

President's Message

Zamir Punja

What are the issues currently on my plate?

As we turned the clock over into the new Millennium, I was filled with dread and anticipation of what the year 2000 would bring. Leading up to the New Year, we were told to expect fall-out from Y2K and to prepare for the excitement of entering into a new century. As it turns out, neither of these seems to have materialized or made a difference in the way most of us conduct our daily activities. It took me a few days to get over the holiday doldrums and I still have difficulty remembering to write 2000 instead of 1999 on my cheques. Other than that, it is business as usual for your CPS President.

During the first 2 months of this year, I have responded to queries and correspondence from members of our Committees and the Society at-large, prepared letters encouraging various colleagues to join CPS, have been contemplating ways to promote our Society, have sent out letters to attract sponsors of our meeting in Victoria, and have worked with the Local Arrangements Committee on various items.

Perhaps the issue that has taken up most of my time so far this year has been genetically modified foods. All of you have undoubtedly followed news media coverage that has made this issue more con-



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troversial than scientific evidence and logical thought would warrant. The prominent television personality David Suzuki propelled me into this debate after I read an article in the paper. He paralleled the irresponsibilities of scientists in bringing DDT, nuclear energy, and tobacco to consumers with that of scientists supporting the use of genetically modified foods. I grimaced at this analogy and proceeded to write a response, outlining how genetic modifications through breeding had greatly improved plants with resistance to diseases and pests, and how biotechnology could further provide advancements in this area. I had to explain what phytopathologists did and how recombinant DNA methods were a widely used technology.

Nothing could have prepared me for what followed after this article was published, which included a photograph of me inoculating some transgenic carrot lines we had developed. I was inundated by local and national radio and TV stations as well as consumer and grower groups to speak and debate on the pros of genetically modified foods. I had been catapulted into stardom because the news media had been so overwhelmed by the negativity propelled by environmental and anti-biotechnology groups that a positive perspective was a sought-after viewpoint. Debates of this type are valuable for consumers who want to hear both sides of controversial issues, especially those affecting their food. I learnt from this experience that consumers don't always understand what we do as scientists, but that they relate very easily to the damage caused by plant diseases and appreciate efforts made to control them. Undoubtedly, the issue of genetically modified foods will continue to be debated. For many CPS members that are conducting research in this area, the outcome can have far-reaching effects. Transgenic virus-resistant, insect-resistant and fungus-resist-

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ant plants are beginning to demonstrate the benefits of genetic engineering technology. I encourage all of you to get engaged in discussions on this topic, particularly with the non-scientific community. A lack of response can be potentially more damaging than getting both sides of the issue aired. Presenting the benefits of this technology to a wider audience can only strengthen its ultimate acceptance.

A second issue that we as a Society need to consider is the conservation of our microbial resources. This came about after a discussion with James Chong at the Agriculture and Agri-Food Research Station in Winnipeg. Would it not be valuable to have an inventory of all of the microbial culture collections held by individual CPS members throughout Canada? I maintain a culture collection of several phytopathogenic fungi that could be of use to other researchers if they were aware of its existence. How can we go about setting up such an inventory? With a few volunteers and an appropriate survey and collation of information, we could build up a database of the organisms maintained by CPS members for use as biological control agents, as pathogens, or other beneficial uses. I believe this would be of tremendous value to phytopathologists worldwide.

I am pleased with the way in which our volunteer committees continue their efforts to address a range of issues of importance to our Society. However, I am concerned whether we can continue to provide efficient services to our members on a strictly volunteer basis or whether CPS should now consider getting salaried staff to assist with its daily activities. Most of the larger societies we belong to have permanent staff members. The handing-over of the *CJPP* to NRC Press has expedited publication of articles and I continue to receive positive feedback on this decision



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to contract out our editorial services. Can we not also engage the services of a professional staff member to deal with issues of marketing, promotion, website, membership and secretarial duties that are currently being handled by volunteers? This is an issue that needs to be discussed by our members, and one which I support. This would free up our Society members to address other far-reaching and global issues affecting our profession.

To update you on a number of other ongoing issues: 1) The Board is considering an exchange of mailing lists between APS and CPS that we could use to promote our Society and publications to over 5000 pathologists; 2) The LAC for the 2001 meeting is considering a joint meeting with the Entomological Society of Canada in Fall, 2001 in Niagara Falls, ON; 3) Efforts to get more industry participation in our Society and to enhance the sales of our publications are continuing; 4) Promotion of our profession and enhancing visibility through the website and international cooperation are underway.

I look forward to receiving your comments on any of these issues or on other issues that you may wish to bring forth.



Mot du président

Zamir Punja

Quels sujets chauds dans mon assiette?

Alors que les pages de calendrier s'envolaient à l'approche du nouveau millénaire, j'étais à la fois rempli d'appréhension et d'espoir face aux promesses de l'an 2000. Sur le chemin de la Nouvelle Année, nous nous sommes fait dire que l'an 2000 aurait des retombées positives et qu'il fallait se préparer à la fébrilité du nouveau siècle. En fin de compte, rien ne semble s'être matérialisé ou avoir fait une différence dans la façon que chacun d'entre nous mène ses activités quotidiennes. Il m'a fallu quelques jours pour me remettre de mes déceptions des Fêtes et j'ai toujours de la difficulté à me rappeler d'écrire 2000 au lieu de 1999 sur mes chèques. Autrement, les choses n'ont pas changé pour votre président de la SCP.

Durant les deux premiers mois de cette année, j'ai répondu aux questions et aux lettres des membres de nos comités et de la Société en général, écrit des lettres pour inciter plusieurs collègues à joindre la SCP, réfléchi aux moyens de promouvoir notre Société, envoyé des lettres pour obtenir des commanditaires pour notre réunion de Victoria, et fait divers travaux avec le Comité local d'organisation.

Cette année, les aliments génétiquement

modifiés ont été le sujet qui m'a probablement le plus occupé jusqu'à présent. Vous avez sans doute tous suivi la couverture des médias qui a rendu ce sujet plus controversé qu'il ne devrait l'être si on s'en tenait aux démonstrations scientifiques et à la pensée logique. La figure bien connue de la télévision, David Suzuki, m'a propulsé dans ce débat après que j'aie lu un article dans le journal. Il comparait l'irresponsabilité des scientifiques

qui ont apporté le DDT, l'énergie nucléaire et le tabac aux consommateurs à celle des scientifiques qui appuient l'usage d'organismes génétiquement modifiés. J'ai grimacé à l'analogie et je me suis mis à écrire une réponse, soulignant comment les modifications génétiques obtenues par croisements avaient considérablement amélioré les plantes en les rendant résistantes aux maladies et aux ravageurs, et comment les biotechnologies pouvaient apporter des améliorations supplémentaires dans ce domaine. J'ai eu à expliquer ce que les phytopathologistes faisaient et jusqu'à quel point les techniques de l'ADN recombinant étaient répandues.

Rien ne m'avait préparé à ce qui allait suivre la parution de cet article illustré d'une photographie qui me montrait en train d'inoculer une lignée transgénique de carotte que j'ai développée. J'ai été inondé de demandes de stations de radio et de télévision locales et nationales, aussi bien que de groupes de consommateurs et de producteurs, pour parler et débattre des avantages des aliments génétiquement modifiés. J'ai été catapulté dans le vedettariat parce que les médias avaient été tellement submergés par les perspectives négatives propagées par les groupes environnementalistes et antibiotechnologie qu'un point de vue positif était avidement recherché. Les débats de ce genre sont importants pour les

consommateurs qui veulent entendre les deux côtés de la médaille, spécialement lorsque leur alimentation est concernée. J'ai appris de cette expérience que les consommateurs ne saisissent pas toujours ce que nous faisons en tant que scientifiques, mais qu'ils comprennent très bien les dommages causés par les mala-

dies aux plantes et qu'ils apprécient les efforts qui sont faits pour les enrayer. Le sujet des aliments génétiquement

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modifiés va sans doute continuer à faire l'objet de débats. Pour plusieurs membres de la SCP qui effectuent des travaux de recherche dans ce domaine, les aboutissements peuvent être d'une portée considérable. Les plantes transgéniques résistantes aux virus, aux insectes et aux champignons commencent à montrer les avantages des techniques de génie génétique. Je vous invite tous à vous impliquer dans des discussions sur le sujet, en particulier dans la communauté non scientifique. L'absence de réponse représente un danger plus grand que de laisser s'opposer les opinions contraires. La présentation des bénéfices de cette technologie à une audience plus vaste ne peut que renforcer son acceptation finale.

Un deuxième sujet auquel notre Société doit s'attaquer est la conservation de nos ressources microbiennes. Cette préoccupation m'est venue à la suite d'une conversation avec James Chong à la station de recherches d'Agriculture et Agroalimentaire Canada à Winnipeg. Ne serait-il pas important d'avoir un inventaire de toutes les collections de cultures microbiennes détenues par les membres de la SCP au Canada? Je détiens une collection de cultures de plusieurs champignons phytopathogènes qui pourrait être utile à d'autres chercheurs s'ils étaient au courant de son existence. Comment pouvons-nous mettre sur pied un tel inventaire? Avec quelques

bénévoles, et une enquête et une cueillette d'informations, nous pourrions bâtir une base de données sur les organismes détenus par les membres de la SCP pour utilisation comme agents de lutte biologique, comme agents pathogènes ou pour d'autres usages bénéfiques. Je crois que sa valeur serait considérable pour les phytopathologistes du monde entier.

Je suis satisfait de la constance avec laquelle nos comités de bénévoles s'acquittent de leurs mandats dans une vaste gamme de domaines d'importance pour notre Société. Par contre, je me demande si nous pourrions continuer à fournir des services de qualité à nos membres en se fiant à une structure strictement bénévole ou si la SCP devrait maintenant envisager l'embauche de salariés pour l'aider dans ses tâches quotidiennes. La plupart des grandes sociétés auxquelles nous appartenons ont du personnel permanent. La prise en charge de la *Revue canadienne de phytopathologie* par les presses du CNRC a accéléré la publication des articles et je continue à recevoir des commentaires positifs sur cette décision de donner à contrat le travail d'édition. Ne pourrions-nous pas aussi nous assurer des services d'employés professionnels pour s'occuper des tâches de marketing, de promotion, du site Web, des services aux membres, et du secrétariat qui sont actuellement exécutées par des bénévoles? C'est une façon de voir que je préconise et qui aurait besoin d'être discutée par nos membres. Ces sujets n'excluent pas d'autres sujets globaux et de grande portée qui touchent notre profession et qui pourraient être abordés par nos membres.

Quelques informations pour faire le point sur plusieurs dossiers en cours. 1) Le Conseil examine la possibilité d'échanger des listes d'envoi avec l'APS afin de faire la promotion de notre Société et de ses publications auprès de plus de 5000 pathologistes. 2) Le Comité local d'organisation pour la réunion de 2001 ex-

amine la possibilité d'une réunion conjointe avec la Société d'Entomologie du Canada à l'automne 2001 à Niagara Falls en Ontario. 3) Des efforts se poursuivent pour accroître l'implication de l'industrie dans notre Société et pour augmenter les ventes de nos publications. 4) La promotion de notre profession et l'augmentation de notre visibilité via notre site Web et la coopération internationale sont des activités en marche.

J'attends avec impatience vos commentaires sur n'importe lequel de ces sujets ou sur d'autres que vous souhaitez aborder.

CPS's View On Genetically Modified Foods

Zamir Punja

The Royal Society of Canada has established an Expert Panel to report on the "Future of Food Biotechnology" and is soliciting input from groups and organizations in Canada. I have prepared the following draft for submission to them. *I am soliciting comments, suggestions, and criticisms on this draft before it is sent in on April 30, 2000.*

Please respond to punja@sfu.ca or phone 604-291-4471 or FAX 604-291-3496.

While the Science Policy Committee will be addressing this issue on behalf of all CPS members, you may prefer to voice your opinions personally and directly, to:

Expert Panel on the "Future of Food Biotechnology"
c/o The Royal Society of Canada,
283 Sparks St.,
Ottawa, ON K1R 7S3
FAX: 613-991-6996

DRAFT

The Canadian Phytopathological Society supports the use of recombinant DNA technologies that results in the development of transgenic crops with enhanced tolerance to diseases affecting crop plants. Members of our Society are continually faced with the challenge of developing environmentally sustainable, economical, and long-term methods for management of diseases on crops of importance to Canada and elsewhere in the world. We view the creation of transgenic plants as an additional tool that can further enhance this objective. Through the management of crop diseases, significant increases in yield have been realized, which translate to increased food production for consumers worldwide.

We are cautiously optimistic that the creation of transgenic plants with enhanced tolerance to fungi, bacteria, viruses, nematodes and

other pathogens can provide significant benefits to crop producers and consumers. We base this optimism on the recognition that the development and adoption of this technology must be based on fundamentally sound scientific principles and appropriate peer review. We emphasize that prior to the widespread implementation of this technology, consideration be given to a reasonable evaluation of potential environmental impacts, and that consumers be made aware of the benefits of this technology. As an example, in addition to enhancing crop yields, it is highly probable that genetically engineered crops with disease tolerance will result in reduced applications of chemical pesticides.

We also believe that it is imperative that this technology be made available to crop producers and ultimately consumers at reasonable cost and that it become part of an integrated approach to disease management. We caution that while we continue to encourage the adoption of this technology, we must not compromise continuing efforts to search for, utilize, and protect existing plant genetic diversity and germplasm containing genes for resistance to diseases. The latter has, and will continue to be, a valuable source of genetic material for breeding programs in Canada and elsewhere.

Committee Reports

Future Meetings Committee

The committee consists of three members: L. Kawchuk, A. Kushalappa and R. Hunt. The committee is charged with having locations and persons in charge of organizing the next four annual meetings. The June 2000 (**Victoria**) meeting local arrangements chair is **Jack Sutherland**. The 2001(**London**) meeting local arrangements chair is **George Lazarovits**. The 2002 (**Lethbridge**) meeting local arrangements chair is **Larry Kawchuk**. The 2003 (**Ottawa**) meeting local arrangements chair is yet to be confirmed.

Strategic Plan Steering Committee Report

The CPS/SCP has embarked on the ambitious task of preparing a strategic plan to guide its future operations (see *CPS News* 43(3):42, September, 1999). A steering committee consisting of Ron Howard (Chair), Gary Turnbull, Bruce Gossen, Verna Higgins, André Lévesque, Jim Menzies, Roger Rimmer, Dave McNally, Maureen Bolen (facilitator) and Greg Boland (ex-officio) was formed to write a plan in time for presentation at the 2000 annual meeting in Victoria. Capably guided by Ms. Bolen, of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, the committee has been working over the past nine months to gather background information needed to create the plan and to draft the key parts of it. The first step was to do an environmental scan, which consisted of contacting a representative number of members to assess their opinions on things such as expectations of the society, satisfaction with services offered, specific issues and concerns, and future directions that the organization should head. Vision, mission, goal and strategy statements were written based on this information and ideas contributed by committee members. These draft statements will be presented to the CPS Board for discussion and interim approval at their March 30 conference call. Following this, an action plan will be developed for each goal.

Society members will have a chance to view the front end of the strategic plan on the Society's website in early April, and the committee would welcome feedback on this material. A draft copy of the entire plan will be published in the June issue of *CPS News* and on the website so members will have a chance to read it over in advance of the annual general meeting. Assuming that it is accepted and approved by the membership, the plan will be implemented following the annual meeting and will serve to guide the Society's operations for the coming five-year period.

Awards Committee Report

A call for nominations for 2000 CPS Awards was published in the December issue of *CPS News*. In addition to usual awards (Honorary Member, Fellow, Award for Outstanding Research, Gordon J. Green Outstanding Young Scientist Award), a new Graduate Student Travel Award is now offered to provide financial reimbursement to selected graduate students to attend the Annual Meeting. The Dr. and Mrs. D.L. Bailey Award ceased to exist in 1999 according to CPS by-laws. The deadline for submitting nominations for the various awards this year was March 15. Applications are examined by all committee members and results will be transmitted to whom it may concern as soon as possible. The committee members will also assess student presentations at the 2000 Annual Meeting to select the best oral and the best poster presentations.

Current members of the committee are Luc Couture (chair), Ron Knox, Verna Higgins, Khalid Rashid, and Sue Boyetchko. Committee members for the coming year (2000-2001) will be Ron Knox (chair), Verna Higgins, Khalid Rashid, Sue Boyetchko, and Brent McCallum.

Respectfully submitted,

Luc Couture, Chair
Awards Committee

Historical Resources Committee

The Historical Resources Committee, formed in 1999, has added two new members, Gayle Jespersen and Lloyd Seaman. The Committee recently deposited approximately three linear metres of historical materials with Archives Canada. We are now accepting new materials for deposit with Archives Canada. To this end, we are in the process of drafting guidelines, with the help of Archives Canada, for designating which materials are of historical value to our Society, and developing an orderly protocol for tracking and receiving these materials. We welcome new members, both active and emeritus CPS members, to join the Committee. Any materials or queries can be sent directly to:

Denis Gaudet,
AAFC Research Centre,
Box 3000
Lethbridge, AB T1J 4B1
Phone: 403-317-2278
FAX: 403-382-3156
E-mail: gaudetd@em.agr.ca

Respectfully submitted,

Denis Gaudet, Gayle Jespersen and Lloyd Seaman

Information Products Marketing Committee

The Information Products Marketing Committee met several times over the past year through conference calls, to further the committee's prime objective, which is to "successfully market and distribute Canadian Phytopathological Society publications and products worldwide, to raise the profile of CPS, and to showcase the literary and scientific talents of its members."

One of the major accomplishments was the development of a policy for Intellectual Property for the CPS. This issue has come up several times, usually as a request from someone who would like to reproduce slides or pictures that appear in our publications. A draft policy has been submitted to the CPS Board for its consideration.

Sales of *Diseases of Field Crops in Canada* continue at a brisk pace. Sales of *Diseases and Pests of Vegetable Crops in Canada* are steady but at lower volumes. The committee is devoting considerable attention to increasing the sales of this publication. In addition to the individual efforts of CPS members, there will be a marketing effort directed at libraries in Canada.

Ideas, comments and feedback on these activities or other information products are welcome. The committee is looking for more representation from Quebec and the Atlantic Provinces. Volunteers will be warmly welcomed.

Committee members are: Mary Ruth McDonald (chair), Gayle Jespersen, Karen Bailey, Bruce Gossen, Robin Morrall, Marilyn Dykstra, Wendy McFadden-Smith and Patrice Audy.

Help Wanted!

The Marketing Committees of the ESC and CPS request the assistance of all members in an effort to distribute and sell remaining copies of the book *Diseases and Pests of Vegetable Crops in Canada*. Currently there are about 1800 softcover copies available (total of English and French). While we would like to earn money from the sale of the book, our main priority is recoup our initial investment, and to get as many books into circulation (and out of storage) as possible. To this end we propose several possible strategies.

Members of the ESC and CPS Executive and their Regional Directors may request copies of *DPVCC* to sell on a consignment basis. Please make arrangements with Alexandra Devine at ESC (see below). Take brochures or a copy of the book with you to Producer Group Meetings. Members who work closely with Grower Associations are encouraged to promote the book to association members. ESC Members are encouraged to approach local businesses (Garden Centres, greenhouses, bookstores) and provide them with information

on *DPVCC*. Interested businesses would then contact Alexandra to order copies or make arrangements for selling the book.

We encourage Society members to give copies of *DPVCC* as 'thank-you' gifts to colleagues in other countries. Planning a trip or going to a meeting in the U.S. or Mexico? Take along a few copies for your hosts.

Finally, we encourage the Awards Committees for both the ESC, CPS and all Regional Societies to consider giving copies of *DPVCC* as Student Prize Awards.

To order books, or for consignment arrangements contact:

Alexandra Devine
Entomological Society of Canada
393 Winston Ave.
Ottawa, ON K2A 1Y8
Tel: (613) 725-2619
Fax: (613) 725-9349

Lorraine Braun, Chair
ESC Marketing Committee

Mary Ruth McDonald, Chair
CPS Marketing Committee

International Cooperation Committee

It was not possible to meet as a full Committee during 1999-2000. However, I am able to report on several interesting and promising developments in the area of international cooperation.

Excellent contacts have been established with some plant pathologists in Poland and Czech Republic and are being explored further for developing cooperation with in these countries. Recently, a Partnerships for Tomorrow Program (PTP) for Canada and 28 countries in Central and Eastern Europe has been announced. This program will be administered by the Association of Canadian Community Colleges (ACCC), is sponsored by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), and could help in developing linkages in those countries. For further information, please visit the ACCC website:

<http://www.accc.ca> or ptp.accc.ca.

I am following up on the matters raised in a letter from President Punja regarding donation of *CJPP* to libraries in developing countries, and promotion of membership in the CPS and sales of our two books abroad. Publicity materials for books are being sent to plant pathologists in some countries in Europe. A CPS member requested mailing of information to three plant pathologists in the Latin America. He also requested sending information on how to become a free member of the CPS. An announcement inviting liaison between members of the Plant Pathology Society of India with those of the CPS was published in the journal *Indian Phytopathology* 52(3), 329, 1999 through the courtesy of Professor A. Varma, Vice-President, International Society of Plant Pathology (ISPP). Since then, I have received communications from three plant pathologists from India expressing interest in liaison with plant pathologists in Canada. These expressions of interest are being passed on to appropriate plant pathologists in Canada.

The CPS is currently developing a strategic plan and this Committee recommended to Dr. Ron Howard, Chair of the Strategic Planning Committee "that international cooperation is important enough, especially in this era of globalization, to be included in some way in the CPS Strategic Plan."

J.P. Tewari, Chair
International Cooperation Committee
Phone: 780-492-4554
FAX: 780-492-4265
E-mail: jtewari@afns.ualberta.ca

Education and Public Awareness Committee

No formal meeting of this committee took place, although members continued to promote plant pathology in the schools and in working on Education committees for other organisations.

As chair, I contacted Gary Bergstrom, who heads up the education committee for APS. We are of the opinion that many activities could be done jointly. They have decided to make a Teachers' Resources page linked to the APS web site; access would be free of charge. This is one area in which CPS could contribute. The school science fair projects written by CPS members last year could be linked to the APS site. The APS board meets April 29 in Minneapolis this year and we have been invited to participate and determine how the two committees might work together.

Many pathologists are engaged in presentations to schools and this committee should be a vehicle to bring some formal structure to such activities. However, the time commitment to coordinate all the possible areas for promotion of plant pathology requires regular input into contacting individuals, writing articles and creating resource materials etc. I strongly urge CPS to provide funding to pay for part-time services so that the activities of the committee proceed on a regular basis.

Current members of this committee include Julie Gold, Steve Haber, Randy Kutcher, Kelly Turkington and Bernard Vigier.

Respectfully submitted,
Jeannie Gilbert

Nominating Committee

Proposed Slate for 2000-2001

CPS/SCP BOARD

President: **S.R. Rimmer**
President-Elect: **G.J. Boland**
Vice-President: **Karen Bailey**
Past-President: **Z. K. Punja**
Secretary: **L. Buchwaldt**
Senior Director: **A.V. Sturz**
Junior Director: **Simon Shamoun**
Treasurer: **P.L. Sholberg**
Membership Secretary: **V. Bisht**

STANDING COMMITTEES

Nominating Committee (5 members)

Z.K. Punja (Chair), G. Lazarovits, M.R. Fernandez, J.G. Menzies, **Patrice Audy*****

Journal Editorial Committee (10 members)

R.P. Singh (Chair), S.H. DeBoer, R.S. Utkhede, R.A.A. Morrall, R.S. Hunt, S.R. Rimmer, K.F. Dobinson, D. Gaudet, M.P. Corlett, L.M. Kawchuk, **Andre Levesque**, **Bruce Gossen**, **Prem Kharbanda**

Awards Committee (5 members)

R.E. Knox (Chair), V.J. Higgins, K.Y. Rashid, S.M. Boyetchko, **Brent McCallum*****

Membership Committee (11 members)

V. Bisht (Chair), P.L. Sholberg, Regional Representatives

Future Meetings Committee (3 members)

S.H. DeBoer (Chair), A.C. Kushalappa, **Mike Celetti*****

Resolutions Committee (3 members)

T.K. Turkington (Chair), P.G. Pearse, **Jeannie Gilbert** ***

Financial Advisory Committee (10 members)

Z.K. Punja (Chair), S.R. Rimmer, G.J. Boland, **Vice-President**, P.L. Sholberg, R.P. Singh, K.L. Bailey, M.D. Dykstra, L.M. Kawchuk, **Dilantha Fernando**

Science Policy Committee (5 members)

G.J. Boland (Chair), R.J. Copeman, R.A. Martin, P.A. Burnett, **Carole Beaulieu*****

The names of proposed new members of the Board and Standing Committees are highlighted in bold. Those confirmed as accepted are asterisked.

The remaining members are continuing or completing their terms as specified by the society's by-laws. Additional nominations can be made by society members for Vice-President, Treasurer, Membership Secretary and Junior Director, as well as for vacant positions on the Nominating, Awards, Future Meetings, Resolutions, and Science Policy Committees. *Nominations shall be signed by five members of the Society and by the nominee, and must be received by the CPS/SCP Secretary **before May 9, 2000**, which is six weeks before the Annual General Meeting.*

Respectfully submitted,
G. Lazarovits (Chair), R.J. Howard, S.R. Rimmer, M.R. Fernandez, J.G. Menzies



CPS Regional Meetings

Eastern Ontario

On February 7, 1999, a workshop entitled "Eastern Cereal Pathology in the 21st Century" was held in Ottawa, at the Elgin Hotel. This was a joint presentation of the Eastern Expert Committee Cereals and Oilseeds (EECCO) and CPS. It served also to highlight the career of two eminent plant pathologists, **Winston Johnston** and **Lloyd Seaman** who retired after their years of service for Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Research Branch at Charlotte-town and Ottawa Research Centres, respectively.

Introductory remarks were made to honour the retiring members by **Andrew Frowd**, past Eastern Ontario regional representative, **George Lazarovits**, past CPS president and Malcolm Morrison, EECCO chairman. It was followed by a series of five interesting presentations, starting with Art McElroy, oat plant breeder (AAFC/ECORC) discussing "A strategy for incorporating crown rust resistance in oat cultivars. He was followed by **Tim Paulitz**, plant pathology professor at McGill University (Macdonald Campus) who discussed the issue of "Fusarium head blight of wheat: new insights on a re-emerging disease". A presentation on biotechnology applications in cereal breeding for disease resistance was made by Linda Harris (AAFC/ECORC). **Richard Martin**, plant pathologist (AAFC/Charlottetown) presented the issue of "Cereal Pathology Research in Canada - the Atlantic link. Finally, **André Comeau**, plant pathologist (AAFC/Ste-Foy) presented "The future of cereal pathology in the next century: the public research and private research dilemma." A short discussion ensued, followed by an evening reception.

Bernie Vigier
Eastern Ontario Regional Representative

Plant Pathology Society of Alberta

The twentieth annual meeting of the Plant Pathology Society of Alberta was held in Jasper, Alberta, November 8-10, 1999. There were over 50 registrants who presented 15 oral presentations and 12 posters. The best student paper was awarded to **Patricia Crane** from the University of Alberta for her excellent presentation. The best technician paper competition ended in a tie, so the prizes were awarded to two technicians, **George Turnbull** from Alberta Research Council, Vegreville and **Byron Puchalski** from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Lethbridge. Thanks go to the judges **Bruce Gossen**, **Denis Gaudet** and **Ken Mallett**.

The meeting started with the traditional wine and cheese reception on Monday evening in a very comfortable setting near the foyer of the beautiful Sawridge Jasper Hotel. On Tuesday morning, eight interesting papers were presented, followed by lunch and a poster session time allotment after lunch. There was time before the business meeting to walk around town and enjoy the mountain views and the unusually warm weather for this time of year.

The abundance and variety of food at the banquet buffet set in the beautiful dining room with a glowing fireplace was enjoyed by all members and a few lucky spouses. The keynote guest speaker was the well known Jasper resident biologist Ben Gadd.

Ben gave an excellent and much enjoyed slide presentation of the flora and fauna of the Rockies as well as some of his hiking, climbing and caving trips. His talk was very informative, entertaining and humorous. After his first presentation, he had his famous guidebook for sale for anyone who was interested. There were rave reviews about his presentation and his book as several people lined up to purchase a copy after his slide show.

Wednesday morning was filled with more interesting papers from the members. The meeting wrapped up at lunch on Wednesday afternoon. A few of us who took ad-

vantage of the Remembrance Day holiday stayed an extra day and enjoyed a guided hike in the woods with Ben Gadd.

A special thanks to the members of the local arrangements committee for a highly successful and memorable meeting:

Elaine Stenbraaten, John Huffman, Hector Goudreau, Tom Staples, Dale Seward, Ralph Lange, Paul Laflamme, Mike Hall, Wanda Gruenheidt, Lorraine Harrison. Thanks also to the many sponsors for their support.

The next meeting of the Plant Pathology Society of Alberta will be held in Edmonton, AB in November 2000. For more information, contact Ken Mallett and Piara Bains.

Respectfully submitted,
Lorraine Harrison
1999 President, PPSA



Saskatchewan

The annual meeting of the Saskatchewan regional group of the Canadian Phytopathological Society (CPS) was held jointly with the Plant Disease Sub-council of the Saskatchewan Advisory Council on Crop Protection (SACCP) on November 15th 1999 at the Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada Research Centre in Saskatoon. About 70 scientists, graduate students, technicians, extension personnel, and industry representatives were present. The number of people in attendance was certainly a record for the Saskatchewan regional group of CPS.

The morning session consisted of eight formal scientific presentations on a variety of subjects. Abstracts of four of the papers have been submitted to the *Canadian Journal of Plant Pathology*. The afternoon session began with disease survey reports involving field and other crops grown in Saskatchewan. Following this there was a roundtable review of research highlights. Attendees were given 1-2 minutes per person to describe briefly their current and/or potential research projects, novel techniques they were using, and plant disease problems they had been aware of. This was followed by lively discussions concerning prairie crop disease situations from various perspectives. In addition, CPS and SACCP had their respective business sessions. Issues discussed at the CPS business session included CPS membership and the 2000 national CPS meeting to be held in Victoria.

The 1999 Winner of T.C. Vanterpool Prize in Plant Pathology and Mycology (a university of Saskatchewan prize) was announced by **Robin Morrall**. She is **Cheryl Armstrong**, a graduate student with the Department of Biology, working on ascochyta blight of chickpea.

In the evening, about 35 CPS/SACCP members and guests attended a supper social at the University Faculty Club.

Jean Liu
Saskatchewan Regional Representative



ProMED-mail and Canadian Plant Pathologists

ProMED-mail, the global Program for Monitoring Emerging Diseases, is sponsored by the International Society for Infectious Diseases. The ProMED-mail electronic outbreak reporting system was inaugurated on the Internet in August 1994 to monitor emerging infectious diseases globally. It is the only outbreak rapid reporting system open to all sources and free of political constraints. All reports are screened by expert Moderators before posting. A central goal of ProMED is to establish a direct partnership among scientists and doctors in all parts of the world, by making it possible for all to share information and discuss emerging concerns about diseases of humans, animals and plants on a timely basis. ProMED-mail welcomes the participation of all interested colleagues, students and interested people outside the health and biomedical professions. There is no charge for subscribing. ProMED-mail now reaches more than 18,000 direct subscribers in over 150 countries.

As a subscriber to ProMED-Plant you as a Canadian plant pathologist will be apprised via e-mail of emerging diseases of plants worldwide. ProMED-Plant endeavors to post disease information within 24 to 48 hours of receipt of news wire stories, press releases, or reports from plant protection services, government agencies and other sources.

The timeliness of ProMED-Plant reporting was demonstrated by the report on October 20, 1999 of an outbreak of plum pox disease of peach in a Pennsylvania orchard. The report was edited, a comment was prepared by me as the Moderator for ProMED-Plant, and the report was posted to ProMED-Plant in the evening of October 24, 1999 (I was out of town until that evening). Plum pox is a quarantineable disease and is widely distributed in Europe. It was reported to occur in Chile in 1992 and, despite precautions, it reached North

America seven years later. Unless you were a subscriber to ProMED-Plant, you probably did not read or hear about the outbreak until you read the excellent report of the disease in the December 1999 issue of the *CPS News*.

I urge all Canadian plant pathologists who wish to be at the leading edge of plant disease reporting to subscribe to ProMED-Plant. All you have to do is get to the ProMED website:

[http://www.promedmail.org:8080/
promed/promed.folder.home](http://www.promedmail.org:8080/promed/promed.folder.home)

and follow the instructions on subscribing.

In addition to subscribing to ProMED-Plant, I also want to urge you to submit reports of disease outbreaks, severity of disease and other relevant information about plant disease emergence. To do so, send the text of your report to occurrence to:

promed@promedmail.org

I look forward to your participation in ProMED-Plant. If you have any questions, please contact me.

Dick Hamilton
Moderator, ProMED-Plant
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Coming Events

The **3rd International Symposium on Rhizoctonia**, ISR 2000 is scheduled to be held at the National Chung Hsing University, Taichung, Taiwan between August 17-22, 2000. The ISR is a formal activity of the International Society of Plant Pathology Rhizoctonia Committee. For more information visit the web site

<http://www.nchu.edu.tw/~isr2000/>

The **deadline** for submission of abstracts is **30 April, 2000**.

The **11th International Sclerotinia Workshop** will take place from 8-12 July, 2001, in York, UK. It is being held under the auspices of the British Society for Plant Pathology and is the first occasion on which it has been held outside North America. Updates of progress with the program and registration information will be posted in due course on the BSPP web site at:

<http://www.bspp.org.uk>



Pest Risk Assessment Opportunities for Plant Pathologists

Matthew H. Royer, USDA

Background

Representatives from academia, government, industry, and non-governmental organizations recently reported that the increase in travel and trade have dramatically increased the risk of invasive plant pest introductions into the United States. Their findings, appearing in a report prepared by the National Plant Board (NPB, 1999), identifies the United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Plant Protection and Quarantine (APHIS-PPQ) as the principal Agency responsible for safeguarding plant resources against invasive plant pest introductions into the US. Among over 300 specific recommendations in the report, they identified an overarching need: APHIS-PPQ policies and procedures must be transformed to meet the demands of a world economy shaped by technological change, international economic integration, strategic alliances and partnerships, and domestic market maturation. One critical area of transformation is risk assessment. The purpose of this article is to share an example of how APHIS-PPQ is meeting a few of the risk assessment challenges by creating opportunities for scientists who are not under contract or employment by APHIS-PPQ to conduct pest risk assessments.

APHIS-PPQ is responsible for promulgating regulations and conducting programs to protect the US from the entry and establishment of harmful plant pests, especially through agricultural trade, travel, and international movement of conveyances. The public is demanding fresh agricultural products year-round, and more diversity. Juxtaposed with industry's expectation of less-hindered trade in agricultural products is the public's demand for more information and involvement in establishing regulatory policy on the safe movement of these products in order to

protect domestic plants and the environment. These forces have resulted in a need for APHIS to manage and share information, conduct risk assessments and obtain comments on those risk assessments, evaluate options to mitigate risks and justify the best one, and communicate with the public and affected parties throughout resolution of any particular issue. The simple fact is that traditional methods of using rules-of-thumb, institutional memory and minimal documentation are increasingly challenged in today's world. This is especially true when the rationale for choosing a particular risk mitigation measure is not apparent or justified based on the risk assessment.

Risk Assessment Backlog

Historically, a backlog of commodity plant pest risk assessments developed several years after promulgation of the regulation addressing importation of fruit and vegetable commodities, *Code of Federal Regulations, Title 7, Part 319.56*. Fruits and vegetables were not allowed to enter the US unless specific pest risk mitigation measures, mentioned in the regulations, were used prior to or at the time of importation. Currently, there are 220 fruit and vegetable commodity plant pest risk assessments (Internet world wide web, 1999a) to be conducted (i.e. a backlog) before evaluating and choosing a risk mitigation option, and promulgating that decision in a regulation. APHIS-PPQ staff estimated that if they were to conduct all these risk assessments with current staffing levels using the most rigorous risk assessment format developed to date, then certain commodity-country combinations would be prohibited from entering the US for as long as 40 years. Other backlogs exist for risk assessments in support of amending regulations for propagative material, corn pests, citrus pests, and others in *the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 7 (i.e. Parts 319, 318, 301, 320, 330, and 340)*.

International Standards

The inability of APHIS-PPQ to remove its risk assessment backlog has been criti-

cized as a trade barrier. Ironically, the establishment of rigorous standards to minimize unjustified phytosanitary trade barriers, which APHIS-PPQ helped to design, increased the documentation requirements and therefore the time to conduct a risk assessment (FAO, 1995). Because of the new standards, and the substantial increase in commodity risk assessments resulting from the desire for more trade, there appeared to be no hope to lessen the backlog.

After the adoption of the above international standard in 1995, the standard was translated into a checklist to help APHIS-PPQ implement it. It proved useful for formatting, documenting, and communicating scientific information, but it did not significantly lessen the backlog. The public was beginning to ask for risk assessments by name, and to explain the risk assessment process. It became apparent that in some cases, the public may wish to conduct the risk assessment and then provide the finished product to APHIS-PPQ to expedite its review of information.

Risk Assessments Conducted by Non-Federal Parties

In 1995, further guidance was added to the checklist, citing APHIS-PPQ experience in a *Guideline for Plant Pest Risk Analysis of Imported Commodities*. The new document contained sections such as responsibilities of APHIS and non-APHIS parties, a suggested peer review process, a pest risk assessment quality control standard, references frequently consulted, and how to document computerized bibliographic literature searches. The document currently is being provided to importers and parties who are interested in conducting their own risk assessments. Non-Federal parties may conduct risk assessments without new or unique regulations because of the rule of general applicability. This means APHIS-PPQ is not requiring the public to conduct or provide risk assessments; it is their choice to provide this information to APHIS-PPQ. This is not a privatized government function or service, although it

may appear to be partially privatized in the sense of providing opportunities for external parties to evaluate scientific information and to provide their analyses to APHIS-PPQ.

Currently, APHIS has approximately 60 risk assessments pending completion by non-APHIS parties. Although encouraging, there are challenges yet unresolved. APHIS-PPQ staff are uncertain whether all assessments will be of sufficient quality so that staff will not feel compelled to redo the assessment. APHIS-PPQ has not developed a system to track the external risk assessment process, nor has it estimated the cost/benefit. Approximately 25% of the risk assessment backlog are bilateral-negotiated or bilateral-related requests (official discussions with a foreign government on specific issues), and other requests from foreign governments. The remaining 75% are requests from importers in the United States. Once a commodity risk assessment is completed, the non-APHIS party who conducted the risk assessment has no guarantee that the commodity will be allowed entry to the US by APHIS; the decision on enterability and risk mitigation is the responsibility of APHIS.

Assistance Provided by APHIS-PPQ

APHIS-PPQ has continued to provide significant assistance to external parties conducting risk assessments, regardless of whether the assessment is conducted under contract or voluntarily. The cost-savings is uncertain at present:

most of the highly technical and obscure pest information for particular country-crop combinations is in the APHIS library. This information needs to be located, photocopied, and sent to external party by APHIS-PPQ;

contractors occasionally request copies of previous decision sheets and pest risk assessments, requiring APHIS-PPQ staff to photocopy and mail the information to the external party;

pest interception data from port-of-entry inspection of commodities and convey-

ances are often necessary to conduct a pest risk assessment. APHIS-PPQ reviews these data for errors before sharing them with external parties; and

contracted pest risk assessments are reviewed by APHIS-PPQ, and they may be returned to the contractor if the assessment is incomplete or not up to standards.

Opportunities for Plant Pathologists

Plant pathologists employed by the government (Federal, State/Provincial, Tribal etc.), academia, and private companies have opportunities to become involved in risk assessment, and the following are but a few examples:

The demand for risk assessments is growing, and is quickly exceeding governments' ability to conduct them in a timely manner. Efforts such as those by USDA-APHIS-PPQ provide an opportunity for non-government plant pathologists to conduct pest risk assessments, to share scientific information with foreign colleagues, and to perhaps become aware of a broader view of protecting the plant environment while facilitating safe trade of plant commodities.

Risk assessment is becoming recognized as a science, complete with analytical methodologies, to improve the interpretation and communication of the probability and impact of pest outbreaks. Plant pathologists, especially in academia, should participate in testing and improving these methodologies so that accurate information and sound analytical procedures are brought to bear on pest problems.

International standards establish the language, procedures, and documentation governments use to communicate about pest risk assessments. Plant pathologists who evaluate scientific data to address these issues must speak this common international risk assessment language.

Risk assessments are expected to lead to sound, risk-based mitigation. Risk mitigation options include measures such as prohibition on importing particular plant commodities (or moving commodities between

states/provinces) because of the likelihood of importing associated plant pests, quarantine treatment, port-of-entry inspection, and foreign-country systems approach to mitigate pests. These measures require resources or otherwise impact the cost/benefit of pursuing trade with a particular commodity. Therefore, it is particularly important to assure sound risk assessments are the basis for mitigation measures. Plant pathologists in industry can participate by helping to evaluate the efficacy and feasibility of implementing various risk mitigation options, based upon information in the risk assessment.

Plant pathologists in government service increasingly are expected to understand, utilize, and explain to the public the risk assessments that support decisions made for the public good. It behooves them to utilize the best available scientific information and procedures. This can only happen if colleagues in academia, industry, and government can exchange information in a non-adversarial environment, with a common language of risk assessment.

Conclusion

APHIS has been providing risk assessment training, both internally as well as to interested State departments of agriculture and foreign trade partners. An initiative with the University of Minnesota will begin early in year 2000, where students will be taught the procedures of APHIS-PPQ risk assessment, and they in turn will provide pest information. The objective for APHIS-PPQ is to not only share the knowledge and tools of risk assessment, but also to expand its network, collect pest information, and enhance its risk-based decision making capabilities. This is one of the biggest challenges to APHIS-PPQ - to provide incentive for non-APHIS parties to conduct risk assessments. With proper oversight and commitment, this effort may over time result in a transparent, scientific and satisfying means to help remove the APHIS-PPQ risk assessment backlog, provide the public and importers a means to participate early in the process of evalu-

ating scientific information on pest risk, and to accomplish this without a huge resource windfall. The broader challenge, internationally, is to raise the conscientiousness of plant pathologists to opportunities for involvement in risk assessment.

Citations

FAO. 1995. International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures, Section 1 - Import Regulations: Guidelines for Pest Risk Analysis, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

Safeguarding American Plant Resources: A Stakeholder Review of the APHIS-PPQ Safeguarding System. 1999. National Plant Board. 132pp.

World Wide Web. 1999a. <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/ppq/ss/cobra/99PendingCommodity.htm>

World Wide Web. 1999b. <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/ppq/ss/cobra>

The Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) receives an overwhelming number of requests for evaluation of the enterability of agricultural commodities. The increasing volume of these requests has significantly lengthened the time frame within which these requests can be answered.

APHIS is offering requestors the opportunity to expedite responses by assisting the Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) pest risk assessment (PRA) process. Requestors now have the option of conducting the pest risk assessment according to the PPQ PRA guidelines or contracting private parties to conduct the PRA. Completed PRAs are then submitted to APHIS for review and response. Alternatively requestors may choose not to complete the PRA, but still aid the PRA process significantly by providing a list of pests known to attack the commodity plant species in the area from which the commodity is to be exported.

To request a copy of the PPQ PRA guidelines or to request that PPQ initiate a Commodity Plant Pest Risk Assessment, complete the Selection of Options form. Please fax the completed form to Ahmad Chawkat, PPQ, at (301) 734-4300.

Ever been called for jury duty?

James Menzies

A funny thing happened to me the other month. Completely out of the blue, I received a letter from the Manitoba Sheriff's office. My immediate reaction was that I must have not paid a speeding ticket or something like that (actually I thought that perhaps Kathryn [my wife] had not paid a ticket, but that is another story). Upon opening the letter, I found that I had the dubious honour of being summoned to jury selection. As I have since found out, my reaction was not normal and I was curiously interested in this process. It seems that few of the people I know have ever been on a jury, and most people know little about this process. With that in mind, I thought that I would pass on some of my experience.

The first thing the summons instructed me to do was call the jury monitor and report that I had received the summons and was going to show up. Under the law, you have little choice unless you are on your death bed, but that is not reality. In general, these people do not want you to suffer unnecessary hardship. The summons also told me the conditions under which I could get out of sitting on a jury. It seems that if an immediate member of my family works for the legal system in some way, I am not eligible to serve on a jury. I informed the jury monitor that I have a twin brother who is a judge. She asked me if I listen to everything my brother tells me. Of course, I informed her that my brother and I have been known to have differing opinions, even though we do not like pointing out the sheer stupidity of each others opinions. She said that I should report for jury duty. I guess being a twin is not closely enough related to someone to be considered part of a family. At this point, I was surprised at all the advice I got from people on how to get out of being a juror. I was coached on the many things I could say to get off the jury. In the end, however, it was irrelevant, as I was not asked to speak.

On jury selection day, I arrived at the court house and was directed towards a beautiful old courtroom. It was huge and most of the walls and desks were made of marble. We sat in the audience and waited for something to happen. During the wait, one of the court clerks told us how we were picked. It seems that in Manitoba, they make a request to Manitoba Health for a random list of people from certain areas of the province when they need jurors. Anyone with a health card is eligible. They request certain areas of the province because they do not want someone from Churchill getting on the jury list for a trial in Winnipeg. The day that I went to jury selection, there were approximately 150 of us who had been summoned. There were three juries to be selected. They start by picking numbers randomly and if your number is called, you sit in the jury box. Once the jury box is full (18 people), they start reviewing the potential jurors. I was number 13. They asked me to stand up and face the accused (who is sitting in the accused docket). Once I did this, the crown attorney and the defence attorney said 'content.' What they were 'content' of I will never know, but the next thing I knew, I was on a jury. Those who did not receive 'content' had to go sit down in the audience again and wait until the next jury was to be selected. When they ran out of potential jurors in the jury box, the court clerk called out more numbers and we continued with the screening of jurors. After all 12 were selected (about 30 people were screened before our jury was complete), the court clerk stood and read the indictment for the case we were to hear. We were then escorted to a jury room to be given further instructions.

The trial was to start in four days time (on a Monday) and would last the whole week! Parking would be free and, best of all, we did not need to show up until 9:30 in the

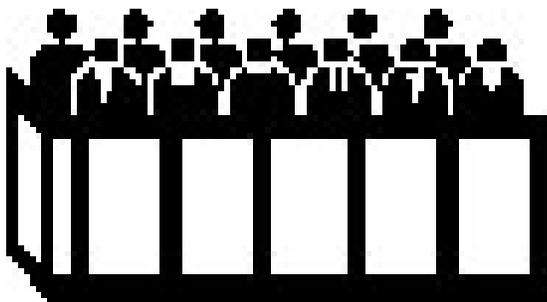
morning. They informed us that we were not to discuss the trial with anyone until after it was over. Our deliberations cannot be disclosed at anytime. They also told us that if you are not paid for jury duty by your employer (my employer does pay), the court system will pay you \$30.00 per day, after the first 10 days of the trial. So merrily I tripped back to work to earn the Queen's shilling and wait until Monday.

When I arrived on Monday morning, I was escorted to the jury room by the jury officer. It is his job to be sure that we are not disturbed and to communicate with people outside the jury room for us. He had a pot of coffee on the go in the jury room and later on, brought some juice and pop for us as well. I finally got to talk to the other people on the jury and learn their names. There were 9 women and 3 men. The ages ranged from 22 to around 60. They were

very nice people and for the duration of the trial we got along very well. As was my experience, they also had stories of friends telling them how to get out of jury duty, yet none of these friends had ever been summoned to jury selection.

We were escorted into the court room at 10:00 am. The judge, Mister Justice Schwartz, introduced himself and then introduced the crown attorney and the defence attorney. The accused was never introduced to us, but he sat in a jury docket along the opposite wall of the court room for the duration of the trial. The case was a criminal case, but I was relieved to know that murder was not one of the charges. Nevertheless, as I sat and stared at the accused, I soon realized that I was going to have to decide what the fate of the accused was going to be. I admit to feeling uneasy about this many times during the trial.

The judge (My Lord to the lawyers) welcomed us to the court and took about 45



minutes to tell us what our jobs were. He told us what the job and responsibilities of the crown and defence councils were. The crown has to prove beyond a 'reasonable' doubt that the accused is guilty and the defence must do what they legally can to create doubt in our minds. The judge is there to rule on the law and to apply the judgment once we, the jury, give it. We are not to be concerned with the penalties for the crime because the judge decides the penalty, not us. Our only task is to determine if the accused is guilty or not guilty. We are not to talk about the case with each other or those outside of the court until we have heard all the evidence (this is tougher than it sounds). Mr. Schwartz allowed us to take notes if we wished, but informed us that it was his experience that note taking does not help much (I took notes anyway and it did not help). He also told us that it has been his experience that once people sit on a jury, they tend to gain a greater respect for the legal system. We were about to find out if this was true.

The trial started with an opening address from the crown council, during which she outlined the case against the accused and gave us an overview of what evidence would be presented during the trial. I am not sure if this is standard practice, but the defence attorney said nothing at this point, and we proceeded to listen to the witnesses.

Witnesses are interesting people. I believe that most of them are scared and do not want to be there. However, it is interesting what you think about people as you watch them give testimony. Some people are honest and some are not. When you are in the position of judging the 'truth', it is surprising how much attention you pay to the person answering the questions. The jury was fortunate in being able to view a very professionally conducted trial. Both the crown and defence attorneys were very good lawyers. I would not want to face the crown in court, but I would sure love to have the defence attorney on my

side. The two lawyers and the judge all seemed to respect each others' abilities, and the case ran very smoothly.

In the first phase of the trial, the crown attorney asked questions first. Then, the defence attorney asked questions, followed once more by the crown attorney. I can't recall, but I don't think the defence attorney ever asked questions after the crown's second set of questions. If they have the right to ask questions or not, I don't know, but I suspect they do. Once the crown finished her side of the case, the defence then called witnesses and the whole process started over again with the exception of the attorneys switching roles in the questioning of witnesses.

Our morning sessions started at 10:00 each day. Mr. Schwartz informed us that we start this late because he and the attorneys have other things to do during the day, and sometimes they meet to discuss certain issues dealing with the trial that they do not want us to hear. We had about 90 minutes for lunch each day (lunches were not provided) and our days ended between 4:00 and 5:30, depending on where we were with the witnesses' testimony. It is surprising how tiring being a juror can be. You are concentrating all day on what people say, and it can be very tense. You are always hoping for the 'knock-out punch' from some witness that will make judgment easy and obvious. Of course, if there was a 'knock-out punch' somewhere in the testimony, the case probably would not have gotten to trial. It is also surprising how hard it is to not discuss the testimony you have just heard with other jurors. I was also surprised that after some witnesses I thought that the accused should be given a seat on the electric chair, and after others, I thought that this poor innocent person was being unjustly persecuted.

Deliberations started on Friday. The morning was spent listening to Mr. Justice Schwartz instruct us 'in the law'. This is not an easy task, as we had varying levels of education, different life experiences,

and the law is not always straight forward. He instructed us that we should remember 'reasonable' doubt, and we should be flexible. Once again, we should not worry about what the penalty for this crime would be should we find the accused guilty. With this in mind, we went into the jury room believing that the case was fairly straight forward, and we would be quaffing an ale by 3:00 pm. I cannot tell you what went on in the jury room but I can tell you that I was not quaffing ale by 3:00 pm. Making a judgment involves getting your mind around facts that differ depending on who is recalling them. In our case, there was bedlam at the scene. We know that there were at least 7 people there, but there could have been 200. There was a minimum of 2 fights occurring. Most of the people were drunk (in their own words, they were still able to walk, but feeling pretty good). One of the witnesses guesses that he had at least 12 beer and then a few shots of hard liquor, though he didn't really like hard liquor. Most of the witnesses had 8 to 10 beer. The most reliable witness was not drunk, but decided to go to the washroom when the critical moments arrived. There were large holes in a lot of the testimony, but this event occurred 1.5 years before the trial and a lot of the witnesses were involved in the incident, which was stressful. The feelings one has towards your new found friends on the jury were also put to the test. There is no law that says you have to respect or like the other jurors. However, you have just met these people, and we all want to be liked. I was impressed with the way some of my fellow jurors were able to express themselves and develop conclusions from the facts as they saw them. During deliberations, which lasted 10 hours, we were given lunch and supper. I will admit that lunch was a disappointment, but supper was very good. Lunch was sandwiches in the jury room and supper was in a nice restaurant, in which we were treated to the 'Sheriff's Menu'. We were always accompanied by a sheriff's officer, even when we went to the washroom. We were only

let out of the jury room for supper and short periods when they took us to walk around in an enclosed outside area.

As time dragged on, I had visions of us pulling a 'Homer'. Homer Simpson's main goal when serving on a jury was to stay overnight in a hotel room. Fortunately, we came to agreement on the verdict at 9:45 in the evening, 15 minutes before we were to be sequestered in a hotel overnight. Everyone was recalled into the court room and our jury foreperson (not me) was asked to give the verdicts to each charge as it was read (there were three). We were then asked as a group if we agreed with the verdicts as stated by the foreperson. The judge then thanked us for spending our week on the jury. He got out of his chair and came to the jury booth and shook each of our hands. (This is unusual to the point that his shaking our hands got more press than the actual verdict). Court was adjourned, and we were free to go, almost. We retired to our jury room and were not allowed to leave until the courtroom was clear. We were also escorted to our vehicles.

Did I leave the courtroom with more respect for our legal system? Most definitely. Am I glad I served on a jury? Yes. Would I suggest others do it? Yes. It was an interesting experience. I learned a lot about the legal system and met some nice people in the process. I suppose that as a Canadian citizen, it was my duty to do it. Would I do it again? I don't think I would like to do it again, but as previously mentioned, I am glad that I have served on a jury. What was the verdict?? Not guilty!

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First, an act of contrition. **Vikram Bisht** - I apologize for not crediting your photography. After all the pleas for pictures you'd think I could make a point of thanking someone who had. Well, thank you! With this issue devoid of all pictures, save our fearless president's mug, I'm sure you all regret my reliance on clip art. I am rather pleased though with the little nods to regional societies.

Thanks also to **Jim Menzies**, tireless associate editor (and now experienced juror) who beats the bushes for the non-housekeeping items. **Lone Buchwaldt** did an admirable job this month of making sure all those committee reports appeared before the annual meeting. Are you going to Victoria? If so, don't forget this weighty newsletter. While Lone did her job, I must chide the laggards (you know who you are) who pled for extensions and asked, ever so innocently, what my *absolute* deadline was. They must know I can be wishy-washy. Some day though, I'll ask them to be guest editor for an issue and see how long on patience they might be.

So what's cooking in the plant pathology world? Out here in the wild west 1999 was a year to remember with an abundance of diseases in field crops - ergot coming out our ears, sclerotia littering the ground beneath pulses and oilseeds and Botrytis growing everywhere but between out toes. El Niño wreaked havoc with more than just wild weather. Should be interesting to see what La Niña has in store.

The bigger issue boiling to the surface is the one **Zamir Punja** has written about this month: biotechnology and the production of the so-called GMOs. Of course my

home town has a huge vested interest in biotech. It's our growth industry. Yet Percy Schmeiser, the little guy taking on Big Green, lives just up the road not an hour away from Toontown. So far we've been spared the ignominy of eco-terrorism. Few such radicals know where Saskatchewan is on the map. Coincidence or clever foresight? In any event, it's fascinating to be in the center of so gripping an issue. With the majority of our GMO production being herbicide tolerant (HT) canola, the crux of the debate seems to be the potential for gene flow via pollen and the creation of "superweedy" volunteer canola.

Whether you have been touched by this issue or not, I urge you to read carefully Zamir's President's Message and the draft position statement he has prepared on behalf of CPS and the Science Policy Committee. Let him know whether you agree or disagree.

David Kaminski, Editor
CPS-SCP News