

■ The International Workshop on Date Palm Tissue Culture, Morocco, 23-25 May 2005

The Date Palm Global Network (DPGN) organized an international workshop on True-To-Type-ness of Date Palm Tissue Culture-Derived Plants in Morocco during 23-25 May 2005. Scientists were coming from 14 countries (Austria, Canada, Egypt, France, Iraq, Israel, Italy, KSA, Morocco, Namibia, Spain, UAE, UK, and USA) attended the workshop.

The workshop aimed at updating the magnitude of tissue culture abnormalities and development of a program of future activities. Presentations from various date growing countries illustrated these variations which were focused on: dwarfism, pollination failure and abnormal fruiting, abnormal morphology of the tree and the leaves, twisted inflorescences and offshoots, leaf whitening and delayed flowering time. Both commercial laboratories and the research units dealing with date palm in vitro propagation were addressed. However, the workshop provided an opportunity to present and compare the date producing countries experiences and to foster international technical cooperation on date palm.

The participants recommended the following:

- * Most of the abnormalities of tissue culture-derived date palms are of a small incidence (less than 5%). These abnormalities were classified into three categories: i) Dwarfism, ii) Parthenocarpic fruits, and iii) Morphological problems.
- * Tissue culture is certainly the most appropriate tool to provide the needs of date palm plants.
- * Create a web site which will be linked to the DPGN web site.
- * Strengthening collaboration between commercial laboratories and research units and ensuring the continuous exchange of information.
- * With regard the future activities, the following initiatives were adopted:
 - Develop a reliable marker to identify the dwarfism and the parthenocarpy phenomenon.
 - Develop a data base of the date palm cultivars and abnormalities.
 - Collaborative approach to provide solutions to clonally fidelity issues.
 - Refine micro propagation protocols to eliminate factors inducing variations.