

# Postgraduate Studentship Programme

**David Marshall, Gary Lyon and Craig Simpson**

This year has seen a further expansion in the student population at SCRI with the second full year of our Joint University Studentship programme. The total now stands at 27. This programme has now become a major feature of the research activity at SCRI. The institute welcomes both the diversity of the resulting student population and the valuable interactions with Universities across the UK that are already resulting in the development of new and exciting research opportunities. Recruitment for the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of the programme is now well underway and it is pleasing to see many new university partners joining in the scheme and a broad range of applicants from across Europe.

SCRI is now firmly established as an international centre of excellence for postgraduate training in plant and environmental sciences. Our organisation is, we believe, unique in the UK in providing a research environment which covers plant and environmental studies from the fundamental to the more applied aspects. This breadth provides a stimulating research environment which means that students are not only able to focus on their own research projects, using state of the art molecular and plant handling facilities, but are also able to experience and fully appreciate the wider context of their work. This is further developed through the close ties we have with key academic laboratories, major companies

such as those in the international plant breeding sector and key rural and environmental policy organisations in the UK and throughout the world.

As always the primary aim of the postgraduate training at SCRI is to equip the individual student with a wide range of modern, scientific skills whilst developing technical and intellectual competencies that can be applied in a range of scientific careers. We work closely with our university partners to monitor and support both delivery of this training and personal development to ensure that the individual student achieves their full potential and in so doing develops a comprehensive range of scientific and transferable skills. On graduation our students will be fully prepared to make a major contribution to the scientific base which is making an increasingly valuable contribution to the response of UK and international organisations to the consequences of changes in the rural landscape and agricultural systems brought about by climate change and increased demands on farming systems.

Students at SCRI are now registered at Universities across the UK; however a significant part of our postgraduate activities revolve around our well established partnership with the University of Dundee, and in particular with the Division of Plant Sciences, which is based at the institute. SCRI also hosts a number of



Michael Ravensdale (centre) and Rene Sonnenberg (second from right) meet Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal at the 2007 SABRI PhD student competition.

undergraduate and postgraduate student projects from many local universities and our staff contribute to UK and European courses. The relationship with Dundee University also includes a special arrangement whereby

all postgraduate students at SCRI can use facilities provided by the University of Dundee, including English language tuition, training courses, library, scientific facilities and counseling.