

3rd February 2011

Professor Zhihong Xu
Peking University
No.5 Yiheyuan Road
Haidian District
Beijing,
P.R. China 100871

Dear Professor Xu,

Thank you very much indeed for your positive and constructive letter of January 10. I am very pleased and proud to receive your comments on the interactions between JIC and Chinese scientists (even though as a recently-arrived Director I can claim no part in their training and hosting!).

I wanted to follow up on the conversation we had in Beijing in April last year, in which we discussed how JIC might interact even more effectively with Chinese research in the areas of crop physiology, genomics, and human health and well-being through a *Streptomyces* platform.

Therefore, it was a great pleasure to receive your colleagues, Dr Cheng Qi and Professor Saijun Tang, when they visited JIC two weeks ago. We, in JIC, had actually been discussing the prospect of a JIC-in-China some weeks before the visit was announced. In the end, the visit from your colleagues was the most productive I have had in my short time at JIC. Your delegation, and your letter, echoed exactly the plans we were proposing to bring to you for enhanced collaboration. The strong relationship between JIC and its Chinese alumni is very important to us and I hope that I will be able to play my part in the expansion of future collaborations and in continuing to strengthen our extremely close bond. There is a real opportunity here for strengthening that bond by collaborating very closely on our close scientific ties.

Following this visit, I received recently from Dr Cheng Qi, a summary report and a suggested forward programme for future collaboration. I have responded positively to his recommendations. No doubt he will discuss this with you on his return to China. I have told Qi that I have already secured some funding from BBSRC to support the first phase of this venture, which would comprise 3-6 month research exchanges.

I am planning to visit China towards the end of June to attend a meeting of the Editorial Board of the emerging and very successful Chinese journal *Molecular Plant* in Qingdao. My schedule has not been fixed yet so there should be an opportunity for us to meet and discuss these ideas further. In the meantime Alan Giles (JIC Chair of Knowledge Exchange and Commercialisation) and Professor Giles Oldroyd (JIC International Development Office and Institute Strategic Programme Leader) will be visiting China before this to progress the 'JIC in China' concept further. Professor Ray Dixon FRS is also planning to visit at the end of February.

Thank you again for your very constructive letter and good wishes.

Kind regards



Professor Dale Sanders, FRS
Director, John Innes Centre

Cc. Professor Yongxiang Lu
Professor Huqu Zhai