

Summer Crop Genetics and Organic Farm Outing

During the summer of our REEU program we were able to learn so much from just a short period of time. I for one was able to learn basic genotyping procedures such as DNA extraction, ethanol precipitation, polymerase chain reaction (PCR), and gel electrophoresis, and with this knowledge I was able to learn how to genotype on my own. I also had the opportunity to purify PCR samples and send them off for sanger sequencing, which I was able to do with the support of my lab team. One the most memorable things I was able to experience was meeting new people, especially the people I work with in my lab. Every person was their own character and we all worked like a family, which inspired me to be someone like my principal investigator and work in the academia like him. Out of any program I could have worked in I was lucky enough to be in this one, I was able to learn so much and everything I did this summer can be applied to almost any genetics program in the future.



On the 7th week of our program, we were able to visit the Sundance Family Farm in Danielsville which I found very interesting to see. What I learned about from farm to table is that farmers must follow techniques if they want to have higher yields without having to put too much work into their farm. One of these techniques involved using natural herbicides and pesticides, such as peppermint and rosemary. Another technique we learned was crop rotation, which is planting different groups of plants in the same field which helps decrease the chances of plant disease outbreak and improves the sustainability of the soil. Successive sowing is also a very important thing to learn when it comes to organic growing, planting seeds at different times of the year helps give a continuous harvest throughout the year instead of just one season during the fall, thus giving a continuous flow of food.

When it comes to growing food then putting it on your table there is a lot of work that comes with it besides pulling weeds, there is a bit of strategizing and planning that comes to growing organic produce. There is a satisfaction that comes when you can grow your own food and be able to survive off it or feed other people. Organic farming is something, I think, that is very different conventional farming when it comes to the amount of critical thinking you need to put into your land. It was very interesting to go and recommend other people to learn about organic farming and how these crops are grown.

