CSSA Holds Inaugural Society-Wide Student Competition

Creating a competition across the CSSA divisions was an exciting opportunity to showcase the talent of CSSA's student members. It was so important that the CSSA Board of Directors integrated it into its goals for building student involvement and engagement in the Society. Notes 2019 CSSA President Beth Guertal, “This is important as a way for graduate students to showcase their research across all crop science disciplines.”

“This event has been in the planning during the last year and we’re extremely proud of hosting the inaugural CSSA Society-Wide Student Competition at the International ASA, CSSA, and SSSA Meeting in San Antonio,” stated Ignacio Ciampitti, chair of the CSSA planning committee for this event.

The seven participating divisions selected their top student to represent their division in the competition, which featured both a five-minute rapid oral and poster session.

The competition was held on the final day of the Annual Meeting. The posters were judged in the morning, and the start of the oral presentations began with committee chair Ciampitti declaring, “This competition provides a unique opportunity for showcasing the students’ crop science work across quite diverse disciplines from breeding genetics to plant health, turfgrass to plant physiology, and others representing our broad range of divisions.”

At the end of the oral presentations, each student was recognized with a finalist certificate, presented by 2019 CSSA President Beth Guertal. At the closing reception, attendees were able to view the posters digitally, and the winners were announced by committee member Joey Young. As an indication of the top-notch competition, there was a tie for first place!

Winners (photo inset)

First Place (tie): Ryan Bryant-Schlobohm, Oklahoma State University (Forage & Grazinglands Division), Breeding Better Bermudagrass for Oklahoma ($875 prize plus a 2020 Phoenix Annual Meeting Registration)

First Place (tie): Emma Jobson, Montana State University (Genomics, Molecular Genetics, & Biotechnology Division), Not Too Tall—Not Too Short; Discovering Novel Reduced Height Alleles in Wheat ($875 prize plus a 2020 Phoenix Annual Meeting Registration)

Third Place: Osler Ortez, University of Nebraska–Lincoln (Crop Ecology, Management, & Quality Division), Corn Ear Issues: Myth or Reality? ($500 prize)

Finalists

Alper Adak, Texas A&M University, Crop Breeding & Genetics Division
Clint Mattox, Oregon State University, Turfgrass Science Division
Sahar Toulabi, Colorado State University, Biomedical, Health-Beneficial & Nutritiously Enhanced Plants Division
Cody Vavra, Texas A&M University, Plant Genetic Resources Division
Zolian Zoong Lwe, Clemson University, Crop Physiology & Metabolism Division

Thank You to the Judges

Jamie Breuninger, Industry Rep. CSSA Board of Directors
Clarice Coyne, USDA-ARS
Cody Creech, University of Nebraska–Lincoln
Emily Fuger, Golf Course Superintendents Association of America
Anthony Greenberg, Bayesic Research
Mark Westgate, Iowa State University

Organizing Committee

Ignacio Ciampitti (Chair), Kansas State University
Joey Young, Texas Tech University
Paige Boyle, Utah State University
Susan Chapman, Staff Liaison