

## Federico Sanchez Named IS-MPMI President-Elect



**Federico Sanchez**, long-time IS-MPMI member and chair of the Local Organizing Committee of the XII International Congress, has been named president-elect of IS-MPMI. He will start his term as president after the Congress in Sorrento, Italy, in July 2007.

Sanchez is currently professor of plant–microbe interactions in the Department of Plant Molecular Biology, Instituto de Biotecnología, Universidad Nacional Autónoma (UNAM) de México at Cuernavaca, Mexico. He teaches graduate students of the post-graduate program in biochemical sciences and undergraduates of the undergraduate program in genomic sciences. Sanchez was born in Mexico City and has a bachelor's degree in chemistry from the School of

Chemistry, UNAM. He obtained a Ph.D. degree in biochemistry in 1979 and had post-doctoral training in molecular biology at UCSF (1980–1981). He pioneered the plant–microbe interactions field in Mexico (1981). He was member of the team that founded the Centro de Fijación de Nitrógeno (Nitrogen Fixation Center) in Cuernavaca, now the Centro de Ciencias Genómicas (Center for Genomic Sciences).

Sanchez moved 10 years later, together with a dozen colleagues from the Centro de Fijación de Nitrógeno (Nitrogen Fixation Center), to the Centro de Ingeniería Genética y Biotecnología (Center for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology)—now the Instituto de Biotecnología (Institute of Biotechnology), where they founded the Department of Plant Molecular Biology in 1991. He has been chair of his department for two different terms. He leads a research group dealing with plant early responses in the symbiotic interaction between *Phaseolus vulgaris* (common bean) and *Rhizobium*. His research group studies the expression of several nodule-enhanced genes during nodule development. His group is also interested in the actin cytoskeleton and several key phosphoinositide metabolism-encoding genes involved in the plant endocytic pathway after *Rhizobium* inoculation. This group has recently developed a protocol to transform common bean with *Agrobacterium rhizogenes*. The *A. rhizogenes*-induced hairy root transformation in the genus *Phaseolus* sets the foundation for functional genomics programs focused on root physiology, root metabolism, and root–microbe interactions.

Sanchez is also involved in setting up a large consortium focused on sequencing the common bean genome and contributing to the establishment of *Phaseolus vulgaris* as the grain model legume plant for direct human consumption. He chaired the Local Organizing Committee of the XII International Congress on Molecular Plant–Microbe Interactions held in Merida, Mexico, in December 2005. He is also a member of the Mexican Academy of Sciences and was vice president and founder member of the Morelos Academy of Sciences. He was the former president of the Mexican Biochemical Society and has been awarded a National Prize in Research in Biotechnology. Sanchez currently has the top level (level III) status of the National Research System (Sistema Nacional de Investigadores) from the National Council of Science and Technology. He has published about 60 journal articles and book chapters and mentored 20 graduate students and about a dozen undergraduates.