Malaysia and Indonesia. It owns six oil mills and is reputed as one of the lowest cost palm oil producers.

Genting Plantations, an early member of the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO), has made significant investments in biotechnology in a major effort to apply genomics to improve agricultural crops. Its subsidiaries, ACGT Sdn. Bhd. and Genting Green Tech Sdn. Bhd., are leading the way for the production of superior oil palm planting materials using DNA marker-assisted selection, a world first. This breakthrough will not only lead to solutions to increase productivity in the palm oil industry but also promote sustainable production.

Genting Plantations’ genomics platform technology was developed following ACGT’s successful sequencing of the oil palm genome in 2008. ACGT has also successfully sequenced the genome of the jatropha, a plant that produces a non-edible oil that has the potential to be used to make biodiesel, a clean burning fuel that is biodegradable and sustainable.

About ACGT Sdn Bhd (“ACGT”)

ACGT is a centre of excellence in genomic science, focused on the application of genome technology to improve crop plants for sustainable food and fuel. It is a subsidiary of Genting Plantations Berhad, the plantation arm of the Genting Group, one of Asia’s leading multinational corporations. Synthetic Genomics, Inc., a U.S based company has a direct shareholding of 8% in ACGT. ACGT Laboratories in Technology Park Malaysia, Bukit Jalil, Kuala Lumpur specialises in DNA sequencing, biomarker discovery, metagenomics and bioinformatics. ACGT’s Gasoline Tree Experimental Research Station in Sepang, Selangor has 22 hectares of jatropha experimental plantings. Incorporated in 2006, ACGT is a BioNexus status company, awarded by the Malaysian Biotechnology Corporation Sdn Bhd, an agency under the purview of the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation Malaysia (MOSTI). For more info, visit www.acgt.asia.

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Images and Captions:



ACGT Laboratories in Technology Park Malaysia, Bukit Jalil, Kuala Lumpur are equipped with the facilities to perform end-to-end re-sequencing.



ACGT Laboratories has bioinformatics capabilities, including a high performance supercomputer.



Scientists loading gel sets at ACGT Laboratories



Ganoderma Fruiting Bodies



Derrik Khoo Sin Huat, CEO of ACGT Sdn Bhd

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