

**PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS TO THE
51st NEW ZEALAND PLANT PROTECTION CONFERENCE
Quality Inn Hamilton, 12 August 1998**

GEORGE W. KERSE

Your Executive Committee, with help from other members of the society and some non-members have been busy working on ongoing and new projects over the past year. I have summarised the most significant of these below.

Plant Protection and Biosecurity: Science and Co-ordination Issues for New Zealand

During the year the NZPPS was commissioned by MoRST to compile a report on issues relating to Plant Protection Research and Biosecurity for New Zealand. Drs Pip Gerard, Anis Rahman and Ian Popay edited this report after consultation with an exhaustive list of people concerned with these issues. This report highlights concern about resourcing of plant protection research in New Zealand and should provide guidance for future directions on these issues. This report illustrates the valuable role the NZPPS can play in the plant protection community in New Zealand.

Scholarship Fund

During this past year, the Executive increased the Scholarship fund to \$25,000. This achieved an objective the society set itself to achieve a sum of \$25,000 in the Scholarship fund by the 50th year. This is barely adequate to sustain the current \$1,500 Scholarship Grant. The Society needs to determine where it goes from here with the Scholarship Fund - whether to increase the value of the scholarship, increase the number of scholarships and how to fund these developments.

Numerical Methods Workshop

The Conference this year was preceded by a "Numerical Methods" workshop. This was organised by the Society with the objective of not only maintaining but improving standards, in terms of statistical design and analysis, of research carried out by Society members. There were a number of people involved in the organisation of this, but Dr Max Suckling deserves particular mention for his initiative and work in bringing this project to fruition. Demand for the workshop exceeded supply and the workshop was so successful the society is considering a follow up session in the future.

51st Conference, Quality Hotel Hamilton

The core activity of the society continues to be the annual conference, it serves the main aim of the society to pool and exchange information and provides a very welcome opportunity for us all to meet once a year. I am pleased to see the Society's standards, in terms of quality of work and presentation, and adherence to timetable during the conference have been maintained this year. The Society owes a debt of gratitude 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. The pre-publication of proceedings continues to be an achievement the Society can be justly proud of.

There is some concern about the size of the proceedings this year. A total of 48 papers and 16 posters is low relative to recent times. Is this merely a hangover from the 50th; is it merely a result of a "clean out" of pending papers with people taking the opportunity of having papers included in the 50th Conference? Or is it a further sign of the decline in plant protection research in New Zealand. The report to MoRST referred to above certainly highlights concerns about a decline in resourcing of plant protection research in New Zealand. Maybe it is a bit of both, however I think it certainly is a reminder that we all need to work hard to ensure a viable future for plant

protection research in New Zealand, and consequently a viable future for our Society. It was very appropriately pointed out in Sir Dryden Spring's Opening address at this year's conference how reliant our agriculturally based industries are on technology to remain competitive in today's global environment, and how important investment in Research and Development is.

I would like to thank, on behalf of the Society, the local organising Committee, consisting of Ian Popay, Trevor James, Anis Rahman, Murray Lane and particularly Mary Hiron, for the excellent organisation of this year's conference. We also appreciate the excellent service we have received from the Quality Hotel, Hamilton throughout the conference.

SwiftPrint Centre Ltd

The publication of the Proceedings of the 51st NZ Plant Protection Conference is the 20th Proceedings that have been printed by SwiftPrint Centre Ltd in Palmerston North. SwiftPrint have marked this milestone by generously donating \$500 to the Society to sponsor the Wine and Cheese evening at this year's conference. I wish to record the Society's gratitude for this donation. It is also appropriate to thank SwiftPrint for the excellent service the society has enjoyed from them in successfully pre-printing the Society's Conference Proceedings in time for every conference over the past 20 years.

An Illustrated Guide to Common Weeds of New Zealand

I am very pleased to report that the Society has achieved its objective of celebrating its 50th year by publishing in time for release at this year's conference "An Illustrated Guide to Common Weeds of New Zealand". This book was the brainchild of Bruce Roy, now a retired farmer from Bay of Plenty. Bruce approached the NZPPS for help to develop this concept through to a book suitable for publication. Numerous people have contributed their time and energy to this project, notably the authors: Bruce Roy, Ian Popay, Paul Champion, Trevor James and Anis Rahman, those offering advice and assistance, including Bill Sykes, Catherine Beard, Arthur Healy, Dave Fullerton and John Randell. There were a number of people and organisations who donated photographs and these are acknowledged in the book. AgResearch and NIWA, deserve a special mention for allowing their staff to contribute time and resources to the preparation of the book.

Website

Your Executive has spent considerable time recently considering options for the society to have a Website hosted on the internet. The aim of this is to have information about NZPPS and access to the conference proceedings freely available on the internet. This medium appears ideal for the society to pool and exchange information, not only in New Zealand but worldwide. A working party has been appointed and in the near future your Executive will report progress in this area.

Looking ahead to next year's Conference, the Society is also planning a Symposium preceding the 52nd Conference in Auckland on "Plant Protection in the Urban Environment". The aim of this is to raise the profile and quality of dialogue of plant protection issues and options in the urban environment.

Acknowledgements

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. They deserve special thanks for their contribution.

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.

In conclusion I would like to say that while the current research environment is uncertain in New Zealand, as long as we continue to have skilled people prepared to contribute their time, energy and enthusiasm to the society (with the support of their various organisations). I am sure the Society has a vibrant future and will continue to make a valuable contribution to plant protection research in New Zealand.

SECRETARY'S ANNUAL REPORT - 1998-1999

M.R. BUTCHER

The past 12 months have seen steady change in the communication infra-structure of the Society. These changes involve how we communicate with each other and the world.

Publications

Apart from our publication popularly called 'Weeds in Colour' (*A Guide to the Identification of New Zealand Common Weeds in Colour*, compiled by Alan Upritchard), all other Society publications are currently handled by Manaaki Whenua Press on a commercial basis. 'Weeds in Colour' has been retained by the Society and distributed by the Secretary for commercial reasons.

This arrangement has developed well with the 52th Proceedings being the first solely distributed to non-members by Manaaki Whenua Press. Their advertising and retailing systems meant that Society publications could be marketed more effectively world wide without the Society establishing their own extensive system. *An Illustrated Guide to the Common Weeds of New Zealand* is also distributed by Manaaki Whenua Press under an addition to the contract.

Internet presence

The Society's website went 'on-line' in late April and was advertised in the May newsletter. Dr Eckehard Brockerhoff of Forest Research is the Society's Website Editor and is to be congratulated for the appearance and structure of the site.

The Society is still experimenting with how best to use the site to the members' advantage. We realise not all members have internet access so the physical print media is not obsolete just yet. The use of the website to enable people (members and non-members) to comment on the Proceedings name was our first 'experiment'. I cannot say my email in-box rapidly exceeded its disc quota with the replies.

Members whose email addresses are known are now on a large distribution list. This method of communication, while taking a bit of setting up and fine-tuning seems to be working well. No-one likes SPAM (spurious electronic advertising) so the use of the email is being carefully considered.

Membership

The Society membership list has become outdated over the last few years, mainly due to the rapid and seemingly endless changes in staffing resulting from restructuring. This year a purge of members whose fees are 2-3 years in arrears is underway (if people do not respond to a large arrears account to keep their membership current). There were also several overseas members who obviously signed up at a conference several years ago and have not been heard from since. These members have been expunged. Corporate membership has been changeable (in membership if not numbers) and several potential new corporate members were approached about the benefits of membership. Some of those approached have followed through with membership. Corporate member websites/emails are hot linked in the Society's website permitting access to corporate sites from the Society website.