

Pesticide Application Group New Group Convenor: Simon Cooper

After graduating in Agricultural Engineering from Silsoe in 1981 my first employment was in South Africa as an engineer on contract amidst the turbulent times of the 1980's. I found myself involved in projects involving all sectors of the rural population. The development of machinery and management techniques to alleviate the problems of aluminium toxicity together with evaluation of single kernel planters took me into the heat of the African sun and I discovered what drought and water shortage really meant. Water conservation was an obvious driver in the local farming system and the development and evaluation of machinery for stubble mulch tillage was another interest. The 'SASOL oil from coal' programme supplied much of the country's petro-chemical needs due to trade embargoes, but in agriculture developing the technologies for local production of SME or bio-diesel from sunflower oil brought me into close contact with engine performance and durability. Technologies appropriate to a wider rural population were needed including developing equipment for improving grazing though introducing palatable species to the arid shrubveld. Studies into the sustainability of small holding style agriculture and the scale and type of mechanisation needed brought a different social dimension to my work as my contract drew to a close.

Back in the UK, I joined the engineering department of Harper Adams Agricultural College at the end of 1988 and have witnessed it change to University College and triple its student numbers in that time. Initially teaching engineering materials and processes I have subsequently specialised in soil and water technologies including terramechanics, field engineering and pesticide application technology. My favoured area of research has been the latter and through this I came into contact with the AAB. Areas of interest have been spray drift, spray accountability and manipulating spray deposits within the crop canopy. Spray drift, quantifying and means of controlling it has been a

recurrent theme and as a cause of machine and operator contamination alike has steered me towards optimising sprayer cleaning and waste disposal of late.

I take over as Convenor of the Pesticide Application Group as food production, sustainability; traceability and security make headline news. Application technology remains at the heart of food production and environmental safety. The Group will continue to offer a forum for discussion and innovation through the conferences and workshops we have planned in the forthcoming programme and look forward to welcoming new and familiar faces.

Simon Cooper, July 2008



CONGRATULATIONS TO ANNA

The AAB are delighted to congratulate Anna Harding, Conference and Editorial Administrator at the AAB Office on her recent marriage to Philip Johns. The wedding was held at St. James the

Great Church, Long Marston on Saturday 5th July followed by a reception at the Salford Hall Hotel, Abbots Salford. The happy couple then enjoyed a honeymoon in Sri Lanka and the Maldives. When Anna comes back down to earth and returns to work she will be known as Mrs Anna Johns.

