

The mission of the **Association of Applied Biologists (AAB)** is to further the application of biology to the production of food, materials, and energy, and for the maintenance and improvement of the earth's environment.

Since its formation in 1904 the Association has addressed major global challenges facing society. Today, those challenges relevant to our mission are critical and include: poor food security, nutrition and health; untenable use of agri- and forest environments; unsustainable and insecure sources of energy; environmental change; degradation of water and soil resources; and loss of biodiversity.

Our strategy to address these challenges by:

- By growing, supporting, and engaging a membership concerned with the application of excellent biology to address relevant societal challenges.
- Supporting specialist groups: to respond to members and wider stakeholders in the provision of appropriate events, publications, and communications; to help develop early career scientists; and to aid the direction of the wider AAB via group convenors and AAB Council.
- Using conferences, symposia, workshops, and published proceedings to exchange, spread, and develop information, ideas, and thought leadership.
- Publication of international, scientific, independently peer-reviewed journals to ensure the dissemination of high-quality research findings and reviews.
- Promotion of the many disciplines of applied biology through engagement with other relevant national and international societies, research funders, and governmental organisations.

1. Growing, supporting, and engaging our membership

As an Association we are defined as and by our members. Given the importance and relevance of applied biology it is essential that we have a strong and engaged membership. It is important that our recent growth in international membership continues.

Actions to increase and engage membership include:

- i.** Offering a free annual membership to non-members paying registration fees to conferences organised by AAB. In this way our membership (numbers and reach) is strongly linked to the popularity and delivery methods of our conferences. Excellent online provision significantly increases our potential to engage with cohorts of applied biologists not previously able to attend in person due to the constraints of cost, time, and other responsibilities. Online provision, for example, furthers our ability to increase the international spread for conference attendance and membership. All of our conferences have the default of providing an online option.

ii. Offering greater support for early career professionals (ECP). This includes free annual membership with nominal charge for online conference registration by ECP. The AAB will remain responsive to the needs and engagement of ECPs, and they will continue to be represented on Council by two ECP champions.

iii. Increasing the benefits to members, including reduced conference registration and publication costs; access to travel and mobility grants; discounted membership and/or greater access to related societies; invitations to external networking events; provide a regular e-Newsletter and AAB emails highlighting relevant activities; opportunities to contribute to specialist groups; and the chance to work alongside others in similar fields in, for example, the organisation of conferences.

iv. The recent introduction of the title of **Fellow of the Association of Applied Biologists** which will continue to recognise those members with a long-term AAB membership alongside their significant contribution to applied biology.

v. Continuing to explore ways of increasing equality, diversity, and inclusion in all activities of the AAB. Online provision has helped inclusivity, and we will continue to offer other opportunities when relevant, e.g. grants for carers.

2. AAB Specialist groups

Applied Plant Pathology

Biocontrol and IPM

Food Systems

Nematology

PlantEd Gene Editing in Plants

Soil and Root Biology

Applied Tree and Forest Biology

Cropping and the Environment

Horticultural Quality and Food Loss

Pesticide Application

Plant Physiology and Crop Improvement

Virology

Our specialist groups are kept under review to reflect our mission; the interests of our members and those of potential recruits; the vigour and funding for progress in the subject area; and societal need. During 2025-26 we will continue to review the relevance and activity of our specialist groups. This is an evolving area with the inauguration of two specialist groups over the past two years.

3. Conferences, symposia, and workshops

Our events are open to the public. AAB's involvement in 10-12 events/ year is a reasonable expectation, and consistent with having twelve specialist groups. However, what is more important is that the overall reach and significance of our event programme increases the relevance, visibility, and impact of the AAB. We will continue to identify novel topics and modes of delivery. This will enable an increase in delegate numbers at the majority of our meetings whilst maintaining financial sustainability and the collegial feel of AAB events. We will ensure that the programme as a whole does not place an undue financial burden on the association.

To meet our objectives we will:

- i.** Continue to support and encourage our specialist group convenors, members, and affiliates to develop and deliver events relevant to the AAB's mission, research environment, and societal need.
- ii.** Look to further encourage collaborations between specialist groups such that where relevant, multidisciplinary events are developed. The biennial presidential conference in Autumn 2026 will continue the format of previous meetings in being multidisciplinary and addressing an area of significant societal need.
- iii.** Continue to collaborate with other international societies to help deliver more impactful events than likely achievable with a single society working independently. This is evidenced by AAB-organisation of the International Conference on Arabidopsis Research (ICAR25) and International Conference on Photosynthesis Research (ICPR26).
- iv.** Continue to develop methods of delivery, particularly online, to provide an excellent and well-regarded experience for all delegates.
- v.** Foster links between academia, industry, grower associations, farmers, non-governmental organisations, funding organisations, and government to enable translation of ideas to facilitate applied outputs.



Henry Nvenankeng receives an award for 'Best ECP oral presentation' at the 2024 Symposium of Potato Cyst Nematode Management'. Prize presented by Valeria Orlando and Catherine Lilley (R)

4. Scientific journals

The purpose of our scientific journals (**Annals of Applied Biology** and **Plant Biotechnology Journal** with the Society of Experimental Biology) is to provide an opportunity for members and other authors to disseminate their work; for members and others to access quality-controlled research articles; to provide a sustainable income stream to support AAB charitable goals; and to increase the visibility of the society in the journals and vice-versa.

i. Review and future proof the business models for the journals.

ii. Ensure that the journals uphold the best standards of equality, diversity, inclusion, and ethics. This will include a review of the composition of Editorial Boards and affirmation that guidelines from the Committee on Publication Ethics continue to be adhered to.

iii. Regularly review any opportunities for purchase or inaugurate new publications.

iv. Review editorial offices, ensuring they are serving the needs of authors and represent good value for money.

v. Encourage journals to support special issues that are published in coordination with both AAB events and with those organised by other relevant societies.

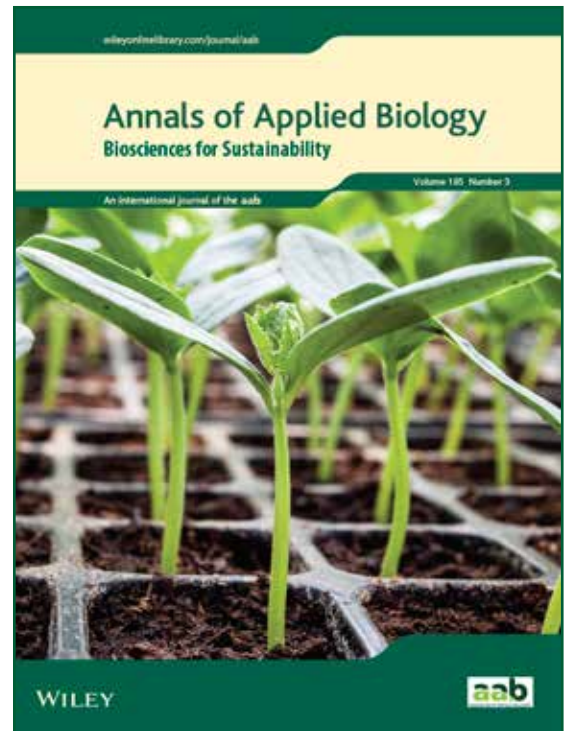
5. Further activities to promote applied biology

The AAB will promote applied biology via interactions with national and international organisations which include the Global Plant Council, the Royal Society of Biology, the Multinational Arabidopsis Steering Committee and different EU Cost Actions. Additionally, we will support the promotion of applied biology through the wider collaborations and representations of individual members of council, and the broader membership of the AAB.

We will continue to respond to relevant calls for evidence to influence policy. Collective responses from AAB Council will be coordinated by the President.

Professor Dale Sanders, AAB President 2025-26

Dr Geraint Parry, AAB Executive Officer



Annals of Applied Biology launched the strapline 'Biosciences for Sustainability'.