

LETTER FROM NAPB PRESIDENT

What an incredible way to begin this year's journey, with the success of our recent annual meeting in Hawai'i still fresh in our minds! We welcomed 342 attendees from 11 countries and 52 universities, heard from 49 speakers, and viewed 187 posters. Most inspiring of all, 45% of participants were students - the future of plant breeding at the heart of our community! Survey feedback confirmed that the 2025 NAPB Conference was a resounding success, with most rating their experience Very Good to Excellent (survey results). The Aloha spirit shone through every aspect, from the opening focus on Hawaiian and Indigenous agriculture to energizing speed networking sessions and the lively Breeding Bash on the Bay. The half-day format encouraged connections, while the special Variety Showcase provided a one-of-a-kind experience unique to Hawai'i. A special thanks goes to Dr. Mikey Kantar and our hosts for blending scientific excellence, cultural learning, and true community spirit.

Looking ahead, workforce development must remain at the center of our efforts. With nearly half of our attendees being students, the next generation of breeders is eager to engage. NAPB's commitment to mentorship will ensure they are supported, prepared, and equipped to carry our discipline forward.

To build on this momentum, we will strengthen connections across our community and expand opportunities for our workforce. Our next annual meeting, hosted by Texas A&M University in 2026, will be another milestone in this journey. In the meantime, if you are attending other meetings, you can help by representing NAPB at conferences, either as a mentor or alongside one. If you have unique ideas this year for our organization or have suggestions, send me an email - your voice matters.

We also thank Dr. J.D. Rossouw for his dedicated service as President. His leadership has guided NAPB through a time of growth, and we are fortunate that he will continue serving on the Executive Committee as Past President. The work of plant breeders has never been more important, and I am honored to serve as your President this year. Thank you for being part of this mission and for the dedication you bring to improving crops, communities, and lives.

With gratitude and optimism,
Neha Kothari
President, NAPB