

FOREWORD

It's been 45 years since Rachel Carson's book 'Silent Spring' was published. Over this time Silent Spring has made many lists of best non-fiction works and raised awareness of the possible impacts of some pesticides on the environment. In many ways this book has been very controversial, raising some very strong and extreme reactions and there is no doubt that parts of the book have been misinterpreted to suit individual agendas. However, this book heralded the arrival of the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) era, as highlighted by follow-up publications such as *Beyond Silent Spring: Integrated Pest Management and Chemical Safety* (edited by H.F. van Emden and D.B. Peakall).

The New Zealand research and primary production communities have certainly not been backward with respect to researching and implementing IPM programmes and much of this research has been published in *New Zealand Plant Protection*. Despite significant advances in science, which has delivered a range of new tools for inclusion in IPM programmes over the last 30 years, controlling pests, diseases and weeds is not getting easier. If anything, plant protection options are increasingly constrained by a range of external pressures, which serve to limit options. Essentially, many of our export markets require pest and residue-free products, with an ability to trace the full 'life-history' back to individual growers. Achieving freedom from both pests/diseases and residues is a tightrope that needs to be walked. As a country, we will only achieve this with access to the best plant protection tools available in the world – whether they are biological control agents, new pesticides or new spraying systems. We also need to know how best to use these tools through an in-depth knowledge of the target biological systems. Many of the papers in this year's journal describe essential components of sustainable primary production systems in New Zealand.

While *Silent Spring* focused on the use of agrichemicals and their environmental impact, and indeed, much environmental research in the primary sector in New Zealand has focused on this aspect of sustainability, there is now a trend for other aspects of sustainability to be receiving more attention. For example, the increasing focus on food miles and carbon footprints has added another dimension to be covered within sustainable primary production systems in New Zealand. It will be interesting to see how implementation of a wider sustainability focus affects that original pillar of sustainability - plant protection science. It links together to represent the 'clean, green' New Zealand, which is precious to us all.

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