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## **KeyGene and United States Department of Agriculture sign long term collaboration on pepper research**

Keygene, Inc. and the United States Department of Agriculture - Agricultural Research Service (USDA-ARS) signed a Cooperative Research and Development Agreement (CRADA) to collaborate on the characterization of pepper germplasm with enhanced flavor.

The three year agreement is part of KeyGene's "Dare to Share" initiative, an "open innovation" concept that enhances molecular genetics research towards novel industry applications. Building on the success of its parent company in Europe, Keygene, Inc. intends to collaborate with US industry and public sector partners to share knowledge and enabling technologies.

The CRADA collaboration will be based on an existing culinary pepper project developed by Dr. John Stommel and his colleagues at the USDA-ARS Genetic Improvement of Fruits and Vegetables Laboratory in Beltsville. The ARS pepper program has successfully utilized diverse Capsicum germplasm resources to breed award winning pepper cultivars. Applying KeyGene's advanced genetic fingerprinting technology, the program will enable the identification of the different accessions to develop bell pepper cultivars with improved taste characteristics. "Our new collaboration with KeyGene brings together complimentary disciplines to address complex research problems related to pepper fruit quality" said Dr. John Stommel.

"In working together with the USDA, we expect that progress can be achieved toward bell pepper breeding with improved taste and flavor," according to Prof. Dr. Arjen van Tunen, President of Keygene, Inc. "We are extremely pleased to start this research project and we believe that the CRADA agreement allows us to further broaden our work on the application of molecular genetics in vegetable breeding."

### **About USDA-ARS**

*The Agricultural Research Service (ARS) is the U.S. Department of Agriculture's chief scientific research agency. Finding solutions to agricultural problems that affect Americans every day, they host 1,200 research projects within 22 National Programs, about 2,100 scientists with an estimated \$1.1 billion fiscal year 2007 budget. The Genetic Improvement of Fruits and Vegetables Laboratory is part of the USDA-ARS and focuses on the development of germplasm for high value small fruits and vegetables with improved disease resistance, tolerance to abiotic stresses, quality, and nutritional value.*

### **About Keygene, Inc.**

*Keygene, Inc., a Maryland based subsidiary of Keygene N.V., aims to deliver molecular genetics innovations to plant breeding companies across the United States. With commitment and a keen proficiency in genetic marker development and experience in providing bioinformatics support, KeyGene has earned an excellent track-record in delivering reliable molecular breeding and trait strategies.*

### **For more information please contact:**

- USDA-ARS: Dr. John Stommel, +1 301 504 5583, john.stommel@ars.usda.gov
- Keygene, Inc.: Dr. An Michiels, +1 240 205 7083, an.michiels@keygene.com



**About Keygene N.V.**

*Keygene N.V., located in Wageningen, the Netherlands, is a R&D company with the mission to be the leading company in developing and applying DNA expertise in the field of molecular genetics. In recent years KeyGene invested in next generation sequencing platforms such as the Roche GS-FLX system (454 technology) and the Illumina Genome Analyzer (Solexa technology). KeyGene has developed a strong proprietary technology platform based on AFLP®, a DNA marker technology for genome analysis, transcript profiling and genetic analysis. For diagnostic purposes, SNPWave® a multiplexed SNP detection technology was developed. KeyGene exploits its proprietary technologies, databases and know-how through contract research and products for applications in the Life Sciences industry and more specifically in innovative breeding applications such as Breeding by Design™, CRoPS® and KeyPoint™. KeyGene's five shareholder companies De Ruiter Seeds, ENZA Zaden, Rijk Zwaan, Vilmorin & Cie and Takii & Co. are major vegetable seed companies. KeyGene has around 120 researchers and staff.*

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