



EFB Microbial Physiology Section

On Tuesday 26 August 2003 at 18.00 h the EFB Microbial Physiology Section held a meeting in Room Rio on the Second Floor of the Basle Congress centre. All Section Members as well as everyone registered for the 11th EFB European Congress of Biotechnology had been invited to attend this open meeting.

Minutes (D R A F T)

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from 8 Section members, among them 2 of the Section Committee

2. Minutes of the Open Meeting of the Section held at Villa Erba, Cernobbio, Italy on Friday, Nov. 15, 2002

The minutes were accepted, and signed by the Chairman.

3. Matters arising from the Minutes

Forthcoming meetings being organised by the Section were reviewed individually later in the Agenda – see below.

4. Report from the Section Chairman

(a) **Vacancies on the Section Committee: please offer to help!** At the last meeting, a call was made for volunteers to help with Section Administration and membership of the Section Committee, especially for help with the organisation of future scientific meetings. Recent retirements mean that there are still vacancies on the Committee. The Section Board would welcome volunteers to join the Committee to organise specialist meetings, or help with the general running of the Section. The Section is also keen to identify a Section Treasurer who will work with other members of the Section Board in developing a sound financial strategy. Nominations (including self-nominations) are invited.

At the meeting, the following colleagues volunteered to support the Section Administration: Geoffrey Hamer (Dublin), Ursula Rinas (Braunschweig), Pau Ferrer (Barcelona) and Chris Hewitt (Birmingham).

Nic Lindley suggested a future meeting on “Microbial response to stress” and volunteered to support such an activity. Further suggestions by Erick Vandamme, and others, are listed below (5g).

Noting that several colleagues have not been active during the last few years, the Chairman suggested that they should be replaced on the Steering Committee.

(b) Report from the EFB Executive Committee. The EFB Executive Committee met in Basle on 23 and 24 August.

There has been a major upheaval within the Federation, resulting in the cancellation of the contract with EFB by DECHEMA who, for 25 years, have provided a secretariat for the Federation. One source of concern was the establishment of 10 Regional Branch Offices, which will greatly increase the opportunity for the Federation to increase both its range of activities, and its membership, but might jeopardise the interests of DECHEMA, whose annual investment subsidising our activities is - or was – substantial. Clearly other issues, including a major personality clash, were also involved.

Other matters discussed included links between EFB and the recently formed Young Biotechnologists Network, Task groups on International Relations and EFB in China, and links with the pharmaceutical industries. Little time was spent on Section activities and no time had been available in any of the three previous ExBo meetings to discuss content and structure of our Congresses. Members noted that the Microbial Physiology Section had organised two of the 28 symposia at the Congress: these sessions attracted almost 30% of the posters! We thank our members for their support. Membership to the EFB Microbial Physiology Section is now almost 1000 – almost a third of the EFB membership.

(c) First FEMS European Congress of Microbiology, Slovenia, June 29 – 3 July, 2003.

The Microbial Physiology Section had organised two sessions there entitled Microbial physiology: recent developments in the nitrogen and phosphorus cycles; and Microbial response to stress. This activity of our Section was also a payback to the support given by FEMS: FEMS had recently sponsored, or would next year sponsor, several of our Section’s meetings like recently PYFF 2 and Recombinant Protein Production 2 and 3, and selected papers presented at PYFF 2 will be considered for publication in FEMS Yeast Research.

5. Review of progress in the organisation of the forthcoming Section symposia

(a) Contribution of the Section to ECB 11 in Basle, Switzerland, August 24-29, 2003. The Microbial Physiology Section has organised two symposia, one on ***Recombinant Protein Production***, and the other on ***Microbial Response to Stress***. The latter attracted 130 abstracts out of 620, the former over 80 abstracts.

(b) Physiology, Biochemistry and Genetic Regulation of Electron Transfer Reactions in Bacteria. Walberberg, Germany, October 12-16, 2003. 86 participants have registered for this meeting, and 49 presentations had been scheduled.

(c) Physiology of Yeasts and Filamentous Fungi II (PYFF II). France. March 24-28, 2004.

This meeting is being organised by Jean-Marie Francois. <http://pyff2.insa-tlse.fr> See also the [PYFF2](#) leaflet. The meeting is scheduled for March 24-28, 2004 in Anglet near Biarritz, France. The registration deadline has been extended until Nov. 15, 2003.

(d) Functional Genomics of Pathogenic Bacteria. Copanello (Catanzaro), Italy, 5-8 October, 2004.

Jeff Cole reported on behalf of Marco Soria, the Chairman of the Applied Functional Genomics Section. This meeting will be organised in cooperation with the EFB Sections on Applied Functional Genomics and Pharma Medical Biotechnology. Appr. 300 participants are anticipated. The programme details are currently defined, and information will be available in the web soon.

(e) Third EFB Symposium on Recombinant Protein Production, Portugal, 11-14 November 2004.

Diethard Mattanovich reported on behalf of Manuel Carrondo (Lissabon), the Chairman of the organising committee. The organising committee has been set up and is currently defining the programme. A strong point will be to stress even more the comparison of different expression systems (prokaryotic and eukaryotic including mammalian cells) based on the increasing insight into host physiology. The integration of mammalian cells will be strongly supported by the cooperation with ESACT. Strong industrial support has been sought for the organisation of the programme. A first announcement will be made available later this year.

(f) Analysis of Microbial Cells at the Single Cell Level III. Austria. May/June 2005

This meeting is being organised by Nicole Borth from Vienna. Information on the exact date and location will be available in November, 2003.

(g) Other interesting topics that are currently not covered:

The following topics were proposed by Section members:

1. Mixed cultures
2. Stress
3. Solid state fermentation physiology
4. Extremophiles physiology i.e. osmolites in halophiles,...
5. Novel extracellular polysaccharides (EPS) of fungi
6. Biofilms and flocs (= bacterial)
7. Microbial synthesis of pigments / colours / vitamins
8. Non-antibiotic secondary metabolites

9. Metabolic engineering
10. Co-enzyme physiology

It was decided to post the proposals with the minutes and collect expressions of interest to support the organisation of a meeting by email to the Chairman (j.a.cole@bham.ac.uk) or the Secretary (d.mattanovich@iam.boku.ac.at).

6 Sources of information on Section activities.

Details of all of the Section activities can be obtained from the Section website (http://www.tu-berlin.de/biotec/mibi/AG_Lang/efb/) or the new EFB Website: (<http://efbweb.org>).

7. Nomination and, if necessary, election of members to the Section Committee

The current Section Committee was supported unanimously by the present section members. The chairman will discuss with the volunteers their potential role in the organisation of the section, and a suggestion for election will be made at the next Section meeting

8. Any other business.

Nic Lindley stated that in the current EU Framework VI programme, any activities concerning microbial biotechnology and microbial physiology are not considered, and suggested to activate lobbying for consideration in Framework VII. The other Section members agreed.

9. Next meeting of the Section.

This will be held during the 2nd meeting on *Physiology of Yeasts and Filamentous Fungi (PYFF II). France. March 24-28, 2004*. Exact date and location will be announced in due time.

Jeff Cole (Chairman)

Diethard Mattanovich (Secretary)

October 2003