

Wageningen, the Netherlands, September 12, 2011



KeyGene and Wageningen UR launch new R&D facility for next generation high throughput DNA sequencing

Today Wageningen UR (University & Research centre) and KeyGene announce the start of a joint DNA sequencing facility with so-called second and third generation DNA sequencers with accompanying ICT and bio-informatics infrastructure. The facility is founded thanks to a 1.7 million Euro investment with the financial support of the CAT-AgroFood of Wageningen UR, an initiative of the Dutch government (ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture & Innovation), the Province of Gelderland and Wageningen UR. The facility will be accessible to other parties, such as breeding companies, universities and hospitals and will belong to the top DNA research facilities in Europe.

The new facility will operate an Illumina® HiSeq™ 2000 sequencer and a PacBio RS Sequencing machine with accompanying bio-informatics infrastructure. The new state-of-the art sequencing facility will enable KeyGene and Wageningen UR to execute genomics research for a broad array of samples from microbial, plant, animal and human origin. Projects will be handled in the joint facility but executed by either KeyGene or Wageningen UR in a bilateral way with each customer.

Andries Koops, Business Unit Manager at Wageningen UR: “Plant breeding has already allowed for a dramatic increase in yield and quality during the past one hundred years. We will use the facility to further speed up this improvement, in order to help the world cope with the growing world population and climate change. Better insight into the genetic variation will enable us to make real leaps in plant breeding. Due to the enormous capacity of the facility hundreds of genomes can be sequenced at the same time. This will allow the researchers to study genetic variation, for instance within a crop like potato, tomato or genetically even more complex crops like strawberry, and to develop new breeding strategies and techniques.”

Michiel van Eijk, VP Technology & Trait Mechanisms of KeyGene comments: “In-house access to these sequencing platforms will further fuel our innovations in agricultural breeding applications. Furthermore, the facility will also enable us to apply the suite of proprietary high-throughput Sequence Based Breeding applications that we have successfully developed over the past years. These include the Whole Genome Profiling (WGP™) physical mapping methodology, the KeyPoint® mutation detection method, the CRoPS® SNP identification method and, most recently, our Sequence Based Genotyping technology. We will roll out these products towards customers in the plant breeding industry around the globe.” Michiel van Eijk continues with stating: “The new facility also intensifies the collaborations between Wageningen UR and KeyGene. Both organizations have a strong commitment to generate solutions providing our growing world population with innovative and sustainable agricultural products.”

Petra Caessens, Manager Operations CAT-AgroFood comments: ‘This joint initiative is a great example of facility sharing across organizations. In addition, other players in the AgroFood research domain can make use of the new facilities and – if relevant - draw upon each other’s expertise. It will strengthen innovation initiatives in the region.’

Wageningen UR:

‘To explore the potential of nature to improve the quality of life’. That is the mission of Wageningen UR (University & Research centre). A staff of 6,500 and 10,000 students from over 100 countries work everywhere around the world in the domain of healthy food and living environment for governments and the business community-at-large.

The strength of Wageningen UR lies in its ability to join the forces of specialised research institutes, Wageningen University and Van Hall Larenstein University of Applied Sciences. It also lies in the combined efforts of the various fields of natural and social sciences. This union of expertise leads to scientific breakthroughs that can quickly be put into practice and be incorporated into education. This is the Wageningen Approach.

KeyGene:

KeyGene is a privately owned, innovative molecular genetics Ag Biotech company with a primary focus on the improvement of 6F (Food, Feed, Fiber, Fuel, Flowers and Fun) crops. KeyGene’s passion is a Green Gene Revolution approach to explore and exploit existing and induced natural genetic variation in vegetable and other 6F crops. KeyGene delivers sustainable responses to the world’s needs for yield stability & quality of vegetable and field crops. We help our strategic partners with cutting edge breeding technologies and plant based trait platforms to meet their needs. We perform strategic and applied research with more than 135 employees from all over the world, with state of the art facilities and equipment. KeyGene has its headquarters in Wageningen, the Netherlands, a subsidiary in Rockville, USA and a Joint Lab with the Shanghai Institute of Biological Sciences in Shanghai, China. For additional information, please visit: www.keygene.com.

CAT-AgroFood

CAT-AgroFood is a recent initiative of the ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture & Innovation, the Province of Gelderland and Wageningen UR. CAT-AgroFood invests in and provides access to state-of-the art technological facilities of Wageningen UR. In this way advanced research facilities become available for all AgroFood researchers at both knowledge institutions and industry. In addition to advanced equipment, CAT-AgroFood - by its virtual structure - will also enable researchers to connect to the scientific expertises within Wageningen UR linked to these facilities.

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