



CSA Newsletter

Canadian Society of Agronomy

March 2008



President's Message

Advancing Canadian agronomy. I'm going to describe three important opportunities for you to advance your own profession in the coming few months. Plan to participate in our annual meeting, nominate a colleague, and convince someone new to join our Society!

1. Annual Meeting: Montreal '08: Plants & Soils. I hope that many of you are looking forward to our upcoming annual meeting as much as I am. Bringing together scientists and students from across the wide geography of Canada and the northeastern United States, there's no doubt going to be lively discussions and debates. Have a close look at the program plans on the next pages and on the web site, submit an abstract, and register soon!

Some of you may say, "I already have enough meetings to go to. Why go to all the effort of participating in Canadian society meetings as well?" Here are some good reasons.

- Rising global demand for food, fibre and fuel are pushing up profits in Canadian contemporary agriculture, but at the same time putting stress on soil, water and air. Canadians need Canadian agronomy. There is a great future for agronomic research.
- The public appreciation for the role of agronomy in achieving Canada's goals for healthy soils, clean water and air, and greenhouse gases can be enhanced by a strong scientific conference. You can make it strong.
- Presenting your best research in an auspicious place like Montreal sends a message to the public that Canadian agronomic research is relevant and essential.
- Dialogue with colleagues in horticulture, field crops, soils and agronomy is a great stimulus for new ideas.
- Montreal is a great place to be in the summer!

Myles Frosst, the new CEO of the Agricultural Institute of Canada, called recently to discuss how we can work together toward the goal of greater public appreciation. He has a vision for contemporary agriculture that he plans to share at our Montreal meeting. I'm excited about the possibilities for turning the trends around and revitalizing the profession of agronomy. I invite you all to turn out.

2. Awards. I encourage you to nominate a colleague. Awards serve to advance your own profession by highlighting the accomplishments of agronomists and their contributions to society. The distinguished winners of past awards are listed on the CSA web site. The Young Agronomist, Fellow, and Distinguished agronomist award nominations are due on the 15th of May, and the Pest Management Scholarship for graduate students is due on the 31st of March. Look inside for more information, and send your nominations to Cindy Grant.

3. Membership. The discipline of agronomy is critical to success in meeting the growing economic, social and ecological demands on crop production. Its public image needs to be enhanced. See Derek Lynch's article inside on your executive's current discussions of what the term "agronomy" means to us and to the public. No matter what we name it, we need to promote this discipline of science. The more members we have, the more we can do. Help make our society and science dynamic. Talk to a colleague today about joining.

Tom Bruulsema
President

Call for Awards Nominations

Our annual meeting is approaching rapidly, bringing with it the opportunity to recognise deserving colleagues for their achievements. We have several awards that are presented through the Canadian Society of Agronomy. These include awards for Young Agronomist, Distinguished Agronomist, and Fellow of the Canadian Society of Agronomy. The guidelines for these awards as well as a list of past recipients can be found on the CSA website at <http://www.agronomycanada.com/awards.html>.

You all know someone who has made an exceptional contribution to agronomy. The CSA awards are the opportunity for that contribution to be recognised by the agronomic community. But, that recognition cannot take place unless the person is nominated. The nomination procedure is not complicated and is described thoroughly on the website. Please take the time to prepare and submit a nomination before **May 15, 2008**.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact:

Cynthia Grant
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Email: cgrant@agr.gc.ca

or

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Call for Nominations for 2008

Two positions on the Canadian Society of Agronomy executive are opening in 2008.

Candidates are needed for the **Eastern Director** and **Western Director** positions serving a two-year term on the Executive.

Holding office in the CSA provides a unique opportunity to work with your colleagues across the country, to have an impact on the society and contribute to the advancement of agronomy in Canada. Directors are required to participate in the executive meetings (teleconference calls), attend and participate in the CSA annual meeting, chair and/or serve on CSA committees as needed, communicate regional issues to the Executive and CSA members, especially through contributing articles to the CSA Newsletters, and help to promote CSA within their organizations and regions.

If you are interested in becoming a director for CSA or you know a colleague who you feel will be a good candidate and is interested in being nominated please contact Yousef Papadopoulos for the nomination procedures (Papadopoulosy@agr.gc.ca; Tel: 902-896-2452).

The 4th Atlantic Agronomy Workshop

When I moved to Prince Edward Island, almost 20 years ago, all those involved in making recommendations (researchers, extension personnel, industry representatives) for producers, would meet annually. It was a great opportunity to find the latest information on a variety of topics, and to learn what others were doing and/or planning. With reduced funding and a change in emphasis by governments, such recommendation meetings have been discontinued. In an effort to keep up contacts and present the latest information on a variety of topics, the first Atlantic Agronomy Workshop was held several years ago. It has proven to be very successful, and this year's workshop was no exception.

The 4th Atlantic Agronomy Workshop was held in Charlottetown, PEI, on January 15 and 16, 2008. This workshop has been held every second year and provides an opportunity for those interested in agronomy, in all its aspects, to meet, and exchange ideas. This year, there were 103 registrants, representing all four Atlantic provinces plus Tarlok Sahota from Thunder Bay, Ontario. The registrants also represented a wide range of interests and occupations: researchers, extension personnel, university faculty, industry personnel, farmers and students.

The committee which organized this workshop was co-chaired by Yousef Papadopoulos, the past president of CSA and Jerry Ivany. The workshop was also supported by the Atlantic Fertilizer Institute, Crop Life Canada - Atlantic, and the PEI Department of Agriculture.

Nitrogen has been receiving a lot of attention in the Maritimes, and especially on PEI. The contamination of ground water, rivers and estuaries by nitrogen from farming and other sources has led to the creation of a government commission to review and make recommendations. Since the only source of water for PEI is ground water, contamination is of great concern. Accordingly, the first morning of the workshop was devoted to a session on "Whole Farm Nutrient Management Models".

The three Maritime provinces have nutrient management programs in place, which are utilized to varying degrees. These were discussed by Jack VanRoestel from Nova Scotia, Jennifer MacLeod from PEI, and Pat Toner from New Brunswick.

No discussion of crops would be complete without some attention to crop pests: insects, diseases and weeds. For example, wireworms cause significant damage to crops in the Maritimes, and many chemicals which could control them are now deregistered. Alternative methods of control are being studied at the Organic Agricultural Center, Truro, by Joanna MacKenzie and at Charlottetown by Christine Noronha.

There is increasing concern among the general public about the use of chemicals in agriculture. So it is interesting to learn that the incidence of sclerotinia rot in carrots can be controlled by mechanical means. Kevin Sanderson (AAFC, Charlottetown) and colleagues have developed and tested a machine which trims the tops of the carrots to allow more light and air circulation into the crop canopy; which reduces the incidence of the disease but does not reduce yield.

The use of crops to supply energy in some form or other is attracting much media attention. Indeed in 2006, at the annual meeting in Halifax, CSA had a symposium on this topic. At our workshop, Michael Main NSAC, Truro, compared 5 major bioenergy systems based on crops for energy efficiency and potential sustainability.

This workshop always encourages the participation of students. There is a competition for the best student oral presentation and the best student poster.

Shabtai Bittman presented the awards to:

Don Kerr, a student at NSAC for his oral presentation, "The influence of organic seed treatments on barley seed vigour, establishment and yield in the Maritimes"; and to

P. Rayorath, also at NSAC, for his poster "Ascophyllum nodosum extracts impart freezing tolerance to Arabidopsis thaliana."

The program included 31 oral presentations and 10 posters. Abstracts from these presentations will be published in the Canadian Journal of Plant Science.

Bert Christie, P.Ag.



From left, Don Kerr, Shabtai Bittman and P. Rayorath



Plants & Soils Montreal'08

13-16 July 2008
McGill University , Montreal, Quebec

CALL FOR PAPERS

I hope you will be joining me in Montreal on July 13-16 for our 2008 annual meeting. This is a joint conference co-sponsored by the Canadian Society of Horticultural Science and the Northeastern Branch of ASA-CSSA-SSSA. It will be hosted by McGill University, Montreal, Canada at the downtown campus.

The Conference Web site, www.montreal08.org, contains all the information for registration, submitting paper titles and abstracts, plenary symposium speakers and topics, housing information, links to information about Montreal and important dates.

If you haven't been to a CSA meeting in a while, this is surely one not to miss. The conference will feature a plenary symposium on Biofuels, Bioproducts and Ecological Intensification. There will also be opportunity for presenting your research and interacting with colleagues from the U.S. and Canada. In addition, Montreal is a beautiful, cosmopolitan city and with the conference being held downtown, you'll have access to great food and entertainment within walking distance.

This conference is also a great opportunity for graduate students to present their research and meet students from other universities. As in the past, we will be having a graduate student competition for oral presentations.

The Call for Papers is now open. Please review the oral and poster guidelines prior to submitting your abstract. Papers submitted may be published in a Special Issue of CJPS.

Important dates to keep in mind:

- March 1 – Registration begins
- April 12 – Abstract submission deadline
- May 30 – Deadline for registration with early-bird fees
- June 24 – Close of on-line registration (on-site registration will be available)

Again, I hope to see you there. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact me,
at Tom.Bruulsema@ipni.net or 519-821-5519.

Tom Bruulsema
www.montreal08.org



McGill



Call for CJPS Associate Editors

As Editor of the Canadian Journal of Plant Science (CJPS), I am requesting your assistance to help develop a nomination list of new Associate Editors, to present to the AIC Scientific Journal Committee.

It was agreed at the annual CJPS editorial board meeting to increase the number of non-Canadian Associate Editors (currently 0), so I would especially welcome interest from potential Associate Editors who are not currently working in Canada.

The CJPS requires four new associate editors to handle manuscripts in the following sections:

Position 1: Agronomy- Breeding, preferably forage crops: In addition to breeding, expertise in the following disciplines would be useful: plant physiology, crop production, pathology.

Position 2: General Agronomy of field crops: Knowledge in crop physiology, crop fertility, cropping systems, and pathology would be beneficial.

Position 3: Pathology of field crops: Diseases of cereals, oilseeds, and specialty crops.

Position 4: Molecular Biology: Expertise in tissue culture, marker assisted selection, genomic analysis, and/or proteomics.

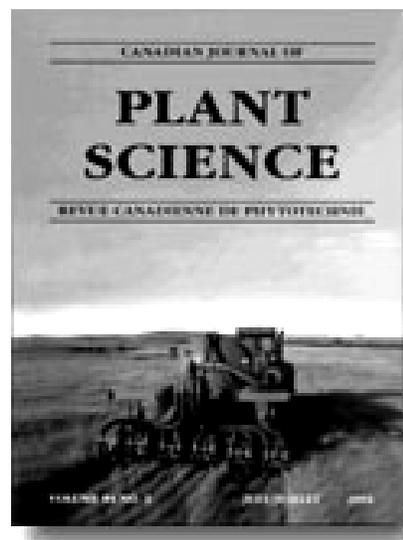
CJPS processes all manuscript submissions via the OSPREY manuscript processing system. Interested CSA members should view the journal website, <http://pubs.nrc-cnrc.gc.ca/aic-journals/cjps.html>

Any interested CSA member should send me a short resumé demonstrating their scientific competencies and list of peer reviewed publications. Names of all interested CSA members would contribute to a nomination list.

Please note that this is not for everyone. We are looking for accomplished authors of peer reviewed journal papers; team players with the strength and commitment to handle manuscripts in a timely fashion. Duties are listed in the journal Operational Manual <http://pubs.nrc-cnrc.gc.ca/aic-journals/instruct/operations-manual>.

Your assistance in this is most sincerely appreciated.

Dr. Vaino Poysa
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What's New from the West?

Soils and Crops Workshop 2008 has just closed its stage-curtain at the University of Saskatchewan after two days (Feb 28-29) of sharing information among approximate 130 participants coming from Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and a few guests from overseas. This annual event, coordinated by the Extension Division of the University of Saskatchewan and the Saskatchewan Soil Fertility Committee, provided an update of the current research being conducted in the areas of soils, crops, water management, environments, agri-forestry, and economics. The workshop also discussed current research in a manner that addresses its potential for solving existing challenges and providing future opportunities. This event has been recognized as one of the leading technology transfer programs in western Canada, and it provided a venue for forming alliances among researchers, extensionists, Agri-business personnel, and farming communities. The members of the Saskatchewan Institute of Agrologists (SIA) and the Certified Crop Advisors (CCA) had the opportunity for their professional career development. A dozen of graduate students from some western Canadian universities took part in the event. The following two students brought home with a winning price of their presentations:

The best grad oral presentation award was presented to Nichol Seerey from the Department of Plant Sciences, the University of Saskatchewan, and she is under the supervision of Dr. Steven Shirliffe.



The best grad poster award was presented to Atul Nayyar from the Semiarid Prairie Agricultural Research Centre, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Swift Current. He is under the supervision of Dr. Chantal Hamel.

Dr. Barbara Cade-Menun started her new career as a Nutrient Cycling Research Scientist at the Semiarid Prairie Agricultural Research, AAFC, Swift Current, Saskatchewan, on March 1, 2008. Dr. Cade-Menun graduated from the University of British Columbia in 1989 with her MSc. and in 1995 with her Ph.D. majored in Soil Chemistry. After graduation, she worked firstly as a Research Assistant at UBC, and then as a Research Associate at the Ecosystem Sciences at the University of California at Berkeley. During the recent four years, she has been working as Research Scientist at the Department of Geological and Environmental Sciences, Stanford University. Her expertise is nutrient cycling and especially P cycling in ecosystems.

Dr. Robert Gulden is a new faculty in the Department of Plant Sciences at the University of Manitoba, Winnipeg. Dr. Gulden graduated from the University of Manitoba in 1996 with his MSc., and in 2003 he received his Ph.D. from the University of Saskatchewan. After two years of post-doctorate research at the University of Guelph, Rob decided to come back to the prairies. Since September 2007, he has taken over the weed research program at the University of Manitoba. As the only weed Professor in Manitoba, Dr. Gulden has been working on weed biology, ecology and eco-physiology; integrated weed management; the impact of management techniques on weed community assembly; and crop/weed competition.

Dr. Danny (Asheesh) Singh joined the research team at the Semiarid Prairie Agricultural Research, AAFC, Swift Current, Saskatchewan, in August 2007, as a Durum Breeder. Danny completed his BSc. in Agriculture and Animal Husbandry in 1998, completed his MSc. in Barley Breeding and Genetics at the University of Saskatchewan in 2001, and graduated with a Ph.D. in Corn Breeding and Genetics at the University of Guelph in 2007. Dr. Singh is one of the newest (maybe the youngest) breeders added to the cereal research team in western Canada.

Dr. Muhammad Tahir, a Ph.D from Washington State University, has become new Assistant Professor at the University of Manitoba during the past summer. Besides teaching responsibilities, Dr. Tahir is focusing his research on the improvement of oil content and oil quality in canola rapeseed through traditional and molecular breeding techniques with special emphasis on development of *Brassica* spp. suitable as feed stock for biodiesel. He is also working on plant genomics to isolate, clone and study the expression of economically important genes for use in breeding programs.

(Note: More on new professionals from the west will be posted in the next issue of the CSA Newsletter. If you have any suggestions or comments, please contact the Western Director of CSA, Dr. Yantai Gan).

Yantai Gan

Agronomy...what does it mean to you?

Agronomy. What does it mean to the average Canadian? The term is at best poorly understood. Courtesy of Wikipedia:

Agronomy is the science of utilizing plants for food, fuel, feed, and fiber. To do this effectively and in a sustainable manner, agronomy encompasses work in the areas of plant genetics, plant physiology, meteorology, and soil science.

Not bad perhaps, and for those active in this field reflects the integrative, cross-disciplinary nature of the work. Internationally, proud societies of agronomy in the US, Europe and elsewhere also characterize the science and profession in a similar manner:

Basic and applied science to explore the relationship between crops, soils, climate and agricultural practice, and between agriculture and the environment

according to the European Society of Agronomy. But even among administrators of agricultural programs and policy makers in Canada, the word agronomy doesn't register as the cutting-edge discipline of science we know it to be, essential for the sustainable use of our agricultural resource base. Is it time, therefore, to consider another more up-to-date name for the Canadian Society of Agronomy?

The CSA executive has recently been exploring this question and the possibility of renaming the organization so that it means more to the public and policy makers. Here are a few examples of suggestions to date:

Plant science	Integrated plant systems
Plant ecology	Plant production ecology
Plant systems	Plant production systems
Plant improvement	Plant production science
Crop improvement	

But it's essential we hear from you the membership on this. Is a name change necessary or do we just need to revamp our efforts in promoting and updating the image of the term "agronomy?" If a change in name is desirable, what should it reflect? None of the above suggestions seemed quite adequate. In a special CSA discussion forum during the Montreal '08: Plants & Soils annual conference on July 13-16th this year, we hope to engage you in this lively discussion.

Derek Lynch
Eastern Director

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