

Introduction by the Director

John R. Hillman



® The Scottish Crop Research Institute (SCRI) is a non-profit-making limited company established under the Companies Act, has charitable status, and is classified as a Non-Departmental Public Body because over 50% of the total funding is received as grant-in-aid from the Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department (SEERAD). All members of the Governing Body are appointed by the First Minister. Staff are not formally civil servants, but are members of the Scottish Executive Rural Affairs Department Superannuation Scheme, 1999. SEERAD also funds any redundancies, the site, and much of its fabric and capital equipment. There is also a Management Statement and Financial Memorandum embodying the formal relationship with SEERAD. The Pay and Grading System, and Staff and Management Codes under which the

Institute operates are administered by the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC).

The Institute is committed to the implementation of Corporate Governance, which requires the highest standards in the three key areas of openness, integrity, and accountability. The Governing Body has a Code of Practice to guide the conduct of its members and has established the appropriate procedures and remits to ensure adherence to these standards. Our specific strategic objectives to achieve this Mission are to:



® SCRI was established in 1981 by an amalgamation of the Scottish Horticultural Research Institute (SHRI, founded at Invergowrie, Dundee in 1951) and the Scottish Plant Breeding Station (SPBS, founded at East

The Mission of SCRI is:

“To be Europe’s leading centre for strategic and applied research into plant and crop-based bioscience, and related environmental sciences, creating knowledge, added-value and new products to benefit the food, drink, agriculture and related industries, the bioindustries, and the environment”.

Our specific strategic objectives to achieve this Mission are to:

Science

- Be an internationally recognized centre of excellence in plant and crop bioscience and products.
- Establish partnerships in key strategic research areas that are fundamental to the long-term vision for the Institute, which will include developing our links with universities and other related bodies.

Knowledge and Technology Transfer & Exploitation

- Be an internationally successful model for knowledge transfer and for the spin-out and exploitation of scientific research at the Institute.

Finance and Physical Resources

- Develop new funding and commercialization relationships facilitated by an effective and responsive system of financial control.
- Provide a scientific, administrative and physical infrastructure that enables and supports high-quality, innovative, basic, strategic, and applied research.


Impact and Image


- Raise our profile and promote public awareness and understanding of relevant bioscience and environmental issues to assist informed public debate.


Human Resources


- Promote the recruitment and development of staff to the highest international standards to deliver the strategic science and commercialisation programmes.

Craigs, Edinburgh in 1921). In 1987, the Institute assumed managerial responsibility for Biomathematics & Statistics Scotland (BioSS), formerly the Scottish Agricultural Statistics Service.


 SCRI is a major international centre for basic, strategic, and applied research on agricultural, horticultural, and industrial crops and on the underlying biological processes common to all plants. It is the only such institute in Scotland and Northern Britain, and the range of complementary skills assembled at the Institute, from fundamental molecular genetics to glasshouse- and field-trials, with exploitation of the SCRI-based international genetic resources in a region of high phytosanitary conditions, is unique within the UK.

 The science is optimised by a matrix-management system comprising three Themes and nine inter-related research Programmes. Management structures are regularly reviewed to ensure maximum effectiveness of the research at SCRI.


 The SCRI research programmes are peer-reviewed at many levels. Each year, the 'core' programme of research comprising a number of projects is assessed by the Agricultural and Biological Research Group of SEERAD. All new projects are appraised by advisers prior to commissioning, the progress of the research projects is monitored annually and, ultimately, final reports are produced for evaluation.


 Every four years, SEERAD commissions the appointment of a Visiting Group to review the work of the Institute. In 1998, a Visiting Group carried out a scientific audit of the quality and conduct of SCRI's core research programme and related work. It assessed SCRI's effectiveness in managing its resources to meet the needs of users and beneficiaries of research, and the Institute's strategic plans for the future development of its scientific programme.


The Mid-Term Implementation Report, (November 2000), showed that all 25 recommendations of the VG Report had been implemented. Many of the recommendations related to the need to formulate a more focused and integrated science strategy based on reviews involving a corporate approach, and this has now been achieved.

 A broad multidisciplinary approach to fundamental and strategic research, and technology transfer, are special strengths of SCRI. Our programmes span the disciplines of genetics and breeding, molecular and cellular biology, biotechnology, plant pathology (bacteriology, entomology, mycology, nematology, and virology), plant physi-

ology and cell biology, environmental science, plant chemistry and biochemistry, agronomy, molecular ecology, vegetation dynamics, bioremediation, serology, physics, mathematics, bioinformatics, and statistics. Genetics and enhanced breeding of selected crops, and biotechnology, lie at the core of all our substantial research, development, and training programmes.

 The breadth and depth of knowledge, technical expertise, and infrastructural resources available at SCRI attract extensive contracts and consultancies from, and foster collaborations with, numerous academic and corporate organisations around the world. Synergistic liaisons with other institutes, universities, and colleges in the UK and overseas are also integral to the scientific growth, development, and validation of the Institute's research activities. New links are being forged continuously, as well as existing contacts being developed and strengthened.


 SCRI and Mylnefield Research Services (MRS) Ltd, the commercial arm of the Institute, are successful in gaining competitive research contracts from government departments and agencies, Levy Boards, grower organisations, international agencies, the European Union, commercial companies, local government, and some Charities, Research Councils, and Trust funds, although we are largely excluded from submitting applications to the latter three sources.


 In February 2000, the Mylnefield Trust was registered. The objectives of the Trust are:

to promote research and scientific work in the life, environmental and related sciences, in particular production of agricultural, horticultural, and forestry crops, methods of limiting or eradicating pests and diseases, wood sciences and biomathematics, methods of increasing production or growth, improving cultivation and research into improved cultivars;

to promote the dissemination of such research.

The Trust will support scientific research at SCRI by making gifts, grants, loans, or payments to the Institute subject to the above objectives being met.

 Also in February 2000, Mylnefield Holdings Ltd was established. Mylnefield Holdings Ltd is legally separate from SCRI and MRS Ltd but will obtain licences to SCRI technology and other necessary third-party technology that will enable it to establish spin-out companies. The new company will transfer money to SCRI and MRS Ltd through royalty and/or milestone payments.

 SCRI provides the base and secretariat for The Scottish Society for Crop Research (SSCR), a regis-

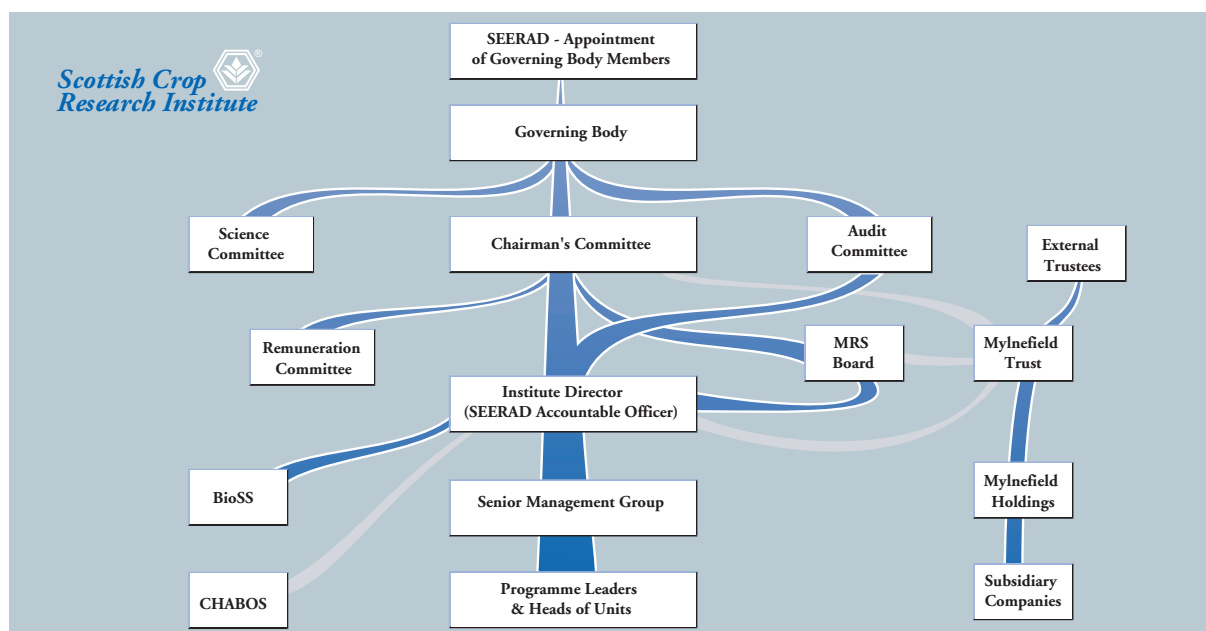




Figure 1 SCRI company and committee structure.

tered Friendly Society formed in 1981 by the amalgamation of The Scottish Society for Research in Plant Breeding and The Scottish Horticultural Research Association.


 The SSCR provides an important link between SCRI research scientists and farmers, growers, processors, and other interested companies in the private sector.


The Society:


- organises interactive field walks and end-user/researcher discussion sessions;
- finances science-based advisory publications for the benefit of its members;
- stimulates crop-based sub-committees to support targeted research projects;
- reinforces SCRI representation with trade associations, Levy Boards, and other user-groups;
- administers the biennial Peter Massalski Prize to the most promising young scientist at SCRI.

 SCRI is one of five Scottish Agricultural and Biological Research Institutes (SABRIs: Scottish Crop Research Institute; Hannah Research Institute; Macaulay Land Use Research Institute; Moredun Research Institute; Rowett Research Institute); and together with the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh; the Scottish Agricultural College (SAC); the Scottish Agricultural Science Agency (SASA); the Fisheries Research Services; and Forestry Commission Research Agency, comprise the Committee of

Heads of Agricultural and Biological Organisations in Scotland (CHABOS).

 BioSS was established to cover the biomathematical and statistical needs of the five SABRIs and SAC. High-level consultancy, training, and research inputs from BioSS give a major advantage to the SABRI and SAC research programmes, as well as to the work of SASA and several other bodies for whom it carries out contracts.

 This Report details a small selection of the recent research achievements of SCRI, BioSS, and MRS Ltd, briefly describes the commercial rôles and successes of MRS Ltd, and summarises the important linking rôle of SSCR. Significant advances continue to be made in both fundamental and strategic science, with contributions to the protection and understanding of the environment. SCRI contributes to the debate on genetically modified crops, providing independent and unbiased information on this important subject. Discoveries are reported of direct and indirect benefit to agriculture, horticulture, forestry, land management, and biotechnology. Dedicated and talented scientific and support staff in the Institute, BioSS, and MRS Ltd, account for our stature, successes, and delivery of achievements.

 Details of the annual accounts, Corporate Plan, health and safety provisions, and the SCRI/MRS

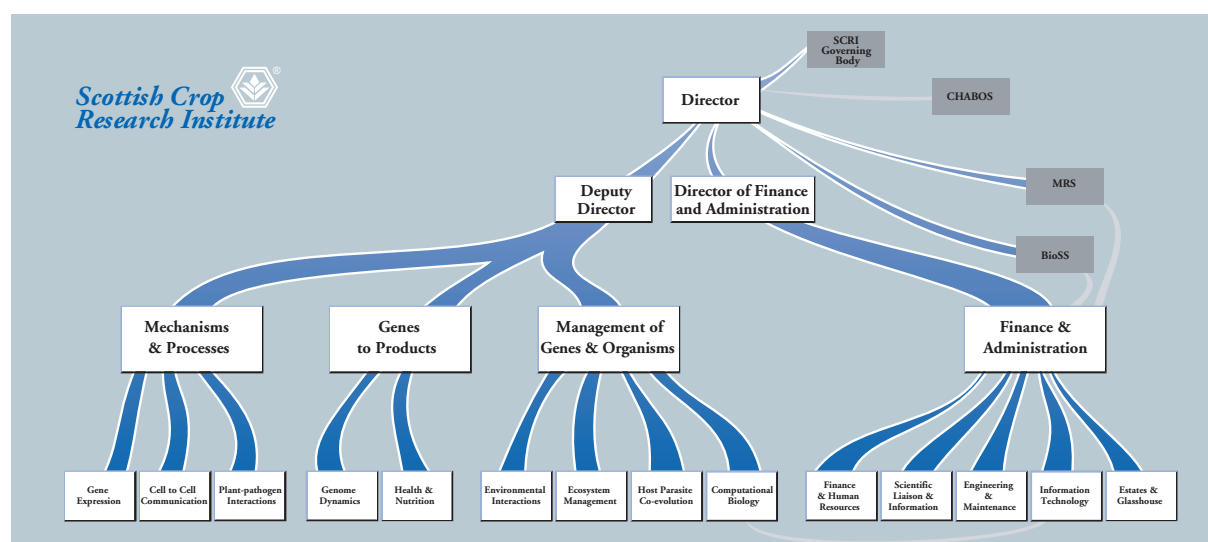


Figure 2 Institute management structure.

quality-assurance arrangements are available on request. (Figures 1 and 2 illustrate the SCRI company and committee structure, and the management structure).

On behalf of the staff and Governing Body, it is a pleasure once again for me to acknowledge with gratitude the staff of SEERAD for their continuing support of, and demonstrable commitment to, our research programme and to our development. Grants, contracts, donations, advice, and joint participation in our activities from the SSCR, other government departments and their agen-

cies, non-governmental agencies, our sister CHABOS institutions and BBSRC institutes with whom we coordinate our research, grower levy boards, local and regional authorities, commercial companies, farmers and other individuals, and learned societies, are also warmly appreciated.

SCRI continues to remain buoyant in generally difficult times for science and agriculture in the UK, justifying its existence in every respect. We are confident that we shall continue to develop and thrive.