

EAPR Newsletter

HEADLINES

Dear all,

Welcome to the Spring 2023 European Association of Potato Research (EAPR) newsletter. Following a quiet time due to COVID-19, we are delighted to say that things are starting to happen again. Given the many difficulties around COVID-19 and the war in Ukraine, Jadwiga Sliwka and colleagues did an amazing job of hosting the 21st Triennial Conference in Krakow, Poland 2022. We are now preparing for the 22nd Triennial in Oslo in July 2024. Look out for information on attending the conference (page 2).

We have a special report on potato production in Ukraine, the largest producer of potato in Europe, and we wish our Ukrainian potato colleagues, and indeed the whole nation, our support in the coming months (page 3).

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Louise Cooke (page 4), whom many of you will know. Our small tribute remembers a life dedicated to plant pathology and many years of research on potato late blight.

The EAPR Council meeting took place 19-20th January 2023, with details on page 5. At the 2022 General Assembly a number of new Councillors were voted onto the Council and a full complement of the current EAPR Officers and Councillors are listed on page 6. Our next General Assembly will be held online on 25th May 2023, to which you are all invited.

We have four Section meetings coming up in 2023 (one of which is combined) so please see pages 7-11 and visit the website for further information and deadlines. Sadly the 'Breeding and Varietal Assessment' and joint 'Eucarpia Potato section' meeting is now uncertain due to the recent earthquake in Turkey. Our hearts go out to everyone affected and we hope to bring you more news of the meeting on our website in the near future.

Finally, we wish to remind those who have not yet joined or renewed their membership to please do so as soon as possible (it's easy to do on the website). We also encourage you to continue to submit articles to Potato Research and would encourage those with an interest in becoming an editor to contact the

Chief editor **Paul Struik** at paul.struik@wur.nl



Image: Potatoes in basket. Credit—Sabrina Ripke from Pixabay.



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

22nd EAPR triennial conference.....	2
Ukraine article.....	3
Obituary—Louise Cooke.....	4
EAPR Council meeting.....	5
EAPR Officers and Councillors.....	6
Section meetings.....	7-11
Potato Research	9
Membership—join now.....	12
Website and Twitter.....	12

Points of interest

- Potato conferences 2023
- Awards
- EAPR Triennial 2023
- Potato News

22ND EAPR TRIENNIAL CONFERENCE: OSLO 7-12 JULY 2024

I am happy to wish you all a very warm welcome to Oslo in July next year (2024). This is the first time Norway will host an EAPR Triennial conference, and the organizing committee is eager to make “the best Triennial conference ever”. The headline for the conference is: **Sustainable Potato production: advances and applications of Potato Research**. We plan 10 scientific sessions covering a broad spectrum of subjects related to the potato crop. The scientific committee consists of both Norwegian scientists and experts from other parts of Europe.

The venue for the conference is Scandic Fornebu Hotel (tinyurl.com/conference-venue) located in Oslo close to the Oslo fjord. The hotel can accommodate more than 300 participants and has very good facilities for the conference.

We plan one full day for excursions during the conference to visit potato growing areas including social activities. In addition, an optional tour to the Arctic potato area after the conference will be offered.

More information about registration and deadline for abstracts will arrive on the website on about 15 March 2023.

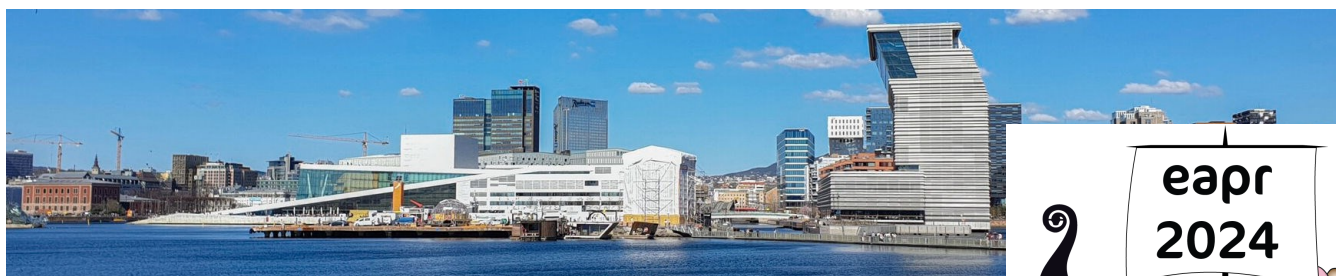
I hope to see you in Oslo in July 2024!

Arne Hermansen
(President of EAPR)



For more information visit:

nibio.pameldingssystem.no/eapr2024



“The 22nd EAPR Triennial Conference will be held in Oslo, Norway on 7th–12th July 2024”

POTATO CONFERENCES 2023

Potato Association of America: Prince Edward Island, Canada 23-27th July 2023

potatoassociation.org/

British Potato: Harrogate, United Kingdom 22-33rd November 2023

bp2023.co.uk/

DEADLINE FOR EAPR TRIENNIAL 2024

REGISTRATION / ACCOMMODATION	Opening	July 2023
	Early bird rate ending	15th March 2024
	Closing	8th April 2024
ABSTRACTS	Opening	June 2023
	Closing	15th December 2023
STUDENT SUPPORT	Closing	15th December 2023

PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE OF POTATO PRODUCTION IN UKRAINE

The 24th February 2022 was the date which will forever be etched on many European and all Ukrainian minds when waves, not ripples, were sent across the world. This was especially true for global energy and food security, which impact heavily upon the high cost/high risk world of potato growing. With fertiliser and fuel costs spiralling, Ukrainian growers thought long and hard about minimising their costs and what area they could afford to plant and risk.

The three day "Special Military Operation" has now arrived at its first anniversary, a point at which we have learnt three major lessons. How thin a veneer of civilisation really is in the 21st century, the increasing global interconnectivity and the indomitability of the human spirit, whether farmer or soldier.

The potato crop has always been important to Ukraine, which produces around \$4 b worth of value and has the largest production in Europe ahead of France, Romania and Germany— 18% of European production. Ukraine is the fifth largest producer of potatoes in the world with over 4% of production. The country produces ca 20 m tn per annum, similar to the U.S. What is generally not appreciated is that over 80% of this production is in the hands of smaller non professional growers, in small-scale, backyard plots for domestic consumption. This increases disease and pest pressures for the 50,000 ha that are under full commercial production.

We started growing 90 ha of potatoes in W Ukraine near Lviv 18 years ago, founding Continental Farmers Group. Within a few years we were Ukraine's largest commercial producer with over 2000 ha of potatoes. Key to this success was investment in new technology and genomics. Most of the smaller producers grow home saved seed for many years, with obvious implications for yield and quality. What I term the "East European Leapfrog Effect" meant a swift move from poor quality seed and horse drawn manual planting to superior seed quality genetics and GPS controlled planters. This paid quick dividends with a tripling of yields in the famous fertile, stone free black soils which I had first learnt of as an undergraduate.

Decades of Soviet "command and control" collective farming had led to much soil damage and compaction. Abandonment of land for over a decade had also led to a huge tumbledown weed burden. Both were costly to remedy but paid dividends quickly. Low state adjudicated rentals for high quality land and a willing and low cost (by European standards) workforce were our two most important competitive advantages. Rural unemployment was 90%. We invested heavily in staff train-

ing and knowledge transfer, as well as supporting community projects. The positive ripple effects of these investments and stewardship were manifold.

It is not allowed to buy agricultural land and so our rental model focused on production rather than land appreciation. We invested in temperature controlled stores for processing crops and supportive contracts from our main crisping customer were critical. Their support during the last year is highly valued, despite temporary closure of their Black Sea factory.

Having sold Continental Farmers, we set up a new venture, Central Plains Group three years ago, integrating a new starch production factory for biodegradable plastic feedstock. We are now Ukraine's second largest grower after our old company. It was a bold decision last spring to plant a thousand ha of potatoes not knowing who might harvest them. We planted in an act of faith and defiance in the face of Russian aggression. Our excellent local team repaid that faith. Our war aid efforts continue with pickups for peace.

Looking forward, we plant again this spring, despite the challenges of power outages, reduced cashflow, increased storage costs, labour shortages due to war and logistics. Around 15% of Ukrainian land (5.5 m ha) is "neutralised" for farming due to landmines and war, and winter wheat sowings is down by a third. The disruption of the annual cycle of food production here will continue to impact globally, not least on the poorest. Our faith in the indomitability of our Ukrainian farming colleagues and the good soils of Ukraine remain steadfast. They will remain when this war is ended.

Dr Keith Dawson (Central Plains Group Ltd)



OBITUARY - LOUISE RENE COOKE (1953-2023)

After a short illness, Louise Rene Cooke passed away on 23rd February 2023. Following her undergraduate degree at the University of Bristol she completed a PhD on the chemical control of Dutch Elm Disease and in 1981 took up a position in Belfast at the Science Service of the then Department of Agriculture for Northern Ireland which later became the Agri-Food & Biosciences institute (AFBI). During her time in Belfast, until her official retirement in 2017, Louise worked on many different pathogens, but her primary interest and passion was *Phytophthora infestans*, cause of late blight of potatoes, with a particular focus on resistance to phenylamide fungicides.



Louise was an active and well-recognised member of the Pathology and Pests Section of the EAPR, presenting her work at meetings and participating in discussions with colleagues. Louise was also a key participant in EuroBlight, a network of scientists and industry working on potato late blight, since its inception in the 1990s and contributed significantly to our understanding of the disease and its control. Since her retirement from AFBI, Louise had been instrumental, alongside international colleagues, in bringing together the AsiaBlight network. Louise was invited to present to the EuroBlight group at its most recent meeting in Switzerland in May 2022 and the community remains indebted to her for her longstanding contributions and commitment to late blight research.

Louise's work for the Fungicide Resistance Action Group (FRAG) UK epitomised her collaborative approach and her ability to combine scientific rigour with practical and impactful advice. With the foresight to see how emerging issues with fun-

gicide resistance would become problematic, she was a founder member of this group in the early 1980s and an expert member right to the end of her life. The guidance documents that the group produces are immeasurably better for her ability to gather and communicate the evidence with clarity and precision. She was an active contributor to all FRAG guidance documents and advice, and the lead for key sectors such as potatoes, apples and pears. Louise was a guiding hand and a mentor to so many now active in resistance research and practical agronomy, that her reach and impact in this field goes far beyond the bounds of FRAG and the UK.

Louise had a joint appointment as a lecturer in The Queens University of Belfast, supervised several students on a range of plant pathological topics, and provided advice and support to many more. Since her appointment in 2001, Louise had remained a much valued and diligent editor for *Plant Pathology*, especially on manuscripts concerning potato and apple diseases, and carried out her duties with the utmost dedication until near the end of 2022, just before being admitted to hospital and just before she was due to retire from the editorial board. Louise's own publication record spans an incredible 47-year period from 1976, with publications on ash dieback in Northern Ireland and *P. infestans* populations in Bangladesh being published as recently as early 2023.

Louise was an influential member of the Society of Irish Plant Pathologists (SIPP) having been both Chairperson and President. In 2019 the Society awarded Louise the Butler Medal for her outstanding contribution to plant pathology on the island of Ireland. In the 55-year history of SIPP, the medal has only been awarded eight times and Louise is the only female recipient.

Louise was a keen lover of music, being a generous supporter and patron of the Ulster Orchestra and Opera NI. She loved singing and was a dedicated member of her church choir. She tended a beautiful garden in which she grew a wide variety of wonderful plants, many of which she was only too happy to share with friends via seeds or cuttings. She also loved her cats. Louise was a person of immense integrity who set high standards for both herself, her students and those she worked with. She was highly respected as a scientist and a person by all who knew her in Belfast and by her many contacts and friends around the world. She will be greatly missed.

Alistair McCracken, Alison Lees, Fiona Burnett, David Cooke, Matt Dickinson

2023 EAPR COUNCIL MEETING

The EAPR Council meeting took place in Oslo, Norway on 19-20 January 2023.

Our new President Arne Hermansen welcomed the Council before discussing and accepting the minutes from the last meeting in Poland. From the actions, it was agreed to seek nominations for the 2030 Triennial at the Oslo conference and to remove inactive members from the database after 6 years.

Finances are looking healthy, allowing us to offer some student support for the Triennial in Oslo and Section meetings. Look out for more announcements.

Our membership currently stands at 202 members but now that an issues with subscription reminders has been overcome we are expecting more people to renew in the near future.

Legal issues were debated, including our agreements with ISHS and Springer, and the new Council composition was updated, following ratification at the 2022 General Assembly.

Potato Research was discussed and it is clear that the journal is doing well (see page 8). It was emphasised

that the continued submission of high-quality papers and help with editing are welcome.

We are working to ensure that there is a full list of country representatives and, to help them disseminate information on the EAPR, a short powerpoint presentation will soon be made available on our website to these and other members.

After a long period of quiet due to COVID-19, Section meetings are starting up again, with three taking place in 2023 (*one of which is joint between 2 Sections plus Eucarpia) and one in 2025 (see pages 6-10).

Under Belgian statutes a General Assembly must be held annually and the date of 25th May was set for the meeting in 2023.

Finally, plans for the Triennials in Oslo and Scotland were discussed and progress reported. Please look out for information on the 2024 Oslo conference, which is starting to come out now.

* Due to the recent earthquake in Turkey this meeting is now uncertain. Please visit the website (eapr.net) for more information.

Image: Participants at the meeting around the table from left to right: Vincent César, Kürt Demeulemeester, Arne Hermansen, Paul Struik, Ian Tóth, Jean-Eric Chauvin. Projector screen left to right, top row: Corne Kempenaar, Thilo Hammann and bottom row: Zsolt Polgar and Alison Lees.



2022 EAPR OFFICERS AND COUNCILLORS



Dr Arne Hermansen (President)
Norwegian Institute of Bioeconomy Research (NIBIO)
Norway
Email: arne.hermansen@nibio.no



Dr Jean-Eric Chauvin (Council for relations with Country Representatives)
French National Institute for Agriculture Alimentation and Environment
France
Email: skrabuleilze@gmail.com



Prof Dr Ii Paul C. Struik (Non-executive Council member and Chief Editor for Potato Research)
Wageningen University and Research (WUR)
Netherlands



Ir Vincent César (Treasurer)
Centre Wallon de Recherches Agronomiques (CRA-W)
Belgium
Email: v.cesar@cra.wallonie.be



Prof Ian Toth (President Elect)
James Hutton Institute (JHI)
United Kingdom
Email: ian.toth@hutton.ac.uk



Ir Kürt Demeulemeester (Vice-President)
Inagro
Belgium
Email: kurt.demeulemeester@inagro.be



Dr Alison Lees (Secretary and Chairperson for Pathology and Pests Section)
James Hutton Institute (JHI)
United Kingdom
Email: alison.lees@hutton.ac.uk



Dr Corne Kempenaar (Councillor for relations with other potato societies)
Wageningen University and Research (WUR)
The Netherlands



Dr Zsolt Polgar (Councillor)
University of Pannonia
Hungary
Email: polg-zs@georgikon.hu



Dr Thilo Hammann (Councillor for Section Meetings)
Julius Kuhn-Institut
Germany
Email: thilo.hammann@julius-kuehn.de

MEETING UPDATES

BREEDING AND VARIETAL ASSESSMENT

The Section Chair for Breeding and Varietal Assessment is currently Domenico Carputo. He is also the country representative for Italy.

Next Section Meeting 2023

The 20th Triennial Meeting of the EAPR Section 'Breeding and Varietal Assessment' and the EUCARPIA Section 'Potatoes' was due to be held in Nigde, Turkey, in late autumn 2023. However, **due to the recent earthquake in Turkey, for which our hearts go out to all those affected, the future of this meeting is now unclear. We will keep you informed on whether the meeting is to go ahead at eapr.net and eucarpia.org.**

In the hope that the meeting does occur, we have some further information below.

Nigde is a historical city located in the Cappadocia region of Central Anatolia, and hosts many historical monuments and natural attractions. The province is also the centre of potato production in Turkey.

The Meeting will cover all aspects of potato genetics, breeding and varietal assessment. Furthermore, topics on the latest methodological developments in omics technologies, New Breeding Technologies (NBT) - including genome editing - and the application of digital methods for phenotyping will be discussed.

This Meeting will offer a rich scientific programme with oral and poster presentations, inspirational keynotes, an exciting excursion as well as plentiful networking opportunities and social interactions. To encourage the participation of young scientists we will have very attractive registration and accommodation options.

Registration fee includes admission to all sessions, welcome cocktail, lunches and conference dinner, coffees and refreshments in the breaks, and the scientific excursion.

The future of the meeting, together with details for registration, accommodation and travel options, should it go ahead, will be available shortly on the second circular of the meeting and will also be published on the EAPR (eapr.net) and EUCARPIA (eucarpia.org) websites.

We hope to welcome you to an exciting and memorable meeting in Nigde in late autumn 2023!

Mehmet Emin Çalışkan (Chair Local Organizing Committee, caliskanme@ohu.edu.tr)

Domenico Carputo (Chair EAPR Section Breeding and Varietal Assessment, carputo@unina.it)

Vanessa Prigge (Chair EUCARPIA Section Potatoes, vanessa.prigge@sakapflanzenzucht.de)



MEETING UPDATES

AGRONOMY AND PHYSIOLOGY

Idit Ginzberg from the Department of Vegetable Research, Institute of Plant Sciences ARO, the Volcani Center, Dagan, Israel was formally elected as Section chair during the 21st Triennial EAPR Conference held in Krakow in July 2022. She is also the Israel country representative.



Next section meeting 2023

The Agronomy and Physiology Section will have a joint meeting with the Post-Harvest Section at the experimental center of ARVALIS-Institut du Vegetal, Villers-Saint Chrisophe, France on 27th to 29 June 2023.

This joint meeting will be the occasion to make the link between production in the field and tuber storage and will feature important headline topics such as 'climate change' and 'energy saving'.

Papers on remote sensing, crop modelling, tuber quality, soil, water and storage management will be particularly welcome.

The meeting will be held in the new facilities of the main French technical location working on potatoes from field to storage, with specific knowledge of digital remote sensing for roots, plants and sprouts growth. The joint meeting will end on the national field day of the technical institute with the possibility to share information with the different participants from industry who will be present at the event.

More details on how to take part in the meeting will be displayed soon so please be ready to register and submit a presentation for the opportunity to enjoy some long-awaited scientific exchanges. Places will be limited so sign up soon!



AWARDS

Prof Paul Struik, Chief Editor of the EAPR's journal Potato Research, has received not one but two prestigious awards in 2022.

He has been awarded a **Royal Decoration from King Willem Alexander** of the Netherlands and is now Officer in the Order of Orange-Nassau. In the photograph below, Paul is seen with his wife Edith Lammerets van Bueren (left) who received the same award 5 years ago together with the Mayor of Utrecht (centre) who presented the award at a special ceremony.

Paul has also been recognised for his contribution to potato research through an **award at the World Potato Congress** in Dublin, Ireland (30th May - 2nd June 2022) for his long and distinctive work in the international potato industry. Congratulations also go to other recipients of the award including Dr. John J. Burke, Antoon Wallays and Richard W. "Dick" Okray.

Congratulations Paul!



Images: Left - Town hall at Villers-Saint Christophe. Credit R. Houdry, Geneawiki. Right- Prof. Paul Struik receiving a Royal Decoration on behalf of King Willem Alexander of the Netherlands.

MEETING UPDATES

POST HARVEST

Michel Martin, head of the potato storage and quality department at ARVALIS-Institut du vegetal in France (left image) and Andreas Meyer, head of the experimental station Dethlingen, Germany (right image) were formally elected as the new co-chairs of the Section at the Triennial Meeting held in Krakow in July 2022. Michel Martin is also country representative for France.



The 21 st Triennial conference was the first occasion to meet the different members of the Post Harvest Section since the section meeting in Norwich in March 2019. At the members meeting, the two former co-chairs of the Section, Tjaart Hofman and Glyn Harper, were thanked for their hard work over the years.

Next Section Meeting 2023

The section members decided to organize a future joint section meeting together with the Agronomy & Physiology Section in June 2023 in France. This joint meeting will take place on 27th to 29th June 2023 in Villers Saint Christophe, France.

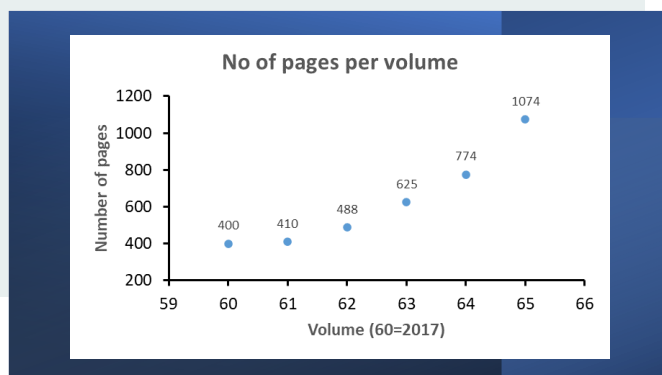
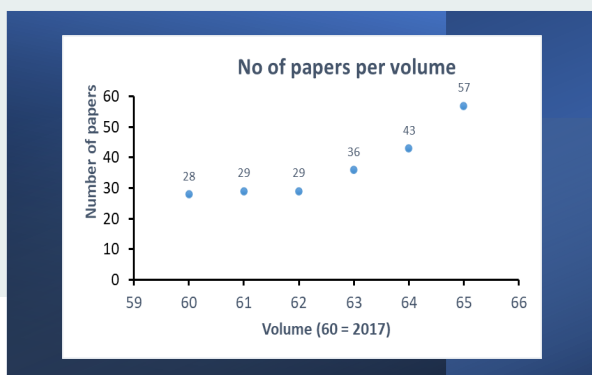
For further information see the Agronomy & Physiology Section on page 7.

Image: Opposite — Potato storage. Credit - CHAP Solutions.



POTATO RESEARCH

Our journal Potato Research continues to do well, especially in terms of number of papers published and number of pages per volume. Its impact factor has also increased to 2.56! This positive trend is thanks to our authors, reviewers, processing editors and the team of Springer. **Please continue to submit high-quality manuscripts!**





MEETING UPDATES

PATHOLOGY AND PESTS

Alison Lees from The James Hutton Institute in Dundee, Scotland was formally elected as chair of the Pathology and Pests Section at the Triennial Meeting held in Krakow in July 2022. She has been a member and supporter of the EAPR Pathology and Pests Section since attending her first section meeting in Sweden in 1998. She is also the new Secretary to the EAPR Council.



Next Section Meeting 2023

The previous successful section meeting was held in Neuchatel, Switzerland 2019.

The next meeting of the Pathology and Pests Section will take place in Arras, France, from 3rd–6th September 2023. Thanks to the organising committee, comprising inov3PT, INRAE-IGEPP, Arvalis, and in particular Karima Boucek for agreeing to organise the meeting.

The conference programme will cover all aspects of potato diseases and pests (epidemiology & management, pathogen diversity, detection, etc.), and will include a session on biocontrol and innovations in potato crop protection. Presentations on pests will be particularly encouraged, e.g. wireworm, Colorado beetle, nematodes, etc. which currently pose a threat to potato crops due to factors including the removal of effective pesticides, climate change and changes in agricultural practices.

A further proposal is to organise a trip to visit the Potato Europe exhibition (potatoeurope.be/en) in Tournai, Belgium (75 km from Arras city) on 7th September for those participants who wish to attend.

More information on registration, abstract submission, etc. will follow on the website. eapr-pathology2023.com

REGISTRATION	Opening	February 2023
	Early bird rate ending	15th April 2023
	Closing	30th June 2023
ABSTRACTS	Opening	February 2023
	Closing	31st March 2023
	Notification to authors	Early June 2023

REGISTRATION COSTS	Early until 15th April 2023	Late/onsite from 16th April 2023
EAPR Member	€300	€340
Non EAPR Member	€370	€410
Student / Accompanying person	€200	€230

MEETING UPDATES

VIROLOGY

Roberto Miglino from HZPC was formally elected as chair of the Virology Section at the Triennial Meeting held in Krakow in July 2022. Adrian Fox is still supporting him during the time of the handover.

Next Section Meeting 2025

The next Virology Section meeting will take place in 2025 in Switzerland and will be hosted by Olivier Schump and Brice Dupuis at Agroscope.

Please visit the EAPR website to find out more as plans progress.

eapr.net



SUMMARY OF UPCOMING SECTION MEETINGS

Breeding and Varietal Resistance — Nigde , Turkey late autumn 2023

Agronomy and Physiology / Post Harvest - Villers-Saint Chrisophe, France
27th to 29 June 2023

Pathology and Pests - Arras, France 3rd - 6th September 2023

Virology - Switzerland sometime in 2025



EAPR TRIENNIAL 2030

We are looking for bids to organise the 24rd EAPR Triennial Conference 2030. We hope that you will consider this opportunity and send your proposals to President Arne Hermansen by the **end of March 2024**.

Proposals should contain:
Declaration of intention;
Name of the proposed President Elect / chief conference organiser; Curriculum vitae.

Email:
arne.hermansen@nibio.no

Images - Above: Potato field site visit during the 2019 Pathogens and Pest Section Meeting in Neuchatel, Switzerland. Opposite: Aphid. Credit - K Koertshuis from Pixabay.

POTATO NEWS

Potatoes can be part of a healthy diet

By replacing some of the high calorie content of a meal with the same weight of potato, while retaining a balance in nutrients, participants in a trial in the USA lost weight, demonstrating that contrary to common belief potatoes do not cause weight gain or increase the risk of type 2 diabetes.

Read more at :

tinyurl.com/potatoes-are-healthy

MEMBERSHIP—JOIN NOW!

The Association has three membership categories: Ordinary, Sustaining and Honorary membership. Although membership is open to both European and non-European individuals or organisations, only Europeans can hold official office, such as membership of the EAPR-Council. At present the Association has over 225 Ordinary members, 14 Sustaining members and 11 Honorary members. Membership is drawn from many countries in all five continents.

For more information on membership and to join using our new easy-to-use electronic system visit:

eapr.net/membership



“Our next EAPR General Assembly is on 25th May 2023”

CONTACT US

Administrative Office

APR, P.O. Box 500, 3001
Leuven 1, Belgium

Phone : +32 16229427

Fax : +32 16229450

Email: info@eapr.net



[@EAPR_potato](https://twitter.com/EAPR_potato)

Editorial Office for Potato
Research:

mark.taylor@hutton.ac.uk

WEB SITE AND TWITTER

There is only so much we can put in a newsletter so for more information on our activities please visit the web site (www.eapr.net) or follow us on Twitter.

