



Annual Reports 2001

President's Report

It gives me much pleasure to present my first report as President to the AGM of the New Zealand Society of Plant Physiologists.

To begin with, on behalf of our Society, I would like to express our appreciation for the opportunity to meet this year with the New Zealand Institute of Agricultural Science and the New Zealand Society for Horticultural Science

As usual, our presence and successful operation at this conference (as with previous conferences) is in large part due to our Secretary/Treasurer, Dr. Jocelyn Eason, and on behalf of the Society, I would like to thank Jocelyn for her efforts in liaising with the Conference organisers to organise the programme, and for preparing all the background paperwork necessary for this AGM. Overall, NZSPP continues to maintain a healthy membership (*ca.* 160), of which a good proportion are student members, and we remain financially independent.

Attendance at this conference is a little down in terms of numbers, when compared with last year. This may be a matter of timing, in the sense that Combio 2000 was only 6 months ago, and also in terms of competition from overseas conferences. However, NZSPP is well represented in terms of the programme.

At this conference, we have the Annals of Botany lecture to be given this year by Dr. Christophe Maurel. I would like to welcome Christophe to an NZSPP conference and hope that his visit to New Zealand is enjoyable and profitable. We will also present our inaugural Outstanding Plant Physiologist award. Through this report, I would like to congratulate our first winners, Drs Peter Minchin and Michael Thorpe.

I also want to make special mention of the work done by Julian Heyes and Dennis Greer in getting the concept underway and for composing the comprehensive 'rules and regulations' for the award. The idea was first mooted seriously in December at Combio2000, and now, just 6 months later, we are presenting our first award. NZSPP members are reminded that the name 'Outstanding Plant Physiologist' is a working title. We are open to suggestions for alternative names. The award alternates each year with an award for a younger researcher, and so a separate name for that award can also be suggested.

At this AGM we will decide our meeting partners for 2002 and, if possible for 2003. At Combio2000, some of the NZSPP executive met with our colleagues from ASPP and tentatively suggested meeting with ASPP every 3 years. Our first meeting can be Melbourne, Australia in 2003. There was enthusiasm and willing shown by ASPP to formally meet every three years (including in New Zealand) and so I would like that momentum to continue. If we

can get some indication this meeting of a desire by our Society to meet in 2003, then we can signal this to ASPP early and (hopefully) get a good representation on the programme.

For 2002, I would like to propose that we meet with the New Zealand Society of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology. Researchers with interests in biochemistry and molecular biology are well represented in our Society, and so NZBMB is a suitable meeting partner. Of course, colloquia reflecting the wide range of research interests by our Society members will be held. In 2002, NZBMB are meeting with the New Zealand Microbiological Society and so the possibility of a Symposium on Plant-Microbe interactions has been suggested.

This year, NZSPP has made travel awards to two students to attend international conferences, Will Nicoll and Tina Summerfield. Congratulations to the recipients and we hope that the conferences are worthwhile.

As President, I would also like to propose that NZSPP adopts the notion of a President's Symposium at an NZSPP conference. That is, for at least one conference held during a President's (normally two-year) term, that person has the discretion to organise or delegate the organization of a Symposium on a topic of their choosing (not always their particular research interest). If the Society considers that the idea should be developed further, I am happy to draft some further guidelines.

At the national level, I would like to make two comments. Next month I will attend a day-long meeting at the Royal Society for constituent organisations and affiliated societies. The RSNZ has appointed a new Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Steve Thompson, and the Society seems determined to occupy a higher profile in New Zealand Science. Shortly, the Society will release its strategic plan and copies will be available to members.

This year, as in past years, NZSPP was encouraged to propose candidates for fellowships of the Society and for the Society medals. I think NZSPP should be active in proposing its members for such honours. As a member of a University, I was interested in the budget announcement concerning the creation of proposed 'Centres of Excellence'. While details are currently a little sketchy, for plant sciences this may represent good opportunities for more in-depth University-CRI collaboration, and Society links are often good mechanisms for such collaborations to originate.

This AGM we will be electing our Council and one member of the existing Council, Adrian Walcroft will not be standing for re-election. I would like to thank Adrian for his contribution to the NZSPP council and to the Society.

I would also like to thank the support given to me by members of NZSPP during my first year as President.

Michael McManus
President, NZSPP
22nd June, 2001

Treasurer's Report 2001

The statement of receipts and payments for the year ended 31 March 2001 is available as hard copy.

We currently have 162 members and our income from subscriptions is up on the previous financial year due to the increase in membership around the ComBio conference in Wellington in December of 2000. One of our members paid in \$US, so the income from subscriptions is not a factor of our fee structure (\$25, \$10).

Our income from bank interest is lower in the current financial year compared to the previous year due to the maturation of the PSIS term deposit in the previous financial year, which was reinvested for a further 18 months. The conference receipts relates to our collection of money for the NZSPP dinner at ComBio2000, which was paid out to the Duxton in one cheque to cover meal price and room hire for all who attended.

The Annals of Botany income was greater than last year, which is due to the fluctuating NZ\$, however you will notice the expenses associated with the Annals of Botany Speaker are also higher for the current financial year.

Due to the large number of student members attending the ComBio conference (20 students gave presentations), our student subsidies for the current year are larger than the previous year. We subsidized our student members at a rate of \$50 (within 2 hour drive) or \$100 (further distance) for travel to Wellington. We also made awards of \$100 for Best Poster (Sam Neill) and Best Oral paper (Lekha Sreekantan).

In addition, we made two International Travel Awards of \$250 each earlier in the year. The International Travel Award recipients were Lekha Sreekantan who attended the Plant Molecular Biology Conference in Quebec, Canada in June 2000, and Lazar Drazete who attended the 4th International Symposium on Mineral Nutrition of Deciduous Fruit Crops, in Penticton, British Columbia, Canada, in August 2000.

We have paid our RSNZ affiliation fees. The International Association of Plant Physiology have again called for fees but have not invoiced us nor responded to requests for bank account details for payment. So as yet, we have not paid any fees to the International Association.

Our accounts have been audited free of charge by PriceWaterhouseCoopers, Palmerston North.

Jocelyn Eason