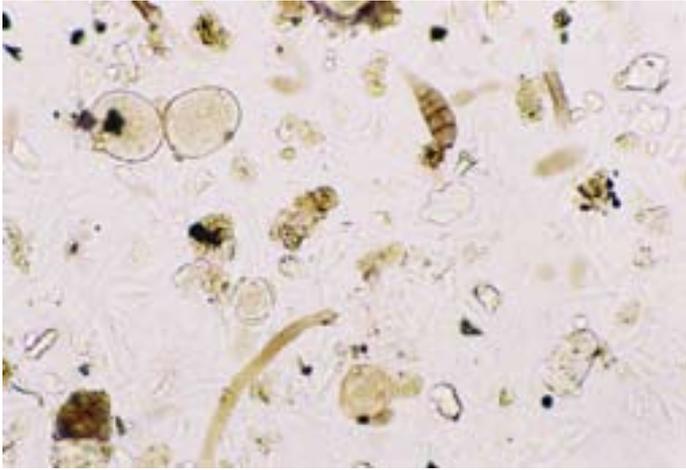


Applied Aspects of Aerobiology

19 November 2008, Rothamsted Research



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This conference, held jointly by the Association of Applied Biologists and British Aerobiology Federation, attracted twenty five delegates and presenters from seven countries.

The presentations comprised nine talks and eight posters, spanning interests in pollen and allergy, plant pathology, fungal ecology, environment monitoring and animal health. Proceedings of the conference were presented as a book in the *Aspects of Applied Biology* series, number 89 (copies

available from the AAB office). Further information was displayed, and literature made available, from sponsors of the event, the Burkard Manufacturing Co, Microzone and Springer. Despite relatively few delegates present, their enthusiasm for the subject, coupled with a relatively informal atmosphere, lead to many fruitful discussions following excellent presentations.

Aerobiology draws on aspects of physics to explain the movement of air and the material suspended in it, and biology to describe the biological processes affecting the production of particles and their impacts on the health of animals, including humans, and plants. Two main areas of focus during the conference were reports of various novel diagnostic methods and the modelling of particle release and dispersal from crops. Diagnostic methods, such as DNA-based, immunological or optical techniques, may offer new prospects of rapid and on-site detection of particles and the analysis of changes in populations of single species or even whole communities. These, and the mathematical modelling methods used to describe particle movement in air, are approaches that can be applied to other spheres of interest concerning aerobiology. Indeed, one conclusion made in discussion was that components of aerobiology were already used in other branches of science, although this was sometimes not recognised and may result in a lack of understanding of this multidisciplinary subject.

It is hoped that the theme of the conference will be repeated in the future and that the interests of the delegates and presentations will be broadened to include aspects of human health, occupational health and hygiene.

Jon West, February 2009