

**YORK, 4-6 APRIL 2005, BSAS ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

**A good one!**

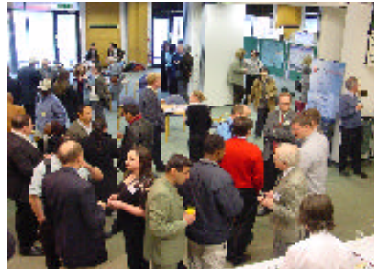
The BSAS Annual Meeting at York attracted nearly 400 delegates who enjoyed a very diverse and full programme. The consensus and feedback on the programme was that it was excellent and delegates complained that they could not get to enough of the presentations!

The Hammond Lecture, 'Understanding the genetic regulation of growth and fat' given by Daniel Pomp from the University of Nebraska, was exceptional, especially in communication and the level of information which enabled everyone who attended to understand a difficult topic. The geneticists loved the genetics sessions and also enjoyed the very friendly equine papers. The two Biodiversity sessions and short presentations of posters was very well received, with a wide variety of people demanding more! The two sessions on African livelihoods were popular and the DEFRA organised Link workshop on Sustainable Livestock Production attracted over 100 people.

Poster presentations were much better disciplined this year with fewer no shows, following Programme Committee's policy of getting authors to register before agreeing to publish in the proceedings. The poster sessions were well attended, but there was a tendency for delegates to congregate around the posters closest to where the wine was being served!

The WPSA Dinner at St Williams College, York Minster, and the BSAS trip to the York Castle Museum went brilliantly. WPSA are going back to the same venue next year.

Student Council activities also worked very well, especially on the Sunday when over 75 students attended the Genomics workshop and the travel and scholarship sessions. Phil Garnsworthy's presentation skills workshop on Monday morning was also, as usual, well attended. Lots of people also joined in the juggling workshop on the Sunday evening and some actually managed to make progress!



*Delegates at the conference in 2005*

The student band and free real ale on Tuesday night was good (but noisy). BSAS subsidised all the student delegates including giving them free accommodation on Sunday night.

**Welcome to our Iranian colleagues**

We had over 30 Iranian delegates this year who were made very welcome. Most joined in with the spirit of the conference and, at a meeting with Peter Rowlinson and Mike Steele, came up with some useful comments on how BSAS could assist the process at York in 2006 for themselves and their colleagues, and possibly help with meetings inside Iran. A few of the Iranians did not pay all of their fees and they will be pursued before they can come again!

The Hon Treasurer has asked that we remind all BSAS members that the Annual Meeting is heavily subsidised by BSAS, especially the members and student rates as part of its charitable expenditure. This is a policy endorsed by both Council and the AGM and will be worth around £13,000 to members in 2006.

**BSAS is listening..**

Not everything was perfect. There does still seem to be a gap between science and technology transfer, which is contributing to a drop in the number of delegates from industry. There is an increasing need to stress the importance of having 'take-home messages' that make presentations more relevant to industry. And we did struggle with climate control in several of the lecture theatres which ranged from arctic to tropical! The latter seem to characterise the biodiversity session and was not popular!

continued/

*Inside this issue...*

Annual Conference 2005	1
Annual Conference 2006	2
Scholarships 2006	
Sheep Conference	3
Beef Quality Conference Awards	
Topical Conferences	4
Student Council	
The New BSAS Website	
Animal Science	
Students - win a free trip	5
New Council Members	
New Ordinary Members	
Jan Crichton	
BSAS Meetings	6
Recruitment	

**20-21 September, Equine Science into Business, Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester**

**15-18 November, Thailand. Integrating Crop and Livestock Systems, Khon Kaen.**

**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](mailto:bsas@sac.ac.uk)  
 Website <http://www.bsas.org.uk>**

## **BSAS is listening...**

We tried the Conference Dinner on campus this year with balloons, magicians and a Beatles band and although the restaurant and entertainment were good, the food itself could have been much better. Next year we will revert to having a conference dinner somewhere nice in the City of York even though that means getting on buses. There were also a number of individual problems regarding accommodation. These were all discussed at the Programme Committee meeting on 4th May in Edinburgh, which reviewed the whole conference. The organisers are going to work even harder with the University of York to get things right for 2006. We will also continue looking for a better venue and Chester Racecourse, Harrogate, Warwick and Harper Adams Agricultural College are being investigated. However, these may prove costly, compared with the 24 hour delegate rate offered at York. There is also the option of moving around the UK each year with an occasional visit to Europe.

York has provisionally been booked for 27 – 29 March, 2006 and although it's not perfect it's as good as we can find at the moment. However if you have been to a conference where the venue was crucial to its success please let us know so we can evaluate them.

## **Annual Conference 27-29 March 2006: BSAS acting on your comments**

At the end of the 2005 conference, the delegates and speakers were asked for their comments and ideas and we are very grateful for the responses received. We had lots of positive feedback about the organisation of the conference, including practical information needs like providing a list of local places to eat, and that all correspondence would be electronic (with an option on the booking form to receive the information by post).

A number of ideas have been generated for sessions next year including the following, which are likely to be theatre sessions with one or more invited speakers. If you wish to get involved in any of these or have ideas for speakers or other sessions please contact the organiser or BSAS office.

**Environmental Impact of Livestock Production** - Bob Mayes - [r.mayes@macaulay.ac.uk](mailto:r.mayes@macaulay.ac.uk)

Water use and water pollution of and by livestock, impact on air quality. Other issues would include catchment management, IPPC, policy context of water framework policy, temperate and tropical agriculture, N and P pollution, drug residues, effect of diet, biodiversity.

**Control of TSE** - Eileen Wall - [eileen.wall@sac.ac.uk](mailto:eileen.wall@sac.ac.uk)  
/John Woolliams

Use of molecular information in livestock production.

**Meat Quality and Safety** - Basil Wolf - [btw@aber.ac.uk](mailto:btw@aber.ac.uk)

The concept of meat quality, its measurement and its genetic basis.

**Dairy systems** - Eileen Wall - [eileen.wall@sac.ac.uk](mailto:eileen.wall@sac.ac.uk)/Jenny Pryce  
Breeding for grazing systems, cross-breeding in temperate and tropical systems. Matching genotype to environment. Genotype x environment interactions.

**Responses to nutrients** - Spiridoula Athanasiadou - [spiridoula.athanasiadou@sac.ac.uk](mailto:spiridoula.athanasiadou@sac.ac.uk)

Monogastrics & ruminants. Use of bioinformatics. Decision Support Systems. Partitioning. Prediction of responses.

**Bioethics** - Hannah Bornett - [bornett@moulton.ac.uk](mailto:bornett@moulton.ac.uk)

Welfare and behaviour, sociology and ethics of keeping animals

**Applied reproduction** - George Mann and Melissa Royal - [mdroyal@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:mdroyal@liverpool.ac.uk)

**Energy conservation in pigs and poultry** (joint with WPSA) - Paul Rose

To examine government climate change regulation and to look at innovative methods that have been taken to reduce carbon use within the intensive pig and poultry sector.

1. Energy Information Centre, Newmarket  
Energy management and structured programmes for intensive livestock sector.
2. Animal Science Group, Wageningen UR, Lelystad.  
pig units using thermal solar energy, manure digestion and heat storage in an aquifer
3. Energy Power Resources (Fibrowatt) Ltd, Eye, Suffolk.  
Generating power from poultry litter.

**Microbial ecology of the gut** - Caroline Rymer/John Wallace/  
Jamie Newbold - [cjn@aber.ac.uk](mailto:cjn@aber.ac.uk)

Pigs & poultry; maybe humans, horses and companion animals. Manipulation of ecology, commercial implications. Adaptation to different feeds

**Equine and companion animals** - Hannah Bornett - [bornett@moulton.ac.uk](mailto:bornett@moulton.ac.uk)

Dog behaviour, cat welfare, genetics and breeding of horses, cats and dogs, health and welfare aspects

**President's session theme - Diet and Human Health** - John MacRae - [j.macrae@rri.sari.ac.uk](mailto:j.macrae@rri.sari.ac.uk)

Joint with the Nutrition Society, lipid metabolism and meat as a functional food. The Hammond lecture will look at the influence of animal diets on human health.

The short presentations given by Poster presenters in the biodiversity session was a very successful event and something the Programme Committee would like to consider repeating with other appropriate topics in 2006.

The other changes that may occur are likely to include having relevant topics within a day or an afternoon/morning, so that delegates who are short of time can come for part of the conference. It was very noticeable this year that there were many more day delegates than in previous years.

## **Scholarships 2006 - Murray Black Award**

As a result of the new format, the Murray Black Scholarship will now be awarded in the Spring each year. The recipients for this year are:

**Catherine Hayhurst, University of Liverpool**, £1,200 to Study the genetic variation in growth hormone, insulin and insulin like growth factor I (IGF-I) in juvenile Holstein-Friesian cattle at Foulum in Denmark.

**Suzanne Rowe, Roslin Institute**, £800 to attend a summer school in statistical genetics in North Carolina, USA. Suzanne is researching ways of applying recent genetic improvement technology directly to natural and commercial livestock pedigrees.

# Sheep Conference

## Bulging at the seams!

The Sheep Conference in County Antrim, Northern Ireland was well attended with over 200 delegates coming together for this very popular and practical conference: Profit from Your Labour.

Jointly organised by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Agriculture Research Institute of Northern Ireland, Teagasc, Agriculture and Food Development Authority, BSAS and the Irish and Ulster Grassland Associations. This meeting brought together everybody on the island of Ireland with an interest in sheep production. The delegate audience was notable by the large number of farmers who had come to discuss and debate the future of sheep in their farming enterprises. Many were worried about the future, especially with the single farm payment system moving EU funding away from production towards environmental maintenance. Many were also concerned about who would be running their farms in the future with many of their children leaving the land for more secure careers – the typical movement of young people towards cities seen throughout the world.

The keynote paper was given by Murray Rolfe a sheep producer from New Zealand, who painted a positive future picture for innovative farmers. Back in the early 1990s, New Zealand had been where Ireland and the UK sheep farmers are today. From a position of deep gloom then, the New Zealand sheep farmers have moved on to become part of a blooming integrated and farmer owned industry striving to meet demand for its meat products. A number of Irish and UK farmer speakers outlined innovative activities they were pursuing given that lack of labour was now a major issue and that meat processing companies were not always pursuing the best interests of producers. Everyone from pedigree breeders to commercial farmers agreed that they needed to speak to each other to understand what was required to deliver a premium quality product, that the public were prepared to pay good money for. They felt, however, that much of the revenue ended up in the pockets of the processors rather than the producers.

The conference took place over two days at the Greenmount Campus of the College of Agriculture and Food and Rural Enterprise just outside Antrim City in Northern Ireland. The campus has recently had considerable investment in its facilities and the trees and flowers of the grounds certainly looked at their best, reflecting an ambience of optimism on the delegates between the sunshine and showers. The food was good and the crack even better! In true sheep farming tradition the visit to a splendidly sited sheep farmer in mountains on the Antrim coast was marked by heavy rain! The delegates in their blue overalls made an interesting feature, as they were tracted up the mountain to listen to some very lively presentations from the farmer, scientists and blackfaced lambs, on farming sheep in an environmentally sensitive area.

Despite getting wet the visit was judged an enormous success along with the indoor barbecue that followed back at Greenmount.



*Delegates - the ones outside the pens!*

The organisers, who came from both north and south of the border, did a splendid job and are now challenged on what to do next to help delegates decide their way forward in the new market.

## Langford Food Industry Conference

### Beef Quality

A really interactive 1½ days at a very good time for producers, processors, retailers and scientists. This conference brought speakers from Poland, France, the USA, and the UK to address and challenge the 100+ delegates.

This new format of 1½ days with presentations, a dinner, debate and practical food tasting sessions worked well, and is likely to be repeated next year with sheep as the possible topic.

Throughout the conference there was an emphasis on explaining quality from a consumer view point. The picture painted by those looking at the future was more optimistic than depressing. Demand for beef in the UK and Europe is good and the opportunities to get a good return from quality products is high, despite the potential competition from countries like Brazil. However, getting better returns back to producers remains a challenge and the need for the whole production and processing chain is vital.

Our congratulations to the Langford team of Jeff Wood, Rita Hinton and colleagues on organising an excellent conference.

## Awards

### Sir John Hammond Memorial Prize

**Dr Kevin Sinclair of Nottingham University** was this year's winner of the prestigious Sir John Hammond Memorial Prize for his outstanding contribution to animal science. The award was presented to Kevin at the BSAS Annual Conference Dinner, in recognition of Kevin's *'contribution to understanding the efficiency of ruminant reproduction through molecular and cellular experimental approaches and whole animal studies, and his ability to communicate the findings to scientists and farmers'*.

### President's Prize - Annual Conference 2005

**Suzanne Rowe of Roslin Institute** won the best theatre at this year's Annual Conference for her presentation on *Genetic heterogeneity of residual variance within families for body weight in poultry*.

**Ruth Pickard of University of Newcastle** was commended for her theatre presentation on *Supplementation of ewe diets with DHA-rich algal biomass for different time periods before lambing affects measure of lamb viability*

**Lenice Bell of Myrescough College** won the best poster for her presentation on *A survey of scrapie PrP genotype results and their relationship with coat colour and hornedness in UK Northern Short Tailed Sheep*

## Suggestions for topical conferences

### **Ethnoveterinary conference - Harvesting Knowledge, Pharming Opportunities**

Writtle College Essex - Jes Scaife - 2006/07

#### **1 Conserving the knowledge base – information gathering techniques**

Making the most of local knowledge;  
From local dialect to botanical identification (how to identify to what the locals use, is it an undiscovered plant)  
Translating symptoms into veterinary diagnosis.

#### **2 Cultivation and culture**

Respecting intellectual property and creating trust;  
Learning the lessons from local farmers;  
Matching growing conditions to optimise medicinal properties.

#### **3 Traditional veterinary medicines; origins and applications – a regional approach**

Asia  
Africa  
South America  
North America  
Europe

#### **4 Targeting biological systems**

The gut  
    Manipulating the rumen;  
    Approaches to manipulating the gut environment in monogastrics  
Controlling health and disease  
    Enhancing the immune system  
    Natural pesticides

### **Lithuanian Veterinary Academy June 2007**

The Lithuanians came to the Krakow conference in 2004 and are keen to work with the Polish and ourselves on a conference on animal science that gives East Europeans an outlet for research findings. They would assistance from BSAS to organise.

### **Fertility in Dairy Cows –Sept 2007**

organiser - Melissa Royal, Liverpool

A Satellite conference of EAAP, Dublin 2007 to be held in Liverpool.

## Student Council - want to join?

The Student Council ran a very successful series of events at the Annual BSAS Conference at York in April, attracting large audiences and much praise. They also interested several potential new members, to replace the three current members who will be finishing their PhDs this year. Next year they hope to have enough applicants to run a proper election, but if any BSAS member, undertaking postgraduate work wants to find out more with a view to joining they would be pleased to hear from them through the BSAS office.

They are also going to put a fuller description of the student council's activities and minutes of their meetings on the website shortly.

## The New BSAS Website

### **The New BSAS Website is now up and running – comments please**

If you have already commented on it - thanks, as we appreciate all the comments and difficulties which we can often only sort out when you tell us. If you have not looked at the site please do so as we would very much welcome your ideas on how to develop it to suit you as it has plenty of potential for future development. We hope you find the new site is easier to get around. The BSAS office can now manage it directly for the first time and on-line registration is coming shortly along with comprehensive new databases. There are also plans to build up the resources available on the member's side and boost the links to other appropriate animal science sites. A small subgroup of Technical & Ethical Committee, including a student representative, will be recommending the next steps. They will be reviewing a number of ideas including:

- 'Interpretive summaries' of published papers, aimed at industry members;
- An interactive database where members can update their own information;
- Q&A page;
- Electronic submission of abstracts;
- Recruitment (job adverts) and funding opportunities ;
- Dedicated pages for specific interest groups like the equine managed by themselves.

### **Animal Science – joining CABI and looking for a European vision**

BSAS will shortly be signing a formal contract with CABI to become our publisher from January 2006. As the publishing world becomes ever more complex and competitive BSAS needs a partner to help move the journal forward in terms of profile, accessibility and quality. BSAS is keen to raise the impact factor of the journal and CABI can help achieve this, as well as penetrate the emerging markets in China and India where it has strong marketing expertise. CABI will publish Animal Science on Ingenta, with members having access through the BSAS website.

At the AGM, Nigel Scollan, Chair of BSAS Publications Committee, received a thorough endorsement as well as encouragement to continue discussions regarding a strong European based journal of animal science to rival the 'Journal of Animal Science'. Subsequent meetings in May 2005, with INRA and EAAP made progress on the issue but, as in all negotiations, it is difficult to meet all aspirations.

Animal Science is a very successful business for BSAS providing the bulk of its finances that allows its charitable expenditure, like awards and subsidising conferences. Consequently the BSAS Council are concerned that any future collaborative on publication protects the income that comes from the journal's financial success, so that the society continues to remain financially strong.

**Win a FREE trip**  
**Applying Equine Science: Research into Business**

20-21 September 2005

Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester, UK

**STUDENT ESSAY COMPETITION**

This is being re-launched this year in a new format. There will be a competition each time there is a BSAS topical conference, with the prize being a free place at that conference. The first is the Applying Equine Science: 'Research into Business' with a deadline of 15th August 2005. 1200 words are required on either of the following:

The future role of equines in the UK environment

To what extent does equine research affect horse husbandry strategies

**PRIZES**

The winner will be informed by the 1 September 2005 and be given a free delegate place, including meals and accommodation at the conference on Applying Equine Science: Research into Business, 20-21 September 2005, Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester, UK. BSAS will assist with reasonable travel costs from within Europe.

*A competition will also be held with a free trip to the Thailand conference in November 2005 – watch the website for details and deadlines*

## New Council Members

Council Welcomes the following three members:

**Dr Helen Edge** who is working as a research associate at the University of Newcastle on projects including management of outdoor sows and the effect of nutritional strategies on the environmental impact of pig production. She has combined research activity with teaching responsibilities, developing problem based learning approaches to module delivery, and is currently responsible for co-ordination of a multi-centre investigation of the effect of age at weaning on biological and economic performance of pigs.

**Kevin Shingfield**- Since 2003 has been working as a senior scientist position at MTT Agrifood Research Finland and returned back to Finland. Currently involved in several large EU funded projects on lipid metabolism in the dairy cow, working in close collaboration with Professor Pekka Huhtanen and Dr. Mikko Griinari. Currently an editor on Animal Science.

**Eileen Wall** teaches at under and post graduate level in SAC and the University of Edinburgh. She regularly contributes to the research community through papers, presentations, as well as successfully organising the International Cattle Breeding Roundtable in Edinburgh (2003). Eileen has been an active member of the society since she was a student and would like to help develop the Society by bringing her enthusiasm and ideas to council. As a younger member she has suggestions on how to involve more young members in the function of the Society.

### **Do you want more regular electronic updates on Society affairs?**

It has been suggested that the Society publish a short electronic monthly newsletter to keep members up to date. This would be a one pager and either e-mailed or posted on the website. Any thoughts??

## New Ordinary Members

Following the new protocol for selecting ordinary members of BSAS Committees at the 2005 AGM, the following are joining the BSAS Standing Committees

**Programme**

Lynne Dawson, ARINI

Eddie Deaville, ADAS/University of Reading

John Rooke, SAC Aberdeen

Tom Acamovic, SAC Auchencruive

Jenni Bell, SAC Crichton Royal Farm

**T&E**

Mike Hutchings, SAC Edinburgh

### **Jan Crichton**

It is with great sadness that we announce the sudden and unexpected death of Jan Crichton, Chief Executive of the British Grassland Society. With many members of BSAS also being BGS members, we have worked closely together on a number of projects over the past 15 or more years. Jan has been the driving force behind many BGS projects and a good friend and colleague to BSAS, working with us on a number of very successful conferences and ventures, including the very popular 2003 joint session at York on 'Reconnecting the Food Chain'.

A large number of BSAS and BGS members attended the funeral in Oxfordshire on Friday 13th May, including Mike Steele representing BSAS.

# BSAS Meetings 2005

20 - 21 September 2005 **Applying Equine Science: Research into Business**  
Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester. RAC Organisers John Alliston and Andrew Hemmings  
The theme is 'appliance of science to equine businesses', with theatre presentations focusing on technology transfer to the equine industry and its successful application in business terms.  
For further details email: [andrew.hemmings@rac.ac.uk](mailto:andrew.hemmings@rac.ac.uk) or [mike.steele@sac.ac.uk](mailto:mike.steele@sac.ac.uk) or visit [www.bsas.org.uk](http://www.bsas.org.uk)

15-18 November 2005 **Integrating crop & livestock systems**  
Meeting the challenge of globalisation, Khon Kaen, Thailand. (Jointly with Animal Husbandry Association of Thailand) to register visit : [www.bsasahat.kku.ac.th](http://www.bsasahat.kku.ac.th)  
An introductory session on issues covering *the globalisation of trade and politics*.  
There are also special workshops planned on :

- New dietary strategies to improve animal health and production
- Dairying
- Crop-livestock system

### Session Issues

These will include:

- Crop livestock systems
- GATT & world trade
- Animal genetic resources
- Nutrient balances
- Role of large ruminants and equines
- Local feed resources
- Organic production
- Medicinal plants
- Animal welfare
- Livelihoods and lifelong development
- Environmental issues

### Format

- 2 days presentations
- One-day visits
- One-day with innovative interactions

Khon Kaen is in the NE of Thailand which can be easily and cheaply reached by air from Bangkok. Fares of around £500 return are available from Europe. The conference venue is the 5 star Sofitel Hotel with a range of hotels to suit budgets within 5 minutes walk.

Accommodation and eating out in Thailand is incredibly good value. Why not include a short holiday in Thailand trekking, shopping or on a beautiful beach. Thailand is very keen to get the tourists back. Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam are all nearby. Everyone speaks English!

**PAPER SUBMISSIONS ARE INVITED NOW - visit [www.bsasahat.kku.ac.th](http://www.bsasahat.kku.ac.th)**

## Future Meetings

September 2007

### Fertility in Dairy Cows

A Satellite conference of EAAP, Dublin 2007, to be held in Liverpool.  
Contact Melissa Royal for more details email: [mdroyal@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:mdroyal@liverpool.ac.uk)

### Recruitment

As our traditional industry contracts the Society continues to lose members. The number of overseas members has increased, but we need to work much harder to retain student members of the Society once they graduate. Undergraduates are attracted by free membership, but we loose contact with them as they move on from University. Please encourage both appropriate students and established scientists to join us.