FOREWORD

“Science Matters” is a phrase being used increasingly in terms of seeking innovative solutions to environmental, societal and economic problems. Science is widely recognised as a pathway to providing the stimulus and creating the sustainable tools for growth in the New Zealand economy. The recent announcement of the 10 National Science Challenges by the Government set out the approach to science investment to achieve benefits for New Zealand. Our Society and members are at the forefront of delivering science that matters. I would expand this to “We do Smart Science that Matters”. Smart because it is always forward looking, often focused on seeking understanding and solutions to problems that best suit the growers and farmers today. In addition, our smart science increases the depth and breadth of pest management, improves productivity in a sustainable way, encourages and maintains New Zealand’s biodiversity and seeks to deliver measurable outcomes. It is where the various disciplines of science meet that Smart Science can be created. This is exactly what happens at our annual conference. All the disciplines of pest management and adjacent science come together in one room. The science is presented, and during question time, tea breaks or the poster session, the researchers meet, connections are made, and most often, there is the sparking of new ideas and new approaches.

Our Society continues to deliver on the four objectives that have been in place for 65 years. Following on from the one day pre-conference symposium on Psa in 2012, a second symposium “Psa the sequel” was run at Mt Maunganui by the Society in partnership with Zespri and with sponsorship from Plant & Food Research and Agmardt. This was highly successful. The attendance, level of presentations, debate and linkages made on the day showed just how important the Society’s objective “To pool and exchange information” is and how well the Society’s committees can deliver the means to do this when a major horticultural industry is facing a crisis due to a new pest. An example of Smart Science matched with delivery and communication facilitated by your Society.

Another of our Society’s objectives is the furtherance of plant protection science, education and extension in New Zealand. To meet this, the Society continues to foster the education and research of graduate and post-graduate students by the awarding of scholarships and travel grants. In 2012 we awarded two NZPPS Research Scholarships and in 2013 four Travel Grants. The ability to communicate effectively is highlighted in the Government science challenges; the Society recognised this some years ago and has been working with first time presenters to encourage communication skills in the area of their research by presenting an award each conference. In addition, the committee is currently investigating ways to engage with undergraduate students and post-graduate researchers at universities to understand their needs and what the Society can do to foster their careers, and in doing so keep them involved in Plant Protection Science. This initiative will continue to evolve over the next year.

Over the 65 years one aspect that is constant is change. The executive committee has continued to consider ways to deliver value to the members and achieve the Society’s objectives. There have been steps taken to modernise the way the Society interacts with members. In this area the Treasurer and Web Editor have done an outstanding job in implementing the electronic payment system and the Editor continues to refine the electronic submission process. Our annual conference has expanded now to include professional development, an initiative developed by our now immediate past president, and this is being run for the second time this year after a well-attended and appreciated

set of workshops last year. It is all about expanding and giving value and benefits to you the members. In this regard another new initiative this year is the travel grant for members of 5+ years standing. This is a grant to enable the successful applicant to further their education, attend conferences and to exchange information with others in their field of research.

Over the years another role the Society has had is to make submissions on Government policy development where it is in the area of our interest. Your Society recently made a submission to MPI on the Pest Management and Decision Pathway discussion documents. I personally would like to thank those who contributed to make those submissions happen.

One of the pillars of the Society is the publication of books. This fine history has continued this year with the publications of “An Illustrated Guide to Weed Seeds of New Zealand” by Trevor James et al. and “An Illustrated Guide to Common Grasses, Sedges and Rushes of New Zealand” by Paul Champion et al. There are books in progress covering Insect pests and Beneficials in New Zealand and further out the area of Plant Pathology will be covered. I would like to recognise the efforts and great contribution of all the authors for the books in the Society’s portfolio for their dedication and authorship.

Another successful initiative was Pestweb, which has recently moved to the AgResearch domain. This was a joint initiative that New Zealand Plant Protection Society members devoted considerable time and effort to create and was then hosted on our website. Without the Society’s support this web-based knowledge tool would not have got off the ground.

I thank all those who have contributed to the Society in the past year and I particularly thank the Executive Committee for the effort you put in to run the Society, deliver the annual conference and the Journal, because that delivers on the second of the Society’s objectives and the one that is most valued by the members.

George Follas
President, New Zealand Plant Protection Society