

# Public Policy Update

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## Public Policy Board Welcomes 2008-2009 Early Career Intern, Maritza Abril



*Maritza Abril*

The APS Public Policy Board (PPB) welcomes **Maritza Abril**, a post-doctoral researcher at Louisiana State University, Department of Biological Sciences, Baton Rouge, as the third PPB early career intern. A native of Colombia, and a member of APS since 2000, Abril earned her M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in biological sciences with an emphasis in plant pathology and mycology under the direction of **Kenneth Curry** at The University of Southern Mississippi. She documented the invasion of strawberry petioles and stolons by *Colletotrichum* spp. at the ultrastructural level while pursuing her master's degree. She was directly involved in testing new fungicides derived from natural sources for control of strawberry anthracnose during her doctoral research project.

During her internship experience, Abril will focus on the PPB priority of increasing funding support for agricultural research. Abril's vision in this regard was well articulated in her application letter: "A strong agricultural infrastructure can only be maintained when governmental agencies are willing to support financially both basic and selected aspects of applied research. Basic research provides information needed to keep applied research successful. It is vital to the long range health of the agricultural industry. Applied research in areas that are only marginally profitable, but necessary to maintain a diversity of crops, requires government support to supplement industry. My own experience with fungicides for small fruit crops made me aware of the prohibitive costs associated with fungicide development and how protection for small production crops in general could lag behind large field crops without government support."

During the coming year, Abril will join the monthly PPB conference calls and participate in the annual spring meeting in Washington, DC, where she will assist the PPB in bringing issues of high APS priority to the attention of federal agency administrators and congressional staff. ■

