

SWSS Representative to WSSA Report

2022 Officers

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The 75th Annual Meeting of the Southern Weed Science Society was held at the AT&T Hotel and Conference Center in Austin, TX January 23-26, 2022. Three hundred three registrants attended the meeting to see and/or hear the 265 oral (146) and poster (119) presentations. Julie Borlaug, of the Norman Borlaug Institute for International Agriculture gave a virtual keynote address. Students that arrived in Austin Sunday evening could register to participate and socialize at Topgolf prior to the Monday 1:00 pm meeting start. The board suggested a similar social event be planned for Baton Rouge in 2023.

Meeting attendees were given option to wear or not wear masks as well as stickers to affix to name badges to indicate level of personal preference for social distancing. This procedure seemed to work well as no objections were noted.

Several members were recognized as award recipients: Peter Dotray at Texas Tech. University and Eric Prostko from the University of Georgia were recognized as Fellows; Ramon Leon from North Carolina State University received the Outstanding Educator Award; Sandeep Rana with Bayer received the Outstanding Young Weed Scientist-Industry Award; Michael Flessner with Virginia Tech received the Outstanding Young Weed Scientist-Academia Award; Delaney Foster (M.S. at Texas Tech University; pursuing Ph.D. at University of Tennessee) received the Outstanding MS Graduate Student Award; Maria Zaccaro-Gruener at the University of Arkansas received the Outstanding Ph.D. Graduate Student Award.

There were issues with room availability during the booking dates at this property. Many members were told no double rooms were available or no rooms were available so many members had to arrange accommodations at an alternative site.

Three students were selected for the Enrichment Experience in 2021: Hannah Wright spent a week touring Texas agriculture with Gary Schwarzlose of Bayer Crop Science and Delaney Foster spent a week touring Mississippi and Arkansas agriculture with Valent representative Mallory Everett Scott. Sarah Kezar spent a week in the Bayer Crop Science facility in St. Louis with Greg Elmore. Each gave an overview of their experiences.

The 2021 Weed Contest was hosted by Drew Ellis and Hunter Perry at the Corteva Research Farm in Greenville, MS August 11. Eight Universities sent 37 graduate student participants. Awards were given for high scoring individual for calibration (tie Delaney Foster and Eli Russell), weed identification (Conner Webster), farmer problem (Hannah Wright), and herbicide symptomology (Lawson Priess). Overall high scores were (in descending order): Lawson Priess, Mason Castner, Eli Russell, Conner Webster, Hannah Wright, Pamela Carvalho-Moore, John Peppers, Tristen Avent, Bradley Greer, Maria Zacarro. Team placements (descending order): University of Arkansas, Virginia Polytechnic Institute, Louisiana State University.

The 2022 Weed Contest will be hosted at the Agricenter in Memphis, TN although the date is not finalized. The board approved financial support for the 2023 Weed Olympics to be hosted by Bayer at their Union City, TN research station.

Declining membership and revenues continue to plague SWSS. Kelly Backscheider did an outstanding job encouraging sustaining memberships for SWSS.

Future annual meeting locations, hotels, dates:

2023, Renaissance Baton Rouge, Baton Rouge, LA, January 22-26

2024, Hyatt Regency San Antonio Riverwalk joint with WSSA, January 22-25

Respectfully submitted

John D. Byrd, Jr.
SWSS Representative