

Breeding Objectives for the Future (Panel)

Charlie Brummer, University of California - Davis, CA USA

Steve Damon, Corteva Agriscience - West Salem, WI USA

Joe Bouton, University of Georgia - Athens, GA USA

Federico Sciarretta, Gentos - Buenos Aires, Argentina

Xuefeng Ma, Forage Genetics International - USA



Charlie Brummer is the Director of the Plant Breeding Center and a Professor in the Department of Plant Sciences at the University of California, Davis. His research program includes alfalfa breeding, genetics, and genomics. His program is developing germplasm and cultivars of semi-dormant and non-dormant alfalfa; investigating fall dormancy, yield, and salinity; and developing and using genetic markers for breeding. He teaches advanced plant breeding and forage crop production. He is a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the Crop Science Society of America.



Steve Damon is the Alfalfa R&D Lead for Corteva Agriscience. He holds a MS from University of Illinois – Champaign/Urbana and PhD from University of Wisconsin – Madison, both in Plant Breeding and Genetics. He previously worked for ten years in corn breeding and five years in soybean breeding and brings this range of experience to alfalfa. Since 2019 he has worked with Corteva alfalfa breeders to advance products for Pioneer, Alforex, and Dairyland brands.



Joe Bouton was a Professor (now Emeritus) at the University of Georgia and a Director (Forage Improvement Division) at Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation where his research centered on development of forage cultivars. He released 28 cultivars throughout his career with 12 still being sold. He currently owns Bouton Consulting Group where he advises seed companies, reviews research projects, writes producer articles, and gives talks at student seminars, and farmer and scientific meetings.



Federico Luis Sciarretta is an Agronomist at Buenos Aires University in Argentina. He is the current Breeding manager at Gentos SA. Since 2010 he has worked in the private sector (Product Development and Extension team) including many template forage species in Argentina and Uruguay. His principal studies focus on physiological mechanisms and environmental factors that define forage yield, persistence and nutritive value of forages in grazing systems looking forward sustainability and resilience.



Xuefeng Ma is the Director of Breeding at Forage Genetics International. He received his PhD in cereal genetics and genomics from the University of Missouri-Columbia. He conducted his postdoc training on alfalfa and clover genetic transformation at the Noble Research Institute. He was manager and senior scientist of molecular breeding at Ceres, Inc. Most recently, he was with the Noble Research Institute again in small grains forage breeding and genomics before joining FGI in 2021.