

BSAS Annual Conference, Southport 2-4 April 2007 sunny and welcoming

This year's Annual BSAS conference in Southport, Merseyside, 2-4 April 2007, turned out to be a very pleasant experience. The brilliant weather helped of course but everyone was surprised by the warm welcome they got from the venue, town and its people. Transport to Southport was much easier than many feared and the fact that you could walk everywhere once you arrived was a big plus. A big change from York. Delegates also found the accommodation was excellent value.

The scientific programme worked well and Sir Ben Gill led the way with a charismatic performance in presenting his Hammond Lecture: *Agriculture at a new Dawn - Food Security v Energy Security*. This was a very participative affair and left delegates wanting more on the implications of future policies on grass roots animal science and production.

There were some really good sessions on genetics, lameness, pigs, sheep, ruminants, avian flu and livestock and water. These didn't always attract the largest audiences but the papers were good and the discussion intense. A lot of folk packed the equines session which included several undergraduate presentations. These were judged to encourage improvement. Natasha Rose from Myerscough College, won a free registration to next year's equine module at Scarborough. Two Liverpool undergraduates also gave their very first papers in the main theatre, a daunting task even for a seasoned lecturer, and you couldn't fault their performances. So congratulations to Bryony Kendall and Stuart Williamson.

The President Prize winners this year were Lorna Baird, AFBI for the best theatre presentation, **A comparison of sole lesion development for Norwegian dairy cattle and Holstein Friesian dairy cattle on three different systems in lactation 1 and 2**

Angela Wright, The Royal Veterinary College won the best poster for her presentation **Analysing the risk of a bovine brucellosis epidemic in great Britain using the cattle tracing scheme: have we just been lucky so far?**

Commendations were awarded to Jessica Brickall, Royal Veterinary College; Sam Mason, University of Leeds and Stuart Williamson, University of Liverpool. So well done to them.

New for 2007 were the mini papers of 3-5 minutes each. These were generally added on to the end of sessions and worked very well. Even non specialises were surprised how much they took in!! The five minute presentations worked better than the shorter ones and are likely to be the norm in future. Many poster presenters also gave these short papers as a way of advertising their poster. Submitted papers were all 15 minutes long including questions and will be repeated next time. It is becoming increasingly important for authors to be able to give theatre presentations to justify financial support.

The venue itself was very good and exceptionally well managed. It is a bit of a walk from one end to the other and occasionally the neighbouring construction site forgot to stay quiet. The food was good and the conference dinner, held in the Floral Hall, was first class.

So we would like to go back except we can't in 2008 as the venue is closed to allow the completion and integration of the new hotel next door. Thus we have booked Southport for 2009 and as an interim measure (and to please nostalgic members) we are going back to Scarborough next year (30 March – 2 April 2008). As a treat we may go to Belfast in 2010.

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2007 Conferences

30-31 August
Fertility Conference
Liverpool Hope
University, UK

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The Student Council once again ran a very successful social evening at the Prince of Wales hotel. This was on the Tuesday evening and included an indoor fun games night and quiz. We agree the queue for the buffet was too long and we were glad that the Scarisbrick hotel (BSAS) and Royal Clifton (WPSA) had been chosen as the main conference hotels! But as usual the company was excellent and even those who decided to eat out came back to join in the jenga, car racing and skittles. The students also organized a Student Sunday event of lectures and discussions covering statistics, presentation and writing skills and funding for travel. This was again very popular and yielded a cadre of new young members for the society. There will be a similar event at the Liverpool fertility conference in August.

BSAS continues to heavily subsidise the annual meeting for its members and is thus deliberately keeping fees down so that its possible to let as many of you attend what is still the UK's largest annual meeting of animal scientists. The Annual Conference is thus a major benefit to being a BSAS member.

(please see back page for photographs from the Conference).

A new Five Year BSAS Plan

A New 5 Year BSAS Plan

Led by Geoff Simm, BSAS has developed a draft 5 year plan to provide the Society with a strategy for action. The plan originates from members views and comments in last year's survey.

The Plan will:

- Provide greater scientific and operational focus and continuity
- Provide a framework for implementing recommendations of the 2006 'Customers Matter' Review of BSAS)
- Lead to a more open Society, further improving the ability of members to interact with the Society, and providing transparency in our operating procedures.

The new BSAS mission statement is 'advancing science related to animals'.

This will be achieved by:

- Promoting science related to animals as a stimulating, highly relevant and rewarding career option to students and younger members.
- Promoting science related to animals as highly relevant to educationalists and students, consumers, industry, government and intergovernmental and non-governmental organisation policy makers and other stakeholders.
- Publishing, with partners, an international, high quality, peer-reviewed journal, *animal*.
- Running meetings to promote scientific interaction, professional development and networking among members and other stakeholders - including an Annual Meeting and more specialised Occasional Meetings.
- Publishing proceedings from these meetings, and other relevant material.
- Promoting collaboration and partnership with other relevant organisations
- Providing expert opinion on science related to animals
- Providing a gateway to scientific information related to animals, to members and non-members.
- Providing a range of other services to members, including news alerts, training and career opportunities
- Developing educational resources
- Producing a Popular Magazine 'Animal Bytes'

Scientific agenda

The plan includes a scientific agenda with a global perspective and will stimulate the application of appropriate new and existing technologies to address key issues in food production and resource use. This agenda currently focuses on two major issues:

- Challenges of global change** – including livestock's role in global climate change, mitigation of this, the impact of global climate change on livestock systems and how agriculture and rural resource use can adapt to it to meet growing global demand and sustainably.
- Animal products to meet societal needs** - in relation to diet and health, security of food supply, animal welfare, ethical production and sustainable resource use.

The plan will be a rolling document to capture both current and future issues so that BSAS can influence and inform policymakers why animal science is important.

Strategy and Strategic Actions

The plan outlines the strategic actions BSAS would take to help achieve this. Currently four perspectives for these actions have been identified:

- BSAS members
- Other BSAS stakeholders
- BSAS Finances
- BSAS Processes

The document is a flexible one so that members and stakeholders ideas can populate it. The Council is presently reviewing what sort of organizational structure is needed. This needs to be a more flexible one than the current committee set up and may involve working groups that get more members more involved in the society.

The plan will be placed on the website for your comments shortly.

Scarborough 2008 30 March - 2 April

So its Scarborough next year and the various groups within BSAS have already met and started planning.

The Hammond speaker is Prof Mike Goddard, University of Melbourne. He is an excellent speaker. Working title for his presentation is – **Molecular genetics for livestock improvement – brave new world or false dawn?**

As part of Geoff Simm's Presidential theme there are two sessions planned 'Global climate change and global livestock production' and 'Value of animal science'. These applied sessions will help show why animal science matters to the society. BSAS intend to invite key stakeholders and policymakers from the various parts of the UK.

Other ideas include

- Livestock nutrition in an era of climate change- an industry focused day to include both ruminants and monogastrics.
- Equine nutrition
- Welfare - Science based welfare assessment and Extensification and welfare
- Extension and education
- Biofuels -implications on animal nutrition (joint session BSAS/WPSA)

The 2008 Gordon Lecture in the WPSA meeting will cover nutrient and gut health in poultry.

Scholarships

Murray Black Awards

The following have been successful in applying for awards under the Murray Black Scholarship scheme. Jenny Gibbons and Konstantinos Zaralis, SAC and Keelin O'Driscoll, Teagasc.

There were an excellent number of submissions. The judges were very pleased to see that many of the applicants wishing too attend conferences had made efforts to add on extra visits or study tours to get maximum value from the travel costs involved. Developing networks from such 'add-ons' were seen as a real benefit to young scientists.

BSAS Summer Placements - Apply now

BSAS still has opportunities to support undergraduate students in summer placements this year to allow them to gain experience in some aspect of animal science research. £500 is available per placement which should be matched in kind or cash by the participating company or institution. Whilst we have a number of interested students we would welcome more placement providers.

The placements normally last for 6-8 weeks normally over the summer period. Students will be expected to follow a planned programme agreed with the supervisor at the placement. The scheme gives young people a chance to consider career opportunities and make contact with potential employers. Students will also be given a free subscription to BSAS if not already a member.

If you are an interested employer please see http://www.bsas.org.uk/funds,_awards_&_jobs/summer_placement_scheme/

Animal: An International Journal of Bio-Sciences. Our new journal has been running since February 2007. Remember its FREE online to all BSAS members. We are very grateful for the authors submitting papers and to the feedback and comments we are getting. As you might imagine launching a new journal is a very busy and exiting time. On the editorial side Michel Doreau's team have been working hard to get to grips with the flow of papers. The rejection rate is over 50% as they strive to push up the quality. There is also much to do to speed up the time from submission to publication now the launch is over to attract more authors. ANIMAL is getting around 500 papers annually but would like more, Submissions from the UK, France, Denmark and china have been high but we need more papers from western Europe and the US.

Cambridge University Press is also working hard to market the journal especially in the US. They have included it in consortia agreements that cover the whole of Brazil and India where previously we had few 'animal science' subscribers. The recent Animal board meeting in Edinburgh on May 14/15th included a review of editorial processes to improve flow and standards. It also looked at targeting review articles, hot topics and good presentations at partner conferences. It agreed that in return for a promised paper animal would fast track manuscripts through the system using guest editors. This would involve dialogue with authors before they submitted electronically so that their papers were shepherded through and published quickly.

Kris Sejrsen, the animal review editor stayed on for the BSAS meeting identifying possible sessions for the 2008 BSAS Annual meeting. This was to help identify key speakers who would be asked to provide papers for animal to be published early. Animal, published by Cambridge University Press, has its own website at www.animal-journal.eu/ Papers can be submitted through www.editorialmanager.com/animal

Please continue to pass on your comments (good and bad) and any problems to the BSAS office or one of the BSAS Board members below who are determined to make animal a success for everyone.

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AGM

Following the AGM in Southport, your Council Members are:

Prof Geoff Simm	BSAS President
Prof C Jamie Newbold	Senior Vice President
Prof Sinclair Mayne	Vice President
Mr Mike Steele	CEO
Dr Brian Cooke	Hon Treasurer
Dr Nigel Scollan	Publications Chair
Dr Caroline Rymer	Programme Chair
Dr Alistair Carson	T&E Chair
Dr Helen Edge	
Dr Eileen Wall	
Dr Kevin Shingfield	
Dr David Kenny	
Miss Angela Wright	
Dr Liam Sinclair	
Dr Lindsay Heasman	
Dr Ian Richardson	
Dr Tommy Boland	

Thanks go to the outgoing members of Council Bob Mayes and Bevis Miller.

Honorary Member

Shamus Hanrahan from Teagasc, Ireland was unanimously elected as an Honorary Member of BSAS at the AGM. Shamus is one of the top sheep scientists in the society and has worked for BSAS over many years, most recently in organising and running the sheep forums in Ireland.

Conferences

We need new ideas for 2008 onwards so please talk to Mike Steele if you have any thoughts on topics especially for UK based occasional conferences.

2007

May 2007 **Sheep Meeting** - date changed. This meeting in Navan, Ireland was postponed from 29 May and will now be rescheduled for the autumn so watch this space.

August 2007 **Fertility in Dairy Cows- *bridging the gaps***
Liverpool Hope University, UK. 30-31 August

The programme for this exciting conference is on the BSAS website and is attracting a great deal of interest amongst vets and animal scientists. See [http://www.bsas.org.uk/Meetings_ & Workshops/](http://www.bsas.org.uk/Meetings_&_Workshops/) for application forms, fact sheets and travel details

In addition to the conference itself there is a dedicated **student day** on Wednesday 29 August. This is likely to include sessions on

- ◆ Advice about being an Expert Witness
- ◆ Communicating with the media
- ◆ How to start your own business (Mr Den Leonard)
- ◆ How to build an attractive CV (Mr James Allcock)
- ◆ Statistics
- ◆ Haptic cow: virtual cow rectal simulator for teaching vet students to assess fertility and diagnose pregnancy (one to one sessions - Mr John Bailie)
- ◆ Genus MOET trip

As usual priority is given to BSAS student members. The first 30 applications from BSAS student members will receive free registration and if needed one night's accommodation.

Liverpool Hope University is just a short taxi ride from Liverpool John Lennon airport and the local metro trains into Liverpool. The campus is five minutes from the end of the M62. Excellent value quality accommodation is available on site in comfortable ensuite single study bedrooms. The main conference runs immediately after EAAP 2007, Dublin, and is just a short low-cost flight from Dublin in the exciting city of Liverpool.

2008/09 BSAS has been in dialogue with sister organisations about running a conference that addresses **the implications for animal science from climate change**. The Tunisian government has offered to host the event and ICARDA, ILRI, INRA and EAAP are all willing to help. The likely date is the winter period of 2008/9. A draft outline programme will be on the website for comment shortly. Geoff Simm, BSAS President who initiated the idea would be very happy to have views and offers of collaboration. Obviously this is a very hot topic for animal science, and countries like Tunisia are in a part of the world that is likely to be negatively affected. It is thus very important that scientists and animal keepers understand the impact of a changing climate and how best they can cope or mitigate such changes.

2008/09 Nepal Jes Scaife, Peter Rowlinson and Mike Steele meet with Dr Durga Datta Dhakai (Dean) and Dr Sharada Bhattarai (Chairman) of Institute of Agriculture & Animal Sciences, Chitwan, Nepal recently. They discussed the possibility of running a workshop on **Ethno-veterinary and Ethno-botanical issues relating to animal science**. This would be a follow up from the 2006 Writtle conference.

2010 Equine Nutrition UK BSAS is helping to organise this EAAP conference. The proposed topic will cover **Nutrition, health and welfare of the performance horse**. The conference needs to be based within reach of national horse stables. If you have any suggestions for venues or sessions or would like to contribute then please let BSAS know.

BSAS ANNUAL CONFERENCE, SOUTHPORT 2007



So this is where they got too.....



Conference Dinner in the Floral Hall



Hilary Davies receives a token of appreciation from BSAS President Peter Buttery. Hilary was Executive Editor for Animal Science.



President Prize winner, Catherine Hayhurst, University of Liverpool, accepts her certificate from Professor Peter Buttery.

The games night was great fun.

