

Welcome to aabnews Issue 75...

After the wettest April on record and recent lift of drought status in much of the UK, we decided this would feature strongly in the newsletter. Since we started writing, Australia has officially come out of a ten year drought, and China is still in the full grip of its worst drought in 50 years. See the feature on how water affects crops on page 4...

Council met on Wednesday 28th March 2012 at the Conference Centre, Wellesbourne.

Council currently has a vacancy for a Membership and Communications officer. Two other Trustees have also given notice of their intention to stand down at the end of 2012. Consequently, please consider whether you would be prepared and interested to become either Publications Officer or Programme Secretary. More details of the roles can be obtained from the AAB office (contact carol@aab.org.uk) and the current post holders (Martin Parry and Graham Russell respectively). Council thanked all the members who had engaged with the survey. 179 members completed the survey on-line which is a response rate of approximately 20%. Council will refer to the extensive findings of the survey to guide the development of AAB strategy. A number of immediate actions were identified in particular to improve routes of communication between members and Council and to encourage specialist groups to improve engagement with their members beyond the group committees. A summary report of the survey findings is available via the website.

The role of the AAB with regard to public and policy engagement especially as part of conferences was briefly discussed. Conference topics may be suitable for the development of additional evening speakers or other engagement activity. Press releases could be used to highlight the key issues resulting from conferences discussion and/or the development of position papers or meeting postscripts that could be hosted on the web. All members, especially conference organisers are therefore asked to consider whether there were any public or policy engagement opportunities associated with the conference and what might be needed to facilitate their delivery (including financial support).

A review of best practice and of the requirements of the Charity Commission with regard to the information presented in the formal "Laws of the Association of Applied Biologists" was carried out by Elizabeth Stockdale following the November 2011 Council meeting. It was noted that as far as possible the Laws should not constrain the operation of the Association and some matters such as timescales for circulation of papers for Council do not need to be in the Laws, though it is expected that best practice would be described in a governance handbook. Council noted that there were some significant changes to the current operating principles proposed as part of these changes in particular in relation to:

- Dissolution
- Annual setting of the subscription including any appropriate variation for classes of members (e.g. students, retired) at a General meeting
- Operation of specialist groups
- Quorum for general meetings

- Procedures for general meetings especially proxy voting and notification of issues to be raised by proxy.
- Removal of an Executive Committee and changes to the requirements to call a Council meeting
- Clarity with regard to declaration of conflicts of interest
- Use of electronic communication

The draft Laws will be circulated by Email for a short consultation with members at the end of May; watch out for an Email in your in-box.

Council approved applications for membership from 50 new applicants and noted the breadth of interest amongst applications for membership and the number of international applications. We look forward to working with these new members in the months and years to come.

The proposed name change to "Biocontrol and IPM" group had been strongly supported by AAB members through an Email consultation carried out in Feb/March 2012. 110 members had voted to support the name change and only 4 against. Concerns raised about the name change were discussed briefly and Council agreed that these had already been considered appropriately by the group committee. The group materials on the web will therefore be updated to reflect the recommended name change together with the rationale for the change, which will be ratified at the next AGM. Council also welcomed the appointment of Toby Bruce as the Group's convenor and looked forward to working with him as a Trustee.

All conference proposals for 2013 will need to be tabled at the Council meeting at the end of June 2012. If you have a good idea for a one day workshop or longer conference that would take place in 2013, please contact the relevant group convenor or the AAB office urgently, so that a proposal with associated budget can be developed in time.

Council received reports on publications. Progress with the new journal "Food and Energy Security" which is a joint venture with Wiley-Blackwell continues on schedule. The formal launch will take place at the Plant Biology Congress at Freiburg at the end of July.

Council recognised the work in the office to continue to provide a service to members and meet all their objectives even during a difficult period as a result of staff sickness. Non-consolidated bonuses were awarded to Carol Millman, Bernadette Lawson and Claire Hartry. The AAB has also taken on a new member of temporary staff to help cover the work, so don't be surprised if you sometimes hear a male voice answering the phone – we welcome Russell to the AAB team.

-Elizabeth Stockdale



IAPA goes on tour

In recognition of the International Advances in Pesticide Application being a truly international event the pesticide application group chose Wageningen as the venue for the January 2012 conference. The move to the Netherlands succeeded in attracting 99 delegates of which 62 were from mainland Europe, 22 UK based and 15 long haul participants, an encouraging attendance overall. Access from Schiphol International airport and rail network made for an easy straightforward arrival to the conference centre.

The conference attracted 57 platform papers and 11 posters and covered just about all walks of pesticide application. Split into 15 sessions over the 2/3 days it made for a busy programme.

The opening sessions on day one started by addressing the performance standards of spray machinery components and knapsack sprayers. Studies into the effective application of Bio-pesticides and the interaction of adjuvants and formulations turned the attention to crop surfaces and modelling the interactions of air quality for public health applications. Bystander exposure to drift and vapours was another area where modelling and practice were compared. Developments into autonomous vehicles and sensing of spray targets was a popular subject for submitted papers covering machinery large and small and crops as diverse as oranges, potatoes and vegetables, and weed control on paved areas. The afternoon extended into the early evening with the first part of the sprayer loading and cleaning session. The session continued into the second day but not before the first of the invited speakers, Dr Mike Bushell, Head of Syngenta International Research Centre, Jealott's Hill opened the day and gave a keynote address on the role of the application industry entitled the food security challenge.

A three paper session on GPS and sprayer guidance systems fitted before the days major topics of spray

drift and spray physics consisting of thirteen papers. The afternoon session convened to welcome our second invited speaker, Prof. Heinz Ganzelmeier, head of sprayer research and testing at the Julius Kühn Institute to give his views on standardisation and its role in research and the development of standards pertinent to the industry needs. Another busy day took the platform presentations to another evening close and an almost seamless move into the poster session and reception for the conference dinner.

The adoption of specialist equipment for specific crops and the efficacy of deposition on targets were the opening subjects of day three before the application in greenhouses and controlled environments rounded off the morning. As with any conference there has to be a last session of the last day and all the difficulties that brings, for us it was a session as well supported as any other. Centering on fruit, vine and vegetable spraying, it combined inputs from modelling and computational fluid dynamics in orchards to drift reduction.

A further bold move was to publish the *Aspects* in colour. Historically the conference had attracted papers containing many complex figures and diagrams that lost a lot of their impact in monochrome. Session organisers encouraged authors to make use of the opportunity and the resulting *Aspects 114* vindicates the decision.

In summing up I made an attempt to quantify what the conference and the proceedings represented. In short it probably represents the best part of a million man hours of research, it is a synopsis of the majority of applied research into pesticide application that is current and on-going in the world and a big thank you to all those who shared their endeavours with us.

- Simon Cooper, Pesticide Application Group



Editor-in-Chief Prof Martin Parry at Biomass and Energy Crops IV, in Illinois last Summer

Food and Energy Security...

has published its first editorial by Editor-in-Chief Martin Parry - Food and Energy Security: exploring the challenges of attaining secure and sustainable supplies of food and energy. Prof. Parry explains the significant research areas which this journal will publish in and why it has been launched. 'Given the rise in human population and the inevitable consequences of climate change, the challenges of achieving secure and sustainable supplies of both food and energy are Herculean. With the launch of the open access, multidisciplinary journal our intention

is to offer a forum for the discussion of the most important advances in this field and promote an integrative approach of scientific disciplines.' *Food and Energy Security* is a fully open access journal which is published in association with Wiley Blackwell. You can find out more about the journal by visiting www.foodenergysecurity.com. To submit your article please find the author guidelines on the same page. AAB Members receive an article processing discount of 20%; please select this option when submitting your manuscript.