



PARASITOLOGY

New Zealand Society for Parasitology Newsletter

December 2015



President's Post

Merry Christmas members!

The end of the year is finally upon us. Hopefully, this will be a time to reflect on the year, recharge the batteries and to storm back into 2016, ready for action!

There has been quite a lot of change in the industry this year, with several companies going through mergers and restructures. One of those has been AgResearch. The Animal Health, Parasitology team has been hit again. In 2014 they lost 3 scientists and 2 technical staff, this year, they have lost another 2 scientists and 1 technician. This leaves only 2 scientists, 2 post docs and 4 technical staff. The team no longer stands on its own and has been merged with the infectious diseases group to become a new team called Animal Health. The infectious diseases group has also been hit with redundancies losing 2 scientists and 1 technician in this most recent round of redundancies.

Many other teams throughout AgResearch have also lost staff and morale on all campuses is low. Questions are being asked as to what the future will bring, not only for those made redundant, but for those left, as well the science. Restructures are never an easy or happy time. Good luck to the teams that are left and keep up the good scientific work.

One of the actions from the AGM in July was for a working group to come up with a strategic plan, vision and *raison d'être*, as the Australian Society have. This working group consists of Richard Scott, Trevor Cook and David Heath. They have drafted up the beginning of a strategy and we will provide an update on this in the new year.

Recently, Cathryn Christie, (your VP) represented the NZSP at the CO (constituent organisation) Forum at the Royal Society of NZ headquarters (where we held the 2014 NZSP conference).

Cathryn spoke about our Society, who our members were, our conference including the recent joint one, touched on our Strategic Plan, discussed our membership drive and how concerned we were about the recent funding cuts and redundancies at AgResearch – this was a shock to the group. Cathryn's report follows. Thanks for the great notes Cathryn!

Thanks — Special mention needs to go again to Dallas Bishop for pulling together material for the newsletters and to Saleh Umair for sending it out to all members. Thank you on behalf of the Executive and the members.

We hope you all have a very merry Christmas and a happy, festive and safe New Year celebrating the beginning of 2016!!

Best wishes from the Committee



Victoria, Saleh, Tania and Cathryn

New Members

Again, we have more new members that have joined the Society. They are: Reuben Harland, Paula Grant and Kathryn McRae and Reuben's bio can be found below. Welcome to the Club!!

Reuben Harland—Totally Vets

As a graduate of Lincoln University with an Honours in Agricultural Science it was inevitable that I would pursue a career in the Agricultural industry. After 2 years at AgResearch and a stint with an Agricultural chemical manufacturer, I returned to the Manawatu where I took up a Technical Sales role with Totally Vets. Through this role I have become fascinated by the dynamic and versatile nature of ruminant parasites and their management. It was with this in mind that I have pursued to further my knowledge in this area by joining the NZ Society of Parasitology and look forward to building networks with other members.



Member's News

Lawrie McMurtry

Prior to starting work with Gribbles Veterinary in Palmerston North late last year, my work had mainly involved working on helminths of sheep, cattle and goats. However, in my new role in Gribbles Veterinary's parasitology department I am working with a much broader range of parasites and their hosts. My studies in Applied Veterinary Parasitology under the guidance of Bill Pomroy, Massey University have come in very useful. In addition to the hosts mentioned above, samples have come from cats, dogs, horses, alpacas and deer, a variety of Zoo and wildlife animals (giraffes, rabbits, pigs, otters, reptiles and primates to name just a few), and a variety of birds (Kiwi, Kea, Kaka, Black Stilts and Parakeets).

I work as part of a team led by Phil McKenna and have been fortunate enough to have Phil train me in the identification of some of the more unusual parasites and also the differences between working in a research environment and a commercial laboratory, i.e. time is money! Also in the parasitology team is Amy McKenzie-Bang who has a background in microbiology and who has worked at Gribbles Veterinary for about 18 months. Amy has taught me the Gribbles Veterinary methods for a variety of tasks/ tests that have to be standardized across the company's five laboratories and meet IANZ accreditation requirements.

The 'bread & butter' of our work is checking helminth eggs counts in cattle and sheep, and pre and post-drench cultures to identify 3rd stage larvae. Other parasites we identify, besides standard helminth eggs, larvae and adults, include eggs (*Trichurus*, *Capillaria*, *Heterakis*, *strongyloides*), coccidia, cyathostomes, flukes, lungworm, cestodes, ascarides, cryptosporidium, giardia and a variety of ectoparasites.

I am really enjoying work for Gribbles Veterinary in the commercial sector. The role is varied and the people are great to work with. It has also provided me with an opportunity to gain experience across a range of other disciplines including microbiology and serology.

In This Issue

- * Presidential Post
- * 2016 Conference
- * New members
- * Member's news
- * Subscription Reminder
- * Royal Society meeting report
- * Media Links

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Visit the Society at

<http://nzsp.science.org.nz>

Royal Society Report

The purpose of the Forums are to both inform COs of what the Society is doing, but also to seek out the views of the COs on issues and opportunities where the Society, working with one or more COs may be able to achieve a positive outcome.

The day was held as follows:

- A Constituents Forum where all COs were entitled to be represented (chaired by Councillor representing Constituent Organisations) NB there were very few apologies
- Three parallel Discipline-Based Forums, (Physical sciences, mathematics, engineering and technological sciences; Biological and life sciences; Humanities and social sciences), each chaired by the relevant Vice-President
- A closing plenary session to sum up the outcomes of the day.

Richard Bedford, President of the RSNZ spoke about the theme of the day being “that which unites us” and talked about the value of the CO relationships with the RSNZ – it provides a connection to an incredible diversity of research, scholars, students and industry around NZ science. The question was, how can we leverage that connection and relationships? Previously there was not a clear idea.

The RSNZ has recently adopted a new strategic plan which outlines the values (Open + Inclusive; Independent; Trustworthy; Inspiring; Knowledgeable) and identifies four focus areas for increasing knowledge base in the next 3 years (Relevant; Impact; Engagement; Excellence). Embracing diversity is high on the agenda Gender; Ethnicity; Organisations) and they have to expand their reach internationally as we are not getting all the recognition we deserve for our sciences. 2017 is the 150th anniversary of the RSNZ and it is the only Society run under a Government Act. Richard encouraged all CO's to invite a RSNZ representative to their 2016/2017 conferences to discuss issues with research and scholarship in NZ.

RSNZ reports are held in high esteem for their evidence based, independent views. Recent reports include one on fluoridation of public water supplies and a review of NZ's taxonomic collections (due out mid Dec). Topics covered need to have a readily identifica-

ble purpose, accessing evidence already out there and packaging it for government advice for policy. The RSNZ have a strong relationship with the Prime Minister's science advisor but are very conscious of independence. There is a communications programme underway to draw attention to the vast expanses of expertise the RSNZ can draw on. It was suggested that each of the CO's supply the RSNZ a list of their experts and area of expertise. RSNZ says it is up to CO's to let RSNZ know what we can do and what we want to do – better to have opportunity to engage and opt out where it is not relevant than no opportunity to engage.

Peter Griffen presented on the Science Media Centre which is based at the RSNZ rooms. This was very interesting and I'm sure will be relevant to a lot of our members. The services offered by the SMC are mostly free and a list is provided at the end of this report.

NZSP comes under the Biological and Life Sciences discipline so after the morning forum the 15 delegates who came under this group gathered around the table with Barry Scott and Phillipa Gardiner. The purpose of this session was to come up with 3 subjects which were thought the most pressing to report on, for New Zealanders. The attendees are presented on the next page.

Conference 2016

Dates and exact place for the NZSP 2016 conference are still being worked on, but we should have these for the next newsletter.

Agronomy Society of New Zealand
Australasian Society for Immunology (NZ Branch)
New Zealand Association of Scientists
New Zealand Freshwater Sciences Society
New Zealand Institute of Agricultural & Horticultural Science
New Zealand Marine Sciences Society
New Zealand Microbiological Society
New Zealand Society of Animal Production

New Zealand Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology
New Zealand Society of Endocrinology
New Zealand Society for Oncology
The New Zealand Society for Parasitology
New Zealand Society of Plant Biologists
The Nutrition Society of New Zealand
The Physiological Society of New Zealand

Bill Bussell
Deepa Patel
Craig Stevens
Graham Sevicke-Jones
David Lewis
Scott Nodder
Helen Withers
Nicola Schreurs

Anthony Poole
Greg Anderson
Melanie McConnell
Cathryn Christie
Rainer Hofmann
Sheila Skeaff
Colin Brown

There is perhaps room for some of these societies to join together under some kind of federation which could be used for advocacy purposes, seeing that the RSNZ has to remain impartial. Phillipa is going to look into this and report back. The three most pressing issues that arose from the table ended up being:

- OBESITY
- GENETIC ENGINEERING/GENOME EDITING
- ANTIBIOTIC RESISTANT BACTERIA

These subjects go back to the RSNZ to peruse along with the ideas from the other disciplines and come back with 1 or 2 which they will do a report on.

I spoke with Dr Deepa Patel PhD, BSc(Hons) representing the Australasian Society for Immunology (NZ branch) who is post doc at the Malaghan institute working with Immunology and they are looking to develop a parasite immunology department by the sounds of it. Her contact details are dpatel@malaghan.org.nz

Also Craig Stevens BEng (Civ.)(Hons I), PhD from NIWA representing the Institute of Agricultural and Horticultural Scientists who expressed interest in providing support in terms of advocacy with any funding cuts/redundancies. His contact details are craig.stevens@niwa.co.nz

There will be forum note and minutes coming from the Royal Society from this meeting. I encourage you all to have a good look at the RSNZ website also to better understand their role in NZ Science. There are also additional offerings from the RSNZ at the end of this newsletter

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you would like to discuss any of this further.

Cathryn Christie

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Science Media Centre Offerings

Science Media Exchange

We operate Scimex.org a go-to portal for journalists where we offer journalists embargoed access to research papers, multimedia content and an expert database. We'd invite you and your members to register as an expert on Scimex, where you can outline to our network of 400 journalists your areas of expertise and level of comfort working with different types of media. You can also pitch stories directly to journalists.

On the web: To register a profile on Scimex, visit www.scimex.org/expert

Science Media SAVVY

Throughout the country we run intensive two-day science communication workshops, courses designed to give you the skills to confidently engage with the media.

We also run **Science Media SAVVY Express** - rapid-fire interview sessions we can undertake at your conference designed to help researchers gain confidence being interviewed in front of the camera.

On the web: [Info on upcoming Science Media SAVVY workshops](#)

On the web: [Our helpful Desk Guide for Scientists: Working with Media](#) (we can send copies too)

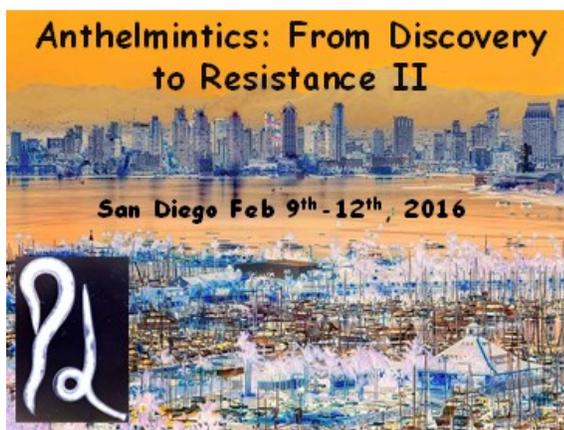
Sciblogs

We operate the largest blogging network in New Zealand, featuring the likes of Professor Michael Corballis, Dr Siouxie Wiles and Dr Michael Edmonds. Blogging is a great way to engage with the public and we can host your blog on Sciblogs, or accept guest posts from you if you would like to be an infrequent contributor.

On the web: Visit www.sciblogs.co.nz

SMC Media briefings

We regular hold online briefings for journalists on science-related subjects. If you identify an issue you think will new of interest to the media, or if there is media misunderstanding of a particular topic, we can host an expert briefing for media, where journalists dial in from their desks to gain valuable background that will improve their reporting.



Subs Reminder

For all those who have been reminded and have paid your exorbitant \$20 subs for the next financial year (2015-2016), thank you very much. If you haven't paid, please get in touch with Secretary Saleh, Saleh.Umair@agresearch.co.nz to sort payment.

Further to Victoria's reference on page 1 to changes in parasitology within AgResearch and industry, David Heath has offered to share his 2014 Conference presentation—"The Future of Parasitology."

If you would like to correspond with David, he can be contacted at david.heath @agresearch.co.nz

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