

Annual Conference, Nottingham University, April 2011

The BSAS annual conference was held at the Jubilee campus of Nottingham University in early April in collaboration with the AVTRW, WPSA and BBSRC. Over 400 delegates attended this *Food Security* themed conference and the new mixture of fundamental and applied scientists, delegates from industry and the veterinary profession made for a very interactive and enjoyable two days. The keynote speaker was Professor Sir John Beddington, the Government Chief Scientist who gave a packed audience a brilliant one hour talk and discussion on the issues and challenges facing the industry. This was followed by an excellent presentation from Prof. Marian Dawkins who gave the Gordon lecture. The early evening timing of these lectures on the first day seemed to suit the audience very well. Both presentations were videoed and will be available on the BSAS website in due course.

The conference followed the new two day format and was extremely busy and enjoyable. There were a whole variety of sessions including availability of feed resources; global food security; interplay between immunity, endocrinology and nutrition; equine exotic diseases; equine performance; meat quality; application of molecular genetic tools to animal science; ruminant health and disease; companion animal health and disease; diagnostics; methane and sheep. There were so many sessions to attend delegates had difficult choices to make with four to six parallel presentations over a two-day period.

The short two-minute *highlight* sessions held at lunchtime proved very popular with well disciplined speakers. They gave the audience snippets of science on a whole variety of topics that could be absorbed in 30 minutes. They proved a much better attraction than the traditional poster displays!

There were excellent opportunities for networking, given the diverse background of delegates both around the sessions and in the social programme. On the Sunday evening there was a quiz in the bar following the student Sunday session. Over 150 people attended. On Monday night there was a combined conference dinner with AVTRW and BBSRC where over 250 people enjoyed a very informal dinner in the Atrium.

Having the conference on the Jubilee campus at Nottingham worked very well so next year's conference will be:

24-25 April 2012, Nottingham University Healthy Food from Healthy Animals

Please put it in your diary!

The 2012 Programme Committee, which includes folk from BSAS, AVTRW, WPSA and BBSRC intend to make greater efforts to integrate papers across disciplines next year to provide greater interaction. There will still be a number of specialist sessions to satisfy specific needs but the aim will be to mix papers and people.

The Conference next year will continue in the Exchange Building but will also be held in the Business School South with its larger lecture theatre and open atrium. Accommodation will be once again on-site in the single study bedrooms as well as the on campus 'hotel standard' National Schools College. Whilst more expensive this provides a really nice standard of accommodation.

The proceedings of the annual conference which combine all BSAS, AVTRW and BBSRC papers is now on the BSAS website in the members area (they have been e-mailed to all AVTRW members). The proceedings are now one of the issues of the Advances in Animal Biosciences series. This series will include publications from EAAP and INRA the partners in ANIMAL. All publications from this series will be available free online to all the BSAS members. Please login to the members area

http://www.bsas.org.uk/members_area/annual_conferences/conference_2011/

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Because next year's conference is later we have a single summary submission deadline date for all organisations:

2 December 2011 (submission system will be open 1 September)

This later date will enable everyone to put get their one page summaries in in good time for assessment and placement. As always we are interested in the whole range of animal science and veterinary species and disciplines being submitted so that we can make up interesting sessions

A number of topics have already been identified for 2012 listed below although we are always open to ideas. These include:

The Hammond : Role of animal-derived foods in an obesogenic society

Prof Mike Gibney, University College, Dublin

The Presidents Session - Healthy Food from Healthy Animals'

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| • Can milk /milk products be an aid to BMI control? | Dr Anestis Dougkas, University of Reading |
| • Eggs in the diet, do they increase the risk of chronic disease? | Prof Bruce Griffin, University of Surrey |
| • The benefits and limitations of fish in our diet | Dr Carrie Ruxton, Nutrition Communications |
| • Red meat in the diet: is it as bad as we have been told? | Dr Laura Wyness, British Nutrition Foundation |

Including topics on

- Systems Biology – modelling animal systems linking with bioinformatics.
- Linking applied strategic and fundamental research.
- Equine sessions: Nutrition, Behaviour, Performance and Health.
- Animal Welfare
- Education
- Wellcome Veterinary Research Student Projects
- Ruminant health and disease
- Pig health and disease
- Diagnostics/Epidemiology
- One health

Industry day

Following the success of the availability of feed resources session this year there will be an expansion of sessions and papers of interest to those working in industry. This is likely to include a session:

Feed materials, including the reintroduction of meat and bone meal, the ethical issues surrounding the production and transport of soya and use of fish/algae: replacing fish oil.

12% of delegates for this year were from industry and we would like to expand this number by providing what they want. If you have specific ideas please let us know.

AVTRW

BSAS is now working very closely with AVTRW. From June 2011 the BSAS office took over the running of the AVTRW 'back office' including running their membership database. It's hoped that the close relationship will develop into other mutually beneficial ventures.

The Association of Veterinary Teachers and Research Work are a very similar body to BSAS . Most of their 400 or so members work in UK and Dublin Vet schools. Tim King of Roslin Institute is the current AVTRW President and Anne French from the University of Edinburgh their Secretary. Both are closely involved in the BSAS/AVTRW annual meeting and will be at the 2012 meeting.

EAAP 2016

BSAS is in discussion with EAAP about hosting the 2016 EAAP meeting in the UK. Whilst at its very early stages BSAS is interested in identifying venues that might be able to accommodate this meeting either in June 2016 or early September 2016. Around 1000/1200 delegates are likely to attend the nine parallel commission sessions that run for four days. The EAAP meeting was last in the UK in 1994 in Edinburgh and before that in Harrogate in 1976. If you know of anywhere that is logistically easy to get to and an interesting place to be then we would be very interested to know of it please.

Academic Association

Michael Lee of Aberystwyth University is leading the BSAS initiative to recruit groups of BSAS members from research and teaching organisations to join the new BSAS **Academic Association**. He and Mike Steele are planning to visit a number of these organisations to give a presentation on the benefits of joining the BSAS Academic Association, and will be organising a breakfast meeting at Nottingham 2012 to bring member organisations together.

Michael is modelling the new BSAS Academic Association on the one followed by American colleagues, where institutions come together to discuss and debate and exchange information of mutual interest. These sessions generate long-term mutually beneficial relationships on research and projects as well as offering individuals opportunities for networking and career progression. There is no extra cost to joining the Academic Association – it's just a matter of accumulating enough individual BSAS members (over five) in one place so that they can become a member of the Academic Association.

If you'd like Michael and Mike to visit, give a lecture on animal science and explain what the Academic Association and BSAS are all about they would be pleased to hear from you. They recently visited Nottingham Trent to talk to an audience of over 50 lecturers and postgrads and had a stimulating debate on the challenges facing animal science and explained the Academic Association.

New BSAS Council Members

We have four new ordinary council members from the AGM in Nottingham. They are:

Sam Hoste, a geneticist who works as a consultant and specialises in KT.
Kevin Sinclair from Nottingham University, who is a specialist in animal and human fertility.
Andrew Clemson, recently qualified Ph.D. who's worked on the BSAS Student Council
Abdul Chaudhry of Newcastle University, who is interested in links with developing countries.

The new BSAS President is Ian Givens. Ian is Professor of Animal Science at Reading specialising in the health qualities of food from animals.

The BSAS Senior Vice President is Chris Warkup who heads KTM-Biosciences based in the Roslin Institute in Edinburgh.
Pete Williams is the new BSAS Vice President. He works for ABN Agri-on biofuels.

BSAS Five Year Strategic Plan

BSAS thinks it is an ideal time to put its head above the parapet and play a much more active role with others in achieving its overall aims of promoting animal science both to the industry and the wider public. BSAS is financially strong enough to be able to do this but needs your help in promoting and backing the actions that it will now undertake.

You will have been receiving a number of e-mail messages concerning the new BSAS five year strategic plan which was presented and endorsed at the AGM in Nottingham in April. Papers for the plan are available on the website in the members area http://www.bsas.org.uk/Members_Area/Five_Year_Plan_-_Actions/.

At the recent Presidents' meeting BSAS endorsed the role that Colin Whittemore is taking in leading the action plan associated with this new strategy which will raise the profile and utility of the Society. This involves setting up four small groups of members to undertake the action points detailed in the action plan. The groups are concerned with:

- increasing impact to end users and the authority of the society - Ray Keating
- developing the benefits of BSAS membership - Colin Whittemore
- collaboration with other members of the animal science community - Richard Dewhurst
- functionality of the BSAS office - Mike Steele

Volunteers have been allocated to each of the groups who will identify how to and then carry out the action points allotted to them. There's a lot of overlap between the different groups so communications are key and Colin will play the role of *moderator* between the groups. We will also keep you updated on what's going on as we make progress.

Communications and Information officer

BSAS will shortly be interviewing a small group of candidates who have expressed an interest in taking on a part-time role covering communications and information. This is one of the actions of the five-year strategic plan. The new person will operate from home in liaison with the BSAS office and the CEO. She or he will help improve communications both within and outside of the society with the provision of improved messages and information for end-users, policymakers, industry and other scientists. The appointment will be for a two-year period and we hope that you will see a variety of changes to the website and better communications through public and social media.

ANIMAL has now been running for four years and is looking to further develop its position as a journal of quality over the next period. At the recent meeting of the Animal board in Edinburgh, Prof. Cled Thomas, who has lead the group since it started, retired. He was replaced by Prof. Nigel Scollan as chair. Each of the three members of Animal, EAAP, INRA and BSAS each have three members with Nigel an independent chairman nominated by EAAP. The BSAS members are Brian Cooke, Mike Steele and Richard Dewhurst.

Animal is continuing to do well with a rejection rate above 65%, increasing numbers of submissions and increasing numbers of subscribers. The sale of journals in 'bundles' means that Animal now reaches nearly 7000 subscribers, a long way from the 800 individual subscriptions Animal Science used to have!

We continue to need your help in raising the impact factor of Animal by citing papers from Animal in any paper you publish wherever it is published.

With the increased flow of papers that do not make the grade for Animal there are a number that are good but have only regional interest. They might better fit into a second level journal so Animal and Cambridge University Press are keen to develop Advances in Animal Biosciences (BSAS Proceedings) as this second level journal. It would continue to include proceedings but also perhaps papers that may be for example the more applied or maybe of interest to those working in developing countries.

Remember Advances will be available online free to all BSAS members including additional issues that come from EAAP or INRA – another benefit of being a BSAS member.

On his retirement in Edinburgh Cled Thomas was given a selection of gifts including an antique Italian lamp for his house in Italy, and a pair of chainsaw gloves so that he might better improve his skills in pruning the olives that surround it!

Scholarships and Awards

Winners of Presidents Prizes at Nottingham

Best theatre Presentation - *Naomi Fox, SAC*

Commended - *Anna Le Moine, University of Leeds* and *Ollie Szyszka, University of Newcastle*

No awards were given for posters or short presentations

Murray Black Grant winners

The following have been given an award from The Murray Black Scholarship for 2011

Pauline Addis, University of Newcastle

Oluwagemiga Adeleye, University of Newcastle

Marion Beecher, Teagasc

Jill Mackay, SAC

Cormac O'Shea, University College Dublin

Future Conferences

Occasional meeting - Reading

BSAS is working with the University of Reading on a one-day meeting to be held at the university on **19 December** on dairy products: their role in health maintenance and vascular disease prevention. This is being organised by Ian Givens our current BSAS President and is in association with current BBSRC/DRINC research projects. The programme will be available on the website in due course.

8th International Symposium on the Nutrition of Herbivores, Aberystwyth, Wales

6-9 September 2011 <http://www.isnh8.org/>

EAAP Stravanger, Norway 29 August - 2 September 2011

BSAS, AVTRW, ASF Annual Conference, University of Nottingham 24-25 April 2012

Obituary for Mr Iain McDonald

Iain McDonald sadly died on 10 April 2011. He was a statistician and mathematician and much valued colleague at the Rowett Institute in Aberdeen. Iain was a recipient of the Sir John Hammond Memorial Award from BSAP, proposed for the prize by Sir Kenneth Blaxter.

An example of his contribution to ruminant nutrition relates to findings that protein nutrition in ruminants was far more complicated than for non-ruminants. The Nylon Bag technique was developed at the Rowett to measure the ruminal degradation of protein supplements and other feedstuffs. When confronted with a problem one day he provided a solution subsequently of great use to many scientists. When a protein supplement is fed to ruminants, two things can happen to it - (i) it can be degraded by microbes at a speed which varies between supplements or, (ii) it could flow out from the rumen depending on flow rate, which can also vary.

How can one put together mathematical formulae which can be understood by nutritionists and help to calculate the real protein supply to the animal? Iain McDonald and colleagues collaborated to produce a simple formula, which resulted in a paper published in 1979 in the Journal of Agricultural Science. This paper now has over 1900 ISI citations and is by far the most cited article for this journal. By E R Ørskov