

Ellie Taagen

QUANTITATIVE GENETICIST • RECOMBINATION SCIENTIST • USA & EU CITIZEN

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Summary

As a quantitative geneticist, I love to discover the relationships between recombination variation and desirable phenotypes and am driven by their potential to enhance breeding pipeline efficiency and genetic gain. Detail oriented planning and interdisciplinary communication are core pillars of my creative and critical thinking approach to problem solving. I am pursuing a Ph.D. in Plant Genetics at Cornell University with an expected graduation spring 2022, and am drawn to career paths in industry at the intersection of genetics, data science, and molecular biology.

Expertise

Quantitative Genetics	whole genome associations, genomic selection, causal variant identification, multi-omics analysis
Recombination Science	meiosis domain knowledge, controlled recombination mechanisms, applied haplotype breeding
Programming	R, Python, Linux command line, LaTeX, Git, bioinformatics tools
Data Science	simulations, reproducible analyses, skillful data visualization, large dataset management (17 Gb)
Statistics	experimental design, generalized linear and mixed model, supervised statistical learning
Soft Skills	multi-disciplinary communication, project management, team leader, creative problem solver

Education

Ph.D. in Plant Genetics

CORNELL UNIVERSITY

- Minors: Plant Molecular Biology and International Agriculture and Rural Development

Ithaca, NY, USA

2017 - expected 2022

B.S. in Molecular, Cellular, Developmental Biology

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

- Minor: Nutritional Sciences

Seattle, WA, USA

2012 - 2016

Relevant Experience

Data Science intern | Genomics Discovery and Application team

Bayer Crop Science

CHARACTERIZING RECOMBINATION RATE DISTRIBUTION AND HERITABILITY

2021 - Present

- Measuring recombination rate variation and discovering genetic determinants that may affect recombination in maize cohorts, in order to provide recommendations of which controlled recombination technologies to apply.
- Six-month, full-time position exposure to multi-disciplinary team-based projects and industry-paced research setting.

Ph.D. research | advisor Dr. Jean-Luc Jannink

Cornell University

SIMULATING CONTROLLED RECOMBINATION IN ALLOPOLYPLOID GENOMES

2020 - Present

- Leveraging simulation and bioinformatics tools to better understand controlled recombination's (Taagen et al. 2020) potential to reveal currently inaccessible genetic diversity and innovate increased control over the inheritance of preferred haplotypes.
- Exploring the biological constraints of meiotic recombination, gamete segregation, genome editing, and prediction-based decisions in a plant breeding simulation context.
- Designing novel methods that compare efficiency of cost of traditional breeding to controlled recombination.

Ph.D. research | advisor Dr. Mark Sorrells

Cornell University

IDENTIFYING GENOMIC STRUCTURAL VARIANT BARRIERS TO GENE POSITIONAL CLONING

2017 - 2021

- Applied traditional population development strategies, along with cutting-edge tools in genomics and transcriptomics to better understand the landscape of causal variation based breeding decisions. [Talk video link](#), peer feedback: **4.8/5**
- Determined that chromosome structural variants can overpower traditional fine-mapping approaches to gene discovery, especially in polyploids, and proposed recommendations for new experimental design standards.
- Results published in (Taagen et al. 2021) and all analysis conducted is reproducible and publicly available as a learning resource at: github.com/etaagen.

Post-baccalaureate RA | advisor Dr. Stephen Jones

Washington State University

BREEDING VALUE CHAIN ENGAGEMENT

2016 - 2017

- Surveyed and engaged supply chain stakeholders and end-users when setting objectives for small grains breeding program.
- Delivered lab and field support for graduate student breeding projects sourced from a broad base of genetic diversity.

Mentorship & Management

Corteva Agriscience and Cornell School of Integrative Plant Science (SIPS) networking

Virtual

COORDINATOR

2020 - Present

- Built network and relationship pipeline with Corteva Global Academic Relations Manager and Cornell SIPS industry partnerships liaison.
- Developed system for matching 50 graduate students with Corteva scientists based on shared career interests.

Diversity and Inclusion Committee, SIPS Cornell

Cornell University

GRADUATE STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

2020 - 2021

- Facilitate monthly meetings, titled OpenUpSTEM, which provide a space for graduate students to learn about, discuss, and take action towards building a sustainable culture of anti-racism in our community.

Synopsis, Plant Breeding and Genetics GSA

Cornell University

PRESIDENT

2019-2020

- Executed 2020 graduate student recruitment visitation for 15 students.
- Oversaw communication between current plant breeding and genetics students and faculty.

Plant Breeding and Genetics faculty search committee

Cornell University

GRADUATE STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

2019-2020

- Screened and evaluated 54 applicant packages, and conducted full day interviews with top 3 candidates (research /teaching /chalk-talk).
- Facilitated graduate student meetings with top candidates and documented graduate student preferences for clear communication to faculty.

Graduate student mentor

Cornell University

UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH ASSISTANTS

2018-2020

- Hired, trained, and mentored three talented undergraduate research assistants and supervised one honors thesis
- Coached one graduate school application and interview process, accepted to five plant sciences PhD programs.

Bonsai Professional Coaching Service

Virtual

MENTEE

2018-2020

- Partnered with leadership coach [Loriana Sekarski](#) to identify and apply personalized [Clifton Strengths by Gallup](#). Top five strengths: *Learner, Achiever, Focus, Communication, Individualization*.
- Trained in STEM industry professionalism and charted conflict management strategies.

Awards & Scholarships

2021 **WIT Early Career Award**, Borlaug Global Rust Initiative

Virtual

2020 **Borlaug Scholar**, National Association of Plant Breeders

Virtual

2020 **3rd Place**, C7 Plant and Animal Genome conference poster competition

San Diego, CA

2019 **Awardee**, Cornell IARD winter interim travel grant

Kerala, India

2018 **Awardee**, ASA, CSSA and SSSA Congressional Visit Day travel grant

Washington DC

2018 **Future Leader in Science**, ASA, CSSA and SSSA

Washington DC

Relevant Workshops

Enrolled **Statistical Learning**, ten-week course

edX Stanford

2020 **Collaborative and Reproducible Data Science in R**, NTRES 6940

Cornell University

2019 **Linux for Biologists**, Institute of Biotechnology

Cornell University

2018 **Breeding for Quantitative Traits in Plants**, book club facilitator

Cornell University

2017 **Tucson Plant Breeding Institute**, quantitative genetics bootcamp

Cornell University

Publications

Taagen, E., J., Gul, A., & Sorrells, M. E. *Positional based cloning “fail-safe” approach is overpowered by wheat (*Triticum aestivum*) chromosome structural variation.* (2021) [The Plant Genome](#)

Taagen, E., Bogdanove, A. J. & Sorrells, M. E. *Counting on Crossovers: Controlled Recombination for Plant Breeding.* (2020) [Trends in Plant Science](#)

Taagen, E., Bogdanove, A. J. & Sorrells, M. E. *Achieving Controlled Recombination with Targeted Cleavage and Epigenetic Modifiers.* (2020) [Trends in Plant Science](#)

Sweeney, D. W., Sun, J., **Taagen, E.** & Sorrells, M. E. *Genomic Selection in Wheat.* (Woodhead Publishing. (2019) in [Applications of Genetic and Genomic Research in Cereals](#), 273-302