



Review of events – Highlights

Knowledge transfer is often likened to starting a conversation. 2007 saw many such conversations at SCRI involving a wide variety of scientists, farmers and food industry specialists. We also reached out to thousands of individual members of the public.

SCRI is a LEAF (Linking Environment and Farming) Innovation Centre. The LEAF Open Day on Sunday 10 June was widely publicised in the local community and by mid-afternoon there were 270 cars parked in the grounds and more than 1000 visitors enjoying tractor rides, science displays and hands-on activities in the Living Field and its newly-opened Study Centre.



Professor Geoff Squire with a young student in the Living Field study centre.

SCRI's three, specialist events also thrived in 2007. 'Cereal Solutions', 'Fruit for the Future' and 'Potatoes in Practice' attracted more than 700 visitors – a high proportion of them growers, researchers or industry specialists. 'Potatoes in Practice' continues to draw a high turn-out and is established as the UK's largest potato field event. This year the visitors included producers from Australia, Spain and Egypt.

The guest speaker at 'Potatoes in Practice' was the Director General Environment, Scottish Government, Richard Wakeford. He told his audience that SCRI's



Gaynor McKenzie and Cabinet Secretary Richard Lochhead at the Royal Highland Show.

research on potato genetics and genomics and on potato pathology was at the cutting edge of science in these fields.

SCRI's events team was also active at

- the Gardening Scotland show at Ingliston
- the Six Cities design event in Dundee (with a display on DNA)
- the Dundee Flower and Food Festival
- the Glasgow Science Centre

The Royal Highland Show provided the opportunity for two, very different exhibits of SCRI's research. In the Royal Highland Education Trust pavilion, staff ran a display aimed at youngsters and demonstrating the nutritional qualities of fruit. The RHS also saw the first public appearance of a three metre high, polystyrene mountain! It was the brainchild of Gavin Ramsay and Gaynor McKenzie of the Commonwealth Potato Collection. It demonstrated to great effect the origins of the potato in the high peaks of the South American Andes.

SCRI was host to a wide range of official visits during the year. The Scottish Government's Chief Scientific Adviser, Professor Anne Glover, visited in May; three separate,



Andrew Welsh MSP (left) and Peter Gregory at the summer reception.

Chinese government delegations came for briefings including one led by the vice Minister for agriculture, Zhu Baocheng; and an evening reception and buffet supper in August, hosted by the Director, had a guest list including John Purvis MEP, Andrew Welsh MSP, Alex Johnstone MSP, and Provost John Hulbert JP of Perth and Kinross Council.

There were individual honours and successes for SCRI members of staff during 2007. Michael Ravensdale and Rene Sonnenberg, PhD research students with SCRI, were both finalists in the 2007 SABRI/SAC postgraduate competition. Both were introduced to HRH The Princess Royal during the presentation ceremony at the Moredun Research Institute.



Visit by the Chinese Vice Minister of Agriculture, Zhu Baocheng.

An event of great significance for SCRI was the signing on 29 May of a memorandum of understanding with the Scottish Agricultural College. Particular areas

for collaboration include crop disease and pest management, soils and the science and economics of sustainable agriculture. The two organisations are also sharing the job of passing knowledge on to the farming and food industries, schools and the public.

Dr Tim George of Environment Plant Interactions was awarded a Royal Society of Edinburgh Fellowship to pursue his work on the resilience of Scottish agriculture in the face of global environmental change. Dr Derek Stewart, the head of Plant Products and Food Quality, was made a Fellow of the Royal Society of Chemistry. Rex Brennan was awarded the Scottish Horticultural Medal for his work as leader of the Soft Fruit Genetics & Pathology work programme.

SCRI's strength as a research centre comes from its individual members of staff. Their dedication over many years was officially recognised in October when forty scientists and support staff received long service awards.



On the same day, SCRI bade farewell to Keith Hopkins, who stood down from the Governing Board after ten years' service.

