

Rationale for sequencing the genome of the house fly, *Musca domestica*

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Overview: House flies are carriers of dozens of devastating diseases that have severe consequences for human and animal health. Despite the fact that it is a passive vector, a key bottleneck to progress in controlling the devastating human diseases transmitted by house flies is lack of knowledge of the basic molecular biology of this species. Sequencing of the house fly genome will provide important inroads to the discovery of novel target sites for house fly control, understanding of the immune response in this dung-living fly, rapid elucidation of insecticide resistance genes and understanding of numerous aspects of the basic biology of this insect pest. The ability of the house fly to prosper in a remarkably septic environment motivates analysis of its innate immune system. Its polymorphic sex determination system, with male-determining factors on either the autosomes or the Y chromosome, is ripe for a genomic analysis. In addition, the house fly is well placed phylogenetically to leverage analysis of the multiple Dipteran genomes sequenced (including several mosquito and *Drosophila* species), and would serve as an important bridge from *Drosophila* to expedite annotation of the *Anopheles gambiae* genome. The community of researchers investigating *Musca domestica* are well prepared and highly motivated to apply genomic analyses to their widely varied research programs (see appendix). Additionally, experienced *Drosophila* and mosquito communities will benefit from, and are eager to obtain, a better outgroup genome (see appendix).

Response to reviews of the January 2005 *Musca* white paper

We appreciate the thought and insight that went into the consideration of the review of our first effort to persuade the Comparative Genomics and Evolution committee that the genome of *Musca domestica* is a worthwhile target. We are very pleased that the Working Group was reasonably enthusiastic about the proposal and recommended it to the Coordinating Committee. It seemed that there was agreement that the species is an important disease vector, that the genomic information could be important for controlling disease transmission, and that *Musca* is well placed for comparative genomic analysis with both *Drosophila* and *Anopheles*. Based on an e-mail and phone conversation with Dr. Adam Felsenfeld there were three concerns that lowered the Coordinating Committee's enthusiasm for *Musca*. The first is that *Musca* is primarily a passive vector, and the feeling was that genomic information of active vectors, specifically transmitting co-adapted pathogens, would be more useful for control. While it is tempting to believe that an understanding of the specific co-adaptation between vector and pathogen will be the key to successful control of insect vectors, in most cases the best solution is to lower the vector population density to the point that the disease is below epidemic threshold. All locally successful attempts to reduce malarial burden, for example, have come from reducing *Anopheles*

density and by reducing human contact through bed nets and repellents. While the research community is hopeful that *Anopheles* can be made refractory to malarial transmission, simple population control is far more likely to have a greater impact on malarial loads for the next decade. Similarly, the potential for *Musca* to vector devastating diseases increases with fly densities, which can become seemingly apocalyptic. Genomic information will help to identify targeted insecticides, repellents, pheromones, etc. to control this devastating disease carrier much more effectively than any current measures.

The second concern was the genome size, previously estimated at 900 Mbp. The first and only estimate of the house fly genome size was done by quantitative ultraviolet microscopy by Bier and Müller (1969). While this method has the potential for reasonably accurate results, no details of replication were given to assess the reliability of their particular estimate. In an effort to get a better estimate of the *Musca* genome size, we used the quantitative Real-Time PCR of Wilhelm et al. (2003). Doing the experiments in six replicates we get a revised estimate of genome size for *Musca domestica* of 308-312 Mbp, or only 1.7 times that of *Drosophila melanogaster*. Further details on our revised genome size estimates appear in Section B.

The final concern was that we had not secured an official ruling from the *Drosophila* Board stating the enthusiasm of the *Drosophila* community for this project. Instead, we just had letters from a few key individuals in the fly community (e.g. Michael Ashburner). We have shared our goals with the *Drosophila* Board, but the timing was insufficient to get an official vote of confidence from the whole board. Informally, Mark Krasnow, President of the *Drosophila* Board, did indicate that the *Musca* project is totally in line with the white paper being presented to NIH Council for support for research infrastructure for the fly community. In their white paper, they cite as a critical goal the acquisition of outgroup genome information to further improve annotation of the *Drosophila* genome.

Additional letters of support from Bradley Mullens (UC Riverside), Thomas Sparks (Dow AgroSciences and Ludek Zurek (Kansas State are now included. In addition, Frank Collins (Notre Dame) has agreed to write a letter of support, but it was not available for the deadline of this submission.

A. Specific biological rationale for *Musca* genomic sequence data.

Improving human health, informing human biology and providing new model

experimental systems. House flies (*Musca domestica*) are cosmopolitan, ubiquitous, and are the vectors of more than 100 human and animal intestinal diseases (Scott & Lettig, 1962; Greenberg, 1965; Keiding, 1986), including bacterial infections such as salmonellosis, anthrax ophthalmia, shigellosis, typhoid fever, tuberculosis, cholera and infantile diarrhea; protozoan infections such as amebic dysentery; helminthic infections such as pinworms, roundworms, hookworms and tapeworms; as well as viral and rickettsial infections. Recently house flies were shown to spread a deadly strain of *Escherichia coli* in Japan (Sasaki *et al.*, 2000). Flies also transmit eye diseases such as trachoma and epidemic conjunctivitis, and infect wounds or skin with diseases such as cutaneous diphtheria, mycoses, yaws and leprosy (Keiding, 1986). Fly-transmitted trachoma alone causes 6 million cases of childhood blindness each year (Organization, 2004). Considering that house flies are highly mobile, come into contact with excreta, carcasses, garbage and other septic matter, and that they are intimately associated with humans, our food and utensils, it is not surprising that they are involved in transmission of so

many serious and widespread diseases (Scott & Lettig, 1962; Keiding, 1986). Most recently house flies have been shown to vector life threatening antibiotic resistant bacteria (L. Zudek, personal communication), which are an ever increasing problem in hospitals and other health care facilities (Sundin, 1996; Graczyk *et al.*, 2001; Maisnier-Patin & Andersson, 2004).

House flies are always found in association with humans and human activities. In fact, house flies and humans have evolved together, with house flies following the spread of *Homo sapiens* across the planet (Münder, 1994). House flies are also one of the most serious pests at dairy, horse, hog, sheep and poultry facilities worldwide. Exposure to debilitating disease-causing agents, public health and nuisance concerns, lowered levels of milk and egg production, reduced feed conversion, all result from house fly activity. Economic losses and the cost associated with fly suppression are difficult to quantify, but costs of pesticides for fly control at poultry facilities alone are estimated at over \$200 million annually in the USA (Geden *et al.*, 1994).

The house fly thrives in a virtual sea of animal pathogens. Sequencing of the house fly genome will shed light on the immune defense systems of this important species, and provide valuable information about how it is able to flourish, while living in intimate contact with such a multitude of pathogens. Comparison with the innate immune systems of *Musca* with *Drosophila* (and *Anopheles*), which face different ecological pressures and pathogens, will be informative, just as the *Drosophila-Anopheles* comparison has been (Christophides *et al.*, 2002). The relatively close relationship to *Drosophila* has already greatly expedited this analysis, as over 30 individual genes in innate immunity have been sequenced in *Musca*. The advantage of a genome sequence is that it will allow discovery of genes unique to *Musca*, and regulatory systems that allow it to survive in a far more septic environment. Moreover, it has become clear that house fly biology is closely linked to microbes. Unlike *Drosophila* and several other Diptera, development of house fly larvae is strictly dependant on a live and active microbial community in a natural developmental habitat. Larvae cannot develop beyond the first instar in sterilized a natural or artificial substrate/medium. The principle of this symbiosis is unknown although it has been shown that different bacteria support the house fly development to different degrees. Moreover, it has become clear that house fly biology is closely linked to microbes.

Given the tremendous importance of house flies in the transmission of human and animal diseases, substantial effort has been made to control this pest. Availability of the house fly genome will identify important target sites and will allow for the development of selective new insect control agents. Identification of novel target sites in the house fly will also aid in the development of new insecticides for control of agricultural pests that limit the supply (and quality) of human foods. A genome sequence would also provide an opportunity to explore biological control in novel ways, including disruption of the unusual autosome-based sex determination system, sterile male release, confounding signals for mate recognition, etc. Such approaches may be safer than insecticides, given the proximity of house flies to humans, animals and many of their important food sources.

The biochemistry and genetics of insecticide resistance have been well studied in the house fly, arguably more widely than in any other insect, due to the economic importance of house flies, the relatively rapid rate at which they develop resistance, and because the house fly has proven to be a useful model for understanding and predicting resistance in other insect species. Availability of the house fly genome would allow for more rapid identification of the genes and regulatory sequences involved in resistance to insect control agents.

Not all aspects of house fly biology have a negative consequence to humans. Maggot therapy, the use of late instar larvae to control infection has been used for centuries by several

human societies. These dipteran larvae (primarily blow flies), in addition to consuming bacteria and necrotic tissue, produce a "healing secretion" (a cocktail of enzymes) with potent antibiotic activities. Identification of the genes responsible for these antibiotics would be of enormous value to human health (Kokoza *et al.*, 2000; van der Biezen, 2001; Metlitskaia *et al.*, 2004), especially given the increase in antibiotic-resistance bacteria (Wollina *et al.*, 2000; Lerch *et al.*, 2003).

Many species of arthropods are the sources of potent allergens that sensitize and induce IgE-mediated allergic reactions in humans. Most of these arthropod allergens are proteins, and the allergic response mechanism to these allergens is the same as it is for allergens from other sources such as plant pollens, molds, and foods. A large number of people affected by allergic reactions to stinging insects, cockroaches, and dust mites. Allergies to house flies are rare, but cases of respiratory allergy from occupational exposure (farmers) have been reported (Wahl & Fraedrich, 1997; Focke *et al.*, 2003). Identification of house fly allergens could lead to recombinant allergens with a potential use in diagnosis and immunotherapy.

Providing better annotation and understanding of the human genome. The completed genome sequences of *Drosophila melanogaster* and *Anopheles gambiae* have been extremely valuable for deductions about the evolutionary origins, structure, and even the function of many human genes (Kortschak *et al.*, 2003). Nevertheless, a significant number of gene modifications and extensive gene loss has occurred in *Drosophila*. Although the genomes and proteomes of *An. gambiae* and *D. melanogaster*, which diverged about 220-240 million years ago (MYA) (Wiegmann *et al.*, 2003), reveal considerable similarities, both lineages have experienced multiple gene acquisitions and losses, especially through expansions and contractions of gene families (Zdobnov *et al.*, 2002). Sequences of orthologous genes in these two insect species have diverged to the point that synonymous positions are virtually randomized (Zdobnov *et al.*, 2002). It was hoped that regulatory regions of genes would become clear by comparison of 5' regions of genes in *Drosophila* and *Anopheles*, but this has proven to be much more difficult. For example, the 5' and 3' regulatory flanking regions of many genes in house flies are virtually unalignable to the orthologous sequence in *Drosophila* (Shaw *et al.*, 2001); the genetic cascades regulating sex determination of the house fly and *D. melanogaster* appear strikingly different, and the upstream regulators of sex determination genes are different between these two insect species (Dübendorfer *et al.*, 2002). Furthermore, 24% of *Apis* ESTs showed better matches to Chordata than to *Drosophila* genes (Whitfield *et al.*, 2002). Some *Apis* ESTs showed significant matches to human sequences, but no matches to the *Drosophila* genome, (inferred to be genes that were lost from *Drosophila*). Similar results have also been identified in the current house fly EST sequences (N. Liu, unpublished). While either *Drosophila* or *An. gambiae* (or both) homologs could be recognized for more than half of the house fly EST sequences, some of these EST sequences showed better matches to other more distant species, such as *Plasmodium falciparum*, *Carassius auratus* (goldfish), and *Homo sapiens*, than to *Drosophila* and/or *An. gambiae* homologs. Some of the *Musca* EST sequences showed no matches to the *Drosophila* and/or *An. gambiae* genome. These results indicate that the genomic sequences from other insect species will be extremely important for linking human genes to their *Drosophila* or *An. gambiae* homologs.

A completed house fly genome will provide new information to fill gaps in our understanding of animal genome evolution. For example, the house fly genome will provide a valuable out-group for analyses of *Drosophila* genomes, given their more recent common

ancestor (compared to *Drosophila* vs. *Anopheles*). The deepest common ancestor to the set of *Drosophila* species whose genomes are being sequenced is estimated to be 60-40 MYA, and the common ancestor between *D. melanogaster* and *M. domestica* has been estimated to be approximately 100 MYA (Beverley & Wilson, 1984). This places it remarkably well in the gap between *Drosophila* and *Anopheles*, and will allow a very broad evolutionary analysis across the Dipteran order. Other dipteran genomes that are in initial stages are *Aedes aegypti*, the vector for yellow fever, and the tsetse fly, vector of sleeping sickness. *Aedes* has an extensive BAC-end and EST sequencing project running at TIGR, and it seems likely that a whole genome shotgun will be launched in the near future. Preliminary trial sequencing is under way for the tsetse fly genome, and plans for the full project are being made under by a consortium formed under the auspices of the United Nation's Tropical Disease Research program.

Suitable outgroups for genome comparisons. The concept of "best" outgroup(s) depends on the questions that one would like to address. House flies make a good choice in particular, because they likely share an ancestor with *Drosophila* within 60-40 MYA which is much deeper than *melanogaster* vs. *pseudoobscura* comparisons and is old enough for major changes to occur, but not so divergent as *Drosophila* vs. *Anopheles* which have very divergent genomes (240-220 MYA). Choosing an outgroup for mosquito genomes is a similarly complex issue. The house fly genome is an excellent choice here because it provides an alternative comparison of similar-aged divergence to the *Drosophila*/mosquito one. The house fly represents a separate major lineage of cyclorrhaphan flies (calyptratae) from *Drosophila*. Multiple, deeply divergent, comparisons within the order allows identification of lineage effects on rates and patterns of genomic diversity. These comparisons become more powerful in elucidating genome evolution as the phylogenetic context is broadened. Another point for consideration is that a single outgroup is much like an experiment with $n=1$. If the outgroup is "unusual" for the trait being investigated, then it does not serve the purpose of a suitable method for rooting a phylogenetic tree or examining patterns of genomic evolution. Multiple outgroups provide a more robust analysis. Some in the *Drosophila* community have called for a genome project for *Scaptodrosophila*, but *M. domestica* would serve this role as well (or better for some analyses) and has more compelling justification because of its serious pest status. Choice of an organism for genome sequencing requires several criteria be met, including an available colony (preferably inbred), known (and preferably small) genome size, known markers and linkage groups, etc. The house fly meets all of these criteria AND is an important human health pest.

The *Glossina* genome has recently been suggested as worthy for having its genome sequenced (Aksoy *et al.*, 2005) and an effort is underway to accomplish this. However, even if the *Glossina* genome is chosen as a target for sequencing, this does not disqualify the house fly for a number of reasons. First, the *Glossina* genome is quite large (500-600 Mbp) and contains numerous repeat sequences (Aksoy *et al.*, 2005) that will make the sequencing effort quite difficult. Second, *Glossina* and *Musca* would both provide useful outgroups for *Drosophila* and mosquito genomes (without being redundant). At the same time they would provide useful comparisons with each other at a level of difference similar to a comparison of *Anopheles* (completed) and *Aedes* (in progress). In addition, house flies have many unique features (including their profound impact on human and animal health) (Section A) and have entirely different lifestyles, habitats and behaviors from *Glossina*, all of which justify sequencing the house fly genome, whether or not *Glossina* is sequenced. Furthermore, house fly has far better genetics, more is known about its sex determination, physiology, biochemistry, neurobiology and

evolution. The house fly is a global pest while *Glossina* is a pest only in Africa.

Facilitating the ability to do experiments, e.g. "direct" genetics or positional cloning, in additional organisms. *M. domestica* is the most abundant and ubiquitous of the dung-living Diptera, many of which are blood-feeding as adult flies and important vectors of human and veterinary diseases. *M. domestica* has a well described linkage map for the five autosomes and two sex chromosomes (X and Y) (Hiroyashi, 1960; Tsukamoto *et al.*, 1961; Milani *et al.*, 1967; Nickel & Wagoner, 1974; Hiroyoshi, 1977). Crossing over is very rare in male house flies (Hamm *et al.*, 2005), a feature that has been used to advantage in genetic analysis of *Musca*, just as it has for *Drosophila*. The house fly is easy to rear and dozens of genetically defined strains are available globally (for identification of genes responsible for various traits, as well as for identification of polymorphisms). House flies do not suffer from severe inbreeding depression (Reed & Bryant, 2004), and many highly inbred strains are available. Several cDNA and genomic libraries have been prepared, and a pilot EST project is underway in Dr. Liu's laboratory (Auburn). More than 390 nucleotide sequences from *M. domestica* can be found in GenBank.

Expanding our understanding of evolutionary processes. The Dipteran clade has radiated into over 120,000 known species since its origin in the late Jurassic. *M. domestica* is well placed within the Diptera to maximize the utility of sequence data for comparison between existing Dipteran genomes. Although systematic/phylogenetic research on Diptera has been carried out for more than a century, a well-supported tree for the entire order has not been completed (Yeates & Wiegmann, 1999). However, it is clear that house fly and *Drosophila* represent a different suborder than *Anopheles*, and house fly represents a different Section (Calyptrate) than *Drosophila* (Acalyptrate) [Note: some classifications differ in the taxonomic level where they split calyptrate and acalyptrate flies]. Given the well centered position between *Drosophila* and *Anopheles*, the *Musca* genome would be nearly ideal for leveraging annotation of the *Anopheles* genome by bridging this gap (Fig. 1).

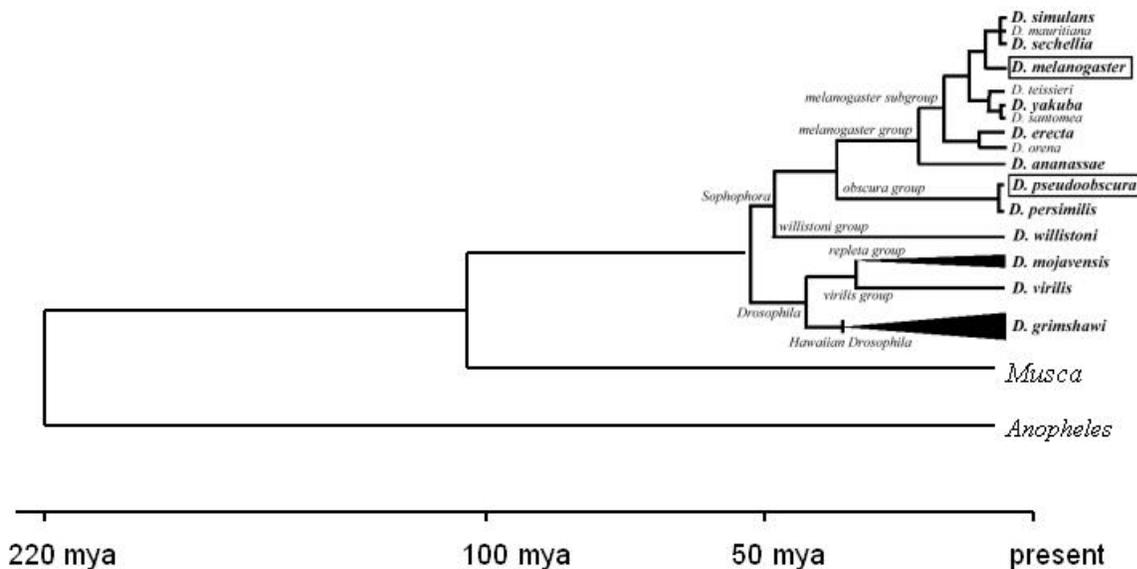


Figure 1. Phylogeny of the Diptera showing the placement of *M. domestica* relative to *Drosophila* and *Anopheles*.

Expanding our understanding of basic biological processes relevant to human health, including developmental biology and neurobiology. The house fly has been, and continues to be a major insect for studies of environmental toxicants. It has had a preeminent role in insect toxicology studies, especially with focus on insecticide resistance (Scott, 1999), comparative toxicity between insects and mammals, and in the development of new insecticides (Casida & Quistad, 2004). The house fly has been a model insect for these scientific areas of inquiry and completion of its genome will facilitate this research by the identification of novel target sites, further elucidation of differences in target sites (ion channels, neuroreceptors, hormones, etc.) between insects and mammals, and by facilitating the identification of genes involved in insecticide resistance. The neonicotinoids serve as an excellent example of the payoff that comes from this comparative biochemical approach. Neonicotinoids are the fastest growing class of insecticides, and were developed specifically by the process of selecting agents that interact with insect and not mammalian receptors (Matsuda *et al.*, 2001; Nauen *et al.*, 2003; Tomizawa & Casida, 2003; Wakita *et al.*, 2003).

Completion of the *Drosophila* and *Anopheles* genomes provided unprecedented opportunities to study insect-pathogen interactions (Christophides *et al.*, 2002; Lazzaro & Clark, 2003; Schlenke & Begun, 2003; Lazzaro *et al.*, 2004; Osta *et al.*, 2004; Srinivasan *et al.*, 2004). The house fly will be potentially of even greater value for two reasons. First, house flies live in intimate association with vertebrate pathogens such as *Helicobacter pylori* (causative agent of gastric ulcer (Li & Stutzenberger, 2000)), *Salmonella*, *Campylobacter jejuni*, *E. coli* (including toxin producing strains E105 and O157:H7 that cause food poisoning (Moriya *et al.*, 1999; de Jesus *et al.*, 2004)) and trachoma (i.e. transmission of *Chlamydia trachomatis* (Emerson *et al.*, 1999; Emerson *et al.*, 2000)). Yet house flies are remarkably resilient to pathogens. Understanding the basis for their refractoriness to many pathogens would offer important insights into ways to improve human health. Second, house fly populations in temperate climates are occasionally decimated by an entomopathogenic fungus (Zygomycetes, Entomophthoraceae). A genome sequence would expedite the investigation of why certain populations of *Musca* are sensitive to this fungus, while others are refractory. Microarray studies using the house fly genome to investigate genes associated with pathogen exposure will be a cornerstone in future studies in this field (Jensen *et al.*, 2001; Kalsbeek *et al.*, 2001; Zurek *et al.*, 2002), and would become a model-system for biological control (entomopathogenic fungi; parasitic hymenoptera; microsporidia) of insects.

In the house fly, sex is determined by a dominant factor, M, which is located on the Y chromosome in "standard" populations. Thus, males are XY^M and females are XX (Hiroyoshi, 1964; Dübendorfer *et al.*, 2002). This is believed to be the ancestral state of sex determination in house flies (Bull & Charnov, 1977; Denholm *et al.*, 1983). However, there are "autosomal male" (A^M) strains in which the M factor is located on one or more of the five autosomes (I-V) (Franco *et al.*, 1982; Inoue *et al.*, 1983; Tomita & Wada, 1989) or even rarely on X (Schmidt *et al.*, 1997). The M factor located on Y functions biologically in a way identical to the M located on any of the other autosomes (Tomita & Wada, 1989; Schmidt *et al.*, 1997). In the A^M strains females are XX and males are also XX (or XO) (Hiroyoshi, 1964; Wagoner, 1969; Franco *et al.*, 1982; Denholm *et al.*, 1983; Denholm *et al.*, 1990). It has been suggested that autosomal males may be causally related to the evolution of insecticide resistance (Hiroyoshi, 1980) or due to a consequence of tight linkage to resistance genes (Franco *et al.*, 1982; Bull, 1983; Kence &

Kence, 1992). However, this hypothesis now has very little support based on the strong North-South cline in autosomal males that was discovered in the USA (100% of the males being III^M in Florida, 100% being XY^M in Maine, and intermediate values being found in New York and North Carolina) that had no correlation with insecticide resistance (Hamm *et al.*, 2005). Some populations are found in which males are A^M/A^M (Tomita & Wada, 1989). Such populations have females with F (feminizing factor located on autosome 4), which is epistatic to M, as a means to produce equal ratios of male and female offspring. In these populations females have become the heterogametic sex.

Despite efforts by developmental biologists, the molecular identities of the M and F factors have remained elusive. In *Drosophila*, *Sex-lethal* (*Sxl*) integrates information about the dose of X and autosomes and provides the initial switch for the sex determination cascade. In *M. domestica*, F and M are not signals for *Sxl*, and in fact *Sxl* is not even involved in sex determination. Most intriguingly, in *Drosophila*, sex determination and dosage compensation are tied to the same pathway, whereas these processes are de-coupled in *Musca*. It has been speculated that it is this decoupling that gives *Musca* the impressive flexibility and polymorphism in sex determination mechanisms (Dübendorfer *et al.*, 2002; Hediger *et al.*, 2004). A full genome sequence of *M. domestica* would allow immediate identification of all homologs to the *Drosophila* sex determination cascade, and would greatly accelerate discovery of the genes that cause the radical divergence in the fundamental processes of sex determination and dosage compensation (Dübendorfer *et al.*, 2002; Hediger *et al.*, 2004).

The house fly has been a model system for studies of insect olfaction (Kelling *et al.*, 2002; Kelling *et al.*, 2003) and (Z)-9-tricosene plays an important role in inter-sex communication and mate selection in house flies. Sequencing of the house fly genome will identify receptor molecules (in antennal and palpal olfactory cells) that will aid olfaction studies in this model organism, and will facilitate development of attractants for house flies to baits in management systems (Darbro & Mullens, 2004; Hanley *et al.*, 2004).

B. Strategic issues in acquiring new sequence data.

The demand for the new sequence data. Letters of support (see Appendix) eloquently demonstrate how researchers from diverse scientific areas (genomics, proteomics, developmental biology, population genetics, evolutionary biology, etc.) would make immediate use of the *M. domestica* genome sequence to accelerate their research programs on fundamental aspects of genetics (sex determination, dosage compensation, olfaction, immunology, etc.) as well as practical problems of pest control. It is clear that this community considers sequencing of the house fly genome to be an extremely high priority.

The suitability of the organism for experimentation. The house fly has many advantages as an experimental organism for laboratory studies necessary in functional genome annotation. It is easy to rear on standard media, and large numbers can be readily produced. Under normal laboratory conditions it takes about 10 days to develop from egg to adult. House flies are highly fecund, so that thousands of house flies can be produced in a matter of weeks. Most of the protocols for basic molecular biology of *Drosophila* work well with *Musca*. In addition to the well studied genetics of the house fly, genetic markers are available for each chromosome. We propose to use DNA from the wild-type CSYM4 strain for sequencing of the house fly genome.

This strain was established from a single pair of house flies for four generations, starting with the highly inbred CS (Cornell-Susceptible standard reference strain; CS) strain of house fly. The CS strain was colonized in the 1960s in the USA (i.e. inbred for approximately 1000 generations). Preliminary sequencing of five genes (*Ace1*, *Rdl*, *CYP6D1*, *VSSC1* and *Gfi-1*) has found complete homozygosity of the strain, but pilot sequencing by the genome center is still recommended to test library quality and coverage.

Insect transgenesis is critically important for both practical applications and for addressing basic scientific questions. The generation of transgenic lines of insects has proven to be perhaps the most powerful method for demonstrating the functional role of genes, both by overexpression studies and by mutation-rescue studies. Transgenic insects have resulted in significant progress in understanding the genes involved in disease transmission, and in understanding the biological and physiological roles of numerous genes. Germ line transformation of house flies has been successfully carried out by various methods (Atkinson *et al.*, 1993; O'Brochta *et al.*, 1994; Warren *et al.*, 1994; Hediger *et al.*, 2001). More recently, one of the authors (N. Liu, Auburn Univ.) has carried out *Musca* transformations to study the genes associated with insecticide resistance. Similar studies will also facilitate the identification of new target sites that could lead to the development of novel insecticides with new modes of action and low toxicity to non-target species. The availability of transgenic technology and completion of the house fly genome will open numerous areas of investigation that were previously not approachable.

The rationale for generating the complete sequence of the organism. A thorough understanding of the biology of complex organisms requires complete sequencing information and identification of all functional elements from the genomes of these organisms. The "whole genome" approach has vastly improved comparative and evolutionary studies, as well as physical map building. It has addressed several important scientific questions about genome evolution, such as evolutionary rates, speciation, genome reorganization, and origins of variation. The approach has also been important for identification of conserved sequences involved in gene regulation and other genomic functions, identification of specific functional sequences (i.e., those that have been substituted or modified during evolution, and which have undergone recent selection (Vandahl *et al.*, 2004)) and elucidation of sequence variation in the population of organisms (such as alternative splicing in the regulation of gene function (Tan *et al.*, 2002)). The "whole genome" approach will also be important for identification of sequences that are broadly conserved across insect genomes to provide insight into the unique features in the genome, and for obtaining a broader and more complete assessment of the extent of genetic variation in the population of organisms; and identification of variation in gene expression (Yan *et al.*, 2002).

The calyptrate flies, with *M. domestica* as the most prominent experimental organism, includes a large number of important vectors of human and veterinary diseases, as well as important species for forensic entomology: dog dung fly (*Musca sorbens*), face fly (*Musca autumnalis*), blow flies (*Lucillia*, *Calliphora*, *Chrysomya*), flesh flies (*Sarcophaga*), screwworm (*Cochliomyia*), tsetse fly (*Glossina*), the little house fly (*Fannia*), warble flies (*Hypoderma*), yellow dung flies (*Scathophaga*), and the root maggot fly (*Anthomyiida*). By using genetic manipulations of *M. domestica* to place function of novel genes in its genome, we anticipate that it will be easy to transfer the knowledge gained to other synanthropic flies.

Many genes, especially regulatory genes, are often expressed at a very low level and they would be rare in EST libraries. The entire house fly genome sequence will, especially when

compared with the *Drosophila* and *Anopheles* genome sequences, facilitate the identification of homologous genes expressed at low levels or in a specific tissue. Expression patterns can then be validated with high throughput real-time PCR systems for use in either general population or microevolutionary studies (e.g., the spread and fitness of resistance genes).

The cost of sequencing the genome and the state of readiness of the organism's DNA for sequencing. Recently, quantitative Real-Time PCR (qRT-PCR) has been shown to be a reliable method for determination of genome size (Wilhelm *et al.*, 2003). Using this method, we compared the genome size of *D. melanogaster* and *M. domestica* (Gao and Scott, unpublished). In two experiments, with six replicates per experiment, we have determined the size of the *D. melanogaster* genome to be 180-181 Mbp (in agreement with the published genome size (Adams *et al.*, 2000)) and the size of the house fly genome to be 309-312 Mbp, or approximately 1.7-fold larger than *D. melanogaster* (slightly smaller than the size of *D. virilis*). Having run house fly and *Drosophila* side-by-side (using homologous single copy genes) and replicating the published size of the *Drosophila* genome we are highly confident of our results. Our estimate is smaller than the size of the house fly genome originally estimated by ultraviolet microscopy (Bier & Müller, 1969) that suggested the house fly had a genome roughly five times the size of the *Drosophila melanogaster*. Unfortunately, this paper provided no details about the number of replications or level of variation in their experiments. Thus, it is difficult to reconcile the current qRT-PCR results with the only other published estimate of genome size. We would propose that a pilot run of random whole genome shotgun reads should be generated as a test both of the quality of the library, and to acquire more information about the distribution of euchromatin. Although polytene chromosomes exist in *Musca* (Vecchi & Rubini, 1973), *in situ* hybridization has not been routinely practiced. This procedure would be very useful in linking mapping and genomics efforts, and in identification of heterochromatic regions and localization of repetitive elements. From this pilot, we will be able to design the sequencing strategy in collaboration with whichever genome center takes on the task. At this time, it appears that some sort of hybrid of the hierarchical, clone-by-clone approach and whole genome shotgun may be the most effective. The hierarchical approach has been used for most eukaryotic genome sequences, including the yeast *S. cerevisiae*, the nematode *C. elegans* (Consortium, 1998), the mustard weed *A. thaliana* (Iniative, 2000), and the human (Consortium, 2001).

A strain of house fly, CSYM4, will be used as a source for genomic DNA construction of the BAC library(s), DNA sequencing, and molecular and physical maps. The homozygosity of this strain will be important for avoiding problems in contig misassembly, which could happen in genomes with heterozygous loci (Mongin *et al.*, 2004). 7-8 X coverage of the house fly genome will be the most informative. BAC end sequences from both ends of approximately 30,000 - 40,000 BAC clones will be generated with an average insert size of 200 kb to yield 60,000 - 80,000 sequence-tagged connectors (STCs). An expanded EST sequencing project, with a good spread of libraries from different tissues and developmental periods would assist in gene annotation and would inform the functional analysis of the genome. The whole genome shotgun project would require about 8 million sequencing reads, so an EST project of 250,000 sequences would provide a reasonable balance of effort, cost, and utility.

Current status of genome efforts in *M. domestica*. Several resources that will facilitate the assembly and annotation of the house fly genome have been funded through a variety of sources. NIHGMS supported research has led to the production of both genomic and cDNA libraries

(Scott lab). As a part of USDA NIR and Auburn University Biogrant funded project, a house fly normalized cDNA library has been constructed from the mRNA of house flies. In a pilot study of this library 300 ESTs have been generated (N. Liu lab), resulting in 292 high quality cDNA sequence reads. 39 ESTs were assembled into 8 contigs. The remaining 253 ESTs are unique, suggesting a 15% redundancy in the house fly sequence set. This EST sequencing effort, combined with other larger EST projects, will be excellent resources for the genomic library (BAC library) screening and building contig maps for comparative genomic studies. In addition, five house flies genomic DNA libraries have been generated by cloning genomic DNA fragments digested by HindIII, BamHI, ScaI, EcoRI, and SspI into pUC18 vectors. Again, these house fly genomic libraries will be resources for house fly WGS sequence reads.

Readiness of the research community. Currently there are approximately 40 laboratories worldwide whose primary research focus is the house fly. About half of these are engaged in studies of molecular biology that would immediately benefit from a complete genome sequence. Most of the others are studying aspects of toxicology and pest control, and immediate access to design of primers for PCR analysis would open the door to simple but powerful molecular approaches to this group. *Drosophila* researchers should be counted among the community that would benefit from the sequencing of the house fly genome. The white papers that resulted in funding to sequence an additional 11 genomes of *Drosophila* species failed to include an outgroup to the set of *Drosophila* species, and *Anopheles gambiae* is just too distantly related for optimal analysis (in most cases).

The Danish Pest Infestation Laboratory has been a center of excellence in house fly research since the founding in 1948. House fly biology and especially insecticide resistance has been a primary research topic at DPIL. Numerous strains of house flies are bred and made available for the international research community. House fly research at DPIL has recently adopted molecular approaches, and has also expanded beyond chemical control to include the interaction with biological control agents such as entomopathogenic fungi. DPIL recently merged with the Danish Institute of Agricultural Research, which has a high level of activity in genomics of domestic animals (i.e. identification and application of DNA variation as markers for health and production traits, mapping of hereditary defects, genome scanning and comparative genome analysis) and is currently working on a joint venture to sequence the porcine genome and developing SNPs (Li, 2000). Michael Kristensen (one of the authors of this white paper) works at DPIL.

Bioinformatics. Initial assembly of the house fly genome sequence will be performed at the sequencing center, but it is our goal to make the sequence available to the greater research community as rapidly as possible. Sequence data will be rapidly and regularly released into public databases, prior to assembly. It is likely that the bioinformatics community will perform more than one assembly, judging from their interest in the *Drosophila* genomes, and the *Musca* genome will be of immediate interest to see how it has accomplished the approximately 2-fold expansion relative to *D. melanogaster*. Once there is a shaking out of the assemblies, the most arduous bioinformatics task that will likely not be handled by the genome center is annotation. We would propose to host a genome annotation “jamboree”, much in the fashion of the jamboree that was held at Celera Genomics upon its first assembly of the *Drosophila melanogaster* genome sequence. Michael Ashburner and others from the *Drosophila* community have already volunteered to assist in the annotation process, after the automatic annotators have made their

first pass. Michael Eisen's group at Berkeley has been one of the most active in pulling together the data from the *Drosophila* genomes sequenced to date, and he is eager to run the pipelines that they have developed for *Drosophila* on the *Musca* genome as well. The plan would be to begin by overlaying as much annotation onto *Musca* by homology to *Drosophila*, and to then explore the remainder armed with BLAST pre-computes and detailed synteny information. By gathering investigators in one place in one intensive effort, there would be an economy of scale in producing an expert-reviewed annotation.

As the annotation information is generated, it needs to be made available in a form that best supports the research efforts by the broader community. This includes features like a genome browser, selectable ftp site, BLAST server, and a SQL interface. FlyBase serves as the model for a tool that provides rapid access to a heterogeneous set of attributes for genomic content. We approached Dr. William Gelbart with the suggestion that *Musca*, as the best outgroup to the *Drosophila* genomes, would be an excellent addition to the FlyBase database. He was enthusiastic about the house fly genome white paper and replied that *Musca* could either be served by FlyBase or InsectBase (pending the outcome of his proposal on the latter). The power of the *Musca* genome informatics comes from comparative genomics, so being imbedded in these multi-species databases is ideal.

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APPENDIX

Letters of support for sequencing of the house fly genome

Ashburner, Michael (Cambridge)

Bloomquist, Gary & Claus Tittiger

Bopp, Daniel & Monica Hediger (University of Zurich)

Broce, Alberto (Kansas State Univ.)

Çağlar, Selim (Hacettepe University)

Casida, John (UC Berkeley)

Collins, Frank (Notre Dame)

Denholm, Ian & Martin Williamson (Rothamstead)

Drosophila Board (Mark A. Krasnow, Stanford)

Eisen, Michael (UC Berkeley)

Giangaspero, Annunziata & Domenico Otranto (Univ. degli Studi di Foggia)

Lazzaro, Brian (Cornell University)

Mullens, Bradley (University of California, Riverside)

Ozoe, Yoshihisa (Shimane University)

Sparks, Thomas C. (Dow AgroSciences)

Tomita, Takashi, Shinji Kasai, Osamu Komagata & Toshio Shono (National

Institute of Infectious Diseases, Japan)

Wiegmann, Brian (NC State University)

Zurek, Ludek (Kansas State University)

To: jgs5@cornell.edu

Subject: Re: Musca domestica whitepaper and Letters of Support

Dear Jeff,

Thank you for sending me the draft White Paper making the case for a genomic sequence of Musca.

Even as a drosophilist I have long been fascinated by Musca. Like *Drosophila melanogaster* it is a cosmopolitan synanthropic species. Unlike *Drosophila*, which only does good in this World (think of how bad it would be if we did not have *Drosophila* to transmit yeast between grapes !), Musca is a serious disease vector. Many years ago I purchased and read Bernard Greenberg's wonderful two volumes 'Flies and Disease' (Princeton 1971) which includes 67 pages of a table listing the associations then known between Musca (as a genus, but mostly domestica) and other organisms, mostly viruses, bacteria and fungi. It is interesting that this seems to have been funded by the US Army. That would make sense, since Musca can transmit anthrax. However, so much emphasis has been put on the hematophagous vectors in recent years, that the importance of the passive vectors such as Musca seems to have been rather overshadowed. As your White Paper clearly summarizes the cost to human health of Musca is very considerable.

Musca is very interesting from a population genetics point of view. It has, again as reviewed in your document, an extraordinarily complex variety of chromosomal sex determining mechanisms, with, for example populations that are male heterogametic, are female heterogametic, that have the male determining factor on different chromosomes

and so forth. Moreover Musca was one of the first organisms subjected to massive control by insecticides, especially DDT. In some regions, eg. the Po Valley in northern Italy, these were almost military campaigns, as recounted to me many years ago by Milani in Pavia. It is not, therefore, surprising that Musca is an ideal model for the study of the mechanisms, evolution and spread of insecticide resistance.

Above all, however, I am excited by this project because of what it promises to comparative genomics. The case that Musca is, evolutionarily, 'midway' between *Anopheles* and *Drosophila* is well made in your White Paper. It could form a great 'bridge' for the comparative analysis of both genomes. Its relatively large genome size, in comparison to *Drosophila*, is also of great interest. Thus I see a Musca genome as being of great value not only for the 'run of the mill' comparative genomic purposes (improving annotations of genes and non-coding sequences), great as that will be, but also for its contribution to our understanding genome evolution at the whole genome level. As you know from the work of the Pavia group there is evidence (pre-molecular) for syntenic conservation of chromosome arms between Musca and *Drosophila*.

Should you wish me to help in any way in the annotation of the Musca sequence then please let me know. I would be delighted to be involved. We must clearly plan for a close collaboration between that effort and FlyBase, though it is probably premature to be too specific about that right now.

Let me know if I can be of further help.

Best wishes,

Michael Ashburner

December 28, 2004

Jeffrey G. Scott
Daljit S. and Elaine Sarkaria Professor of Insect Physiology and Toxicology
Department of Entomology
Comstock Hall
Cornell University
Ithaca, NY 14853

Dear Jeff,

This letter is to assure you of our enthusiastic support for your proposal to sequence the genome of the housefly, *Musca domestica*.

Our research in *M. domestica* focuses on the endocrine regulation and biochemistry of cuticular hydrocarbon biosynthesis. Since all insects rely on cuticular hydrocarbons as a defence against desiccation, results from this work may be used to develop new pest control strategies. Furthermore, some cuticular hydrocarbons serve as contact sex pheromones. Female housefly pheromone components include various long-chain compounds derived from fatty acids, and their synthesis is regulated by ecdysone. We are now in the process of identifying and purifying cDNA clones for the enzymes involved. These include various cytochromes P450 and fatty acyl elongases, among others.

An annotated *M. domestica* genome will be an invaluable resource that will greatly help with our work, particularly in understanding how genes are regulated during pheromone biosynthesis and/or hydrocarbon production. Comparisons with other known genomes will provide insight into how these processes have evolved in insects.

With best wishes for a successful proposal,

Sincerely,

Gary J. Blomquist, Professor and Chair

Claus Tittiger, Associate Professor



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Dr. Daniel Bopp

Zürich, January, 4th 2005

Dear Jeff

We are writing to express our strong and enthusiastic support for sequencing of the house fly genome. Our research group has a longstanding and successful record of genetic and molecular studies with *Musca domestica*. We are exploiting this system to improve our understanding of how sex-determining pathways have evolved in insects.

How the sexual fate of an individual is determined poses a fascinating problem in biology and has attracted the attention of many researchers since the dawn of genetic studies. Though sex determination is based on a simple binary decision between two alternative developmental programs, male or female, we have only begun to understand the underlying genetic control in a few model systems. In insects, this pathway has been most extensively studied in *Drosophila melanogaster*. This work has led to a detailed description of the underlying genetic architecture and sex determination has become one of the best-studied developmental pathways in this model organism. However, from comparative studies in other dipteran insects it was evident that the instructive part of the *Drosophila* pathway does not represent a conserved mode of operation. On the contrary, an astounding diversity of sex-determining mechanisms seems to exist at this level in the insect world. For instance, some species make use of dominant Mendelian cues, commonly referred to as *M* when determining male development or *F* when determining the female fate. In other species it is the genetic make-up of the mother that decides whether her progeny will be male (arrhenogenic) or female (thelygenic). The spectrum of sex-determining cues is broad and extends from quantitative chromosomal signals (e.g. differences in ploidy) to environmental cues, such as temperature or population



density. What has specifically attracted our attention to *Musca domestica* is the existence of seemingly different strategies in one and the same species. The spectrum ranges from the use of dominant male or female determiners to a system in which sex is solely determined by the maternal genotype. This special feature makes the housefly a perfect model system for studying evolutionary changes in the sex determination pathway. The different mechanisms seem to have evolved in a relatively short period suggesting that the observed variations are subtle changes in an otherwise well conserved pathway. By identifying the components and their molecular functions in the *Musca* pathway and comparing them to those found in other fly species we may be able to define a basic principle that is operational in many species. If such a conserved core mechanism does exist it will provide an ideal target for developing effective sexing strategies which can be applied to Sterile Insect Technique based programs to control the spreading of pest fly species of medical and agricultural relevance.

With the recent isolation of a *Musca transformer* homologue (*Mdtra*) we made an important move forward towards understanding the basic principle by which sex is determined in the housefly. *Mdtra* corresponds to the genetically identified *F* gene, the master ON/OFF switch in the pathway (Dübendorfer et al., 2002). Molecular analysis of this locus supports previous genetic evidence that female development relies on an autocatalytic activity of *F* to select and maintain the female fate (Dübendorfer and Hediger, 1998). *Mdtra* functionally corresponds to the *Drosophila Sxl* gene in that it not only executes but also memorizes the female choice through a self-sustaining feedback loop. In both cases, male development follows when the formation of this loop is prevented. In *Musca*, the loop breaker is likely to be the male dominant factor *M*. The use of dominant male determining factors is widespread in insects. However the molecular nature of these *M* factors has not yet been elucidated. We are currently attempting to isolate the *M* factor from the *Musca* genome using subtractive hybridization screens of mRNAs isolated from unisexual embryos. These approaches would greatly benefit from the availability of molecular tools, such as BAC libraries and EST libraries. Access to the complete gene content of *Musca* would also facilitate and accelerate the characterization and validation of candidate *M* genes. To improve our understanding of how *Mdtra* executes the female program we are also interested in identifying



Mdtra targets. With your proposal to sequence the *Musca* genome it would be feasible to take a functional genomic approach to this end. For instance, candidates can be identified in genome-wide Blast searches by virtue of a set of conserved cis-regulatory sequences and by using the microarray chip technology to produce genome-wide expression profiles for the detection of early sex-specific activities.

Daniel Bopp
PhD

Monika Hediger
PhD

Institute of Zoology, University of Zürich, Switzerland

January 4, 2005

Dr. Jeffrey Scott
Department of Entomology
Cornell University

Dear Dr. Scott:

It is with pleasure that I write this letter as indication of my full support for the request to NIH for funds to sequence the genome of the house fly, *Musca domestica*. The house fly can claim the fame to be the most ubiquitous and cosmopolitan of all the millions described and undescribed species of insects. But more significant yet, it is its role as the most important insect vector of enteric pathogens of humans and domesticated animals. The recent report of *E. coli* multiplying in house flies, and not just being carried by these flies, has done nothing but to reinforce the public health pest status of this fly. As the news media brings us constantly the horrors caused by the devastating effects of the tsunami in Southeast Asia, we just expect house flies to add to the misery of the surviving victims.

Confined livestock feeding operations offer a plethora of habitats for house flies in which to develop in great numbers. And as the urban areas keep alarmingly encroaching more and more on rural areas, the frequency of conflicts between urbanites and livestock producers over the ownership of these pesky flies will just only increase. These flies do not just affect humans by their annoying presence, but as carriers of enteric pathogens they disseminate these within the animal production confines, but also disperse them to wherever the wind and their wings will carry these flies.

For an insect species of such economic and human health importance, we are certainly ill equipped to manage, and least control, their populations. As an example of this poor situation, we do not have an adequate trap for monitoring their populations; in addition, the house fly has demonstrated to possess a formidable capacity to overcome almost every chemical toxicant we have thrown at them. For those of us that have dedicated our professional lives to study filth flies, with the ultimate goal of devising novel and effective control measures, sequencing the genome of undoubtedly the most significance member of this clan is certainly welcoming news as we see promising results of these efforts. These efforts should result in the opening of new promising avenues of attack to control their populations, or at least, the knowledge on how to manage the shrinking chemical arsenal we still have at hands.

Again, I express my full support for the funding of sequencing the genome of the house fly.

Sincerely,

Alberto B. Broce
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01.05.2005

Dear Dr. Jeffrey G. Scott

I and my partners of the “Hacettepe University Ecological Science Research Laboratories (ESRL)” have been working on the field of vector ecology and control for over 20 years. Our research topics span a wide array of fields like population biology of vector organisms, phenotypic variation, resistance development, genetics of resistance and establishment of vector management programs.

The housefly *Musca domestica* L. is a pest well known by many. Its association with household garbage and other organic disposals also makes it a potential vector for many diseases which can affect public health. Therefore efforts to control this organism have been and still are an important research subject. The housefly’s natural ability to adapt to various habitats has made it a cosmopolite insect well distributed in most parts of the world. The housefly’s high reproduction rate and its ability to adapt to various environments makes control efforts very difficult therefore information of its capacity to increase under different environmental conditions is of high importance.

In order to design an effective and persistent management program it is essential to follow both demographic and genetic changes taking place in target populations as a result of management programs. Resistance is the major problem encountered in nearly all management programs. In order to track the development of resistance and counter attack it is vital to have information exact genetic and enzymatic mechanisms of resistance and their phenotypic expressions. With information obtained from these studies, it will be possible to evaluate the behavior of resistance whether it will settle into a stable state or whether it will oscillate between certain levels. It will also be determine the various resistance mechanisms acting on the population and their relative frequencies.

A full knowledge of the housefly genome would be an invaluable asset to these studies. Full information of the genome will also be helpful in mapping QTL traits underlying the genetic structure of the phenotypic variation taking place in the population. Therefore it will be possible to fully understand and track the selective pressures and evolutionary changes taking place in the population. In addition such research conducted on the housefly can easily be used as a model for other vector organisms such as blowflies, mosquitoes or sandflies.

We give full support for this effort and believe that sequencing the genome of the housefly and other vector organisms is a very important goal and will be a major contribution to the scientific community.

On behalf of the ESRL

Assoc. Prof. Selim Sualp Çağlar

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SANTA BARBARA • SANTA CRUZ

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January 4, 2005

Professor Jeffrey G. Scott
Department of Entomology
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Dear Professor Scott:

I strongly support placing high priority on sequencing the house fly, *Musca domestica*, genome. The housefly is the most extensively studied model for insect toxicology and biochemical mechanisms of control. Genetic manipulation of its genes provides insight into mechanisms of toxicity and resistance. Knowledge of its entire genome would identify insect-unique candidate targets. Knockouts of individual genes would provide new possibilities for insect control and opportunities for synthesis of target-specific chemicals affecting insects rather than mammals.

Selective toxicity involving low risk for mammals and high potency to insect pests is an essential requirement for safe and effective pesticides. About 90% of insecticides act on the insect nervous system including the voltage-dependent sodium ion channel, the chloride ion channel of the γ -aminobutyric acid receptor, and the cholinergic enzyme and receptor. The mechanisms for selective toxicity of insecticides are conferred by structural differences in the target sites and balance between metabolic activation and detoxification. The insect genome analysis, particularly in genes for nervous targets and xenobiotic-metabolizing enzymes, is therefore important in defining unique toxicology mechanisms. Also, the genome data will lead to recognition of novel insecticidal targets in insect pests.

Sincerely yours,

John E. Casida, Director
Environmental Chemistry and
Toxicology Laboratory
Professor of Entomology



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July 15, 2005

Jeffrey G. Scott
Sarkaria Professor of Insect Physiology and Toxicology
Department of Entomology
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Dear Jeff,

I have read the *Musca domestica* genome project white paper that you have submitted to NHGRI, and I want to let you and your potential reviewers know that I strongly endorse this project. I believe that the genome of this dipteran species will be a particularly useful outgroup – complementing the available *Drosophila* species – in helping us use comparative genomics to better understand the genomes of *Anopheles gambiae* and other mosquitoes. (A draft of the *Aedes aegypti* genome is almost complete and work on *Culex pipiens quinquefasciatus* is underway.)

The house fly is also a widely studied model organism, especially in the area of toxicology and insecticide resistance, and this and other areas of research will benefit significantly from a house fly genome project.

Finally, *Musca* is a very important vector of both human and domestic animal pathogens, and the very large community of scientists who study this species as a human and veterinary pest and vector will benefit enormously.

Again, I strongly endorse this project.

Sincerely,.

Frank H. Collins
Clark Professor of Biological Sciences

4 January 2005

Professor Jeffrey G. Scott
Department of Entomology
Comstock Hall
Cornell University
Ithaca
NY 14853
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Dear Jeff

I am delighted to add my support to your proposal to prioritise the housefly (*Musca domestica*) for genome sequencing. The draft of the proposal by yourself, Nannan Liu and Michael Kristensen does an admirable job in highlighting the many areas of research that would benefit from access to a full sequence. First and foremost, I would cite the extraordinary way that *M. domestica* has adapted to a wide range of environments, becoming commensal with man on every continent and one of the primary insect vectors of human diseases, in the developing world especially. As you rightly point out, the range of diseases transmitted has made this species a major target of control programmes worldwide, though often with relatively little success due to its catholic environmental requirements, its high reproductive potential, and its proven capacity to respond to and withstand exposure to control agents. *M. domestica* remains one of the model organisms for research on mechanisms of insecticide resistance, and information gleaned from this work over the years has fuelled parallel studies on a wide range of medical, veterinary and agricultural pests. Indeed, for many years much of the information available on the genetics and biochemical nature of detoxification mechanisms and target-site modifications was derived directly from painstaking work on *M. domestica*. This exploited the availability of morphological markers for linkage analyses and for dissecting individual mechanisms from strains showing resistance to virtually all known classes of insecticide. Houseflies continue to lead the way in developing resistance to newer classes of chemistry and this, combined with the ease of laboratory maintenance and crossing, render them ideally suited for isolating and characterising the genes responsible. Work in this area is not just of value for improved understanding of resistance *per se*, but assists with identifying molecular mechanisms underpinning micro-evolutionary adaptations to a broad range of xenobiotics and other environmental challenges.

Resistance is just one area in which *M. domestica* has contributed, and can continue to contribute to our broad understanding of the native of adaptations and microevolutionary processes. However, I believe it has the potential to contribute even more substantially to broader, fundamental studies of attributes that enable an organism like this to become such a ubiquitous threat to the welfare of humans and domesticated livestock.

...continued

What enables a species like *M. domestica* to exert such dominance while others, with seemingly rather similar demographic and ecological characteristics, remain only of localised or specialised importance? Is it a question of exceptional phenotypic plasticity (which must in itself have a genetic explanation), or is it equipped with mechanisms that enhance mutability and hence the prospects of recovery of favourable genotypes? Work I was involved in some years ago demonstrated houseflies to exhibit dramatic polymorphism in mechanisms of sex determination, ranging from a 'classical' X-Y system with males being the heterogametic sex, to ones in which sex was established by the presence or absence of a dominant female determinant located on one or more of the five autosomes. The mechanics of what must be a highly complex transition from male to female heterogamety was left rather up in the air due to the (then) lack of incisive tools for taking the research further. It would be a fascinating topic to revisit as it seemed that this polymorphism was of recent origin, associated perhaps with areas where insecticide use was most prevalent, and where a number of independent resistance mutations were appearing and rapidly becoming commonplace. There is certainly very exciting scope for continuing such work armed with the tools and information that comprehensive data on genomic composition and structure would provide.

I wish you success with the proposal to NIH, and am happy to provide further information as required.

Yours sincerely

DR IAN DENHOLM

Head of the Plant and Invertebrate Ecology Division

DR MARTIN WILLIAMSON

Insect Molecular Biology Group, Biological Chemistry Division



Mark A. Krasnow, M.D., Ph.D.
Professor & Associate Chairman of Biochemistry
Investigator, Howard Hughes Medical Institute

July 11, 2005

Dr. Jeffrey G. Scott
Daljit S. and Elaine Sarkaria Professor of Insect Physiology and Toxicology
Department of Entomology, Comstock Hall
Cornell University
Ithaca, NY 14853

Dear Jeff,

I am writing in regard to the White Paper entitled "Rationale for sequencing the genome of the house fly, *Musca domestica*" that you are submitting to NIH. I do so in my capacity as the 2005-2006 President of the *Drosophila* Board of Directors. The *Drosophila* Board is an elected body of officers and regional representatives. One of the functions of the Board is to oversee community resources and to represent the best interests of the *Drosophila* research community. In carrying out these roles, the Board does not endorse specific grant applications or advocate for a specific group of researchers, but instead, it defines critical needs of the community-at-large and identifies possible solutions.

With extensive input from the *Drosophila* community, the *Drosophila* Board assembles and publishes the *Drosophila* Board White Paper. We are in the final stages of producing White Paper 2005, which includes a review of recent progress, identification of bottlenecks to more rapid research progress, and defining the most pressing needs of the *Drosophila* research community over the next several years. A draft version has been prepared and circulated for comments from the Board, the *Drosophila* research community, and officials at NIH. The final version should be available later this summer.

There are many reasons for embarking on the *Musca domestica* genome project, including the human health implications of controlling this disease vector, as well as the well-articulated arguments for its importance in genome annotation, evolutionary biology, and understanding the evolution of sex determination mechanisms. Further, a highly inbred line is available and many other reagents are in place, as well as a plan for hands-on annotation involving the community.

One of the twelve most pressing needs of the *Drosophila* research community identified in the current draft of White Paper 2005 is annotation of genome sequence from additional *Drosophila* species. The sequencing of 11 additional species of *Drosophila* is well underway and assemblies should be available soon. These new data present an unparalleled opportunity for rapid progress in a range of areas including (1) using comparative sequence analysis to improve the annotations of *D. melanogaster*, (2) understanding genome evolution including the functional evolution of genetic pathways, (3) describing variation at a genome scale, and (4) identifying non-coding genes and regulatory elements. To fully realize the potential of this unique resource, continuing support is needed for assembling, aligning and annotating these genomes. In addition to the biological and medical reasons for sequencing the *Musca domestica* genome, *Musca* is well situated between *Drosophila* and *Anopheles* to serve as an outgroup for the *Drosophila* genomes. It would also serve as a useful bridge for annotation of the *Anopheles* and other insect genomes.

Although we did not receive the Musca White Paper in time to consider the project for inclusion and prioritization in our White Paper 2005, there is support for the project among the nine Board members that were available to review the Musca White Paper.

I would be happy to answer any question you might have about the Drosophila Board and its role in assessing the needs and priorities of the Drosophila research community.

On behalf of the Drosophila Board,

Mark Krasnow, M.D., Ph.D.
President, Drosophila Board of Directors



Michael B. Eisen, Ph.D.

Life Sciences Division
Lawrence Berkeley National Lab

Department of Molecular and Cell Biology
University of California Berkeley

January 2, 2005

Jeffrey G. Scott
Department of Entomology
Comstock Hall
Cornell University
Ithaca, NY 14853

Dear Jeff,

I am writing to strongly support your proposal to obtain a genome sequence for the housefly *Musca domestica*.

My lab studies the evolution of transcriptional regulation, with a focus on *Drosophila* and other Dipterans. While we have rich resources for the comparative and evolutionary studies within the genus *Drosophila*, many aspects of our work are limited by the absence of a genome sequence of an outgroup. The closest available species – the mosquito *Anopheles gambiae* – diverged over 200 million years ago from *Drosophila*, and there is extensive sequence divergence between these two groups that makes it nearly impossible to compare the non-coding sequences of these groups. Furthermore, key aspects of development and other functions are radically different between *Drosophila* and *Anopheles*, further complicating comparative analyses. In particular, many of the key regulators of development found in *Drosophila* are absent or have markedly distinct functions in *Anopheles*.

In contrast, *Musca domestica* is far less diverged from *Drosophila* both at the sequence level and in terms of many functions. In particular, development in *Musca* proceeds very similarly to *Drosophila*, and the two taxa share an almost identical developmental toolkit. Our group, and many others, are poised to use this genome in our research. For these reasons we strongly support obtaining the *Musca* genome sequence.

Sincerely,

Michael B. Eisen

Faculty Scientist
Department of Genome Sciences
Life Sciences Division
Lawrence Orlando Berkeley National Lab

Assistant Professor of Genetics and Development
Center for Integrative Genomics
Department of Molecular and Cell Biology
University of California Berkeley

Dear Dr Scott,

among the ectoparasites affecting worldwide animals and humans, *Musca domestica* (Diptera: Muscidae), commonly known as “house fly”, represent a major concern for the human and animal health. This is mainly due to the fact that it is diffused and can live in several environments, the town as well as the countryside.

Musca domestica act as pathogen both at the larval (as causative agent of facultative myiasis) and at the adult stage. At adult stage *M. domestica* may also cause nuisance to the livestock by flying or feeding on animal secretions or wounds. Meanwhile face flies are very active mechanic and/or biological vectors of pathogens. In particular *M. domestica* is mechanical vector of viruses (enterovirus, rotavirus), bacterial (salmonellae, shigellae, streptococci, stafilococci, *Escherichia coli*), protozoa (*Giardia*, amoeba, *Cryptosporidium*, etc.), nematodes (tricurids, ancylostomatids, ascarids). In fact more than 100 pathogens have been isolated from house flies and, among them, about 60 are transmitted by flies. *Musca domestica* is also biological vector of nematodes (e.g. *Thelazia*, *Parafilaria*, *Stephanofilaria*, *Habronema*) (Giangaspero, 1997).

Genomic studies on some *M. domestica* might be of interest to elucidate the direct and indirect pathogenic role this species plays in different geographical areas and on different hosts.

For example, the presence of different size or shape of prestomal teeth may be a character linked to the different pathogenic activity *M. domestica* have under the evolutionary pressure of different habitats and/or feeding habits. Similarly, genetic studies could be interesting to achieve insights on the indirect role of face flies as vectors of pathogen (see above). An example on this respect is represented by *M. domestica* acting as vector of nematodes belonging to the genus *Thelazia*.

Thelazia spp. commonly named “eyeworms”, comprises about 16 species of nematodes of animal and human concern. In fact *Thelazia* includes the more common species of spirurids infecting a wide range of domestic animals all over the world that are responsible for subclinical to clinical diseases, with variable symptoms (from mild conjunctivitis, epiphora and photophobia to keratitis and ulcers).

The life cycle of this nematode requires the presence of secretophagous flies (Diptera: Muscidae) as intermediate hosts. Thirteen species of *Musca* have been incriminated in the transmission of eyeworms, (*Musca autumnalis*, *Musca larvipara*, *Musca osiris* and *Musca domestica*) but mainly face flies (i.e. *M. autumnalis* and *M. larvipara*) have been demonstrated, both under experimental and natural conditions, to act as vectors in a few countries (Stoffolano, 1970; Otranto et al., 2003).

The role of *M. domestica* as vector of thelazioe is still controversial since, while in some countries (i.e. India and Cecoslovacchia) this species was demonstrated to be a good vector of eyeworms, experimental trials carried out in US demonstrated that it is not suitable to transmit bovine eyeworms. The latter evidences were based on epidemiological (only occasionally this species eat on the conjunctive) and biological evidences (*M. domestica* larvae develop in the haematocele in an anomalous manner) (Broce and Elzinga, 1984; Geden and Stoffolano, 1981; 1982).

The evidence that the house fly may act as intermediate host of *Thelazia gulosa* and *Thelazia rhodesi* –which infect cattle– (Vilagiova, 1967; Gupta, 1970) indicates that where *M. domestica* and eyeworms have shared a common habitat for long periods of time, selection could have favoured a successful vector-nematode relationship (Geden & Stoffolano, 1981).

A recent molecular epidemiological survey demonstrated that *M. domestica* may act as vector of *T. gulosa* in southern Italy (Otranto et al., 2003).

By the means of genomic studies on *M. domestica* the role of this species in the aetiology, epidemiology and pathogenesis of thelaziosis in different geographical areas might be of interest.

Genome projects for several medically important parasites have been initiated and are in progress. We are firmly convinced that the NIH sequencing project of house fly genome might add important information on a topic which is often little considered, as the epidemiology of animal and human parasitic diseases.

A. Giangaspero & D. Otranto

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College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

January 4, 2005

Dear Jeff,

I am writing to express strong support for your proposal to have the genome of *Musca domestica* sequenced. I see a number of reasons why housefly should be sequenced, including the practicality of "doing genetics" in the system and the phylogenetic placement of the housefly. As you know, my particular research interest is in the population genetics and evolutionary biology of insect immune systems. The ability to conduct research in this area was greatly expanded by the complete sequencing of the *Drosophila melanogaster* and *Anopheles gambiae* genomes. I envision a similar explosion in research productivity with the data and technological resources that would become available with a *Musca* sequence.

Because of the housefly's evolutionary intermediacy between *Drosophila* and *Anopheles*, availability of a *Musca* genome sequence would have immediate impact on several research questions related to my interest. The high divergence between *Drosophila* and *Anopheles* impairs comparison of these species for inference of evolutionary pressures on many proteins. This problem is compounded by the fact that the most interesting proteins are frequently those most quickly evolving. The housefly, being more closely related to *Drosophila melanogaster* than *Anopheles*, but less closely related than the recently sequenced *Drosophila pseudobscura*, is a useful outgroup for evolutionary genomic comparisons. Furthermore, the availability of genome sequences at multiple phylogenetic distances confers optimal power for testing long-term evolutionary hypotheses. For one example, when the complement of immune response genes in the *Anopheles* genome were compared to those of *Drosophila*, it was found that the mosquito genome had much larger gene families related to suppression of eukaryotic parasites (presumably due to pressure from malaria) while the fruit fly had many more genes relevant for suppression of microbial infection (presumably reflecting the septic environment in which it lives). Because the environmental pathogens afflicting *Musca* differ from those affecting either *Anopheles* or *Drosophila*, further comparison with the housefly will extend our ability to address the degree to which gene complement is determined by the ecology of the organism.

I am quite enthusiastic about the prospect of a *Musca* genome sequence both for my own research and for the advancement of insect evolutionary and functional genetics. Please do not hesitate to call on me if I can help advance your effort.

Sincerely,



Brian Lazzaro
Assistant Professor
Department of Entomology
Cornell University



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Department of Entomology
Comstock Hall
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Ithaca, NY 14853

7 Jan. 2005

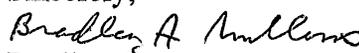
Dear Jeff,

I am pleased to be able to write in support of your NIH proposal to sequence the genome of the house fly, *Musca domestica*. This species is a superior laboratory model for studying many aspects of basic biological processes. Therefore the genome would no doubt be of immense utility for developmental or evolutionary biologists, geneticists and neuroscientists.

My own area is biology and management of pests affecting human and animal health. In this regard, in my opinion, **the house fly truly deserves to be ranked as a high priority target**. It absolutely should be up there with the primary obligate vectors of biologically-transmitted human disease agents. Genome description already is either complete or underway for several significant vectors- the house fly deserves no less attention.

The house fly is one of mankind's most abundant, widespread, and unwelcome associates. Unlike a species like *Anopheles gambiae* (a principal African malaria vector and one of the first targets of genome description), house flies now exist almost everywhere humans do. Most of the pathogens they transmit also can get around by other means, so it has been easy to underestimate, or at least not fully appreciate, the actual role of flies in disease agent transmission.

Especially over the past decade, however, it has become steadily clearer just how important house flies are in linking contaminated substrates with humans or domestic animals. Enteric (and rather frequently antibiotic-resistant) pathogens such as *Salmonella* or *Campylobacter* cause immense misery, or sometimes death, around the world. Sequencing the house fly genome could have tremendous applications for novel control efforts, from development of new toxicants to manipulating behavior. I enthusiastically support your efforts.

Sincerely,

Bradley A. Mullens
Professor

January 4, 2005

Letter of Support for Housefly Genome Project

Neurotransmitter receptors, including ligand-gated ion channels and G protein-coupled receptors, are targets for medicines and insecticides. I have been working on neurotransmitter receptors as sites for insecticidal action, using the housefly, *Musca domestica* L. The advantage of using the housefly in such studies includes its short life cycle, the large size of the body (compared to *Drosophila*), and easiness of rearing. The housefly has served as an excellent organism to study the biochemistry and physiology of hygienic insect pests. Studies with the housefly have led to an accumulation of data regarding insect neurochemistry and toxicology.

Although the low density of receptors in insect tissue hampered detailed analysis of the mode of action of ligands on isolated receptors, recent molecular biological techniques have made it possible to use heterologously-expressed receptors in such studies. For example, the γ -aminobutyric acid (GABA)-gated channel, a target of the phenylpyrazole insecticide, was considered to be an only chloride channel in the insect nervous system several years ago, but glutamate has recently been shown to open a distinct chloride channel. It is necessary to promptly examine whether insecticides acting at the GABA receptor act on the glutamate receptor as well. We cloned genes that encode subunits of GABA- and glutamate-gated chloride channels from the housefly (Accession No.: AB177547 and AB177546), and are investigating molecular and pharmacological characteristics of each channel. Sequencing the genome will provide information to isolate other subunit(s) or protein(s) that interact(s) with the above subunits to form functional, native GABA and glutamate receptors. I strongly support the proposal for sequencing housefly genome, which will facilitate the molecular toxicological studies of insect pests.

Yoshihisa Ozoe

Professor of Bioorganic Chemistry

Department of Life Science and Biotechnology

Shimane University

Matsue, Shimane 690-8504, Japan

January 21, 2005

Dr. Jeffery G. Scott
Department of Entomology
Comstock Hall
Cornell University
Ithaca, NY 14853

Dear Dr. Scott,

This letter is in support of your request to NIH to sequence the genome of the house fly, *Musca domestica*. The house fly has long history in the scientific community as a tool for the study of a host of basic and applied problems including population genetics and target site investigations that are central to the understanding and development of new insect control technologies and molecules. Equally important, the house fly is itself an insect pest of world wide importance.

Because of it's pest status, a dizzying array of insect control agents have been used against the house fly over the past 60 years leading to numerous cases of resistance. According to the Michigan State University Resistance Database, the house fly ranks in the top 10 most resistant insect pests, having developed resistance to more than 35 different insecticides. Because it has developed resistance to such a wide spectrum of insect control agents, the house fly has been the subject of a wide array of studies address to behavioral, biological, biochemical and molecular basis of resistance. Likewise, the numerous resistant strains provide a doorway to understand the population genetics of resistance and resistance management. In addition, these same strains also provide a tool to investigate and identify new targets and approaches for the control of pest insects. The availability of the genome sequence for the house fly would be of enormous value to the scientific community as well as industry by providing the means more fully study and understand this important insect pest.

I applaud the efforts of you and your colleagues to induce NIH to sequence the house fly genome.

Best regards,

Thomas C. Sparks
Advisor
Discovery Research, Insect Management Biology
Dow AgroSciences
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Indianapolis, IN 46268

Support letter for sequencing the genome of the housefly, *Musca domestica*

Takashi Tomita, Shinji Kasai, Osamu Komagata and Toshio Shono
Department of Medical Entomology, National Institute of Infectious Diseases,
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The housefly is recognized as the significant medically important insect worldwide. Houseflies breed in dumping sites, livestock sheds and organic fertilizer in greenhouses. The housefly is not only an unpleasant pest for humans and livestock, but also the vector of emerging and re-emerging diseases. A total case number of food poisoning due to enterohemorrhagic *E. coli* O-157 shows no signs of decreasing in last several years in Japan (1445 patients were confirmed diagnosis by O157:H7 serotypes in 2001) and one of the factors for this is failure is lack of appropriate control of houseflies. Furthermore, flies (including houseflies) have recently been strongly implicated to be the transmitters of bird-influenza among poultry farms in Japan. Accordingly, control of houseflies is becoming more and more important in this era to secure human health from such emerging diseases.

Historically houseflies have been the targets of chemical control, and that resulted in the development of high levels of resistance to most of the insecticide families including organochlorines, organophosphates, pyrethroids and insect growth regulators (such as chitin synthesis inhibitors and juvenile hormone mimics). Therefore, the natural population of the housefly is like a department store of insecticide resistance, and thus it is one of the most difficult species for us to control. We believe that the genome-sequencing project of the housefly will bring us vast amounts of valuable information to overcome a number of problems regarding to this insect and other important pest insects. Furthermore, there are some unique advantages for the housefly genome project compared to the projects conducted for other insect species. In this letter, we would like to support the housefly genome project from the following three aspects.

(I) Elucidation of the mechanisms of insecticide resistance

As mentioned above, a number of housefly local population have been already confirmed to develop insecticide resistance in livestock barns and that causes fear of spreading pathogens especially in Asian country where livestock farms are situated close to

residential areas. There are two major mechanisms in insecticide resistance; insensitivity of insecticidal targets, such as acetylcholinesterase and sodium channels, and the increased activity of insecticide-detoxifying enzymes, such as cytochrome P450s, carboxylesterases and glutathione *S*-transferases. Housefly is the representative and ideal model insect in the research field of insecticide resistance. Abundant studies of the mechanisms of insecticide resistance have been conducted using housefly, compared to *Drosophila melanogaster*, *Bombix mori* and *Anopheles gambiae*, although the function of each enzyme is still not yet fully studied. One of the highest hurdles for identification of resistance genes involves the P450s and glutathione *S*-transferases, because they are large multigene families. For example, *Drosophila* and *Anopheles* genome project clarified that they have 91 and 100 P450 isoforms, respectively. Each isoform has very similar protein structure and molecular mass so that it had been very difficult to isolate each isoform from others for the function analysis. Since most P450s have high substrate specificities, multiple numbers of P450s theoretically have roles in insecticide metabolism. However, CYP6D1 identified in Scott's laboratory is the only P450 that has been proven to be a significant factor in pyrethroid-resistance. Sequencing the whole genome of housefly will be conducive in order to identify unknown P450s involved in resistance. A goal of the research will be application of these accomplishments to molecular monitoring of insecticide-resistance that will help prompt selection of efficacious compounds in the agricultural and medical fields.

(ii) Exploration of novel insecticidal targets

Some cytochrome P450s are well studied as target sites for the development of medicines (anti-tuberculosis), fungicides, and herbicides. Thus, the P450s of insects also have potential for use as insecticidal targets. However, due to multiplicity of isoforms, the study of insect P450s has not made progress in this area. P450s metabolize endogenous hormones (juvenile and ecdysteroid) and pheromones as well as exogenous chemicals such as pesticides and environmental pollutants. Four P450 genes involved in ecdysteroid synthetic pathway have recently identified. Since this pathway is restricted to invertebrates, but essential for them to maintain their lives, P450s participating in this pathway will be good candidates as target of new insect regulators. The *Drosophila* genome project contributed (in part) to the discovery of these molecules. Using information from the *Drosophila* genome our group conducted transcriptional analysis of *Drosophila* P450s. We spotted all *Drosophila* P450 genes on slide glass and then the expression of all P450 genes were comprehensively analyzed by microarray method.

Several sex-specific unique isoforms were discovered (Kasai and Tomita, 2003, *Biochem. Biophys. Res. Commun.*, **300**, 894-900) and have potential as candidates for the target of new insecticides. We could have never identified these proteins without the information obtained from the genome project. Because the P450s of each insect species are unique, our results from *Drosophila* cannot be readily utilized in other insects. Therefore, we are interested in using similar approaches in housefly, in order to address the important health issues of this species (mentioned above).

(III) Elucidation of epistatic sex-determination system

Epistatic sex-determination is a major system in insects, however, the substance of sex-determinant, the genes involved in downstream gene cascade, and their interactions are not known. The housefly provides multiply located, but functionally equivalent male determinants that helps to look for a great genetic switch. A model insect, *D. melanogaster*, takes rather a unique sex-determining system: balance of autosome and sex chromosome doses. Mosquitoes, and most fly species (including the housefly), as well as lepidopteran species have epistatic sex-determining system. In the housefly, the presence or absence of a male-determining gene (M) in the genome will destine male or female. Y chromosome is basically a carrier of M in the housefly. However, the existence of M in each autosomal linkage and furthermore a mutant female-determining factor (epistatic to M; on chromosome 4) are segregating in the natural population. These sex-determinants are already genetically mapped in the respective linkage groups. Identification of M, the wild-type gene of F, and how they regulate downstream cascades, including absence of male crossing-over are quite interesting to be elucidated.

By the reasons mentioned above, we strongly support the proposal to sequence the housefly genome.

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3 January 2005

Jeffrey G. Scott
Daljit S. and Elaine Sarkaria Professor of Insect Physiology and Toxicology
Department of Entomology
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Ithaca, NY 14853

Dear Dr. Scott,

I am writing to express my enthusiasm and support for the proposed *Musca domestica* genome project. *Musca* is a key model organism critical to diverse fields of study, including genetics, physiology, toxicology, neurobiology, and medical/veterinary entomology. Obtaining a full genome sequence for this fly will be critically important for framing detailed evolutionary comparisons both among and within genomes. *Musca* provides a thoroughly studied, phenotypically well-characterized, fly species useful for detailed experimental and descriptive comparisons with the completed *Drosophila* and mosquito genomes. This project will have an immediate impact on my own phylogenetic research program and on a broad array of research programs that use flies as a model system.

Musca is a member of the cyclorrhaphan fly lineage -- Calypttratae. This is highly diverse fly group that shares a common ancestor with *Drosophila* (30-80 mya) and *Anopheles* (230-250mya) spanning a long history of fly diversification and genetic evolution. This closer, but still quite old relationship with *Drosophila* provides an important intermediate-aged comparison allowing finer scale establishment of orthology relationships, tracking of genome rearrangements, and calibration of evolutionary rate assessments.

A fully detailed genome for *Musca* will be extremely useful in providing genetic markers useful within our NSF-funded, Assembling the Tree of Life (ATOL) project on Diptera phylogeny, called FLYTREE (<http://www.inhs.uiuc.edu/cee/FLYTREE/>). A major component of this large collaborative project involves mining the established, and newly emerging, fly genomes for genes that are informative of fly evolutionary relationships. Within our project, we are also currently completing full sequencing and annotation of the *Musca domestica* mitochondrial genome - this will be compared to other mitochondrial genomes for dipteran model organisms.

I would be pleased to help in any way with the *Musca* project, especially in providing evolutionary phylogenetic insights in the context of comparative genomic analysis as the results of our own phylogenetic projects emerge.

I look forward to this important genomic initiative for *Musca*, and please feel free to contact me for further information.

Sincerely,



Brian M. Wiegmann
Associate Professor, Department of Entomology

Jeffrey G. Scott
Department of Entomology
Cornell University
Ithaca, NY 14853

July 6, 2005

Dear Dr. Scott,

I would like to express my strong support for your proposal to sequence the house fly genome. The house fly is undoubtedly one of the most successful insect species. Sequencing the house fly genome is interesting and important from many perspectives, including biology, phylogeny, insecticide resistance, microbial ecology and public health. The last two perspectives are of great interest of mine.

Due to the house fly developmental habitats (decaying organic materials - primarily animal manure with numerous and diverse microbial communities), unrestricted movement, attraction to the urban environment, and mode of feeding (regurgitation), house flies greatly amplify the risk of human exposure to pathogens and antibiotic resistant strains. Considering the heavy use of antibiotics in the U.S. livestock industry and convergence of agricultural and urban/sub-urban environments over the past two decades, the public health importance of house flies has increased tremendously. Research results from my and other labs. show that this insect plays an important role in the ecology of antibiotic resistance strains/resistance genes and to some degree in dissemination of human pathogens, such as *Escherichia coli* O157:H7 and *Campylobacter jejuni*.

Moreover, it has become clear that house fly biology is closely linked to microbes. Development of house fly larvae is strictly dependant on a live and active microbial community in a natural developmental habitat. Larvae cannot develop beyond the first instar in sterilized a natural or artificial substrate/medium. The principle of this symbiosis is unknown although it has been shown that different bacteria support the house fly development to different degrees.

Sequencing of the house fly genome would offer new tools in the research on house fly microbial ecology. For example, the spotted microarray approach would allow to investigate how different bacterial strains effect expression of different house fly genes and result in better understanding of the house fly-bacterial symbiosis that can lead to new approaches in house fly management based on transgenesis and paratransgenesis.

Again, I strongly support the proposal to sequence the house fly genome.

Best regards,

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Assistant Professor
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