

ECOLOGICAL GENETICS MEETS EPIGENETICS



**Collection of papers from the 1st Central European Meeting
on Mouse Epigenetics in Nové Hrady,
Czech Republic 14.–17. 8. 2008**

Edited by
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Editorial

Pavel STOPKA and Kateřina DVOŘÁKOVÁ-HORTOVÁ

This issue of *Folia zoologica* brings a collection of papers from the first Central European Meeting on Mouse Epigenetics held in Nové Hradky, Czech Republic 14.-17.8. 2008. The meeting was organized in order to bring together scientists from neighbouring countries in Central Europe simply to establish collaborations between universities and academic departments that are often close in terms of geographic distance but intellectually quite far due to their historical links to other European institutions.

Another reason why we organized this conference is a fact that ecological genetists and epigenetists often ask similar questions and study same model organisms but their conceptual framework and the level of biological resolutions are often different. Although the title of this editorial comment links two groups of scientists we have used the word epigenetics as a conference title instead as we believe that nowadays the term epigenetics includes almost everything because it focusses on the evergreen biological question of nature versus nurture.

Ecological geneticists try to solve this enigma on the level of organismal phenotype whilst epigeneticists try to find mechanisms for such variation. From this point of view the conference was found successful as it attracted people that presented relevant topics including mechanisms of chromatin remodelling, regulation of epigenetic events, environmental and social modulation of pheromonal communication and regulation of reproduction.

This first Central European meeting hosted 40 registered participants including three welcome speakers, and from six different countries (Austria, Czech Republic, Germany, Slovakia, United Kingdom, United States of America). Although it was a small conference, it was a fruitful beginning of a development that will hopefully become an event of the year similarly as other international specialist group meetings and annual sessions. An update of this event for upcoming years will be placed at www.mousegene.cz.

We are very grateful to life science private companies that financially helped us to maintain the conference cost low. These were mainly (and alphabetically) Bio-rad, KRD, and Roche.

We also sincerely thank the Editorial Board of *Folia Zoologica* for their final acceptance and publishing the papers in their journal.