



# Institute of Plant Breeding Genetics and Genomics

College of Agricultural & Environmental Sciences

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

# 2025

## Annual Retreat

**Macon Marriott City Center** ♦ 240 Coliseum Dr ♦ Macon, GA 31217

## Wednesday, March 5



3:00 pm Arrival and check-in, Marriott lobby

Poster setup in Ballrooms B and C



**4:00 pm Ballroom A**

**Moderated by Sameer Pokhrel**

Welcome by **Joann Conner** and **Patrick Conner**,  
PBGG retreat planning committee chairs



**Speaker**

**Todd Jones**, Senior Director, Ag Equity Initiatives, Corteva  
*Ag Equity Projects at Corteva Agriscience*

**6:00 pm Ballroom B**



Dinner Buffet

**7:00 pm Ballrooms B and C**



7:00-8:30 Poster Session  
*Ballrooms B and C*

8:30-10:00 Game Night,  
following Poster Session  
*Ballroom B*



# Thursday, March 6

7:00 am Meet at main entrance of hotel @ 6:50am



Fun Run/Walk

[Click here for Fun Run Map](#)

6:30-9:00 am Ballroom B



Breakfast Buffet

*After Breakfast, coffee/tea/soda available*

9:00 am Ballroom A Moderated by Samantha Jo Wan



**Speaker** [John Lovell](#), Research Faculty Investigator at the Genome Sequencing Center, HudsonAlpha

*Using our genomics superpowers for good*

10:00 am Ballroom A



10:00-11:00, Grad Student workshop with Industry Specialists



Todd Jones,  
Corteva



Jill Lennon,  
Corteva

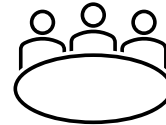


Brenda Owens,  
BASF



Lloyd May,  
Bayer

10:00 am Ballroom C



Faculty meeting/  
breakout session



PBGG Graduate  
Program update,  
**Esther van der Knaap**



11:00-12:00, GSA meeting for graduate students & postdocs

12:00 pm Ballroom B



Lunch Buffet

## Thursday, continued...

**1:00 pm Ballroom A Moderated by Kamalpreet Dhillon**



**1:00 Speaker**

**Ana Paula Alonso**, Professor @ University of North Texas, Director of the BioAnalytical Facility; Interim Director of the BioDiscovery Institute

*Exploring Carbon Metabolism to Boost Specialty Oil Production in Alternative Crops*



**2:00 Faculty speaker**

**Daniela Lourenco**, Associate Professor, UGA; Animal and Dairy Science

*Optimizing genomic evaluations: single-step GBLUP and GWAS for large genotyped populations*

**3:00 – 5:30 pm Free Time**

Free time on your own.

Local options and distance from hotel include:

- Explore [Downtown Macon \(1.1 mi\)](#)
- [Tubman Museum](#), History Museum ([0.8mi](#))
- [Ocmulgee Mounds](#) National Historic Park ([1.2 mi](#))
- [Jarrell 1920 House](#), State Historic Site ([19 mi](#))
- Additional attractions found in [Explore Georgia's Guide to Macon](#)



**5:45-9:30 pm Dinner and Social Event**

**Shuttle trips to transport attendees to venue depart beginning at 5:45 pm**

Enter venue from Plum Street through the Beer Garden



6:30 pm Catered Dinner at [Fall Line Station](#)

8:00-9:00 pm Trivia with  
[Brain Blast Entertainment](#)



Shuttles will return attendees back to hotel every 30 minutes, beginning at 8:00pm.  
The last shuttle departs Fall Line at 9:30pm.

# Friday, March 7

6:30-9:00 am Ballroom B



Breakfast Buffet

Please check out before the 9:00 session.  
Room keys are to be returned to front desk

9:00 am Ballroom A Moderated by Raegan Wiggins



9:00-10:00, **Speaker**

**Rex Bernardo**, Professor and Endowed Chair in Corn Breeding and Genetics, Univ of Minnesota  
*The Cultivar Triangle*



10:00-10:30 Postdoc talk

**Carlos Cardon**

*Seed transcriptome variation between two peanut genotypes contrasting for aflatoxin contamination*

10:30 am Break

Coffee, tea and soda available

11:00 am Ballroom A



IP review, **Derek Eberhart**

*Your IP responsibilities for germplasm sharing and cultivar licensing*

12:00 pm Ballroom B



Lunch Buffet

12:30 pm Ballroom A



John Ingle Innovation in Plant Breeding Award winners, introduced by Shelley Fincher

Austin Hart



Caitlin McCann



Sameer Pokhrel



2:00 Poster Award Winners announced and Adjourn

THANK YOU TO THE 2025 RETREAT PLANNING COMMITTEE

Joann Conner  
Patrick Conner  
Raegan Wiggins

Samantha Wan  
Kamalpreet Dhillon

Sameer Pokhrel  
Sameer Khanal

Peng Chee  
Gunawati Gunawan  
Stacey Gay

We look forward to seeing you at the next retreat!  
*Thanks to Dario Chavez and the Griffin campus for heading up the 2026 committee*