



**FROM THE PRESIDENT**

Dear all,

Further to my previous message, I can now confirm that a total of five parasitology positions have been lost from AgResearch in Palmerston North. Of these, two left voluntarily, while another person was able to transfer to another group within the company. Unfortunately this meant another two people were made redundant. This has been painful for those people directly affected, and to a lesser extent for everyone else. We must all try to ensure the process does not happen again.

As a first step, we (the society) are working to organise a series of meetings in which some of our members will discuss parasitology issues with groups of livestock farmers throughout the country. We are hopeful that coming up with a suitable format may attract government co-funding – I expect to have more news for the next newsletter.

Finally, our efforts to raise the profile of the society take place via many routes; unless you check the recipient list of this email, you may not realise that a number of overseas parasitology societies and other organisations are now being sent the NZSP newsletter – please tell Tania Waghorn if you can suggest anyone who may be interested. We have already had some feedback from abroad which is very encouraging. Speaking of which, I am attending the British Society Annual Meeting in Edinburgh next month – it is encouraging to see that veterinary parasitology (a particular strength of our own society's membership) has four dedicated sessions this year – a relatively large presence for the BSP, whose focus has traditionally been in other areas such as tropical medicine. On a personal note, this will be my first trip to the northern hemisphere since 2001, far less Scotland, so I think I'm overdue a decent pint of warm beer.

Best regards,  
Ian

**CONFERENCE 2009**

The venue is in the lower South Island.

Dates are likely to be in early or mid-October. A 2-day conference on a Thursday / Friday is envisaged.

A field trip and farmer's forum are planned for the second day.

Organisers for the conference are **Robin McAnulty & Paul Mason**.

If you have any suggestions or offers of assistance please contact them.

**Robin**            [Robin.McAnulty@lincoln.ac.nz](mailto:Robin.McAnulty@lincoln.ac.nz)

**Paul**             [masonp@earthlight.co.nz](mailto:masonp@earthlight.co.nz)

More details in the next newsletter.

## VOLUNTARY REDUNDANCIES FROM AGRESEARCH ANIMAL HEALTH

In October 2008, two of the technical staff from the Immunoparasitology Team applied for, and were granted, voluntary severance from AgResearch. Merie Cannon had quite possibly the greatest justification of any such application; she went to spend more time in her vineyard in Otaki (and with her three beautiful daughters). The remaining staff have their advance orders in already. Sarah Rosanowski opted for a different lifestyle and has enrolled in a postgraduate program at Massey; I have asked six different people the specific details of her study and got six different answers, with the only common thread being something to do with horse faeces. We all wish Merie and Sarah success in their respective careers, and fortunately we probably haven't seen the last of either.

*from Ian Sutherland*

### How long is the longest nematode ever recorded?

*Placentonema gigantissima* from Sperm Whale (*Physeter catodon*) at 8.5m in length.

## CONFERENCE NOTICES

### Australian Society for Parasitology Annual Meeting

12–15 July 2009, University of Sydney [<http://www.parasite.org.au/arcnet/conference/index.html>]

### ICOPA XII

15–20 August 2010, Melbourne [<http://www.icopaxii.org>]

### WAAVP Conference

8 – 13 August 2009, Calgary, Canada [<http://www.waavp2009.com>]

#### Important Dates

Call for Papers Opens	October 6, 2008
Submission Deadline	March 1, 2009
Notification of acceptance	April 5, 2009

### 2009 British Society for Parasitology – Spring Meeting

6 – 8 April 2009, Edinburgh University

### 7th International Sheep Veterinary Congress

12 – 16 June 2009, Stavanger, Norway [[www.isvc09.no](http://www.isvc09.no)]

Focus will be on various diseases of sheep as well as safe food and all matters relating to the use of sheep in a modern society.

**Scientific Program Main Topics** - Chronic/Slow diseases / Management/Flock Health / Reproduction / Caseous lymphadenitis / Medicine and Disease / Parasitology / Virology / Diagnostics / Toxicology / Mammary Gland / Genetics / Nutrition / Pneumonia / Welfare / Zoonosis and Food Safety / Pasture and landscape / Sheep and Future market

## ASP MEMBER – DR PAUL PRESIDENTE

It is with deep sadness that we inform you of the sudden death of Dr Paul Presidente on 29 December 2008, just a week before he was due to begin a well-earned retirement (although he was going to return to work on a part-time consultancy arrangement to begin to reduce his workload and prepare for full retirement). Paul (64) was working as a Research Parasitologist at the Victorian Department of Primary Industries at Attwood, on the outskirts of Melbourne. During his distinguished 30-year career with the Department, Paul developed new approaches to deal with important parasitic diseases of livestock and was highly regarded within the research community. Paul was also a mentor to many young researchers and a great friend to his colleagues. Paul's passing was totally unexpected; however, he lived with a genetic heart condition that appears to have been a contributing factor. Paul passed away at work, where he most loved to be.

*from Barry Hosking*

## NEW ONLINE JOURNAL

A new open access, online journal, **Parasites & Vectors** has been launched. It was stated that a good start had been made with some 50 articles published in the first year.

Visit the website - <http://www.parasitesandvectors.com>

## JOB SEEKER

### Master Student – Massey University

Massey University is looking for a student who would be interested in the following study. Interested people can contact Laryssa Howe at [L.Howe@massey.ac.nz](mailto:L.Howe@massey.ac.nz).

### Transgenesis and RNAi in *Neospora caninum*

*Neospora caninum* is an apicomplexan, intracellular parasite that infects and causes neosporosis in a wide range of mammals, including cattle. In order to effectively control the disease, we propose to develop to develop stable, transposon mediated transgenesis and RNA-mediated interference (RNAi) systems that will help elucidate the molecular biology of *Neospora*. Transposons are DNA sequences defined by inverted repeat termini and contain a gene for a protein called transposase that can mediate the movement of the transposon from one genomic location to another. Transposon mediated transgenesis will help in the identification of gene and regulatory sequence functions through forward genetic approaches while RNAi will help in the identification of gene function by knocking down the expression of specific genes. Thus these will enable the study of the infection process as well as the identification of novel drug targets and vaccine candidates in *Neospora*. The piggyBac transposon will be used to develop the transgenesis system in *Neospora*. The piggyBac transposon has been shown to be active in the apicomplexan parasite *Plasmodium*

*falciparum* (Balu et al., 2005). A selectable marker conferring resistance to the antibiotic phleomycin (ble) and a scorable marker, the green fluorescent protein (EGFP) will be cloned into the piggyBac transposon. The selectable marker will be used to select for the piggyBac transgene following the transfection by electroporation of *Neospora*. The EGFP marker will be used to visualise the transgenic *Neospora*. Transgenesis will be confirmed by inverse PCR and sequencing of the inserted transposon and the flanking *Neospora* genomic DNA. In order to find out if RNAi can be used in *Neospora* to knock down the expression of specific genes, short interfering RNA (25 mer double stranded RNA) designed against the EGFP sequence will be commercially synthesised and introduced in *Neospora* expressing the EGFP marker. Reduction in EGFP expression will be monitored by fluorescent microscopy and confirmed by RT-PCR. The developed transgenesis and RNAi systems in *Neospora* will be powerful tools to study *Neospora* molecular biology towards the identification of novel drug targets and vaccine candidates

Of which city is Ian Scott a native?  
Liverpool

What sticky product is used to aid the diagnosis of pinworm?  
Adhesive tape

Check out the NZSP website  
<http://nzsp.rsnz.org/>

## QUIZ QUESTIONS – DECEMBER 2008 NEWSLETTER

And the winner is.....

**Congratulations Richard Shaw!**



**Richard at work**

- QUIZ # 2**
1. Which German Doctor, in the 1850s, fed meat containing tapeworm cysts to condemned prisoners that he later dissected finding tapeworms in various stages of growth, thus proving that the cysts were a larval stage of tapeworms?
  2. According to 2007 research, infection of women with the protozoan parasite *Toxoplasma gondii*, leads to the birth of more boys or girls?
  3. What is the world's largest blood-sucking insect and how much blood does it take in a single feed?



### **NZSP MEMBERSHIP**

Membership of the Society had peaked at 85 in 2008. There are now a number of outstanding subscriptions for this financial year (2008/2009).

- Cheques should be made payable to the **New Zealand Society for Parasitology** and sent to the Treasurer (Ian Scott).
- Direct payment can be made to the Society's account:  
NZ Society for Parasitology Inc, West Pac, 03 0774 0857331-01

Please include your name in the reference for the transaction.

Return Subscription to: Dr Ian Scott  
IVABS, College of Sciences, Massey University  
Private Bag 11-222, Palmerston North

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**NEW ZEALAND SOCIETY FOR PARASITOLOGY SUBSCRIPTION 2008 / 2009**

The subscription for this year is \$15.00.

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**AMOUNT PAID:** \_\_\_\_\_

**CORRECT EMAIL ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_

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