

Winner of BioCop Fellowship Scheme 2008

I am pleased to announce that the winner of the BioCop Fellowship Scheme 2008 is Ms Hester J. van den Top of the National Institute for Public Health and Environment in Bilthoven, the Netherlands (RIVM, Partner 2).

Ms Van den Top obtained her primary degree in analytical chemistry in 1989 and started working at the laboratory for Food and Residue Analysis, RIVM in the same year. She has since gained skills using different analytical techniques for mycotoxins, phycotoxins and plant toxins, mainly involving LC, combined with several different detection systems, including different types of mass spectrometry. She also worked with other techniques such as ELISA and cell assays. Developing and validating new analytical techniques has been one of her most important tasks. In addition she has an interest in experimental design and quality assurance issues. She is currently involved in the BioCop project mainly in the areas of Phycotoxins and Mycotoxins.

She has planned to visit the laboratory of the University of Zurich, Switzerland (UNIZH, partner 5) to learn the transcriptomics analysis method for the determination of trichothecenes, a technique relatively new to her laboratory. The visit will allow for technology transfer and will actively promote collaboration between the different laboratories (chemical and cell-focused laboratories) that will help the project to enable the entire screening method to be performed in different labs. An important objective is to adapt the method to deal with specific problems that might be encountered when the method is applied in chemical labs. This would be useful to improve reproducibility of results and make the method more accessible to be implemented as a screening method.

On completion of the visit, Ms Van den Top will provide a short report on what has been achieved from both research and personal prospects.

Founded in 2005, the BioCop Fellowship Scheme is an annual programme with primary aims of promoting women's participation in science, providing career development opportunities training in new technologies for women scientists working on the BioCop project.

However, the 2009 BioCop Fellowship Scheme will be open to international scientists working in the area of food safety. Call for applications will be announced on the BioCop website in early 2009. I am looking forward to receiving your applications.

BioCop Gender Manger
Dr Chen Situ
Queen's University Belfast