

2009 - 2010 Vavilov Frankel Fellows

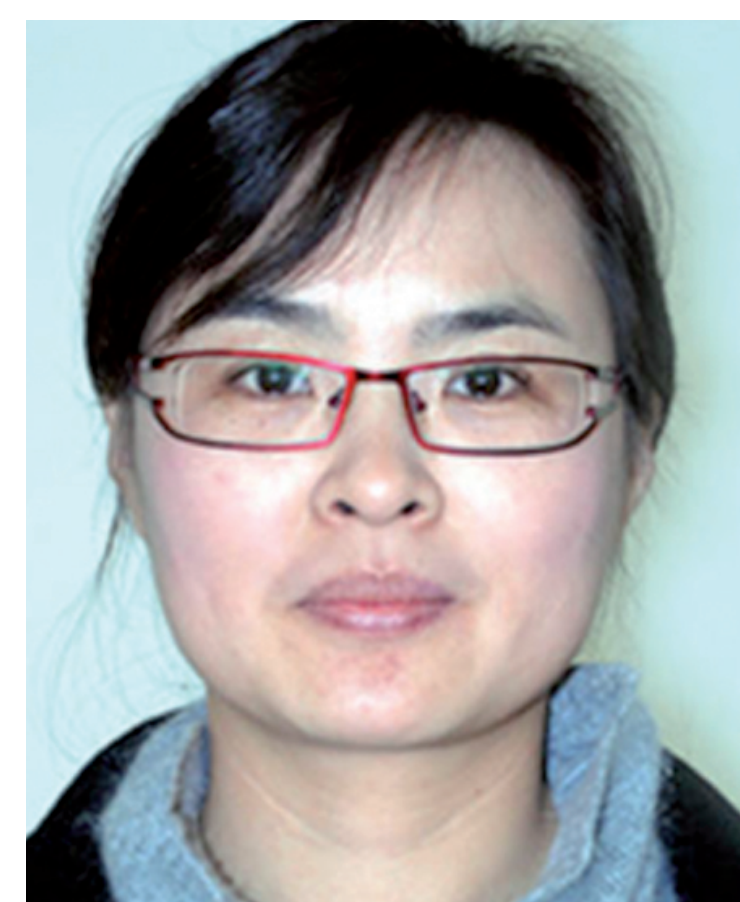
Research by the Vavilov-Frankel fellows has covered a wide range of topics, from new conservation technologies to the socio-economic, human and policy aspects of plant genetic resources conservation and use.



Feysal Bushira Mustefa

from Ethiopia will work on the characterization of 81 different safflower accessions kept in the genebank of the National Biodiversity Conservation

Institute in Addis Ababa. Despite being a useful and drought-resistant crop, safflower has been neglected by researchers in Ethiopia. Through his study, Feysal plans to identify those varieties that offer the greatest potential benefit to breeding programmes intended to improve the safflower crop. Feysal's 2010 Fellowship will be carried out at the USDA Western Regional Plant Introduction Station at Washington State University in the United States, and is partly supported by Pioneer Hi-Bred, A DuPont Business, in collaboration with Bioversity International.



Li Ling

from China aims to improve the understanding of the environmental background of China's collection of pea varieties. China and Australia have previously

shared pea diversity to boost their breeding programmes, but many Chinese accessions would be more useful if location data could be used to infer responses to biotic and abiotic stresses. Li's plan is to convert existing information for collecting sites to geographic coordinates and combine this with climate/soil data for the various sites. Beneficiaries of Li's research will be breeders in China and Australia, with the expectation that farmers will get new, more productive varieties that will contribute to improved incomes and nutrition. Li's 2010 Fellowship will be carried out at the Biosciences Research Division of the Department of Primary Industries in Victoria, Australia, and is supported by the Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC), Australia.



Danilo Eduardo Mejía Moreta

from Ecuador screened accessions of rice conserved at the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) for the possession of genes to inhibit

nitrification, a process that results in substantial losses to soils as a result of nitrate leaching and the emission of nitrous oxide. Danilo's study reports for the first time the identification and characterization of a promising upland rice genotype that has a high inhibitory effect on the soil nitrification process by releasing inhibitors from its root system. Mejía's 2009 Fellowship was carried out at CIAT and was partly supported Pioneer Hi-Bred, A DuPont Business, in collaboration with Bioversity International.



Esmaeil Ebrahimie

from Iran looked in the wild relatives of Australia's soybeans for genes that will help confer traits such as drought, heat and salinity resistance to

cultivated soybeans. Esmaeil's study presents the SAT transcription factors in *Glycine canescens* as one of the promising genes for genetic transformation against stresses and nitrogen fixation. The work has contributed to Australia's first native soybean gene databank, and all information will be made publicly available. Ebrahimie's 2009 Fellowship was carried out at the University of Adelaide in Australia and was supported by the Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC), Australia.