CSA Newsletter

Canadian Society of Agronomy **November 2006**

President's Message

It has been a pleasure to participate in hosting our 2006 Annual Conference and General Meeting (AGM) in Halifax. This conference was a joint effort conducted with the Annual Meeting of Canadian Society of Animal Science (CSAS) and the Canadian Society of Horticultural Science (CSHS). The conference drew over 200 primary participants including a record numbers of graduate students. The CSA got to business immediately after the opening reception on August 1st with a special session where 50 members (including graduate students) brainstormed on how the CSA can be improved. Each member was asked to share their reason for joining the CSA and the following includes some of the reasons cited: Curiosity, Mentoring, Promotion criteria, Credential, Professional identify, mobility, networking, Journal connection (serve as associate editor and editor), networking with other societies, employment networking, international collaboration, knowledge base, research networking, developing vision and values, pursuing personal values vs. employment values, career start, link opportunity and knowledge, facilitated career development, facilitated communication with other agronomists, facilitated Canadian venue, integration, scholarship, recognition of profession, scope out the agronomists people, scope the career, scope agronomy, and opportunity to serve. The first day of the conference started with a poster session, followed by the Plenary Session theme "Reinventing Agricultural Research" where the speakers addressed the questions 'Does production agriculture still need publically funded scientists?'; 'Is production agriculture as we have known it for the last fifty years still relevant?'; 'What is the future of agricultural research?'; and 'Where should we be going?'. Technical sessions featured scientific presentations, a symposium entitledTeaching Agricultural Science at Universities and a second session for viewing the posters (5:00 to 7:00 pm) completed the day. Day 2 of the conference the participants headed to Truro and enroutte visited a leading cash crop and dairy farm before touring research plots at the Nova Scotia Agricultural College (NSAC). The AGM was held at NSAC prior to Maritime feast. The final day of the conference was dedicated to scientific presentation sessions and two symposia; namely, Agriculture: Consumer or Producer of Energy and Multifunctionality of Grasslands in Agro-Ecosystems. The conference was concluded with an award banquet.

Following the AGM in Halifax the CSA executives regrouped via a conference call meeting on October 2. Following minor adjustments to the strategy the executives developed last fall, we are currently moving on to con-

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tinue the implementation of the three year strategy plan. The highlights of the 2006-2007 work plan include: 1) Generate Enthusiasm & Enhance Member Involvement:- the executives will be working on introducing new recognition awards, supporting the invitation of CSA speakers at our annual and regional conferences, maximizing publication opportunities for our members, formalizing the CSA presence nationally and internationally and insuring member involvement is increased; 2) Revenue Generation:- the plan is to expand corporate sponsorship, explore CSA involvement in book publications that generate royalties, and increase the amount of surplus from our regional and national conferences; 3) Membership Drive:- contacting former members and encouraging them to reactivate their involvement and their membership; attracting young agronomists back into our organization by activating a pilot project entitled 'Undergraduate Agronomist Clubs at NSAC and University of Manitoba, as well as, continuing to offer special events for graduate students at the CSA annual conference. Once again I encourage you to become more involved and help your executives implement this important strategy for reinventing the CSA to fit the needs of Canadian agronomists.

Yousef A. Papadopoulos,
President

Fee Increase for CSA in 2007

At the AGM in Halifax, the membership voted to allow the Executive to increase the CSA membership fees. The CSA Executive decided to increase the fee from $70 to $90 for 2007. The fee has remained constant at $70 since 2003. The increase is based on an overall review of our finances and our plans to expand selected activities.

Our current financial situation is that we are just breaking even. This means our net worth (reserve) is declining slightly with inflation.

We are vulnerable to:

- cost increases (supplies, postage),
- reductions in sponsorships (some companies who sponsored in the past no longer have the funds available to sponsor any organization) and
- reduction in registrations (because there are fewer agronomists in Canada), which raises the cost of services per member.

It has been asked why we are not cheaper than ASA. We have learned from Dave Sleper, President of ASA, that they get most of their revenue from profits from their annual meeting (which subsidizes the ASA). CSA has made small profits from the past few annual meetings, but has purposefully chosen not to 'milk' the conferences. We need good, affordable meetings.

We also think that the CSA financial reserves are needed against the risk of losses in future meetings. These reserves take the pressure off meeting organizers and will make it easier for us to get volunteers in the future.

Finally, to remain vigorous, the CSA needs to experiment with new initiatives. Some current examples are:

- Agronomy clubs at universities,
- Website to publish refereed papers for geno type descriptions and regional research findings and
- Proposed books such as "Agronomic Tech niques"

CSA requires additional funds in its budget in order to initiate these important new ventures.

Without the CSA, there will likely not be a Canadian Journal of Plant Science, nor an annual national agronomist conference. These and other CSA activities are helpful for professional Agronomists in Canada, so it is in our collective interest to help keep the ball rolling in these challenging times.

The CSA Executive feels it is important to plan for the future to ensure the continuing health of our society, and hopes all CSA members will understand and endorse our decision.

Shabtai Bittman
Secretary-Treasurer, CSA

PLANT CANADA 2007 PROGRAM

Place: **Saskatoon, TCU Place** Dates: **June 10-14, 2007**

Plant Canada Events:

- Opening reception
- Plenary session 1: Natural Products
- Plenary session 2: A Plant Health Network
- Graduate student social
- Industry session: Designing a new agri-food industry
- Saskatchewan youth science journalism challenge
- Volunteered oral and poster presentation sessions
  - Plant responses to the environment
  - Pest management
  - Plant development and improvement
- Banquet and live entertainment
- Post-conference field trips

CSA events:

- Mini-symposium: Progress in organic cropping systems
- Mini-symposium: Emerging barriers to marketing crops
- Special session: Nutrient cycling
- Graduate student paper competition (oral and poster presentations)
- Annual meeting
- Awards presentations
- Field research tour

Call for papers and registration information will be available early in 2007 on:

- Plant Canada website: http://www.plantcanada.ca/index.htm, CSA website: http://agronomycanada.com/

For further information contact:
Bruce Coulman, CSA representative on National Organizing Committee, Plant Canada 2007 (bruce.coulman@usask.ca)

Something new this year—student journalism contest.
Please consider volunteering; see http://www.science-west.ca/Journalism/ for details.

News from the East….

The 2006 field season has wound down. In Atlantic Canada it will be remembered as one of the wettest and more challenging springs in recent memory. In Summerside, Prince Edward Island, in early June, they recorded almost a months worth of rain, 87.4mm, in just one weekend. It's the first time I have seen established and hilled potato plots lost to excessive rainfall, and ducks in grain plots that looked more like paddy fields.

A highlight of the year for me was assisting with organizing, and attending our annual conference 'Halifax 2006', held jointly with the Canadian Society of Animal Science and the Canadian Society for Horticultural Science. The joint symposia allowed for some truly cross cutting themes to be presented and it was also great to see so many familiar faces from across the country.

This year saw also the completion, after three years of effort, of a Canadian national standard for organic agriculture, which can be viewed at: http://www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/cgsb/on_the_net/organic/index-e.html. With facilitation and coordination by the Canadian Standards Board of the Standards Council of Canada, the standard was developed by a truly diverse stakeholder committee, representing government, producers, processors, consumers, retailers and academics. The standard outlines the allowable production inputs, and recommended best management practices for organic crop and livestock production. In also stipulates the requirements for transition to organic production, and for preparation, handling and traceability of organic agricultural products.

All of Canada's major trading partners, with respect to organic food products, had established national organic standards and regulatory systems, and to maintain access to these markets it was key that Canada develop its own comparable regulatory system. The proposed regulations governing organic agricultural products in Canada, (http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/fssa/orgbio/otfgtspbe.shtml) will establish a system in which the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), as the competent authority, regulates the use of a "Canada Organic" agricultural product legend and logo. In addition to facilitating international market access, the system is designed to provide protection to consumers against misleading labeling practices and support the development of the domestic market for organic products.

Will organic be the only 'branded' agricultural production system? Undoubtedly not. While it's the first in Canada to be covered under national regulations, a number of other industry-developed branded systems for specific commodities already exist which offer guarantees linked to the specifics of the management system rather than just the product alone. For CSA members this trend is an interesting one to watch.

Derek Lynch
CSA Eastern Director

AWARDS PRESENTED IN 2006

CSA Fellows—2006

Dr. Adrian Johnston:

Adrian Johnston received his Ph.D. in Crop Science from the University of Saskatchewan in 1991. He worked for Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food from 1981-85, for Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada from 1992-99, and is currently Northern Great Plains Director for the Potash and Phosphate Institute, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan (1999-present).

Adrian ranks at the top of our profession in his enthusiastic, well-informed, and professional approach to furthering agronomic and soil science with emphasis on crop production, soil fertility, and environmental quality. As an Extension specialist, his programs were focused and informative. The Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada research program he managed became a national example of collaboration between disciplines, leading to national recognition. He has met the challenges of a changing agriculture research and extension environment and the challenges in getting results.

Adrian sought new challenges as he moved to the Potash & Phosphate Institute. His leadership ability came to the fore in his position as Northern Great Plains Director, where he directed all PPI research and education programs in the Northern Great Plains region (Montana, North Dakota, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba). He coordinates the biannual education program and editing and printing of the proceedings of the Western Canada Agronomy Workshop (representing 2 states and 3 provinces), a workshop which routinely attracts several hundred participants. He has brought a production agriculture perspective to the manure management and greenhouse gas issues and, importantly, has worked with researchers to advance management options to reduce the impact of agriculture on the environment. Recently, Adrian has taken on new responsibilities, serving as the President and Asian programs director for PPIC.

Adrian has great ability to distil science to a common factor of understanding, and is much appreciated for his knowledge, candour and commonality when speaking to farmers, executives or research scientists. He has helped to organize and teach soil fertility short courses in three provinces and two states. He has also been an invited speaker on soil fertility and plant nutrition at an international conference in China. In addition to the soil fertility training, he has given talks which promote cropping systems, soil science, and sound nutrient management planning.

Adrian serves as the Chair of the Prairie Provinces CCA exam committee, and an educational adviser to the Precision Farming program at Assiniboine College in Brandon, Manitoba. He has also been active in CSA, serving as Western Director , Chairman of the Awards Committee and associate editor of the Canadian Journal of Plant Science.

Stewart Brandt:

Stewart Brandt is a Crop Management Agronomist for Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada at the Scott Research Farm in Scott, Saskatchewan. He received his M.Sc. in Crop Science/Weed Science in 1978 from the University of Saskatchewan. His research has focused on developing and ensuring the adoption of tillage and cropping alternatives that reduce soil degradation, enhance economic returns, and improve soil quality.

Stewart has conducted a progressive and significant research program on cropping systems and has been instrumental in Western Canada in the development of soil conservation systems, sustainable canola management and low-input agriculture. Mr. Brandt has also led and chaired an internal AAFC Long-Term Crop Rotation network that set standards and communication among researchers across the country. His research on fertility, crop rotations, weed control, seed quality, seeding methods, and the integration of these practices have benefited all producers.

Stewart's work has been instrumental in encouraging a reduction in summer fallow and widespread adoption of direct seeding and other forms of conservation tillage in the prairie provinces. Based on the sound management practices developed by Stewart, 50% of the canola grown in Saskatchewan over the last few years was seeded directly into standing stubble. These practices were instrumental in avoiding extensive soil erosion during the severe drought experienced in the region during 2001-2003.

Stewart has been a leader in organic research in Canada. He championed a large scale organic project, the Alternate Cropping Study, before organic was a trendy, or even an acceptable area of study. His vision and risk taking made this project possible. He brought an extensive team to the project, fostered collaboration and provided strong leadership to ensure that the project stayed on course. This project has now run for 12 years, has been a prototype for similar projects, and is providing solid information and excellent extension opportunities for organic producers.

Agronomic research is of no benefit until it is put into practice by growers. Stewart's endless hours of speaking at producer meetings on conservation tillage, canola production, fertility management, rotations, input use, and seed quality have been instrumental in farmers adopting new and innovative agronomic practices. Stewart developed the Scott Experimental Farm field day into a premium event to learn and understand cropping system functioning. The Scott Field Day is attended by 250 to 400 farmers from Saskatchewan and Alberta every year.

As Chair of the Green Plan Alternative Cropping Technical Committee, a large scale organic project, his research has focused on developing and ensuring the adoption of tillage and cropping alternatives that reduce soil degradation, enhance economic returns, improve soil quality and benefit all crop producers in Western Canada.

CSA Distinguished Agrnonomist—2006

Dr. Bert Christie:

Dr. Bert Christie received his Ph.D. in Plant Breeding and Statistics in 1959 from Iowa State University. He was a Professor at the Faculty of Crop Science Department, University of Guelph from 1959 – 1989, Research Scientist for Agriculture and AgriFood Canada at the Crops and Livestock Research Centre, Charlottetown from 1989-1998, and Adjunct Professor for the Department of Plant Science, Nova Scotia Agricultural College from 1989-2000.

Bert is a very highly respected agronomist, who has had a distinguished career in teaching, research and service to the agricultural sector. Although he was a very successful research scientist, it is his teaching skills and dedication that are particularly recognized. He is very highly regarded as an outstanding teacher and mentor. He particularly excelled at the graduate level, as a teacher, a thesis supervisor and as a mentor and coach to students throughout the university. Students came first: he had an 'open door' policy, and students, particularly those struggling with experimental design or the mysteries of quantitative genetics, always received the instruction and help they needed. This was equally true for his own grad students and other students in the university. He is an excellent communicator, and this, coupled with his patience and deep commitment to students, earned him their highest respect.

Bert was an innovative scientist who was always quick to consider the potential of new technologies or findings in forage research. Advances in forage quality research – initially an 'animal science domain' – were soon applied to forage genetics and the potential for quality improvements through breeding were soon demonstrated. He is also a collaborator, working with scientists in other disciplines, and this approach often led to the development of novel concepts or areas of investigation.

Bert played an active role in the Canadian Society of Agronomy, serving as Secretary, 1969-1971, Associate Editor of the Canadian Journal of Plant Science, 1974-1979 and President, 1976‑77. In retirement, Bert has continued to serve Canadian Agronomy as a wise public provocateur, questioning the role of biotechnology in Canadian agriculture. He retains the ability to stimulate thought and discussion on the important issues facing agriculture today.

CSA Pest Management Scholarship Winner for 2006

Mr. Mohammed Abu-Dieyeh of Macdonald College of McGill University was selected as the winner of the Canadian Society of Agronomy Pest Management Scholarship in 2006. His PhD research project was a study titled "The significant of competition : suppression of *Taraxacum officinale* populations by *Sclerotinia minor* and grass over-seeding". His project was supervised by Dr. Allan Watson in the Department of Plant Sciences at Macdonald College. Mohammed presented a paper about his research at the CSA Annual meeting in Halifax, August 1 - 4, 2006 and was presented with the $500 portion of the scholarship from CSA at the annual closing banquet of the Society on August 4. This scholarship provides modest support for our students in Canada and the travel support of up to $1000 from Monsanto Canada, Inc is crucial to allowing the student to travel to our scientific conference to present their research findings and make themselves known to the scientific and business community. I thank Monsanto Canada Inc for continuing to provide the $1000 travel award portion of the CSA Pest Management Scholarship.

The CSA Pest Management Scholarship committee is accepting applications from students in MSc and PhD at Canadian universities for the 2007 CSA Pest Management Scholarship until April 30, 2007. Information about the scholarship and application forms can be obtained on the CSA website at www.agronomycanada.com . A change made this year is that students do not need to submit official transcripts of the courses and grades taken. A listing and Department certification of the list and grades will be acceptable.

Canadian-American Cooperation

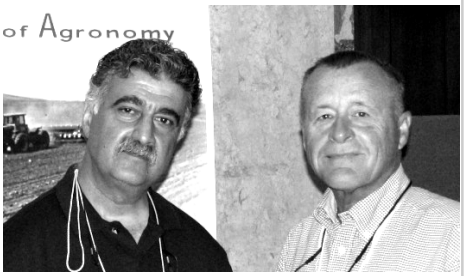
Many Canadian agronomists are members of both the American and Canadian Societies of Agronomy. There is great value in enhancing the cooperation between the two.

This past summer in Halifax, David Sleper, President of the American Society of Agronomy, participated in the meetings of the executive and the membership. Among the items discussed was a memorandum of understanding between the Societies. This memorandum, to be signed by the end of the year, ensures continued dialogue for a four-year period commencing this fall.

The Societies commit themselves to mutual Web links, space for newsletter articles, and exchange of newsletters and complimentary registrations for executive representation at each other's meetings. Planning for future conferences is facilitated in this way.

The Northeast Branch of the ASA-CSSA-SSSA has expressed interest in meeting with the Canadian Society of Agronomy in 2008. Discussions are underway with the intention of holding the 2008 conference at MacDonald College, McGill University.

On both sides of the border, agronomy as a discipline faces the challenge of decline in numbers. Oddly this comes at a time when agronomic practices of producers-—tillage, nutrient use, pesticide application—are under greater public scrutiny than ever. Regulation of agricultural practice is increasing, but regulations depend on scientific evidence of the full range of effects of agronomic practice—economic, environmental, and social. The anachronism of declining numbers of agronomists combined with rising regulation increases the potential to stultify crop management. It is increasingly important for today's agronomists to work together—across borders and across disciplines.



Yousef and
ASA President, David Sleper

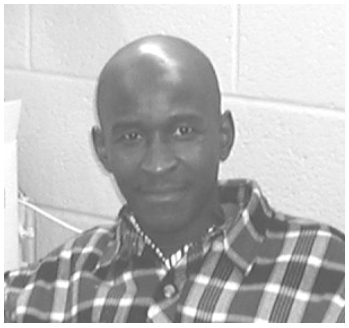
By tapping in to the larger American Society of Agronomy, the Canadian Society benefits. There is considerable opportunity for involvement in the International Certified Crop Adviser program. More than one thousand Certified Crop Advisers currently work with producers in Canada. As practitioners of the science of agronomy, it is important that they be included in conferences and activities of the Canadian Society of Agronomy.

Tom Bruulsema,
President-elect, Canadian Society of Agronomy
International Plant Nutrition Institute

CSA Student Awards—2006

Sean Lemoine, from Acadia University of Nova Scotia, was awarded first place in the Graduate Student Oral Competition for "Late maturing hay, forage quality, and grassland birds: Conservation you can chew on!"

Catherine Welsh, from the University of Manitoba, was awarded second place in the Graduate Student Oral Competition for "Organic crop management reduces labile phosphorous."



Manasah Mkhabela, from the Nova Scotia Agricultural College, was awarded third place in the Graduate Student Oral Competition for "Gaseous N losses, nitrate leaching and corn yield from conventional tillage and notillage systems following fall application of semi-solid beef manure and inorganic nitrogen fertilizer".

Etienne LeRiche, from the Nova Scotia Agricultural College was awarded third place in the Graduate Student Poster Competition for "Nutrient distribution in tubers of *Solanum tuberosum* var. Shepody and Russet Burbank."

Ardhini Maharning, from Dalhousie University, was awarded first place in the Graduate Student Poster Competition for "Long-term management intensive grazing of pastures shifts the soil food web."

Gaetane Carignan, from the Nova Scotia Agricultural College, was awarded second place in the Graduate Student Poster Competition for "Cow condition, milk yields and milk quality when grazing in a modified management intensive grazing system in Atlantic Canada."

In Memorium:

Dr. Edwin E. Gamble:

World renowned plant breeder in genetics and statistics, Dr. Edwin E. Gamble passed away on October 5, 2006. He was 75. Dr. Gamble is lovingly remembered by his wife Mary (nee Small) of 52 years, and his five children, Brenda (David), William (Debra), Dean, Christopher (Sheryl) and Cynthia, six grandchildren, Shaun (Jenna), Michael, Sarah, Jennifer (Jeremy), Matthew and David, and one great-grandchild, Valentino. The son of the late Albert and Joan Gamble, he is also survived by his two sisters Joan McLean and Margaret Lougheed and their families.

Dr. Gamble was a longtime professor in the Crop Science department at the University of Guelph, including 10 years as chair of the department. His legacy at the university included the design and development of the Crop Science building, and the development of crop science portion of the Elora Research Station. His groundbreaking research included the development of a corn breeding and production program, as well as brome grass, timothy, orchard grass and forage grasses and legumes. He also did work on soybean, white bean, rapeseed, winter wheat, barley, oat, alfalfa, birdsfoot trefoil, perennial ryegrass, tall fescue.
He obtained his BSA, in agronomy in 1952 and a MSA in plant breeding and agronomy in 1954, both from the Ontario Agriculture College, University of Toronto and a Ph.D. in plant breeding, genetics and statistics from Iowa State University in 1957.
Dr. Gamble took his expertise around the world since the early 1960s assisting such countries such as Jamaica, Australia, Japan, Taiwan, Philippines, India, Mexico, Colombia, and Germany. Since his retirement in 1994, Dr. Gamble served as a volunteer advisor with CESO, travelling to China, Mongolia, and the Ukraine providing his expertise to those countries to improve production and breeding of corn, soybeans, wheat and grasses.

In 1994, China bestowed Dr. Gamble with its highest award for a foreign researcher, China's Friendship Award, in recognition of his contributions and dedication in increasing the crop yield in China's wheat belt by as much as 25 per cent.

Dr. Gamble is a honourary life member of the Canadian Seed Growers Association and the Commercial Seed Analysts Association of Canada, and was a member of the Canadian Society of Agronomy, Ontario Institute of Agrologists, Agricultural Institute of Canada, American Society of Agronomy, Crop Science Society of America, International Herbage Seed Production Research Group and a member of the advisory board of international journal, Plant Varieties and Seeds.

Dr. Gamble once commented, "I think farmers are basically the same the world over. If you can demonstrate that a change in technique is a good idea, and can make them more money, they'll take it up."

A private family service was held on October 10, 2006. Interment was in the family plot at Fairview Cemetery, Acton. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions to a charity of choice would be appreciated. A tree will be planted in memory of Dr. Gamble in the Wall-Custance Memorial Forest in the University of Guelph Arboretum. The dedication service will be held on Sunday, September 23, 2007 at 2:30 p.m.

Steps to a Healthier You:

"Steps to a healthier you" is the voice that was heard loud and clear from the 6th Canadian Pulse Research Workshop held at Hilton Garden Inn, Saskatoon, 1-3 November, 2006. Approximately 140 researchers, extension agrologists, graduate students, and industrial representatives attended the mind-opening workshop where Canadian researchers and international guests shared the latest research findings on the health benefits and nutritional components of using pulses in human diets. The attendants also shared information on food quality, pulse processing, and the potential of marketing Canadian pulses in North America markets. In addition, the attendants received updates on the latest research on genetic improvement, sustainable production, and environmental benefits of growing peas, lentils, chickpeas, dry beans, fababeans, among other pulses.

Pulses are high in protein, fiber and low in fat and glycemic carbohydrates. These characteristics make pulses unique that have the potential to contribute favourably to human health. Preliminary research shows that some of the pulses play an important role in regulating food intake, glucose response after meals, and maintenance or help reducing body weight. Pulse-based products usually have a slow digestibility due to viscous soluble fibre, high amylase starch, high proteins, and enzyme inhibitors, while the low glycemic index of pulses help endurance of performance for those who are engaged in intensive physical activity. Diets containing certain components of pulses may favourably affect appetite regulating hormones, energy balances, metabolic oxidations, and atherosclerosis and endothelial function.

Canadian pulses may also affect international consumers directly and indirectly. For example, lentils grown in soils of the Canadian prairies are enriched in selenium which is an essential micronutrient needed for general wellbeing, including a healthy immune system, protection against cancer, and protection against toxic forms of arsenic. Ten millions of people in Bangladesh and India are in chronic low-level arsenic poisoning with skin problems, cancers and eventually death. Selenium-rich lentils exported from the Canadian prairies might help to cure the millions.

For decades, this workshop was the first where the health organization, research institutes and agriculturalists together recognized that pulses should be an integral part of North Americans diets due to their nutrition, health benefits, and attributes as functional ingredients leading to innovative food products. Canadian pulse research and development will be continuously focusing on science-based evidence in nutrition and health benefits, development of pulse food product, and improvement of consumer awareness of health benefits of pulses in diets. Research is also needed in the functionality and application of pulses to various food-products to meet consumers' needs for healthy, tasty, and convenient food products. Pulse research …….still a long way to go.

Dr. Yantai Gan
CSA Western Director

AIC Journals: Online Submission and Peer Review

The Agricultural Institute of Canada has contracted with the Canada Institute for Scientific and Technical Information (CISTI) for the use of their OSPREY web-based manuscript submission and peer review system.

OSPREY was developed by CISTI in collaboration with the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (CSIRO) in Australia, and is used by the Canadian Journal of Forest Research, the Canadian Journal of Earth Science and other journals published by the National Research Council of Canada.

OSPREY is user friendly, simple to use, and requires no special software. OSPREY is available 24/7 from anywhere in the world, and provides security, data back-up and detailed manuscript tracking. Authors will be able to submit manuscripts quickly and easily in virtually any file format and check the status of their manuscripts at any time.

OSPREY will be available for CJPS, CJAS and CJSS starting on 5 September 2006 through the AIC web site: www.aic.ca.

For information contact: Tim Fenton - journals@aic.ca, (613) 232-9459 (309)

International Plant Nutrition Institute (IPNI)
To Address Global Crop Production

A new global, scientific, agronomic organization called the International Plant Nutrition Institute (IPNI) has been recently established by a resolution adopted unanimously by IPNI's founding members. The Board of Directors of the Potash & Phosphate Institute (PPI) has committed its scientific staff to the new global IPNI organization. By the end of 2006, PPI will be fully integrated into IPNI. Thereafter, PPI will no longer exist.

Scheduled to officially begin operations January 1, 2007, IPNI will immediately have effective scientific programs in place in North America, Central and South America, China, India, and Southeast Asia. IPNI anticipates promptly establishing such programs in Western and Eastern Europe as well as in the Middle East.

Announcement of this important decision came from William J. Doyle, Chairman of PPI, and President and CEO of PotashCorp, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. "The new organization will be composed of fertilizer industry companies that are basic producers of nitrogen (N) and/or phosphate (P) and/or potash (K) and/or sulfur (S) for agricultural use. Large retail organizations that will not qualify as basic producers of N, P, K, or S may qualify as associate members. The purpose is to help provide a coordinated scientific foundation for fertilizer nutrient use and to scientifically address associated environmental issues," Mr. Doyle explained.

"We are pleased to become part of this new organization," said Mr. Patricio Contesse, Chief Executive Officer of SQM, one of the largest South American fertilizer corporations with worldwide operations. Mr. Contesse and other leaders in the global fertilizer industry agree there is a continuing need for agronomic and related sciences in advancing goals for crop production, efficient and effective nutrient use, and environmental protection.

Dr. Terry L. Roberts of Norcross, Georgia, will serve as the first president of IPNI. Dr. Paul E. Fixen of Brookings, South Dakota, will be Coordinator, Americas Group, and Dr. Adrian Johnston of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, will be Coordinator, Asia Group.

Founding members of IPNI are: Agrium Inc.; Arab Potash Company; Belarusian Potash Company; Bunge Fertilizantes S.A.; CF Industries Holding, Inc.; Groupe OCP; Intrepid Mining, LLC; K+S KALI GmbH; Mosaic; PotashCorp; Saskferco; Simplot; Sinochem Hong Kong Ltd.; Spur Ventures Inc.; SQM; Terra Industries Inc.; and Uralkali.

For further information, please visit the IPNI website www.ipni.net
or contact Dr. Terry Roberts at IPNI:
tel. 1.770.447.0335;
e-mail: troberts@ipni.net.

The mission of IPNI is to develop and promote scientific information about the responsible management of plant nutrients for the benefit of the human family.

Report of the Science Policy Committee, 2006

One issue that we are watching with interest is the impact of the demise of the Canadian Agri-Food Research Council (CARC) on communication about issues that affect agriculture and crop research. Another issue that could be addressed but has not yet even been considered is the comprehensive review and re-alignment of programs that is occurring right now in science-based departments across the federal government. This could ultimately influence the priorities and funding of groups like NSERC, and so may have an important impact on many members of Plant Canada. We need to contribute to these reviews, but require active volunteers who will take the lead on particular issues.

An international symposium on Plant Health Networks, bringing together speakers from Australia, Europe, the USA and Canada, is planned for the Plant Canada meeting in June 2007 at Saskatoon. We are working with CFIA to ensure that issues that are important to our members are considered as the Canadian initiative is developed. As well, specialists in Ontario and the prairies are participating in the soybean rust surveillance program. The USDA developed and implemented this program (http://www.usda.gov/soybeanrust/) as a model for their response to an invasive crop pest.

A symposium on a Plant Health Network for Canada was held on November 8, 2005 at the annual meeting of the Western Forum on Pest Management. Dr. K. Cardwell (Director, Plant Diagnostic Network, USDA) described the network that has been developed in the USA for the rapid identification and containment of invasive pest species, and Dr. E. Foster (Director, Plant Health & Biotechnology Laboratory Services, CFIA) presented an outline for a Canadian Plant Health Network initiative called 'PlantProNet.' Dr. Foster's presentation is available on the WFPM website (http://www.westernforum.org/), and copies of Dr. Cardwell's presentation are available on CD from B.D. Gossen.

If you would like more information, have suggestions for other issues that should be addressed, or would like to become involved, don't hesitate to contact any member of the committee.

Respectfully submitted,
Bruce Gossen (Chair),
P. Cavers, B. Moffatt, M. Morrison, L. Vasseur, Y. Desjardins

News from the East….

The 2006 field season has wound down. In Atlantic Canada it will be remembered as one of the wettest and more challenging springs in recent memory. In Summerside, Prince Edward Island, in early June, they recorded almost a months worth of rain, 87.4mm, in just one weekend. It's the first time I have seen established and hilled potato plots lost to excessive rainfall, and ducks in grain plots that looked more like paddy fields.

A highlight of the year for me was assisting with organizing, and attending our annual conference 'Halifax 2006', held jointly with the Canadian Society of Animal Science and the Canadian Society for Horticultural Science. The joint symposia allowed for some truly cross cutting themes to be presented and it was also great to see so many familiar faces from across the country.

This year saw also the completion, after three years of effort, of a Canadian national standard for organic agriculture, which can be viewed at: http://www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/cgsb/on_the_net/organic/index-e.html. With facilitation and coordination by the Canadian Standards Board of the Standards Council of Canada, the standard was developed by a truly diverse stakeholder committee, representing government, producers, processors, consumers, retailers and academics. The standard outlines the allowable production inputs, and recommended best management practices for organic crop and livestock production. In also stipulates the requirements for transition to organic production, and for preparation, handling and traceability of organic agricultural products.

All of Canada's major trading partners, with respect to organic food products, had established national organic standards and regulatory systems, and to maintain access to these markets it was key that Canada develop its own comparable regulatory system. The proposed regulations governing organic agricultural products in Canada, (http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/fssa/orgbio/otfgtspbe.shtml) will establish a system in which the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), as the competent authority, regulates the use of a "Canada Organic" agricultural product legend and logo. In addition to facilitating international market access, the system is designed to provide protection to consumers against misleading labeling practices and support the development of the domestic market for organic products.

Will organic be the only 'branded' agricultural production system? Undoubtedly not. While it's the first in Canada to be covered under national regulations, a number of other industry-developed branded systems for specific commodities already exist which offer guarantees linked to the specifics of the management system rather than just the product alone. For CSA members this trend is an interesting one to watch.

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