

BSAS Annual Conference 2-4 April 2007, Southport, UK

Included with this newsletter is the programme for the 2007 BSAS Annual Conference. The programme is bigger than ever, and is being held for the first time in Southport, Lancashire, England. Three parallel theatre sessions will run throughout, starting after lunch on Monday and finishing at lunchtime on Wednesday. We had a record number of submissions (over 300).

This year we have a slight modification to the format. Whilst invited theatre presentations are 25-30 minutes, all submitted theatre presentations are 15 minutes (10 minutes presentation and five minutes for questions). There is also a new *mini theatre* presentation of five minutes with three minutes presentation and one clarification question. Posters will be displayed in the Floral Hall.

This year the Hammond is being given by Sir Ben Gill. He is talking on 'Agriculture at a new dawn: food security v energy security.' He will then chair the invited session on *agricultural production and food security* which will consider a global view, why UK agriculture is where it is and marketing and consumer impacts. A session on *livestock and water* will follow.

Invited sessions include:

- Farm animal genetic resources
- Genetics of robustness
- Responses to nutrients (President's session)
- Ruminant lameness
- New approaches to controlling avian influenza (joint with WPSA)

Submitted sessions cover:

- Molecular genetics
- Animal health
- Product quality
- Dairy cow energy balance
- Fermentation and digestion
- Developments in genetic evaluations
- Meat quality
- Equine
- Welfare and behaviour
- Newly weaned pigs
- Pigs
- Parasites
- Sheep nutrition and genetics
- Ruminant nutrition

Poster sessions include:

Sheep, goats and camels; dairy cattle and reproduction; genetics; *In situ*; Equine; Dairy cattle; Pig; Ruminant kinetics and *in vitro* techniques; Feed and forage characterisation; Beef cattle; and Poultry.

The Student Programme

The Sunday/Monday Programme will cover scientific writing, cv writing, genomics and maybe stats! This session is FREE to all BSAS student members. It will start in the Scarisbricke Hotel on Sunday

(continued page 2)

Inside this issue...

BSAS Conference	1 & 2
Strategic Review	2 & 3
Stakeholder Meeting	4
Scholarships and Awards	
Animal - update	
Animal - list of contents	5
Conferences - past	6
Conference calendar	
Committee meetings	

2007 Conferences

2-4 April
 BSAS Annual Conference
 Southport, UK

30-31 August
 Fertility Conference
 Liverpool Hope
 University, UK

BSAS,
 PO Box 3,
 Penicuik,
 Midlothian EH26 ORZ. UK
 Tel: 00 44 (0)131-445-4508,
 Fax: 00 44 (0)131-535-3120,
 Email: bsas@sac.ac.uk
 Website <http://www.bsas.org.uk>

and finish in the Floral Hall complex on Monday. The Student Council will also help run the Tuesday evening entertainment -open to all (you'll only have to pay for the buffet) which is a games night, held in the Prince of Wales Hotel. It will include large scale Scalextric racing, monster genga, skittles, table football and various competitions. The Conference Dinner will be held in the Floral Hall Complex on the Monday evening, where we are promised an excellent dinner.

BVCA visit

Bridget, Frances and Mike from the secretariat visited the Floral Hall Complex in Southport during the British Cattle Veterinary Association conference in late November to see how a similar size event worked. They spoke to the organisers, the venue management and delegates who were all very pleased with both their conference and the venue. BSAS Programme Committee are now confident that we have found an excellent home for the conference for 2007. They are also very pleased that all the lecture theatres in the complex are available, it was previously envisaged that the construction of an adjoining new hotel would limit availability.

BSAS caravan

The extension to the Floral Hall Complex with its new hotel during 2007 means that the venue is unlikely to be available in 2008 for our Annual Conference, so BSAS is looking to move the event around a number of venues over a three or four year period. There are plans to go to Belfast in 2009 or 2010, the search is now on for 2008's location.

Programme Committee meeting

Members of the committee spent 2 days in the Royal Clifton Hotel, Southport in late November assessing submitted summaries and formulating the programme schedule for April's meeting. They worked very hard and enjoyed their short stay by the seaside!

Strategic Review

BSAS President's committee, also took the opportunity to meet in Southport, and discussed the outcome of the membership surveys that CustomersMatter undertook in the summer. Alan Duncan from the Macaulay, who led this strategic review gave a presentation and all agreed that the survey was excellent value for money. The exercise had highlighted in identifiable terms what members liked about BSAS and wanted in the future. There was general support for current BSAS activities but members expressed their desire for BSAS to play a much more proactive role in promoting the science relating to animals to a wider audience.

The surveys tackled the questions:

- What attracts members to BSAS?*
- What benefits can we improve?*
- Why do members leave?*
- What can we do to get people to join?*

The reports on the surveys show that most recruitment to BSAS was by word-of-mouth and that people joined primarily so they could acquire knowledge from the conference, the journal or through networks. Members thought the purpose of BSAS was dissemination of information, lobbying, the promotion of animal science and developing new research areas.

Members identified five key aims for BSAS:

- Exchanging ideas*
- Enhancing understanding*
- Bringing together support for animal science*
- Facilitating peer review*
- Improving productivity of farm animals*

They wish to see more efforts in enhancing the understanding of animal science to the wider community. They specifically mentioned issues like environmentally sustainable animal production, safety and quality of food, and the integration of animal science into economic and ethical systems.

Members liked the way the BSAS office dealt with members, conferences and internal communications but questioned the effectiveness of external communications. They would like to see improved efforts on the representation of animal science to 'society', including lobbying at government level. They would like some changes to the annual conference in terms of a more logical schedule by species or discipline, although they liked its organization, relevance to training young people, networking opportunities and ambience.

They felt the website was okay and that scholarships were adequate. They valued BSAS being a representative for animal science, but lacked detailed awareness of what the society actually did. They would like to see BSAS communicating better, with more UK farmers involved, better lobbying, better contacts with the media and links with other similar organizations to BSAS. In the future they felt that BSAS needed to make more efforts to counter the negative perceptions of the animal industry in the public sphere and to better promote the animal science agenda.

They identified a number of specific priorities:

- Educational resources*
- A popular knowledge transfer magazine for the industry*
- CPD and accreditation*

The membership felt the society should primarily cater for its current membership but did agree that it should spend around 10% of its time and resources on new activities each year.

Reasons given by lapsed members on why they left BSAS ranged from lack of relevance, moving to new occupations and insufficient tailored information.

The survey of non members was also very interesting as despite the lack of in-depth knowledge by participants many were broadly in support of issues pointed out by the members. Non-members cited finance as a major reason for not joining as well as lack of relevance and ability to source information provided elsewhere. Most of the non members in the survey admitted that they had never been approached by BSAS to join, reflecting the society's passive approach to recruitment.

Recommendations

The reports identified a number of areas that required action.

BSAS should re-evaluate its aims. It should consider communications as its third pillar of activities in addition to the annual conference and journal. Whilst scope exists to improve internal links this should focus on external communications and representations through stronger partnerships. Thus BSAS should make better use of its membership of the Bio-Sciences Federation and develop links to other relevant agencies. A popular outreach magazine could be considered to deliver positive and generic messages about 'animal science' for a wider audience and include issues like the environment, food chain, health, man's use of animals or animals in society. This could be electronic.

The report highlighted that members wanted to see BSAS providing educational resources. Such materials would have to fit within the curriculum and be developed with teachers. Resources needed to be web-based and easy to access. A lot of material might already exist which BSAS could collect and audit so that the BSAS website could become a gateway for information.

Annual Conference. A better structured Annual Conference should be considered perhaps designed by discipline or species so that participants could better plan their attendance. Thus there could be days for industry or Applied Animal Science. There should also be a rolling programme of specific topics or issues that continued over a number of years rather than ad hoc one-offs.

Recruitment. BSAS needed to be proactive in recruiting new members at all levels. It should consider having institutional representatives to maximise the word of mouth approach that currently exists. Promotional information on animal science and incentives to join should be produced.

At its November meeting Presidents Committee decided that BSAS needed a five-year plan targeting specific objectives across all activities. This would include themed sessions at the Annual Conference and themed conferences in the UK and overseas. They agreed that BSAS needs to be more proactive in:

- *Lobbying*
- *Setting forward looking topics at conferences*
- *Encouraging visionary publications*

As a consequence of all the discussions a number of working groups have now been set up to cover:

- *Rewriting the mission statement*
- *Communications and knowledge transfer (via magazine, translating scientific information for farmers, the public, schools and policy maker)*
- *Educational resources*
- *Membership*

Full copies of the survey reports are available on the BSAS website.

Stakeholder Meeting, Belfast



The Technical & Ethical Committee held their December meeting in Belfast and used the occasion to ask stakeholders from across Northern Ireland (policy makers, advisors, levy organisations and academics) for their thoughts on BSAS's future direction and activities. Held in the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (ABFI) the meeting included a number of presentations from ABFI and BSAS. The latter gave BSAS a chance to explain its current activities and the ideas for the future that came out of the membership surveys taken over the summer. Stakeholders gave comments and advice.

They were very clear that whatever BSAS decided to do that it needed to get its customers centrally involved in its activities. One key point they raised was that policy makers needed advice on research needs, priorities and timing. They felt BSAS could play a very helpful role in identifying future issues that would face policy makers. Policy makers would then be able to commission relevant research that was needed to address these issues in advance of them becoming critical. This could mean commissioning research many years ahead.

They felt if BSAS was to undertake a lobbying role it needed to consider its profile on the European scene in Brussels where much of the legislation was now coming.

They felt partnerships were the way forward and that in any information initiatives BSAS should link-up with other organizations that had already put resources together. They pointed out that authors of scientific papers could help provide much of the information needed for the wider public if they could be persuaded to write short summaries explaining their science in non-technical terms so that producers, consumers, the government, pupils or the public could better understand its implications.

Recruitment

One of the comments made in the surveys of non-members was that a number of people expressed an interest in joining BSAS but had never been approached. Recruitment by BSAS has always been organic and by word of mouth. BSAS has never had a sustained membership recruitment or retention campaign that might also raise its profile.

In consequence the BSAS office is now putting together a recruitment package to approach ex –members and non members who attended BSAS recent conferences or have been in contact with BSAS over the last few years.

In December, Mike Steele and Ruth Pickard from the Student Council, attended a student managed animal science conference in the Agricultural Faculty at Newcastle University, to talk to students from Newcastle, and the land based colleges in Northumberland and Durham about joining BSAS as student members. They recruited nearly 40. See page 6.

The editors and board members of our new journal *Animal: An International Journal of Bio-Sciences* have been working very hard behind-the-scenes to get this new and exciting journal launched on time in February 2007. They now have more than enough submitted and review papers to fill the first issue. *Animal* will appear as 10 issues in 2007 and thereafter monthly. There will be no issue in January and July 2007.

Animal is very grateful for all BSAS authors who have submitted their research papers and is working hard to get them edited and published in record time. Included in this newsletter is an outline of the papers in the first issue. Please take time to have a look and let your friends and colleagues know. BSAS, as co-owner, is very keen that the momentum builds to make *Animal* a true rival to its American cousins. Remember it's your journal and needs your support. You have an opportunity to contribute to its success by submitting good quality scientific research papers and giving your comments and thoughts. The editor-in-chief Michel Doreau will be at the Annual Conference in Southport as both a poster presenter and now a member of BSAS. He is very open to suggestions and ideas so come to Southport and meet him. He is keen to talk to presenters and authors about the journal and its development.

The next meeting of the *Animal* Management Board will be in Edinburgh on May 15th. If you have any issues or thoughts please contact the BSAS board members:

Dr Nigel Scollan

Dr Brian Cooke

Mr Mike Steele

The board is chaired by Professor Cled Thomas on behalf of EAAP.

Animal has its own website at www.animal-journal.eu/ The first publication, published by Cambridge University Press, will be launched in February 2007. Papers can be submitted through www.editorialmanager.com/animal

Scholarships and awards

At their meeting in Belfast T&E Committee decided the following travel grants:

Alan Robertson

Olena Doran from University of Bristol, £600 to participate in the 53rd International Congress in Meat Science & Technology, Beijing, August 2007

Claudia Paol Cardenas, Roslin Institute £190 to attend the Internacional chick meeting in Barcelona April 2007.

Catherine Hayhurst, Liverpool University £600 for travel and subsistence for genetics research project at Roslin Institute

Sir Kenneth Blaxter

Emma Baxter, SAC £1000 to attend the 41st Congress of the International Society for Applied Ethology (ISAE) in Merida, Mexico and undertake a short study tour of pig farms in Mexico July 2007.

Fiona Lang, SAC, £1000 To attend the 41st Congress of ISAE in Merida, Mexico and a short research project at University of British Columbia, Canada.

Editorial

Breeding and genetics

Selection for carcass quality in hill sheep measured by X-ray computer tomography

E. Karamichou, B.G. Merrell, W.A. Murray, G. Simm and S.C. Bishop

Breed variation and genetic parameters for growth and body development in diverse beef cattle genotypes

R.A. Afolayan, W.S. Pitchford, M.P.B. Deland and W.A. McKiernan

A simple method to approximate gene content in a large pedigree population: application to the myostatin gene in dual-purpose Belgian Blue cattle

N. Gengler, P. Mayeres and M. Szydlowski

Associations between genetic merit for milk production and animal parameters and the fertility performance of dairy cows

D.R. Mackey, A.W. Gordon, M.A. McCoy, M. Verner and C.S. Mayne

Nutrition

Bacterial protein meal in diets for growing pigs: effects on protein and energy metabolism

A.L.F. Hellwing, A.-H. Tauson, N.P. Kjos and A. Skrede

BSAS Annual Meeting, 2006. Session "Response to Nutrients"

Predicting the responses of animals to their nutrients — quo vadimus?

I. Kyriazakis

Predicting nutrient responses in poultry: future challenges

R.M. Gous

The effects of pathogen challenges on the performance of naïve and immune animals: the problem of prediction

F.B. Sandberg, G.C. Emmans and I. Kyriazakis

Towards a biological basis for predicting nutrient partitioning: the dairy cow as an example

N.C. Friggens and J.R. Newbold

Predicting the profile of nutrients available for absorption: animal response and environmental impact

J. Dijkstra, E. Kebreab, J.A.N. Mills, W.F. Pellikaan, S. López, A. Bannink and J. France

Physiology and functional biology of systems

Do age and feeding levels have comparable effects on fat deposition in breast muscle of mule ducks?

P. Chartrin, M.D. Bernadet, G. Guy, J. Mourot, J-F. Hocquette, N. Rideau, M-J. Duclos¹ and E. Baéz

Behaviour, welfare and health

Effect of milking frequency and nutritional level on aspects of the health and welfare of dairy cows

D.E. Gleeson, B. O'Brien, L. Boyle and B. Earley

Pig acute-phase protein levels after stress induced by changes in the pattern of food administration

C. Piñeiro, M. Piñeiro, J. Morales, R. Carpintero, F.M. Campbell, P.D. Eckersall, M.J.M. Toussaint, M.A. Alava and F. Lampreave

Farming systems and environment

Using n-alkanes to estimate diet composition of herbivores: a novel mathematical approach

P. Barcia, M.N. Bugalho, M.L. Campagnolo and J.O. Cerdeira

Analyses of lamb survival of Scottish Blackface sheep

R.M. Sawalha, J. Conington, S. Brotherstone and B. Villanueva

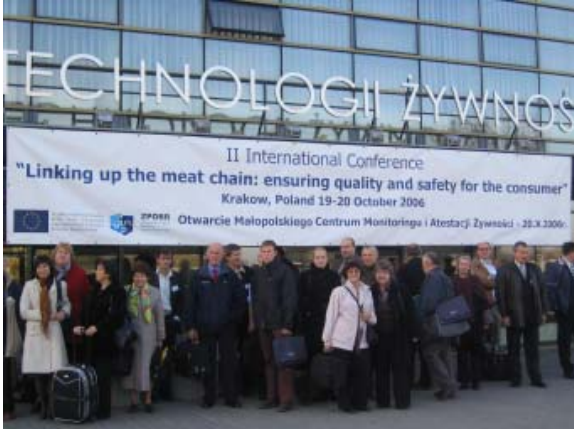
Product quality, health and well-being

Recent advances in cattle functional genomics and their application to beef quality (Review)

J-F. Hocquette, S. Lehnert, W. Barendse, I. Cassar-Malek and B. Picard

Conferences Past

Linking up the meat chain: Ensuring quality and safety for consumers, Krakow, Poland, 19-20 October 2006



Over 150 delegates attended the second joint BSAS/Krakow Agricultural University conference in Krakow Poland on 'Linking up the meat chain: ensuring quality and safety for the consumer'. They enjoyed a vibrant and very well organised event with presentations from Poland, UK, Lithuania, Serbia, Belgium, Switzerland and USA. The first day was held in the University Congress Hall and the second at the brand new Centre for Monitoring and Food Certification. BSAS speakers included Nigel Scollan, Tim Parr, Joanthan Guy and Paul Warriss. Prof Peter Buttery, BSAS President and Mike Steele, CEO, chaired sessions. There were over 80 well presented posters from scientists across Eastern Europe and it was noticeable that the standard had improved immensely since the first conference in 2004. It was very encouraging to see twice as many delegates and posters at this conference compared to the previous one.

The meeting was held over two days of very bright but cold weather, and fortunately before the heavy snow fall that occurred later in October 2006! The conference dinner was held in Krakow's spectacular Royal Castle and was a splendid occasion.

The conference was another example of BSAS working with sister organisations to assist and network with scientists across Eastern Europe and part of the BSAS strategy to stimulate debate and discussion on topical issues. The next conference in this series is in Lithuania in early June 2007 organised by Dr Vigilius Jukna.

BSAS is very grateful for the work of the local organising team that included Prof Waldyshaw Migdal and Dr Piotr Pasciak without whom we could not have organised such a successful meeting.

From a tourist point of view, Krakow is a magical place to visit and very friendly. There are now a host of cheap flights to the city from all over Europe

Conference Calendar

2-4 April 2007

BSAS Annual Conference, Southport, Merseyside, UK - see page 1 or visit www.bsas.org.uk/Meetings_&_Workshops/Annual_Conference/

17-19 April 2007

High Value Grassland, University of Keele, Staffs www.britishgrassland.com/bgs/about/calendar.asp

30-31 August 2007

Fertility Conference, Liverpool Hope University, UK

Other conferences

23-24 May 2007

Langford Food Industry Conference, Improving the Eating Quality of Pig Meat
For further information contact leisha.hewitt@bristol.ac.uk

2-5 July 2007

Paradigms in Pig Science, University School of Biosciences, Sutton Bonington Campus
http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/biosciences/ah/research/conference__pig_science.php

BSAS Committee Meetings 2007

16 January 2007

Presidents, Publications - London

17 January

Council - London



BSAS sponsor student conference at Newcastle
see page 4, Recruitment.