

The Scottish Society for Crop Research

Bill Macfarlane Smith

The Society provides a link between the Scottish Crop Research Institute and farmers, processors and other interested bodies:

- by organising field walks in the summer and meetings during the winter for the exchange of information
- by financing science-based publications for the benefit of the membership
- through the formation of crop-based sub-committees which maintain contact with members on specialised topics
- by funding research at SCRI which is either 'pump-priming' to initiate new research, or work for minority interests that the large funding bodies would not support.

The Society also has a role in raising awareness of items of interest and concern to the agriculture,

horticulture and forestry industries. At the moment, this is achieved by funding the Annual SSCR Lecture immediately following the Annual General Meeting. This year's AGM was held on Wednesday 26 May and the Annual Lecture was given by Professor Martin Tangney, Professor of the Biofuels Research Centre at Edinburgh Napier University. The title of the Lecture was 'Biofuels'.

The Society currently supports research on a range of topics, with funding being made available on an



Cereals in Practice.



Fruit for the Future.



Potatoes in Practice.

annual basis for work selected by the three Crop Sub-Committees. Short notes on the outcome of research funded in the past by SSCR are on the Society's web pages which can be accessed directly or via links from SCRI's website. Funding continues to be provided on a biennial basis for a keynote speaker at the Crop Protection Northern Britain Conference.

All meetings organised by the Society were again well supported, with similar or greater numbers attracted than in previous years. 'Cereals in Practice' was held on 8 July 2010, again at the Institute's Balruddery Farm. This event combined the research and practical demonstrations of the work of SCRI and SAC scientists and again included demonstrations of machinery.

The 'Fruit for the Future' event was held on 15 July 2010, and attracted breeders, growers, end-users and processors. The provision of additional facilities for visitors to meet, and for the presentations on research, was greatly appreciated. New selections of raspberries, strawberries, blackcurrants, and gooseberries were displayed, with the opportunity provided for the tasting and evaluation of prospective new varieties of raspberry.

'Potatoes in Practice' was held on 12 August, at Balruddery Farm. This was attended by well over 700 growers, breeders, scientists and advisers who had come to see new research, new cultivars and methods of crop husbandry. It may well be difficult to better this attendance in future years. Support was again provided by the Potato Council, the Scottish Agricultural College, CSC Crop Protection Ltd., SCRI and the Society. Plot demonstrations, including those of potato crop handling machinery and other equipment, were of particular interest, in spite of the generally inclement weather on the day.

The Potato and Soft Fruit Crop Sub-Committees held other half day meetings during the year to provide information on current research and to permit interaction between end users, growers, processors and scientists. The Cereal and Combinable Crop Sub-Committee has planned a winter event at Battleby on 24 February 2011.

The Society continues to review its remit, to ensure that it both is fit for the 21st century and continues to meet the objectives and aspirations of its members. Members were invited by the Chairman, Dr Wale, in his AGM address when he demitted office, to contribute views on the future objectives and structure of the Society.