

## **REPORT FROM THE XI INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON RUMINANT PHYSIOLOGY**

**SEPTEMBER 6-9, 2009, CLERMONT-FERRAND, FRANCE**

SARAH ELIZABETH HOOK

The XI International Symposium on Ruminant Physiology held September 6-9, 2009 in Clermont-Ferrand, France gathered a worldwide audience of ruminant researchers. The programme contained 21 invited conferences, 43 oral short communications, and 330 posters, with researchers from 49 countries in attendance. The focus of this conference was on digestion, metabolism and the interaction between nutrition, reproduction and welfare and each of these fields of research were well represented.

Although there were many excellent conferences and communications presented, there are a few that were especially informative, based on my interests and research area. The first was the opening conference by M. Clauss from the University of Zurich entitled "Evolutionary adaptations of ruminants and their potential relevance for modern production systems". Here, Dr. Clauss discussed how to improve digestive efficiency of domestic ruminants, based on the mechanisms present in wild ruminants and the topics of increased saliva production and stratification of rumen contents were particularly interesting.

Dr. K.E. Nelson of The J. Craig Venter Institute presented "Recent advances in metagenomics applied to ruminant gastrointestinal ecosystem" and discussed a number of new and emerging technologies that can be applied to the discovery and characterization of the gastrointestinal microflora. This provided a nice summary of the available techniques for use in future research projects.

Dr. L.L. Guan of the University of Alberta presented research "Characterisation of methanogens in the rumen of cattle with different feed efficiency", which directly applies to my research area. As I have done similar research into methanogens in the rumen, I was interested in the results she presented regarding community structure and alteration by diet.

Finally, Dr. P. Freestone from University of Leicester School of Medicine discussed "Stress and microbial endocrinology: prospects for ruminant nutrition". This talk was particularly interesting because it dealt with how stress can affect gut microflora and infection, which could be a concern when studying microflora of animals that could be stressed by experimental procedures and collection techniques.

I think the most important outcome of traveling to this conference was the people that I met. I spoke with a number of researchers who are doing work in my field and was able to discuss experiments and challenges I had come across. I was also able to set up collaborations and met researchers that I will continue to be in contact with to set up trips to their labs and potentially a post-doctoral position at the completion of my PhD. This conference provided my first opportunity to meet a number of scientists who shared my research interests and it was an incredible experience. I thank the International Union of Nutritional Scientists and Agricultural Institute of Canada Foundation for sponsoring me to attend this informative conference and the opportunity to meet scientists that I hope to work with in the near future.

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**EXPENSES FROM THE XI INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON RUMINANT PHYSIOLOGY**

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<b>Item (Receipt #)</b>	<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>My Share</b>	<b>Total (CAD): 1€=\$1.596961</b>
Accommodations (1)	492.00 €	246.00 €	\$392.85
Travel insurance (2)			\$43.20
Taxi (3)	24.00 €	24.00 €	\$38.33
Red Car Service (4)			\$111.00
Airfare (5)			\$772.92
Registration (6)	350.00 €	350.00 €	\$558.94
Meal plan (7)	100.00 €	100.00 €	\$159.70
Sept. 5 <sup>th</sup> Food (8)	19.01 €	9.51 €	\$15.18
Sept. 10 <sup>th</sup> Food (9)	13.00 €	7.90 €	\$12.62
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$2104.74</b>