

THE 50TH NEW ZEALAND PLANT PROTECTION CONFERENCE

DR RICHARD E. FALLOON

President, New Zealand Plant Protection Society Inc.

The 50th New Zealand Plant Protection Conference marks an important milestone for the NZ Plant Protection Society, for New Zealand's agricultural, horticultural and forestry industries, and for this country's natural environment. The Conference is convened under the banner "Plant Protection in a Green Oasis; the Next 50 Years", a theme with forward-looking connotations. A number of keynote and invited speakers, both international and local, have been brought together to address themes that are very important today, and are likely to dominate plant protection research and practice in the future. The 50th NZ Plant Protection Conference will be an excellent signpost for the future of New Zealand's primary industries, and the natural and social environments of this country.

The first National Weeds Conference was held at Lincoln Agricultural College on 10-11 August 1948. The catalyst for that meeting was the visit to New Zealand two months earlier by an eminent American weed control specialist. A committee of people from Lincoln College and the local research community then organised a conference of representatives from the agricultural and horticultural industries of New Zealand, researchers in relevant science and tertiary teaching institutions, agrochemical industry representatives, and people from government and local authority agencies to consider problems caused by weeds and methods for weed control. Thus, the institution of the New Zealand Weeds Conference was born. Over the next few years, this annual event gave rise to the New Zealand Weeds Society, with the titles NZ Weeds Conference and the NZ Weeds Society being used interchangeably. In 1964, the name of this Society changed to the NZ Weed and Pest Control Society, and in 1992 further nomenclatural evolution resulted in the NZ Plant Protection Society Inc.

In retrospect, our Society and its predecessors have maintained an excellent tradition of "pooling and exchanging information on the biology of weeds, invertebrate and vertebrate pests, pathogens and beneficial organisms". The annual Conferences and Society publications, including the Conference *Proceedings*, are the most tangible record of the Society's activities and achievements. As well, the forums provided by the Society to instigate and foster interpersonal, interdisciplinary and inter-industry links have provided legacies of knowledge-sharing that have contributed greatly to agrarian New Zealand as well as the economic and social well-being of this country.

The 50th Conference maintains our Society's tradition of presenting current plant protection research as both printed, refereed scientific papers and oral or poster expositions. I am confident this Conference will maintain our traditions of excellence and timeliness in presentations to standards that are second to none, and that these traditions will continue to be upheld in the future.

The New Zealand Plant Protection Society embarks on its 50th year in excellent heart, with a very sound membership and financial base. Let us here recognise the achievements and contributions of the past. Let us also face the challenges of the future with standards of diligence, integrity and interpersonal respect at least equal to those traditionally maintained by members of this Society. May the achievements of the past be benchmarks for our future endeavours, to address New Zealand's environmental issues, and to continue distinguished service to the plant-based industries of this country.