

# *Mylnefield Research Services (MRS)*

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*MRS, the commercial wholly-owned subsidiary of the Scottish Crop Research Institute (SCRI), was established in 1989 to enhance competitiveness, understand and fulfil the needs of industry. The company has grown steadily and continued to benefit SCRI through annual Gift Aid and the provision of services, without any external financial assistance.*

*The Mission Statement of MRS is:*

*To develop commercially the Scottish Crop Research Institute's scientific expertise, resources and intellectual property, and to improve the quality of services to achieve new standards of excellence.*

**Finances** The income of MRS increased to £1.91 million in 2004/2005, an increase of almost 15% on the previous year. MRS transferred £1.3 million to the SCRI Group, including £132k of Gift Aid. As in previous years, contract research (72%) was the biggest contributor to income, followed by royalties (12%) and analytical services (10%).

**Licensing and IP Asset Management** MRS is responsible for ensuring that all varieties emanating from breeding programmes at SCRI are protected by plant variety rights, drawing up license agreements with third parties and collecting the royalties. MRS licences potatoes, forage and salad rape, turnip, kale, blackcurrants, blackberry, raspberry and strawberry varieties and currently has a portfolio of 470 licences in 18 countries.

Since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2004, two potato varieties and one kale variety have been added to the UK National List and another five potato varieties have been submitted to National List trials. Three potato varieties and one kale variety were granted EU Plant Variety Rights. In addition there were nine applications for Plant Variety Rights for potato varieties, including five in Australia. SCRI varieties are being trialled all over the world including Japan (potatoes), China (soft fruit), Romania (soft fruit and potatoes), Australia (potatoes), Cuba (potatoes) and Egypt (potatoes).

**Proof of Concept Projects** MRS is responsible for commercialising the output of Proof of Concept projects funded by Scottish Enterprise at SCRI. Current projects include a novel method of produc-

ing ascorbic acid in yeast (Roberto Viola and Rob Hancock), the development of a service to screen genes for nematocidal, fungicidal and insecticidal activity (John Jones and Sean Chapman), a new method for analysing the physical and chemical properties of timber (Derek Stewart) and the development of environmental molecular diagnostics for water quality assessment (Tim Daniell). Discussions with commercial companies are on-going regarding licensing these technologies and / or establishing new businesses based at SCRI.

**Mylnefield Lipid Analysis** The lipid analysis business was rebranded as Mylnefield Lipid Analysis and increased emphasis placed on marketing services. This has resulted in an increase in turnover and winning a significant contract with a multi-national pharmaceutical company. Further investment in equipment, notably stability cabinets and an additional gas chromatograph, has enabled us to significantly grow the business.

**Developing Markets** In May 2005, MRS led an Agricultural Trade Mission, organised by China Britain Business Council (CBBC), to China and continued to concentrate its efforts on China lifting the import ban on UK seed potatoes. A significant opportunity exists to both MRS and SCRI, in helping China develop its potato industry. SCRI and MRS presented papers at, and co-organised the International Potato Symposium in Sichuan, where the UK was very well represented.

Following discussion between MRS, CBBC and Defra, potato projects are being prioritised as an industry

need for funding under the new Memorandum of Understanding between Defra and the Ministry of Agriculture of the People's Republic of China.

Nigel Kerby was appointed to the Board of CBBC and, in his capacity as a Board Member, was invited to meet President Hu Jintao on his state visit to the UK.

**Human Resources** MRS values highly the skills and experience of all its employees and recognises their contribution, together with that of SCRI scientific and administrative staff, to company performance. MRS is committed to investing in training to ensure that all employees not only perform effectively and efficiently, but also gain long-term satisfaction from their work.

Prof. John Hillman, Prof. Richard Cogdell and Mr Ed Angus all stepped down from the MRS Board of Directors after many years services. We welcome Prof. Peter Gregory to the Board.

**Knowledge Transfer and Exploitation (KTE)** MRS plays an integral role in the overall knowledge transfer strategy of SCRI. In summer 2005, MRS contacted more than 250 stakeholders for feedback on the new SEERAD-funded work packages and had numerous follow-on discussions. In addition, MRS contributed to the 'Programme for Knowledge Management and Transfer to Deliver SEERAD's Strategy for Research



Chinese Administration for Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine (AQSIQ) visit SCRI (June 2004)

on the Environment, Biology and Agriculture'- the overarching strategy for knowledge transfer. We have also been proactive in disseminating information on SCRI to a wide range of end-users, and gave 9 invited presentations at national and international conferences and symposia.

**Acknowledgements** MRS gratefully acknowledges the support of all SCRI staff, for their significant contribution to the success of the company. MRS would also like to thank its customers and sponsors for their continued support. In addition, we would like to thank the non-executive Directors of MRS who contribute valuable time without recompense.

## Mylnefield Trust and Mylnefield Holdings

The Mylnefield Trust and Mylnefield Holdings Ltd. (MHL) were established in 2000 in order to give the SCRI Group the flexibility it requires to grow. Central to this growth is the creation of a number of spin-out companies, such as Scottish Potato Technology Ltd, in which MHL on behalf of the SCRI Group, will hold equity.

The Trustees are a group of individuals, including several members of the MRS Board of Directors and the SCRI Governing Body. The Trust currently has funds of approximately £300K, achieved mainly through donations from MRS Ltd.

The Trust has charitable status and has as its prime objectives:

- 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 possible varieties.
- to promote the dissemination of such research



A Local Art-Science Collaboration

To date the Trust has funded:

- An Incentive Fund to provide further support for scientists actively winning external contracts to pursue scientific research
- Funds to support the establishment of an Education Officer at SCRI
- A hardship fund for an overseas student
- Start-up funding for the Product Innovation Centre
- In 2004 The Mylnefield Trust funded 6 projects totalling £21,349

During the financial year 2005-06 The Mylnefield Trust is supporting 5 projects (detailed below) amounting to £19,850. Also during this financial year, The Mylnefield Trust is supporting scientific publications up to a value of £10,000.

Name	Title	Value
Tim Daniell/Jen Kennedy	Re-colonisation Dynamics of Arbuscular Mycorrhizal Fungi	£3,050
Hugh Barker/Mark Petrie/Bruce Marshall	Development of Interactive Web-Based Applications to Provide Information on Soft Fruit Pests and Pathogens	£5,800
Sharon Neilson	Living Field Community Garden	£3,500
John Brown/Dave Marshall	Development of Portal System for Plant Science Scotland	£2,500
Ian Toth/Leighton Pritchard	Bringing Plant Science Closer to the Public: A Local Art-Science Collaboration	£5,000