PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS TO THE 52ND NEW ZEALAND PLANT PROTECTION CONFERENCE Auckland Airport Centra, 11 August 1999

G.W. KERSE

This past year has been another busy one for your Executive and a number of other people assisting with the various projects undertaken by the Society. There has been good progress made and I have summarised for you the main activities as follows:

Website

As announced in the May Newsletter your Society now has its own webpage. For your reference the site address is www.hortnet.co.nz/nzpps. The Society acknowledges the support of Hortnet in hosting the webpage. Dr Eckehard Brockerhoff has done what I think is a great job of designing and maintaining the website, which is clearly laid out and in which it is easy to find the various locations for information about the society. The Society is grateful to Dr Brockerhoff for this work and to Forest Research for their support. The Proceedings of the last 5 conferences (including this year) are accessible from the webpage, as is information about the Society, its publications and upcoming events.

I believe this is a significant achievement for the Society and one which very efficiently serves the Society's main objective of pooling and exchanging information relevant to Plant Protection Science. There are many more exciting possibilities for utilising this medium and your Executive will continue to explore future possibilities.

Publications

Sales of the Illustrated Guide to Common Weeds have been good with sales to date returning close to three quarters of the monetary cost of publishing in the first year of sales. There does not seem to have been a significant effect on demand for Weeds in Colour, which suggests the two weeds books are servicing different markets. This then has been another successful publication from the Society.

There have been suggestions for further publications, in particular an Insects Book and a Plant Diseases book. An initial investigation into the viability of an Insects book indicated that this project should be postponed due to a number of other similar publications pending release.

Symposium

The Society has continued its efforts in providing a forum for exchange of information and debate on topical issues with the Symposium on Managing Urban Weeds and Pests, which preceded this Conference on Monday.

This proved to be yet another successful event hosted and organised by your Society. The Society is grateful to sponsors supporting the symposium, invited speakers for their contribution and to those attending for their support. Our Vice-President, Dr. Max Suckling, deserves a special mention for his initiative and drive in seeing this project through to a successful conclusion. Max was ably assisted by other members of the Symposium organising committee; Phillipa Stephens, Ian Popay and Maureen O'Callaghan.

52nd Conference, Auckland Airport Centra

The Annual Conference is the main focus of the Society. It provides an ideal opportunity for us all to meet and exchange ideas and information, and of course publish results of recent Research.

It is pleasing to see that the Society is maintaining its enviable standards, in terms of quality of work and presentation, and adherence to timetable during the conference. The Society is grateful to the authors and their co-workers, the Technical Editorial Committee, listed in the proceedings, the Editor and those involved in the organisation and running of the conference for this. The pre-publication of proceedings continues to be an achievement the Society can be justly proud of.

I would like to thank, on behalf of the Society, the local organising Committee, chaired by Phillipa Stevens with able assistance from Trevor Patterson, Mary Hiron, Karyn Froud and Mike Cornwell for the excellent organisation of this years conference. We also appreciate the excellent service we have received from the Auckland Airport Centra throughout the conference.

Finance

As you will see from the Treasurer's Report the Society is in a sound financial state. The Society has a healthy level of reserves that have been carefully nurtured by previous Executives. The Society's publications have significantly contributed, particularly the "Weeds in Colour" book and it looks as though "An Illustrated Guide to Common Weeds" will also be a significant contributor.

The Society I believe has always delivered value for money in all its activities and through careful management and hard work, and also good support in the form of sponsorship, has often returned a modest profit from conferences, symposiums and other activities.

The Executive is always open to suggestions from members for ideas for worthwhile activities. The Society is fortunate to have these reserves available to underwrite worthwhile activities. Clearly at the same time these reserves should be utilised judiciously and with a view to eventually returning most of the venture capital where possible to enable further future worthwhile activities to be underwritten.

Last year in my address to the AGM I mentioned concern about a decline in the volume of work published in the Proceedings of our Annual Conference. This year there have been a few more papers published, however this does reflect on some of the challenges facing Plant Protection Science and our Society. Government funding of Plant Protection Research in New Zealand continues to decline and CRIs are being encouraged to move towards greater financial independence. One result of this is more confidential research and less material available for publication.

Two of the challenges for this Society are to lobby for a "fair slice of the pie" for Plant Protection Research, and this is where our affiliation with the Royal Society is so important, and to ensure that our Proceedings are a worthy medium for publication. I think it is entirely appropriate that the name of our Proceedings is reviewed to correctly reflect the fact the papers are Refereed by a Technical Editorial Committee consisting of Scientists who are respected nationally and internationally in their field of expertise.

I would like to record here, on behalf of the Society, thanks to the Executive for their time and energy during the past year. We should also express our appreciation for the support of their employing organisations as well. Of particular note are the two most demanding positions; Secretary - Mike Butcher and editor - Maureen O'Callaghan. As this is the last proceedings that Maureen will edit, it is appropriate to thank her here for her fine work in maintaining the Editorial standards of the Conference Proceedings. Ian Popay also deserves a mention here for his work in editing our newsletter.

There are many other people, unnamed here, who have also contributed in a variety of ways to the activities of the society during the year and I take this opportunity to thank them also. I hope this anonymous form of thanks adequately expresses the Society's appreciation for their support.

Finally, I would like to thank the Society for the opportunity to serve as your President over the past 2 years. I have found it a challenging, stimulating and enjoyable experience and have particularly enjoyed the contact with a variety of people both inside and outside the Society. I would encourage other members of the Society if they have any interest in being involved in the Society to put themselves forward. I am sure that you will, like me, find it a rewarding experience.

There are significant challenges ahead for the Society. However as long as the Society focuses on serving the needs of its members and members are prepared to support the Society with their time energy and enthusiasm, the Society will continue to make a valuable contribution to Plant Protection Research in New Zealand.

Thank You