

Early Career Members

Profile: Early Career Professional Award Recipient

Dr. Jianming Yu, associate professor of agronomy at Kansas State University, has been selected to receive the 2010 ASA, CSSA, and SSSA Early Career Professional Award. This award recognizes professionals who have made an outstanding contribution in agronomy, crop science, and/or soil science within seven years of completing their terminal degree. Nominees are evaluated by their peers based on the following criteria:

1. Evidence of quality teaching at the undergraduate and/or graduate levels.
2. Effectiveness in extension and outreach activities.
3. Significance and originality of basic and/or applied research.
4. Achievements in private-sector application of agronomy, crop, and/or soil science.
5. Contributions to the public or professional organizations and institutions.

Yu received a B.S. degree in agronomy from Northwestern Agricultural University in China, M.S. degree in plant breeding and genetics from Kansas State University (KSU), and Ph.D. in plant breeding and genetics from University of Minnesota. After completing the Ph.D. program, he conducted research as a postdoc at both University of Minnesota and Institute for Genomic Research at Cornell University. In 2006, he was hired as assistant professor of agronomy at KSU and was promoted to associate professor of Agronomy in 2010 with a 90% research and 10% teaching appointment.

Yu has established a Genetic and Genomics for Crop Improvement program, where the focus is to develop novel methods for utilizing cutting-edge genetic and genomic tools in complex trait dissection and plant breeding. He was nominated by ASA and SSSA Fellow Dr. David Mengel, KSU professor of agronomy. In the nomination, Mengel confirmed Yu's outstanding research record. Yu has garnered \$3.2 million in research funding as principal investigator (PI) or co-PI. He has 26 publications in prestigious journals, including *Science*, *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, *Nature Genetics*, *Crop Science*, *Genetics*, and *Theoretical and Applied Genetics*, and has published six book chapters. In addition to his publication record, Yu has also served on the editorial boards of *Crop Science* and *Theoretical and Applied Genetics*.

Yu teaches an upper-level, undergraduate plant genetics course every year at KSU and has received excellent teaching evaluations from his students. In addition, he advises and mentors several M.S. and Ph.D. graduate students.

If you want to learn more about the Early Career Professional Award or the Early Career Members Committee,

Q&A with Jianming Yu

Q: What advice would you give to other early career members and graduate students in the Societies?

A: I would encourage graduate students to decide if they desire to enter the industry or stay in academia as early as possible in their academic careers. They should evaluate whether they enjoy research, teaching, and/or extension. If academia is their choice, they should make preparations to go through the postdoc stage. Both groups should work hard to get projects done well, publish their research, and start thinking about grant opportunities.

Q: What important moments in your life took you through the career you have now?

A: I was raised in a small, rural town in China with mostly wheat and corn production. I attended Northwestern A&F University in China for my B.S. and then worked four years for the China National Seed Group Corporation. I moved to the United States to study for my M.S. at KSU with Dr. Mitch Tuinstra. Obtaining an M.S. assistantship at KSU was critical to my career path. I originally thought I would graduate with my M.S. and then move to the seed industry, but when I started my research program, I really enjoyed it. I was able to attend the ASA Annual Meetings as a graduate student and had the opportunity to meet many other researchers in plant breeding and genetics. Through these opportunities, I was able to begin Ph.D. study with Dr. Rex Bernardo at the University of Minnesota and then a post-doc position with Dr. Ed Buckler at Cornell University. I really have to credit the advice and mentorship of Dr. Mitch Tuinstra, Dr. Rex Bernardo and Dr. Ed Buckler, each of whom really helped to shape my academic career path. I am very grateful to colleagues, collaborators, and research team members at K-State for their generous support.



please visit the website: www.agronomy.org/membership/early-career or contact Early Career Members Committee Chair, Dr. Jeff Edwards at jeff.edwards@okstate.edu.