



NEWSLETTER OF THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN SOCIETY FOR PLANT PATHOLOGY

July 2011



Council 2011-2014:

President: Prof Teresa Coutinho (teresa.coutinho@fabi.up.ac.za)
Vice-President: Prof Jolanda Roux (jolanda.roux@fabi.up.ac.za)
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Secretary: Ms. Wilmarie Kriel (wilmarie@starkeyres.co.za)

Branch chairpersons 2011-2014

Northern Branch: Dr Lucy Moleleki (lucy.moleleki@up.ac.za)
Central Branch: Dr Deidre Fourie (fouried@arc.agric.za)
Eastern Branch: Ms Dael Visser (visserd@ukzn.ac.za)
Southern Branch: Dr Cheryl Lennox (clennox@sun.ac.za)

Website: <http://www.saspp.co.za/> [under construction – watch this space...]

Why join SASPP?

One often hears comments from colleagues and students that they gain no benefit from belonging to scientific societies, in particular, to our society. The attraction of belonging to many scientific societies is free access to their publications, in particular, their journals. SASPP currently does not have its own journal and whether or not to initiate such a publication has been debated at various forums. To offer its members something similar the Council has decided to place publications that are out of print and pdf's of recently published articles by the community on our website. Membership of societies does not only allow members access to publications, it all offers reduced costs of attending our flagship biennial congress. Additional benefits to student members include reduced conference fees and opportunities to apply for a number of awards. The Council is also working on offering additional membership services through our association with other international societies such as the British Society of Plant Pathology (BSPP), Australasian Plant Pathology Society (APPS) etc and local societies such as the Plant Breeders Association. Last, and perhaps most importantly, however, is the less tangible benefit of being part of a scientific society. To quote Schwartz *et al.* (2008) "Membership in scientific societies is a responsibility and critical to disciplinary success; this message needs core attention in professional training. It is not enough to do the science; scientists have a responsibility to educate others about the value of our science." [Scientific societies in the 21st century: a membership crisis. *Conservation Biology* 22:1087–1089].

Newly elected council begins their term with a strategic planning meeting

On the 6th July the Council hosted a planning meeting with the idea of placing the Society on the very best possible trajectory to ensure growth and stability into the future. The fact that we will celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the SASPP in 2018 also provided an ideal point in time to plot the future of the Society. Past presidents of the Society, Heads of Departments of Plant Pathology, branch chairpersons, student representatives from each university and representatives of key areas of importance to the future of Plant Pathology in South Africa were invited to attend the meeting. Seventeen people were able to attend and this included: the council members, Pedro Crous, Zakkie Pretorius and Mike Wingfield (past presidents), Gert Marais (Head of Plant Pathology,

UFS), Lucy Moleleki (Northern Branch chair), Deidre Fourie (Central Branch chair) and Cheryl Lennox (Southern Branch chair), Debbie Carmichael (student representative from WITS), Gert van Collier (student representative from US), Masiyima Sakupwanya (student representative from UP), Isabel Rong (ARC representative), Veronica Serage (DAFF representative) and Terry Aveling (chair of the 47th SASPP congress organising committee).

A range of topics were discussed. The most pressing matters are updating the SASPP listserver which currently has a 60% bounce rate and the website. With regards to the website, it was decided, among other things, to once again

implement the “pathogen of the month” page and remove the signing in function the original purpose of which was to allow members to update their personal information. A newsletter, such as this one, will be circulated to the community quarterly on email. Members are invited to send their contributions to the president. Also, very importantly, intensive efforts will be made by the council to involve industries closely linked with plant pathology in the society’s activities.

Other matters which the council would like to implement will have to be included in the constitution and approved by members. These include an online poll system to approve any changes to the constitution, establishment of a student council and in order to insure continuity appoint the past president of the society for a further two years to serve on the new council.

The reason for the online poll was because currently it would take two years before any changes could be ratified and it would be far easier and faster to do this through an online system.

Each branch would be asked to elect a student to serve on the so called council on an annual basis. A meeting of the student council would take place during the congress. The student representative from the branch from whence the current council originated will serve on the SASPP council for 2 to possibly 4 years, depending on the year of registration and qualification. It is common in other scientific societies for the past president to serve on the current council to insure continuity and guide them through the initial phases.

So watch this space... the Society is alive and well!

The 47th Southern African Society for Plant Pathology Congress



Prof Theresa Aveling opening the 47th SASPP Congress

The 47th Southern African Society for Plant Pathology (SASPP) congress was held at the Berg-en-Dal Conference Centre in the Kruger National Park from 23 to 26 January 2011. The congress was organised by the University of Pretoria, CSIR and Syngenta SA. Prof Theresa Aveling (Department of Microbiology and Plant Pathology, Forestry and

Agricultural Biotechnology Institute) was the chairperson and Dr Quenton Kritzing (Department of Plant Science) was the secretary of the organising committee.



The congress was attended by 198 delegates. Prof Aveling opened the congress Sunday evening followed by the Dr JE Vanderplank memorial lecture presented by Prof Chrissie Rey. Of the 12 international delegates attending, five gave keynote addresses namely, Dr Guro Brodal (Norway), Prof Burt Bluhm (USA), Dr Kevin Hyde (United Kingdom), Prof Wojciech Janisiewicz (USA) and Prof Paul Birch (United Kingdom). Dr Marieka Gryzenhout presented the Ethel Mary Doidge Memorial Address. There were a total of 59 oral presentations, of which 32 were presented by post-graduate students, and 66 poster presentations. Social events included a Welcoming Reception on Sunday 23th, the traditional “John Mildenhall Stakes” on Monday 24th and a Conference “Bush Banquet” on Tuesday 25th.



Prof Lindsey du Toit attempting the “John Mildenhall Stakes”

Left: SASPP Congress delegates in the Berg en Dal Conference Centre, Kruger Park

Congratulations

The Commonwealth Forestry Association has bestowed Prof Jolanda Roux with the Queen's Award for her contribution to forestry. The award, which recognises the achievements and supports the future work of an outstanding mid-career forester, comprises a certificate, a cash prize and a travel grant.

Prof Roux is from the University of Pretoria's Forestry and Agricultural Biotechnology Institute (FABI), and has been recognised for her exceptional contributions to forestry with an innovative approach to her work.

Her research interests focus strongly on fungi and bacteria resulting in disease and death of woody hosts. Most of the research has been focused on the diseases of the commercial plantation forestry species in South Africa and other African countries, namely *Acacia mearnsii*, *Eucalyptus* spp. and *Pinus* spp.

With her appointment in the Department of Science and Technology/National Research Foundation Centre of Excellence in tree health biotechnology (CTHB), Prof Roux has now become much more involved in investigating the health of native tree species in Southern Africa. She is especially involved in the in-field diagnosis of disease and pest problems and the identification of the causal agents using morphological and molecular techniques.



Future events:

The XV Congress on Molecular Plant-Microbe Interactions
Kyoto International Conference Center, Kyoto, Japan, 02 to 06 Aug 2011
<http://mpmi2011.umin.jp/>

2011 APS Annual Meeting
Honolulu, Hawaii, USA 6 to 10 August 2011
<http://www.apsnet.org/>

44th Brazilian Congress of Plant Pathology
14 – 19 August 2011
<http://www.fito2011.com.br>

Second Asian PGPR Conference
Beijing, China, 21 – 24 August 2011
<http://www.ag.auburn.edu/auxiliary/asianpgpr/meetings/2011>

8th International Symposium on Mycosphaerella and Stagonospora Diseases of Cereals
Mexico City, 11 to 14 Sep 2011
<http://conferences.cimmyt.org/en/component/registrationpro/event/2/8th-International-symposium-on-Mycosphaerella-and-Stagonospora-diseases-of-cereals>

Botrytis-Sclerotinia Post-Genome Workshop
Lyon, France, 15-17 September 2011
<http://bspwg2011.univ-lyon1.fr/en>

The 2011 International Spinach Conference
Amsterdam, Netherlands, 3 to 10 October 2011
<http://spinach.uark.edu>

2011 Annual International Research Conference on Methyl Bromide Alternatives and Emissions Reductions

San Diego, California, 31 October to 2 November 2011
<http://www.mbao.org>

2011 IUFRO Forest Entomology-Forest Pathology Joint Meeting
Uruguay, 8 to 11 November 2011
<http://www.iufrouuguay2011.org>

3rd International *Phytophthora capsici* Conference
Duck Key, FL, USA, 30 November to 1 December 2011
<http://conferences.dce.ufl.edu/pcap>

2011 National Fusarium Head Blight Forum
Hyatt Regency St. Louis at the Arch, St. Louis, Missouri, USA, 4 to 6 December 2011
<http://scabusa.org/forum11.html>

2011 Field Crop Rust Symposium
San Antonio, USA, 14 to 16 December 2011
<http://www.apsnet.org/meetings/topicalmeetings/fcrs2011/Pages/default.aspx>

BSPP Presidential Meeting 2011: The Impact of Bioactive Small Molecules in Plant Pathology
Clare College, Cambridge, UK, 15 to 16 Dec 2011
<http://www.bspp.org.uk/meetings/>