

Report of the 13th European Association for Potato Research Virology Section Meeting 17 – 22 June 2007, Coylumbridge, Aviemore, Scotland

The 13th triennial meeting of the Virology Section of the EAPR, hosted by the Scottish Agricultural Science Agency (SASA) and the Scottish Crop Research Institute (SCRI) was held at the Hilton Hotel, Coylumbridge, Aviemore, set in a woodland estate in the centre of the Cairngorm National Park, the largest national park in the United Kingdom. It was the first time that the meeting had been held in Scotland and it was used to celebrate the EAPR's 50th anniversary.

Over 70 delegates from all continents attended. Generous sponsorship received from a range of UK and overseas companies / organizations enabled financial assistance to be provided to keynote speakers, and travel grants to delegates from Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Pakistan, Poland and Turkey. The meeting was opened by Colin Jeffries who provided a potted history of the EAPR and the Virology Section. Continuing the historical theme, Professor Bryan Harrison gave his keynote lecture to celebrate 50 years of the EAPR, "Fifty years of potato virus research: achievements and changing concerns".

There then followed the scientific sessions that dealt with: resistance; plant-virus interactions; epidemiology and control of virus-vector insects; impact of climate change on virus incidence and spread; non European / global virus issues; soil-borne viruses; certification/quarantine; diagnostic testing. Keynote papers were given by: Gad Loebenstein (Understanding Natural resistance mechanisms- will it lead to obtaining resistant cultivars?), Lesley Torrance (Soil-borne virus diseases of potato with particular reference to Potato mop-top virus), Richard Harrington (Vectors and viruses in a warmer world), Luis Salazar (Global virus issues) and Rick Mumford (Making diagnostics work: getting it right, every time for the right price). In all, some 38 oral papers and 23 posters were presented.

The social events included: a welcome reception hosted by the Highland Council: dinner at The Ptarmigan, the UK's highest restaurant at 1100 m, just under the summit of Cairn Gorm, reached by funicular railway; a visit to a whisky distillery and Urquhart Castle on the shore of Loch Ness; a Highland banquet with piper and piped band concluding with a Ceildidh (traditional Scottish dancing). Scientific excursions were to the minituber production facility and stores of the Higgins Group, one of Scotland's largest seed potato producers and to SASA's impressive new headquarters (www.sasa.gov.uk) and world renowned potato plots that contain over 1000 cultivars including heritage varieties, and potato inspector training plots of popular cultivars, virus symptoms and variations.

Thank you to the EAPR for sponsoring the attendance of an early career scientist and to the rest of the organising committee of Carolyn Nisbet, Isla Browning (SASA), Finlay Dale, Lesley Torrance and Brian Fenton (SCRI) and the delegates for making this a memorable and informative conference.

Colin Jeffries
Organising Committee and Chairman of the EAPR Virology Section

4 January 2008