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New Zealand Plant Protection Society (Inc.)

Newsletter

May 2003

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The National Biosecurity Strategy lurches on

In the last newsletter I mentioned the draft strategy, which duly appeared in December. As many as 150 submissions on the Draft were received by 5th March, and a Review of the Submissions, along with a digest of their Principal Recommendations can be found on the Biosecurity Strategy Development webpage:
<http://www.biostrategy.govt.nz/>.

Stephen Goldson and Alison Stewart made a submission on behalf of the Society (see later in this newsletter) and members of the Society were involved in submissions by other organisations.

The Draft Strategy was not well received by many involved in biosecurity – it proposed designating MAF and the Ministry of Fisheries as lead agencies, revamping old committees and setting up new ones to ensure that everything ran smoothly. To its credit, though, it did suggest the need for clear leadership and accountability over biosecurity issues, both of which have been sadly lacking so far.

And what's happening now? You won't find the answer on the Strategy webpage – some of the information on that is 8 months or more out of date. I understand that a lot of high-level discussions took place and that many groups are now working feverishly on the final version of the Strategy, due in June or July this year.

Many submissions objected to the idea of MAF being responsible for terrestrial (including freshwater) biosecurity. Their mandate, experience and culture are concerned with promoting production of and trade in primary produce. Some of us believe that serious conflicts of interest could arise between those priorities and the need to protect our precious and unique natural environments. The European Union's current challenge to Australia's quarantine regime at the World Trade Organisation is an example of such a conflict. The challenge is being made on the grounds that the system 'efficiently' blocks the import of agricultural products into Australia.

By Conference time in August we should, I hope, have seen the final version of the strategy. It should make for some good discussions at the Château On The Park. And if the final version looks anything like the Draft you'll be able hear my views from a great distance!

Ian Popay

Plant Protection Society Conference August 12-14th 2003

Planning for the NZPPS Conference is well underway, as it should be!

Our venue, The Chateau On The Park, is offering accommodation at \$120 + GST which is up to \$40 off normal room rate. Just a 10-minute drive from Christchurch airport, the Chateau On The Park hotel provides a comfortable atmosphere with many satisfying features. Close to the centre of Christchurch (a 15 minute walk) and bordering the famous Hagley Park with its world-renowned gardens and sports complexes, the Chateau On The Park is located at 189 Deans Avenue, Riccarton. For those of you who wish to take advantage of Air New Zealand Express fares and book early, then you might also like to confirm your accommodation booking by telephoning the Chateau Reservation call free 0800 808 999 or for more information: www.chateau-park.co.nz. When booking, please quote "New Zealand Plant Protection Society".

The Chateau runs an airport shuttle service from 7.45 am until 8 pm. call 0800 808 999 (within New Zealand).

For those of you who like the idea of motel accommodation, then there are plenty to choose from. Aalton, Hagley Park, Alcazar, Annabelle Court, Central Park, Cherry Tree Lodge are just some that are within walking distance on a fine early spring day in Canterbury.

Rodger Welsh

Wilding Conifer Management in New Zealand - Present and Future

**- Chateau On The Park, Christchurch
11th August 2003, 9.15 am
Convenor: Richard Hill**

This workshop will be held on the day before the NZPPS annual conference. Presented jointly by the Society and Landcare Research, with Forest Research, its primary aim is to explore the feasibility of biological control of wilding pines using seed-feeding insects. The workshop will feature in-depth discussion of the risk that biological control agents may increase the rate of transmission of conifer diseases such as pine pitch canker. The workshop will cover the following:

- The status of wilding conifers in New Zealand
- The strengths and weaknesses of current management practice
- Innovation in Practice
- The industry view of wilding conifers and management options
- Options for biological control of wilding conifers
- The threat of pine pitch canker
- The risks of insects transmitting disease
- The biological control programme against pines in South Africa.

The cost of the workshop will be \$80.00 + GST. This will cover the costs of meals and a copy of the symposium proceedings. For further information please contact Richard Hill - hillrl@xtra.co.nz.

From the Editor - May 2003

With paper numbers running right on the average for the past 10 years, this year the timetable will not be as limited as it was at the Rotorua conference. Please make sure that you read the updated instructions for presenters on the website. There have been some changes to these instructions, with the main one being that overheads and slides are not supported any longer – the only option for presenters is Powerpoint. The programme for the conference will be posted on the website about 15 June.

I would like to thank those authors and referees who made the effort to get papers completed before the 15 April deadline. It is

really helpful to get some papers underway before the bulk of papers arrive. One paper has already been proofed by the author – thanks to Terry Stewart for getting it in early and Nigel Bell for refereeing it promptly.

Please check your final version very carefully before you send it to me. Changes on the proofs that were not in the final version of your manuscript are a direct cost to the Society and will only be made if the mistake has a direct effect on the interpretation of the paper. When you are sent the .pdf file of your formatted paper the main things to check are Greek letters and other non-keyboard characters as well as Tables and Figures. The cost of formatting changes due to a mistake during layout are borne by the printer.

For those people yet to submit their papers, remember that the revisions must be returned within five days. This is particularly important for the 15 May deadline papers as final versions must be with the printer by the end of May. If you have figures, it would be much appreciated if they could be submitted as jpeg, tiff, pdf or eps files. Figures embedded into Word from Excel and other graphing programs can often not be imported into the Printer's software and must be scanned from hard copy.

Remember that if you have any questions the easiest way to contact me is by email. I check emails every evening so you will get a reply the following morning. I look forward to receiving the remainder of the papers and to seeing you all at the conference. If you haven't met me before please come up and introduce yourself!

Sue Zydenbos
Editor

President's Message

As I write this, the world is confronting the frightening prospect of the SARS virus; not much is known about this disease except that it mutates and is infectious. Its mode of transmission remains uncertain (cockroaches have been one suggestion) and its ultimate

impact completely unknown. Certainly, it is already having a detrimental effect on New Zealand trade and tourism. It is a coincidence, but the outbreak of this disease has occurred when there was already intensifying public/media reaction to incursions into New Zealand of severely damaging organisms that threaten health and ecosystems.

Thus the science-based management of adverse biological events is right back on New Zealand's radar screen. Hitherto, and as often discussed, there have been reasons for the diversion of resources towards New Zealand's need to develop wealth-creating, value-added industry. This has been widely endorsed; indeed, I don't remember anything at all about the management of unforeseen biological events at the recent Knowledge Wave Conferences (not that I was there, but I did take a desultory interest in their content).

For the many members of the NZPPS who have kept arguing that their sort of capability must be maintained for the national good, it would seem that their time has come. The Government and its agencies are clearly recognising that the defence of that which makes New Zealand unique has a cachet equal to wealth creation. Indeed one is not of much use without the other. This assertion is not just presidential hand-waving; the point is demonstrated by the views of establishment thinkers such as Dr Don Brash (former Governor of the Reserve Bank and now a high-ranking National Member of Parliament). Dr Brash, who is not known for any particular passion for plant protection, has included biosecurity on his list of 10 issues for attention in his recent discussion paper on economic policy. He noted dryly, that 'successive governments had given "insufficient attention" in recent years to the need to protect New Zealand from the accidental or intentional introduction of dangerous pests and animal diseases'. This surely, is right in the middle of the bailiwick of the NZPPS; Dr Brash would make an interesting opening speaker or session chairman at one of our conferences.

The members of the NZPPS provide the science and acumen needed to support this country's biosecurity and plant protection

needs. While the Society has an obvious and long-standing role in facilitating the exchange of information between its members, it can also assist by promulgating their work (and capability) beyond its immediate boundaries. Amongst other things, this should assist in ensuring that plant protection scientific capability is appropriately integrated into the operations of those government agencies charged with protecting the health and biological integrity of New Zealand. Indeed, this point has been well emphasised to the developers of the still-pending New Zealand Biosecurity Strategy. I believe that progress has been made in this area and it is very encouraging to note how many biosecurity and plant protection officials are joining the NZPPS and contributing to its conferences and symposia.

Stephen Goldson
President NZPPS

You saw the show- now read the book!

Our Society has been responsible for organising some outstanding symposia. Papers presented at these, along with related papers from the Conference itself, have been published and are available from the Society (for details, see the Society's website). Papers from the 2002 Symposium are now available in *Defending the Green Oasis: New Zealand Biosecurity and Science*, edited by Stephen Goldson and Max Suckling. This invaluable publication is now available to members for \$35 including GST and postage and handling. **Contact Society Secretary Lois McKay at AgResearch Lincoln if you'd like one.**

Unique job opportunity! New newsletter editor wanted

Ian Popay has been responsible for the preparation of this newsletter for the last few years. He would like to devote the few hours

he spends on it in late April and late November each year to a new enterprise. A volunteer to take over this less-than-arduous task is therefore being sought. The job mostly involves conning the President, Editor and Conference Organiser into writing a few terse words a couple of times a year, soliciting miscellaneous items from members, and using a little bit of imagination in devising editorial comment.

Prospective candidates for the position should contact Ian (contact details on front page).

Students! Be in, quick - Conference Travel Grant

A reminder that applications for the New Zealand Plant Protection Society Inc. conference travel grant for students should be made to the Secretary by 15 May 2003.

The 2003 conference will be held in Christchurch at the Chateau-on-the-Park from 12-14 August.

Grants may be awarded, on a competitive basis, to individual students from whom research papers have been accepted for presentation at the Conference. Other grants may be awarded to groups of students travelling together to encourage greater attendance at, and participation in, the Conference by students with an interest in a career in plant protection.

Applications by individual students should contain a copy of the applicant's academic record, a brief supporting statement from the applicant's supervisor and budget for the amount requested. Applications by student groups should be made by a member of the Society from the teaching staff who will supervise the group's attendance at the Conference. A brief outline of why each member of a group should be financially supported by the Society should be provided.

Further information and an application form are available from the Society's website on www.hortnet.co.nz

Primary Resource Science Societies Forum: Fifty years on 25th June, Albany Campus, Massey University

New Zealand's scientists have been through a half century of remarkable change, capped with a decade of extremely difficulty. It has been stated in various quarters that the work the science societies have done together has mitigated the effects of what could have happened. Whatever we think about the current system it would have been worse had we not been active.

Part of this activity is the work the Primary Resource Science Societies, linked by the Royal Society of New Zealand, have done in organising joint forums with a thrust. This year the thrust is the vision for the future, while acknowledging the foundation of the past.

This year's Forum is the third in the series, the previous ones being on the *Role of primary resources in NZ's economic development*, and *Preserving NZ's wealth generating capacity*. The proceedings are published by the RSNZ as part of their miscellaneous series. The Forum is open to all, and is supported by the Primary Resource Societies, of which ours is one.

Be active, participate, contribute Come to the Forum : Fifty years on

The Forum, on the 25th June at the Albany Campus of Massey University, will be the focus for 'our voice'. Following the model for the last few years, we have invited speakers from a range of backgrounds to talk about the potential for the future. Speakers include Paul Tocker (Chair of ACRI) on the role of the CRIs, Alan Freeth (CEO Wrightson) on Agribusiness in the future, Ian Shaw (Senior scientist in ESR) on food quality and safety, Rod Oram (political commentator) on the prospects for the future, Neil Taylor (CEO Meat NZ) on the role of groups such as ours, David Wallace, (successful and innovative farmer - what does he need from us to stay that way?). Various other papers are under

discussion with potential deliverers - watch the web site for developments.

The aim is to provide more information to Wellington about our contribution to NZ's economy.

The workshop in the afternoon aims to capture the major points, working on them with industry, and taking the outcome to the Ministers and various other Wellington bodies. This is the model that we have followed for the last two years, and the fact that we are working so closely with other societies, industry, and levy bodies has received favourable comment. The Forum is an opportunity to be the 'squeaky wheel' to which politicians respond - we need you there.

Registration forms are on the website (www.agscience.co.nz) or available from nzias@iconz.co.nz.

Who do you know who would benefit from attendance?

Jacqueline Rowarth
Past President NZIAS

An illustrated guide to common weeds of New Zealand

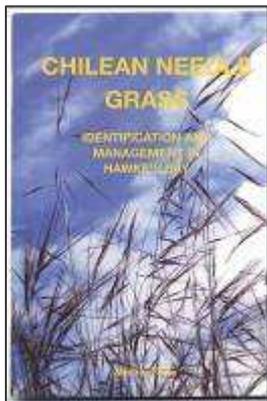
The last newsletter mentioned that the first edition of this book has almost sold out. The Executive Committee of the Society has now given the go-ahead for the preparation of a second edition. Authors Champion, Popay and James have been busy taking and collecting photographs and revising the text for this second edition, which we hope will be available later this year. They would like to thank members who have contributed photographs for the new edition.

Plant Protection Society Website

Don't forget to bookmark the Society's website (<http://www.hortnet.co.nz/nzpps/>) and check it out from time to time.

Coming soon to the website will be additions to the Pesticide Resistance information. You are probably aware that information on herbicide resistance has been available there for some time. Nick Martin (Crop and Food Research) and Robert Beresford (HortResearch) have been beavering away preparing web pages on insecticide and fungicide resistance.

The website also contains past proceedings of the conference, contact details of committee members and information on the upcoming conference. Also there is an invitation to the International Congress of Entomology, to be held in Brisbane, 15th – 21st August 2004.



Chilean Needle Grass - A Guide to Identification & Management in Hawke's Bay by Mike Slay

The new booklet provides landowners with a 'resource kit' to

help with identification and management to prevent the spread of the weed in the region. Chilean needle grass is potentially one of New Zealand's worst pasture weeds. A native of South America, it was first collected in Auckland and Marlborough in the late 1920s. In Hawke's Bay, it affects 600ha and is slowly spreading. It can disrupt farm management because affected paddocks should not be grazed by sheep, which can be damaged by its seeds, and which can spread the seed. Seed can also be spread by machinery, or in hay.

In Hawke's Bay, Chilean needle grass first established at Waipawa in the 1950s through the use of contaminated pasture or crop seed brought in from Marlborough, but it was not identified until 1981. Attempts to eradicate it with non-selective herbicides made the problem worse, because the grass invaded the newly bared areas.

Concerned at its persistence and continued spread, a Chilean needle grass group was set up by landowners to review past research and develop management programmes based on its biological traits.

Agricultural technologist Mike Slay unearthed information that showed the potential of this weed to wreck pastoral systems. He also discovered that Australia has a national strategy to research its control and develop management practices.

On easy country timely mowing can reduce seed production. On steeper country, chemical topping with the herbicides glyphosate and haloxyfop (Gallant) applied from the air had the same effect. Combining timely grazing with cattle and chemical topping gave almost 100% control of the seed heads.

The seed is needle sharp, penetrating and attaching to almost anything. Under lax grazing the plant seeds in a conventional manner and this is the only time it is easily identified. However, the plant also produces hidden, or cleistogamous, seeds that cannot be seen so easily. Chilean needle grass is listed in the National Pest Plant Accord, meaning that propagation or distribution is illegal.

The booklet is available free of charge from the Hawke's Bay Regional Council on 0800 108 838.

"Biosecurity at the Centre of New Zealand"

The National Education and Training Seminar of the New Zealand Biosecurity Institute, in association with The Vertebrate Pest Management Institute of New Zealand, will be held from 9th to 11th July 2003 at the Rutherford Hotel in Nelson

This year's seminar focuses on national initiatives and local themes concerning biosecurity, including selling the message, exploring how to get the best for everyone out of biosecurity and hearing the views of a wide range of participants. There will be many opportunities to learn about new pests and

techniques for improving the control of those we are already familiar with.

More information and registration form are available on the Biosecurity Institute's website www.biosecurity.org.nz.

Science vacancies at Forest Research

Forest Research, Rotorua, is looking for staff for the following positions:

- **Entomology Technician**, to contribute to research programmes on forest pests and weeds by providing a wide range of technical support in both laboratory and field situations. Insect rearing will form a major component, as will field inspection of tree health and insect collecting.
- **Research Entomologist**, contributing to research programmes on the ecology of forest pests and, potentially, weeds.
- **Entomological / Ecological Modelling Specialist**, to enhance the ecological modelling capability within the Forest Biosecurity and Protection team and to apply modelling approaches to a diverse research programme.

Details can be found at Career Opportunities on their website:

<http://www.forestresearch.co.nz>.

Submission from the President and Vice-President on *Guarding Pacific's Triple Star; Draft Biosecurity Strategy for New Zealand*

The New Zealand Plant Protection Society Inc., the National Centre for Advanced Bio-protection Technologies at Lincoln and the AgResearch Biocontrol and Biosecurity Group acknowledge the case made for biosecurity in the *Draft Biosecurity Strategy for New Zealand*; in particular, the document provides

useful illustration/demonstration of the issues confronting New Zealand.

The groups presenting this short analysis of the draft would like to re-emphasise the paramount importance of a biosecurity strategy for New Zealand. It is contended that few, if any, areas of national concern require a strategy more urgently. Unlike other sectors, biosecurity has effectively no strong commercial drivers (e.g. biotechnology); it has a large public good component, very diverse requirements and, unlike many other activities, it is about preserving, rather than generating wealth. The defensive role of biosecurity has been difficult to promote during times of 'economic transformation'. Thus, exceptionally strong advocacy is required.

The organisations represented in this response wish to make the following generic suggestions. It is felt that the draft strategy in many places lacks frameworks for process and decision-making.

- There should be a single lead agency responsible for land-based biosecurity operations.
- For New Zealand biosecurity to reach its maximum value there has to be very clear lines of accountability and advocacy. A single individual must be given sufficient political authority to be able to question publicly any decisions that may go against the interests of biosecurity. Likewise, the same individual must be answerable to biosecurity's interests when inopportune decisions are made.
- The current advisory structure of committees and advisory groups that inform biosecurity activities has become complex. The responsibility and influence of these is unclear. A simpler, more transparent decision-making structure with clear definition of accountabilities is recommended.
- There is an urgent requirement to reintegrate science into the New Zealand biosecurity system. Notably:

- ◊ Science is required not only for the discharge of research contracts but for the capability of its personnel in rapid evaluation of biosecurity issues and appropriate decision-making.
- ◊ There must be a proper framework for scientific decision-making in biosecurity. Priorities must not be set on an ad hoc basis.
- ◊ Urgent arrangements must be made with science provider institutes and FRST to ensure (i) ready access to scientists with expertise in the biosecurity area and (ii) the maintenance of scientific capability in biosecurity-related discipline areas.
- It is suggested that the Director General, MAF should establish a biosecurity steering group to examine, carte blanche, those issues (and no doubt others) discussed above.

Dr Stephen Goldson

President, New Zealand Plant Protection Society Inc.

Professor Alison Stewart

Director, National Centre for Advanced Bio-protection Technologies, Lincoln; Vice-president, New Zealand Plant Protection Society Inc.

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