



PRESS RELEASE Aug 2026

National Association for Plant Breeding Honors Five Scientists

The National Association for Plant Breeding (NAPB) has announced its awardees for outstanding accomplishments in five categories: Early Career Scientist, Lifetime Achievement, Public Sector Impact, Private Sector Impact and Ann Marie Thro Friends of Plant Breeding.

The 2026 NAPB awardees exemplify the very best in plant breeding research, education, outreach and leadership. They model persistent dedication and a passionate devotion to applying their plant breeding skills and technical excellence to promote food security, quality of life and economic resiliency for a sustainable future. They are committed to supporting the next generation of the plant breeding discipline. These outstanding professionals inspire plant breeders and scientists everywhere. The awardees are as follows:

Early Career Scientist Award: Dr. Esteban Rios, University of Florida

Lifetime Achievement Award: Dr. Brian Scheffler, USDA-ARS

Public Sector Impact Award: Dr. Jianming Yu, Iowa State University

Private Sector Impact Award: Dr. Laura Grapes, Bayer

Ann Marie Thro Friends of Plant Breeding: Dr. Dave Bubeck, Corteva

Awards were announced at the NAPB annual conference, hosted by Texas A&M University, College Station TX 14-18 June 2026. The meeting attracted around 350 participants, including over 170 students, and featured technical and scientific presentations, interactive workshops, and local tours. It also included a meeting of the Plant Breeding Coordinating Committee (PBCC). All five awardees are invited to deliver talks at the next annual NAPB meeting, hosted by North Dakota State University, Fargo ND, 24-28 June 2027.

About the NAPB and PBCC

Plant breeders develop new crop varieties to promote food security, quality of life, and economic resiliency for a sustainable future. The NAPB [<http://www.plantbreeding.org>] is a unique organization in the U.S., bringing together public and private sector plant breeders to share technical information, improve program efficiency and effectiveness, develop the next generation of scientists, disseminate information about plant breeding, and advocate for a cohesive national plant breeding agenda. The PBCC is a national public sector group of scientists that provides a forum for discussion and outreach on plant breeding.

[<https://www.nrsp10.org/PBCC>]

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