

Plant-gene expression database completed

Ceres Inc., the United States and Keygene N.V., the Netherlands, have successfully completed a collaborative programme to generate a comprehensive database of plant gene expression patterns. This important milestone in plant genomics was achieved as a result of the two companies pooling together their strengths in high-throughput gene sequencing, analysis of expressed gene products and bioinformatics, to characterize the expression levels of most of the genes of *Arabidopsis thaliana*.

Keygene applied its proprietary AFLP[®] technology to quantify gene expression levels in many distinct plant organs. The high sensitivity of AFLP enables analysis of a large portion of all expressed genes, including rarely expressed genes that are difficult to detect using other methods. Ceres employed high-throughput sequencing to characterize the large number of AFLP fragments. On the basis of these results, Ceres' and Keygene's bioinformatics teams created an expression database covering an estimated 90 per cent of all genes expressed in *Arabidopsis thaliana*. Both companies will apply this information in their ongoing genomics programmes. While data has been created for *Arabidopsis thaliana*, a model species, it is directly useful for understanding and predicting the role of genes in commercial crop species such as corn, wheat, soya bean and canola. Keygene and Ceres also plan to expand the scope of their collaboration to include a large number of gene expression profiles from several commercially important crops. (Website: <http://www.pnnewswire.com>)