New Zealand Plant Protection Society (Inc)

Newsletter

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Guest Editorial - *Ian Popay, Immediate Past President*

In my last 'Message from the President' I complained about miserly government spending on science in NZ, and the pathetic, expensive and inefficient funding system we have to cope with. This time I'm having a grizzle about scientists' pay relative to almost anything else.

When I was a young and rapidly rising scientist, I remember being impressed that a reasonably competent scientist, on the old public service science scale, could earn as much as a back-bench MP. Science salaries and lecturing salaries were linked, and both were tied to MP's pay. I looked longingly at the career prospects that those pay scales offered. If you worked hard and kept your nose clean, you could be reasonably certain of where you'd be at different stages of your life.

By the time I started to get anywhere, of course, the rot had set in. A back bench MP now scores a base salary of over $110,000 plus a wheelbarrow full of extras. University staff have not done quite so well. An Assistant Professor (the old Reader level) gets about $100,000, roughly the same as a top scientist in the CRIs, according to a current 'futureintech' website (http://www.futureintech.org.nz/Career_options_Science.cfm). Academic staff are, however, still seeking substantial pay increases. And, I'm sorry to say, very, very few scientists ever get close to those top rewards.

Interestingly enough, if you struggle through to the financial pages of the annual reports the CRIs produce, you can find details there of the number of staff whose remuneration exceeds $100,000. In the most recent annual reports, AgResearch, the biggest, has 50. NIWA, much smaller, had 49 last year, Landcare Research 20, HortResearch 28, Crop and Food 15. Some of these, to be fair, are senior executives and science managers, often senior scientists themselves, who now supervise the work of other scientists. Many of these highly paid ones, though, are business managers of one kind or another. I guess the CRIs have to pay high rates to win good business staff in a very competitive commercial environment. Scientists, regrettably, don't have much in the way of private sector equivalents. Where do you go if you don't like the pay you get in your CRI? To another one? Overseas is really the only option.

But as Andy West told us recently, and others have been saying for years, we scientists are an aging 'demography', and we need a lot of new scientists in the fairly near future. Why aren't school leavers storming the gates of the universities to start their science careers? *Think about it!*

It takes a bare minimum of six years to receive the basic training for science. Six years of a mounting student loan. After that, if you're lucky, you score a job with no proper career structure, a poor salary compared with those of new teachers or policemen, and a funding system that might or might not keep you employed for a few years before you have to start a new career somewhere else. No wonder we don't encourage our children to join the club!

It's a good job that working in science can be so exciting at times, is so much fun, and offers freedoms rarely available elsewhere. I know we're not in it for the money, but I'm afraid money – and a certain amount of job security - is one of the things that helps young people choose their careers. And modern science, in New Zealand, offers neither.

President's Report...

Philippa Stevens

I initially felt quite daunted at the prospect of writing my first column as President of the Society – what on earth could I say! However, when I thought about what had been happening since the conference in August, I realised that I would like to spend some time exploring and promoting the value of partnerships within the New Zealand Plant Protection framework. Two specific examples where I believe the formation of partnerships and resulting synergies are essential involve biosecurity and Pesticide risk reduction.

Biosecurity New Zealand recently had its third annual summit where the theme was "Partnerships in Practice". While it is heartening to see that baseline funding for Biosecurity has increased by 40% over the last five years, there will never be enough money to achieve biosecurity aims without creating effective and committed partnerships across a range of organisations and community groups. However, I believe that the formation of the new 'Better Border Biosecurity" partnership programme is an exciting and challenging development in biosecurity research. The Better Border Biosecurity programme is an unincorporated joint venture with nine partners: Crop & Food Research, AgResearch, HortResearch, Ensis, the Lincoln University-based National Centre for Advanced Bio-Protection Technologies, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Department of Conservation, ERMA and the Forest Biosecurity Research Council. The ability for all of these partners to work together to improve the biosecurity of New Zealand is very powerful.

ERMA is also exploring the value of partnership in their upcoming (at the time of writing) workshop on "Integrating initiatives for Pesticide Risk Reduction". It is clear that real progress in pesticide risk reduction will not be made until the research community, regulators, and industries get together on this issue. Mike Butcher, from Pipfruit New Zealand recently reminded me that it is essential that industry groups are actively buying into any research aiming to reduce pesticide risk or the research results will not be implemented. Current programmes funded by FRST, with input from sector groups, and a range of projects funded by the MAF Sustainable Farming Fund are all contributing via a partnership model to contribute to the implementation of pesticide risk reduction in New Zealand. Certainly, collaboration between research organisations is increasingly becoming the *Modus operandi*.

The New Zealand Plant Protection Society is another form of partnership – the constituency of the society allows a wide range of linkages that transcends organisational boundaries. Although many research organisations are currently actively collaborating, this was not always the case as funding systems have not always supported this behaviour. The NZ Plant Protection Society allowed the scientific interactions to continue, in spite of these external pressures. A new partnership initiative currently being supported by the Society is the reformation of the pesticide resistance committees. These committees (one each for herbicides, insecticides and fungicides) were active in the later 1980s and early 90s. Their activities are still as relevant today, especially with the range of new chemicals being developed. These committees will represent a collaborative effort between agrichemical companies, researchers and sectors.

I for one am very happy that the current external funding environment is on which encourages and allows collaboration between members of New Zealand's very small Plant Protection community. However, the role of the New Zealand Plant Protection Society, in further facilitating these is essential.

Obituaries

Peter Dentener, a long time member of this Society (between 1982 and 2004) passed away unexpectedly on 24 September 2005. After completing his undergraduate training (entomology and Virology) in the Netherlands, Peter moved to New Zealand, where he completed a PhD at Waikato University (Insect ecology and population dynamics of lucerne flea (*Sminthurus viridus*)). He started working at the Mt Albert Research Centre for DSIR in 1985 and was transferred into HortResearch when the Crown Research Institutes were formed in 1993. Peter specialised in postharvest disinfestation and his research covered a range of fresh fruit products as well as forestry products. His research contributed to a successful country access research programmes which gained access for a range of New Zealand fruits and fruit varieties to the lucrative Japanese market. He also evaluated a wide range of new technologies as potential alternatives to the use of Methyl bromide fumigation. More recently, he developed an interest in modelling insects using climatic and biological data. Peter left HortResearch in October 2004 to pursue other interests and it is with great sadness that we heard of his death. An obituary for Peter will be written in the 59th NZ Plant Protection journal.

Paul Lynch, a life member of the Society, is virtually unknown in the wider agricultural community, yet his work in the 1950s and 1960s helped to provide the basis for many current agricultural recommendations and practices, particularly in fertiliser usage. He was also an early exponent of the use of herbicides for weed control. A full obituary for Paul is written in Volume 58 of the NZ Plant Protection journal.

Richard Wood, also a long time member of the Society, passed away in May this year after a long illness. Richard was brought up on a market garden in the Esk Valley in Hawke's Bay. He began his career as an adviser with the Department of Agriculture after completing a Bachelor of Horticultural Science from Massey University. From 1970 to 1988 he was based in Pukekohe as a consultant, specialising in vegetables, which was his main interest. In 1988 he left MAF to become a private consultant and continued his own business until last year.
Richard was remembered fondly by his peers and described as a "first-class human being" by Pat Sale, a fellow horticulturist.
A full obituary for Richard will be written in the 59th NZ Plant Protection journal.

Meet the new Committee

Philippa Stevens - President

Philippa has been involved in horticultural research since 1989. Her research specialty is applied entomology, with a focus on Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and biological control of pests of sub-tropical crops (including kiwifruit, avocado, and citrus). She has also developed an interest in risk assessment following her involvement with the first application to release a new organism into New Zealand following the formation of ERMA New Zealand (a parasitoid of greenhouse thrips called *Thripobius semiluteus*) and her involvement in carrying out a Pest Risk Assessment to support an application to export New Zealand Citrus to the USA market. She is currently the Group Leader of HortResearch's Bioprotection Group, which consists of 120 researchers based at 10 sites around New Zealand. She is often seen at airports with a briefcase full of client reports and budgets to review, and very occasionally, scientific papers to read.

Trevor James - Vice President

I have been a member of the Society for 28 years and been a member for the executive for the last 8 years. I have attended 27 conferences and been involved in organisation (particularly the audio visual) of most of the conferences since the early 90s. I am employed by AgResearch where my research covers all aspects of weed management (agricultural and environmental), seed ecology and the soil seed bank, herbicide use and safety, and the interaction of herbicides and the environment. I am also developing keys for weed and seed identification and have been involved with the publication the New Zealand weed books.

Ian Popay - Immediate Past President

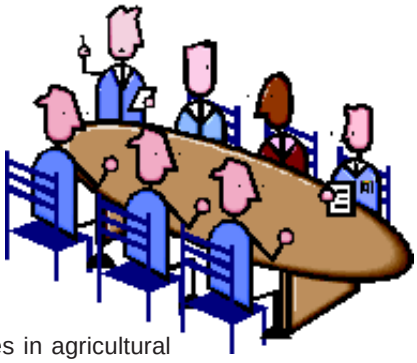
Is a Scientific Officer with DOC, specialising in weed ecology and control. Based in one of DOC's Hamilton offices, he has had national responsibility for the monitoring of weed control programmes but is easing out of that role and back to doing some proper research. He's long been involved in studies of weeds and weed control, with brief career forays into pasture agronomy and 'communication'. In his spare time he watches, bemused, as his children grow up into respectable human beings. He also enjoys travelling, and his next target is an expedition all the way to Rangitoto.

Sonja Reid - Secretary

I have worked as Operations Coordinator with Pipfruit NZ in Hastings since 1991. PNZ is the representative body for the pipfruit industry and much of our work is involved around industry research and development, market access and policy issues, and administering necessary industry function such the pipfruit Budwood Selection Scheme for the continued access to high quality propagation material. As Operations Coordinator I spend most of my time working in administration and assisting managers with specific projects. I became a member of the Society 5 years ago and took up the position of Secretary in November last year.

Dr Anis Rahman - Treasurer

Senior Scientist, Weed Research. My research is focused on developing sustainable and effective management of weeds in various production sectors. The approach is to study the biology and ecology of major agricultural weeds and develop integrated management strategies. Over the years it has led to practical solutions to weed problems faced by growers and has resulted in considerably reduced herbicide use by the industry. My research also specialises in environmental aspects of pesticide use in New Zealand. We investigate the persistence, degradation, leaching and run off of pesticides in agricultural situations and develop mitigation strategies to minimise the risks. My research team attaches considerable emphasis on developing guidelines for safe use of different groups of pesticides and transferring this knowledge to land owners and end users. I have been a member of the NZPPSoc since 1972.



Sue Zydenbos - Editor

After growing up on a sheep farm in North Canterbury, I completed a B. Agr. Sci. (Hons - Plant Science) degree at Lincoln College. I worked as a pasture scientist with MAF at Winchmore Irrigation Research Station for 4 years, carrying out a wide range of research projects. I returned to Lincoln University for 3 years to do a PhD in Animal Biochemistry, studying leanness in sheep with a range of techniques, including traditional genetics, physiology, endocrinology, biochemistry and molecular biology. I spent a 2-year post-doc at the Karolinska Institute in Sweden, working in cell and molecular biology to investigate the growth hormone receptor. Back in New Zealand, I worked for AgResearch at Invermay, using molecular techniques to look at leanness in sheep and growth of the deer antler. On returning to Canterbury in 1997, I helped my husband establish a landscape design and construction business, worked as a scientific editor for Crop & Food Research, became a self-employed scientific writer and editor and had two children. I have been the NZPPS Editor since 2000 and really enjoy the variety of papers I get to deal with.

John Kean - Website Editor

I work in the Biocontrol and Biosecurity group at AgResearch, based in Lincoln. My research centres around the use of population models and data analysis in pest control and biosecurity, but my experience has also touched on weed spread, rarity, and native insects. I have been a member of NZPPS for three years, and last year had the privilege of taking over from Ecki Brockerhoff as NZPPS website editor. It has been a fun and challenging role, putting me (along with Sue and Sonja) at the interface between the Society and the public, where I am constantly surprised at the breadth and depth of research coming through the Society, as well as by the range of people who seek it out - from local farmers with a weed problem, to scientists all over the world. It feels great to play a small role in promoting the Society's work, and interacting with such a great team.

George Follas

I am the Development Manager New Zealand for Syngenta Crop Protection Ltd. I have worked in the plant protection industry for the past 24 years in research for private companies since graduating from Massey University. My work has covered all the plant protection disciplines and the full range of crops growing in New Zealand from apples to zucchinis and even the very unusual such as investigating solutions for midge control in sewage

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systems. I have been a member of the society since 1982 and was pleased to be able to support the society by becoming a committee member this year.

Alan Cliffe

Development Manager for Nufarm NZ. After completing a degree in Zoology at Massey University in 1974, I joined Ispray Chemicals in Nelson in 1975 to technically support and field trial their range of agricultural chemicals. After 8 years I moved from Nelson to Auckland with The NZ Farmer's Fertilizer Company, renamed Fernz Corporation, now Nufarm Limited. Company takeovers and name changes have meant that this month I achieve 30 years with the organisation. For Nufarm NZ I manage the registration and labelling group and oversee the field development programme.

My first NZ Weed and Pest Control Conference was in 1976 in Christchurch and I think I have attended every conference since. I enjoy the Society and its conferences for the opportunity to catch up with researchers and industry people, and for the social opportunity.

Ian Harvey

Ian retired from government service after 30yrs and 3 days in 1997. He has worked in the Lincoln area since 1970, being a plant pathological diagnostician and extension specialist up until 1986, when he left and joined MAF Tech as a research scientist. This dissolved into AgResearch in 1992, and the pain ended in 1997, when he founded PLANTwise, which may not have been that ..wise, since he is now busier than he has ever been before. But, he is back doing the things he enjoys and making a successful business of it. Ian has an MAgSc from Massey and a PhD from Bristol (UK).

Karyn Froud

I have been a member of NZPPS for ten years and have just been elected onto the committee. I have lead the Incursion Investigation Plants and Environment team with Biosecurity New Zealand, MAF since 2003. The team is based within the MAF Incursion and Diagnostic Centres in Auckland and Lincoln and is responsible for managing the investigation and initial response to suspected incursions of exotic or emerging pests and diseases affecting plants, plantation forests, freshwater systems and the environment, new plants and GMOs. My specialist topics are biological control, plant viruses and vector ecology. Prior to MAF I was a scientist with HortResearch and worked on IPM, biological control and virus vectors.

John D Fletcher

New Zealand Institute for Crop & Food Research, Lincoln. I am a plant pathologist and virologist with over 30 years research and consulting experience both in New Zealand and overseas. I have expertise in the virus diseases of arable, vegetable, ornamental and pasture crops. My research has an emphasis on disease diagnosis, virus surveys, epidemiology and disease management. I am also involved in the breeding of virus resistant cultivars, pathogen-tested germplasm, seed health, biosecurity and virus vector management. I have been a member of NZPPS for about 12 years.

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From the Editor

Sue Zydenbos

It was great to meet some new faces and catch up with "old" ones at the conference. I really enjoyed the chance to actually talk to people rather than just exchanging emails.

The 57 papers published this year was slightly below the average for the past 10 years (n=62), and poster numbers at 24 were fewer than the past three years (n=30). However, the length of papers has continued to rise in recent years, reaching 5.5 pages/paper, compared to less than 5 pages/paper prior to 2000. This year there was a higher than normal number of papers rejected as a result of more rigorous enforcement of standards and criteria for *New Zealand Plant Protection*. In my report to the AGM last year, I had indicated that this would happen. The papers are now up on the website and I was very pleased than no one wanted any corrections done from what is printed in the journal.

As indicated last year, a number of changes were made to the journal for 2005. These included removing the "**formerly Proceedings of the New Zealand Plant Protection Conference"* from the title page of the Journal, revising the "Disclaimer" that is on page ii and also the disclaimers that print out on abstracts and full papers downloaded from the website, deleting the lists of chemical names from the front of the journal as well as some minor changes to the "Instructions for Authors" on the inside covers.

The main difficulty I struck this year was people not submitting their figures as .tif or .jpg files. Please note that this is clearly specified in the "Instructions for Authors". Figures that are embedded in Microsoft Word do not translate properly into the Printer's software and frequently text, such as axis labels, will disappear. This wastes my time, your time and that of the graphic designer since the text must be retyped. Figures embedded in Word are acceptable for the initial version of the manuscript since most referees use Word and can see the figures, but .tif or .jpg files should be submitted for the final version.

After a discussion at the AGM it was decided that NZPP will continue to allow the use of common names in published papers. However, the full scientific name of the organism(s) being studied must be given in the title or keywords. In view of this, the policy of a maximum of five keywords will be relaxed but excessive numbers of keywords will be deleted at the editor's discretion! Detailed taxonomic information, including authorities, should be given in the introduction rather than the title. Standard or "commonly used in New Zealand" common names should be used throughout the paper. Again, the actual common name used throughout the paper will be at the discretion of the editor and referee(s)

Remember that it is easiest to contact me by email. Both email addresses (editor@nzpps.org OR zydenbos@xtra.co.nz) will get to me so you don't have to send them twice! I check my emails every evening and you can generally expect a reply the following morning. I look forward to another round of interesting papers in 2006 and a fantastic conference in Blenheim (plan to stay an extra day so you can visit the wineries!).

Committee involvement over the last 6 months

The committee meets 4 times a year and covers a wide range of issues involving the Society. Members are usually only privy to these issues when they are presented at the Annual General Meeting. So that all members are up to date with committee responsibilities and involvement we will include a summary of key outcomes and discussion points from our meetings. Members wishing to make comment on any of the points raised should email the Secretary, secretary@nzpps.org.

Conference 2007

A proposal was put forward by Dion Mundy from HortResearch Blenheim to hold the 2007 conference in Blenheim. After discussions at the AGM and August committee meeting it was decided that the conference will be held in Blenheim. Plans are progressing so watch this space!

Membership

Membership of the Society currently sits at 354 Ordinary Members, 23 Student Members, 6 Life Members and 17 Corporate Members.

CABi

The committee received a request from CABi, an international repository of scientific information to make NZPPS papers available on their website. It was decided that the international exposure for the Society from accepting the request would be extremely worthwhile and our papers are now available on the CABi website.

Journal Rating

Discussions are continuing regarding whether the NZPPS journal should be rated for its scientific impact. The committee are currently looking at the impact of rating on similar scientific journals and a decision whether to go ahead with the rating will be made at the next committee meeting in March 2006.

Dan Watkins Scholarship

The Dan Watkin's Scholarship in Weed Science has now been finalised and was advertised and made available to New Zealand tertiary students in June this year. Clyton Moyo from Massey University was announced as the inaugural recipient of the scholarship last month. The scholarship, which is administered by NZPPS, was set up and financed by Dr George Mason, one of the founders of Taranaki Nuchem, in memory of Dan Watkins, a founder of the New Zealand Weeds Conference and in recognition of his contribution to weed science in New Zealand.

First Presenter Competition

A proposal was raised to have a 'First Presenter' competition at the annual conference. Members presenting research for the first time could enter the competition and be judged on certain criteria (still to be decided). This idea will be progressed by Toni Withers.

Council of Australasian Weed Societies (CAWS) Membership

NZPPS has gained affiliate membership of this society for 1 year. The name has been changed from the Council of Australian Weeds Society. The benefits of being a member are cheaper rates for individual members and the opportunity for the conference to be periodically held in NZ. Ian Popay will continue to represent NZPPS on CAWS.

Scientific and common names

Details in the journal relating to scientific and common names in the journal will be redrafted. Common names will be allowed but scientific names must be included in the paper title. The five-word limit on keywords will also be relaxed.

Corporate Subs

Corporate subs were raised from $281.25 incl GST to $300 incl GST, effective from 2006.

Lucid Key for Common Weeds

The development of a Lucid Key for Common Weeds of New Zealand using material from the 2nd Edition of An Illustrated Guide to Common Weeds of New Zealand. Trevor James who was granted funds to develop the key has expanded the key to nearly double the number of taxa and is currently finishing it off. Some plant descriptions need to be completed and many photos inserted. Trevor is investigating the key being hosted on a website, freely available to everybody, in the near future.

Pesticide Resistance Committees

The committee have decided to drive the reactivation of Pesticide Resistance Committees for Herbicides, Insecticides and Fungicides. It was felt that more discussion and interaction was required amongst key groups involved with Pesticide Resistance issues and strategies.

New President

Pip Stevens replaced Ian Popay as President of NZPPS. Trevor James is the new Vice President.

Notice Board

Society Scholarships Awarded

We had an outstanding response to scholarships this year, receiving 13 applications for the NZ Plant Protection Research Scholarship and 7 applications for the Dan Watkins Scholarship in Weed Science.

Two NZ Plant Protection Research Scholarships were awarded, the first to Tara Murray from Ensis who has just begun her PhD in Entomology. Her research is on '*Paropsis charybdis* and its parasitoid complex: a model system for improving host specificity testing'. Tara was awarded $3000.

A second scholarship of $2000 was awarded to Naydene Barron from Massey University who is half way through a Masters of Science in Genetics. Her research is on 'Dothistroma and the mycotoxin dothistromin: Characterizing the pathogen-host interaction'.

The inaugural Dan Watkins Scholarship in Weed Science was awarded to Clyton Moyo from Massey University. Clyton is one year into his PhD in Plant Science and is studying 'Strategies to use herbicides more efficiently in New Zealand Pastures'. Clyton was awarded $5000.

The Scholarships committee commented on the outstanding applications of the three successful applicants and the overall high standard of applications received for the scholarships this year.

Congratulations to the successful candidates. The members of the Society look forward to hearing the results of your respective studies!

Blenheim conference - special sessions

We would like to hold a special session on viticulture at the conference and ask that members think carefully about whether they have any appropriate work to present. If we get enough papers we may be able to ask for sponsorship for the session from some of the big wine producers – a refreshing thought! Another topic to think about is any research that particularly relates to the Marlborough area. However, please remember that such papers will be subject to the normal refereeing and editorial process.

Asian - Pacific Weed Science Society Conference

The 20th Asian - Pacific Weed Science Society Conference was held in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam from 7th to 11th November 2005.

The theme of the Conference was "Six Decades of Weed Science since the discovery of 2,4-D ' . In keeping with this theme the Vietnamese scientists made some presentations on the effect of Agent Orange and other Phenoxy herbicides on the flora and environment of Vietnamese landscape. Some of the information was horrifying as well as saddening.

The Conference included sessions on integrated weed management, biological control, herbicides, herbicide resistant weeds and crops, allelopathy, biodiversity, weed ecology, weed utilisation, education and technology transfer. In total 110 oral papers and 40 posters were presented. A one - day symposium on Weedy Rice organised by FAO preceded the Conference.

The highlight of the Conference was a Plenary Session which included keynote papers on a variety of topics by well known international weed scientists . This session was co - chaired by Anis Rahman and the

Director of Vietnam's National Rice Research Institute.

Some 100 foreign researchers participated in the conference along with some 200 Vietnamese scientists. The overseas scientists came from Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, China, India, Indonesia, Israel, Japan, South and North Korea, Malaysia, Mynamar, New Zealand, Pakistan, Philippines. Poland, Sri Lanka, Thailand, U.K. and the USA.. The participants included representatives of the National Weed Science Societies, President, Vice President and Past Presidents of the International Weed Science Society, and the R & D managers of several international agrichemical companies.

Trevor James and Anis Rahman represented New Zealand and made oral presentations.

New Pesticide Resistance Book

The latest book published by NZPPS, **'PESTICIDE RESISTANCE: Prevention and Management Strategies 2005'** will be of particular interest to farmers, growers and consultants involved in making decisions about pesticide use. The issue of resistance of pests, including plant pathogenic fungi and bacteria, insects, mites, nematodes and weeds, to pesticides is very relevant to sustainable agriculture and horticulture.

NZPPS has been proactive in documenting and highlighting pesticide resistance for many years. Society members have developed strategies that have been ratified by industry for a range of horticultural, arable and pastoral crops and their pests.

This book provides a permanent record of all the current strategies and will give farmers, growers and consultants the opportunity to have the information on hand for quick reference during daily activities.

The book is available from The Secretary - Sonja Reid, NZPPS, c/- Pipfruit NZ, PO Box 11094, Hastings, NZ (email: secretary@nzpps.org) at a price of $35 plus GST, plus postage and handling.

Special papers category at the conference

By Sue Zydenbos

At the AGM the concept of having some non-published presentations at the conference was raised. This was further discussed at the October Executive Committee meeting and it is felt that more input is needed from members before any change is made to the status quo. These "special papers" relate mainly to presentations by regulatory authorities that summarise their activities but do not contain rigorous scientific data. For example, ERMA may wish to explain their process for application of release of organisms or Biosecurity New Zealand may wish to present an incursion-response case study. Such issues are central to the objectives of NZPPS, i.e. "to pool and exchange information …", yet many of these presentations would be rejected by the review process for published scientific papers and are therefore unable to be presented orally at the conference. While the option of a poster presentation exists, this does not generate the same type of discussion and feedback from the audience that an oral paper does.

Often these types of papers are presented in the symposia or workshops that regularly precede the conference but this limits the content to that particular topic. It has been suggested that "commentary papers" be considered for presentation at NZPPS conferences, either as part of a special commentary session or as a presentation at the start of a related session. To be fair, everyone must be offered the opportunity to submit these papers, but those selected would be at the discretion of the editor and the executive committee and would need to fit in with the conference programme, i.e. not all commentary papers submitted would be accepted and the selection process would be quite subjective. The commentary papers would be included in *New Zealand Plant Protection* as a 200-word abstract along with the poster abstracts.

In summary, the case for "commentary papers" must be very carefully considered. It is most important that this does not become an avenue for presenting sub-standard research and there is a very strong feeling that the standards of *New Zealand Plant Protection* should not be compromised. However, commentary papers and/or sessions could be a valuable addition to the conference in the exchange of information and the promotion of discussion on topical issues.

Your feedback to any members of the Executive Committee is very welcome (exec@nzpps.org).

Germplasm Newsletter

For anyone interested in the importation of germplasm of new organisms (including plants) refer to: http://www.ermanz.govt.nz/no/newsletters/20051118.html, which is the link to a newsletter being produced by the Environmental Risk Management Authority (ERMA New Zealand) on this subject.

If you have any articles/comments for the newsletter forward them to:

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ERMA New Zealand
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Facsimile 04 914-0433

New specialist building for Crop & Food

Crop & Food Research's plant pathologists and entomologists have made the move over to their new building at Lincoln. The as-yet-unnamed building has many specialist features including laboratories built to PC2 standards, insect growth rooms, a quarantine facility, a media kitchen and incubator room. And of course new offices for 26.

"There's a very, very positive adrenaline buzz in the air," says Richard Falloon, who has been co-ordinating the researchers' input into the building.

"Science team members have been very active in its planning", he says.

Leader of the Sustainable Productive Environments science team, Grant Smith, says he's really delighted with the building.

"The architect and builders have captured our vision for a modern plant pathology and entomology research facility. "It has a great feel about it and will be a great place to work." "We're all looking forward to getting it commissioned and getting research including B3 Biosecurity work underway.

The building is twice the space of the existing facilities but has been designed for energy efficiency, with modern features such as double glazing, extensive insulation, external blinds to reduce glare and heat gain from the sun and sensor operated lights. The new building will be officially opened early next year.

Photo: New Crop & Food building

The end of an era...

Forest Health Advisory Services comes to an end after 49 years

Members of the society may have heard that Vigil – Forest Health Advisory Services ceased operations at the end of September 2005. VIGIL had its genesis in 1956 as the Forest Biology Survey (FBS). The Survey, which was controlled by the Forest Research Institute (in those days part of the New Zealand Forest Service), was formed because of a growing concern about the health of our plantation forests. This concern was primarily triggered by outbreaks of the sirex wood wasp (*Sirex noctilio*) in unthinned *Pinus* stands in the central North Island and extremely high populations of the native looper (*Pseudocoremia suavis*) causing severe defoliation of *Pinus radiata* in Eyrewell and Balmoral forests in Canterbury. Both these events began in the late 1940s and early 1950s. In 1953 the Government engaged J.J. de Gryse, a prominent Canadian forest pathologist, to "furnish a comprehensive report and recommendations on the essential measures and practices to adopt to safeguard the country's exotic forests from the threat of insect and pathological epidemics". One of the recommendations in the de Gryse report was system of forest health surveillance by means of a detection survey. The staff of the Survey were originally known as Forest Biology Observers but this name was changed to Forest Health Officers in 1979.

The early emphasis of the Survey was on monitoring insect populations, particularly those of lepidopterous defoliators, and certain fungal problems in exotic forests. Their work received a huge boost with the discovery of dothistroma needle blight in the mid 1960s and in the early 1970s the Survey's work expanded to include nurseries and regular surveys of port environs (what we call High Risk Site Surveys today). Since the early 1980s aerial surveillance has become a routine integral part of forest health work. In the 1990s they became much more involved in "urban forestry" as well.

When the Forest Service was disbanded in 1987 the FBS (and the then Forest Research Institute) became part of the Ministry of Forestry and the Forest Health Officers became Protection Officers (Health). In 1998 the Ministry of Forestry was combined with the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry was born and the Protection Officers transmogrified into Forest Health Advisers. The stay in MAF was relatively short-lived and in 1999 the group was sold to what was then Forest Research and the name Vigil came into being.

So under various names and guises, Virgil has been providing dedicated service to the forest industry and to New Zealand's post-border Biosecurity for forty-nine years. We understand that a number of alternative field surveillance providers will now be contracted to provide the same services as VIGIL has been doing, to MAF and to the forest industry. We all know that our post-border surveillance systems are absolutely key to the protection of our productive and natural estates, and we hope that the eyes out there, looking for new incursions are the most experienced and skilled available to New Zealand. The Plant Protection Society Executive wishes the ex-VIGIL staff all the best for the future.

(Some information for this article was taken from Forest Health News No. 155, September 2005)

PPC_{NZ} devolves from Scion

Scion, the Rotorua-based CRI formerly known as Forest Research, recently announced the formation of Plant Protection Chemistry $_{NZ}$ Ltd (PPC_{NZ}) as an independent research and development company.

PPC_{NZ} had been functioning since 1975 as a science group within the organisation, specialising in the formulation and application of agrichemicals. Over time, PPC_{NZ} had developed an identity and a commercial client base that no longer had a close strategic fit within Scion as a CRI dedicated to forestry and biomaterials research.

Scion Chief Executive, Dr Tom Richardson, says that the evolution of PPC_{NZ} as a stand-alone company demonstrates how a Crown Research Institute can act as an effective incubator for successful commercial businesses.

The establishment of PPC_{NZ} as a stand-alone business came about as the result of a management buy-out initiated by the three senior staff within the business: Jerzy Zabkiewicz, Robyn Gaskin and Alison Forster.

A notable success for the PPC_{NZ} team in the past was the development of a novel organosilicone additive that can reduce the amount of herbicide needed to treat an area, and degrades very rapidly in environment. This product was commercialised as "Pulse" by Monsanto in 1985, and was a world first for New Zealand in the use of this new class of additive. The product's success saw the growth of an organosilicone market in New Zealand and the world from nil to multi-million dollars globally.

Although the primary focus is on agrichemical formulation properties and uses, PPC_{NZ} has been responsible for the introduction of other diverse products, highly sophisticated PC based software, interactive training programmes on the use of pesticides, technical extension services to a wide range of end-users , as well as being in the front rank of global research on understanding and improving the efficacy of agrichemicals.

Photo: PPC_{NZ} management celebration

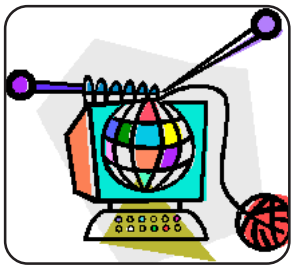
As PPC_{NZ} continues to work with commercial clients in developing new technologies, the business will continue to occupy the same location within Scion, employing the same personnel and providing mutual access to key scientific equipment.

For more information, contact:

Jerzy (George) Zabkiewicz – Director, PPC_{NZ}, 07 343 5491

www.ppcnz.co.nz

2005 Website Report - John Kean



It's been an eventful year for the Society's website. To go with our new URL (**www.nzpps.org**) a major overhaul of the entire site was completed in June 2005, giving a more professional look and enhanced usability to our web presence. The "official" logos and colours are now used and the pesticide resistance pages have been given their own style, with greater consistency across pages.

As part of the update, *New Zealand Plant Protection* is now promoted as a "journal" rather than a "proceedings", and it has been given greater priority and visibility on the website. Complete indices to all back issues are listed, right back to volume 1 in 1948. For those papers which are not available as pdfs, an email link requests me to scan, format and supply requested papers, and these are then mounted on the website as well. From February to July 2005, a total of 108 old papers have been processed, comprising about 5% of the back catalogue.

Due to unfortunate technical glitches at HortNet (our web host), website usage statistics are only available for July 2004 through February 2005. The results are very similar to those for the same period last year, but don't yet take into account any affects of recent website improvements - we'll have to wait until next year to find out how these changes affect visitor activity. As always, the web statistics should be treated with caution, since a large proportion of the "visitors" recorded are automatic "web-bots" trawling for information on behalf of search engines like Google.

Almost all of our four-hundred-and-something visitors per day (including web-bots) arrived from one or other search engine (mostly Google). A few came in via links from the Royal NZ Institute of Horticulture, but the tragedy of the year is that our old friend www.cookzucchini.com, which used to send us vegetable-loving web surfers by the dozen, appears to have disappeared from the internet. These are dark days indeed for fans of the zucchini and marrow, not to mention the courgette!

The most popular journal article this year was Sarah Cowell's 1999 paper on "Use of environmental life cycle assessment to evaluate alternative agricultural production systems". However, last year's winners Maureen O'Callaghan and Travis Glare struck back, taking second and third places, while impressive performances from Kerry Harrington and Nimal Rabeendran romped home in fourth and fifth respectively. Congratulations to all of these winners!

NZPPS website statistics summary

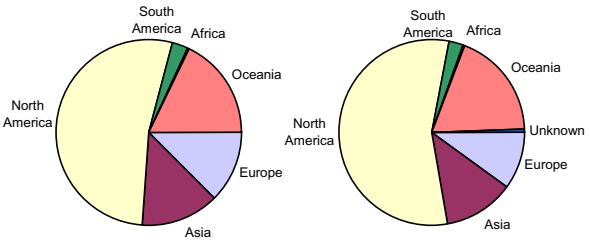
Period	Jul03-Jun04	Jul04-Feb05
Total Hits	532641	340864
Average Hits per Day	1455	1402
Total Visitors	172422	101924
Average Visitors per Day	471	419
Total pdf hits	218799	129116

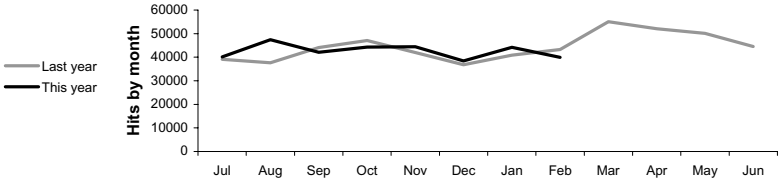
Most popular pdfs

1	O'Callaghan & Glare (2001) "Impacts of transgenic plants and micro-organisms on soil biota"	Cowell (1999) "Use of environmental life cycle assessment to evaluate alternative agricultural production systems"
2	Lovei (2001) "Ecological risks and benefits of transgenic plants"	O'Callaghan & Glare (2001) "Impacts of transgenic plants and micro-organisms on soil biota"
3	Cowell (1999) "Use of environmental life cycle assessment to evaluate alternative agricultural production systems"	O'Callaghan et al (2003) "Denaturing gradient gel electrophoresis - a tool for plant protection research"
4	McNeill et al (2001) "Bacteriophages: a potential biocontrol agent against walnut blight"	Harrington et al (2001) "Herbicide resistance in black nightshade and Onehunga weed"
5	Ramezani et al (2002) "Fungicidal effect of volatile oils from Eucalyptus citriodora and its major constituent citronella"	Rabeendran et al (1998) "Isolation and in vitro screening of soil fungi for biological control of Sclerotinia sclerotiorum"

Most popular search phrases leading to NZPPS site	1	nut grass	nut grass
	2	pesticide resistance	plant protection
	3	plant protection	erwinia herbicola
	4	weed leaf	new zealand plant protection
	5	tebufenozide	wasp bait
Most unexpected search phrases leading to NZPPS site	1	weed leaf	paper decomposition
	2	cat poison	"hot water" pest
	3	what do possums eat	what is the value of forecasting
	4	licorice	atomic bomb ecological effects
	5	bruntwood badges and polo shirts	young models

Visitors by continent





The Royal Society of NZ has launched its job search service, Fusionz (http://fusionz.rsnz.org). Fusionz advertises positions in science and technology organisations or for scientific/ technical jobs within other organisations, across New Zealand.

For job seekers: See http://fusionz.rsnz.org/ to browse all listings or search for jobs within a specific geographical or scientific area.

For job advertisers: With 20,000 scientists and technologists represented by our 60 constituent organisations, the Royal Society offers targeted marketing of your job vacancies. Advertising jobs is easy - simply click on 'Add a job' and fill in the details - the vacancy is posted up immediately. The cost is $50 per advert but we will be happy to offer a discounted flat rate that allows organisations to post up as many vacancies as they have for a set period (contact: nisha.basson@rsnz.org).

Photos: ©Ian Harvey, PLANTwise, Lincoln

NZ Plant Protection Society Annual Conference and Workshop

By Ian Popay

This year's conference, and the one day workshop on Biosecurity: Technologies for pest eradication, were held in the Ilott Theatre in Wellington Town Hall in August. The venue was excellent and both meetings were well attended and ran smoothly.

The biosecurity workshop involved 15 invited (and therefore excellent) speakers, including two guests from Australia and contributors from Auckland University, Waitakere City Council, Biosecurity NZ, ERMA, DOC and the CRIs. Highlights of the day, for me, were the papers by Alan Saunders on pest eradication in Pacific Islands and by Penny Hulse on social aspects of the aerial spray operations in Auckland.

The conference itself started with a session on biosecurity, which led into the usual eclectic mixture of papers on weed and pest control in horticulture, pastures and forestry. I continue to be impressed by the vastly increased standard of presentations these days, thanks largely to the universal adoption of PowerPoint. Conference dinner was in the Renouf Centre of the Michael Fowler Centre. The lack of an after-dinner dance has since been criticised by younger and flightier members and we will attempt to rectify that in future.