

Horticulture Group

Newsletter

Issue 2 / February 2009

Editorial Welcome

Welcome to the February Newsletter of the SCI Horticulture Group. We hope you find something of interest in these pages. Suggestions, news items and even articles are always welcomed.

Editor

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The London Food Committee

By William Hudson

Last year in late summer I attended a symposium concerning London markets. This meeting was chaired by Rosie Boycott. She had recently been appointed 'Food Champion For London' by Boris Johnson or Bojo which I understand is his new nick name. I met Rosie after the meeting and explained what I did and my back ground and she immediately said there were no farmers on her food committee and would I like to join it. Of course I said yes.

The London Food Committee has a number of groups made up of committee members such as Local Food Strategies, Waste, Schools and Health, Mapping for Food Growth, Food Poverty and Security. The committee also has a number of projects, Local Markets for Local Food, Improving Food Skills, Capital Growth, Public Sector Procurement.

Then there is the difficult one 'The Olympics' an extra 19 million meals will be required in two weeks! But the main drive of the committee is to make London food more sustainable and resilient and to lay the foundations for this to be a long lasting legacy.

It is not surprising then to see that sustainability for London also refers to sustainability for our food system for the rest of the country. As well as increasing the awareness of our food production, getting people involved in growing themselves and community activities. It is hoped to be able to encourage the commercial production of fruit and vegetables around the outside of London, like it used to be. This produce can then be sold in street markets, shops, restaurants and wholesalers.

It has been very difficult in the recent past to compete with imports from Europe but the strength of the euro now gives our growers a better chance. The problem is that we

Group Development

We are pleased with our progress in our first year. However, we seek the capacity to do more in these difficult times. Of course it is not just the economy that drives us! Equally important are the environmental and climate change concerns, Olympic legacy issues, food safety and security as well as many others. SCI's Horticulture Group seeks to convert these challenges into opportunities and the interchange of ideas between science and business. To achieve this aim, we need your help

With the next AGM due in September we are actively recruiting new members who will be willing and able to help us. If you are actively involved in horticulture, have views and expertise that you are willing to share and project, then we would like to hear from you. With your help we can achieve our objectives. So, please contact Erin Taylor or any member of the Committee.

Mike Hall (Chairman)

Society of Chemical Industry

www.soci.org

SCI founded in London 1881 and in New York 1894
Incorporated by Royal Charter 1907, Registered as UK Charity 206883
Recognised as a not for profit organisation across the world

have very few growers left and very few acres committed to horticulture close to London and if that isn't enough there are very few people who want to be growers or young people who want to come into the industry. The people who are showing an interest in becoming growers don't have any land to do it on and farmers are reluctant to sell or lease small areas that would be suitable.

Looking at all this in a wider context for the rest of the country we need more people with knowledge to get

involved. More growers to inform local and central government. We need farmers with practical experience to contribute to the vision and delivery aspirations of the politicians; and yes we have to learn to speak like that because they are not going to learn how to speak like us. I hope that the London Food Committee will become an example for what can be done to mobilize society to be able to have a sustainable and resilient food supply system for the future.

Picture: www.freedigitalphotos.net



Industry News

Pests & Diseases

The Pesticides Safety Directorate (PSD) will begin a consultation with chemical users in the autumn to determine the best way to implement the EU's new Sustainable Use Directive, approved by the European Parliament on 13 January. (*Hort Week*, 30 January 2009)

Colourful 5 a day

M&S are launching a new slogan 'Making your 5 A DAY as colourful as you can means you get lots of different nutrients' (*FPJ* 16 January 2009)

Under 40s address pest control

UK companies Exosect and Certis addressed the recent Leipzig Under 40s conference on control of codling moth. This bi-annual European conference aims to bring together the younger generation in the industry (*FPJ*, 6 February 2009).

Jobs for UK workers

The National Farmers' Union (NFU) has appealed to UK growers to employ domestic workers. Richard Hirst, chairman of the NFU Horticulture Board said, 'I really think we need to energise the student networks. This may mean being more flexible but it will be worth it in the long run' (*FPJ*, 6 February 2009).

Spanish woes

Spanish growers have called crisis meetings as weather, low prices, lack of water and competition from countries such as Morocco and Israel threaten their season (*FPJ*, 6 February 2009)

Crisis Views

Delivering the annual City of London Lecture at London's Guildhall last week, Tesco chief executive Sir Terry Leahy insisted that the consumer and an unswerving belief in free trade will be paramount in seeing the world through recession. Peter Kendall, president of the NFU responded by saying there was too much short-termism in the market that is undermining confidence and planning in farming. (*FPJ*, 6 February 2009)

A video of the evening is available at:

www.cityfoodlecture.com

More students

Writtle College has seen student applications rise by 25.4% to its four specialist schools including the School of Horticulture and Sustainable Environments. Overall applications to study at all institutions represented by GuildHE have grown on average by 14% this year.

www.guildhe.ac.uk

SCI Horticulture Web Forum

Come and join our existing online debates or start a new subject you think would be interesting.

Current 'threads' include a debate on GM foods, with reference to the talk by Sir Don Curry on 23 March; the merits of 'traditional', 'classical' and 'lab' breeding techniques; current horticulture group activities and opportunities; helpful links to a number of e-newsletters which might provide fuel for future debate. <http://92.52.100.201/Home/Forum.aspx>

New Diagnostic Kit

Agralan has launched new diagnostic Flash kits to test for viruses and bacteria in the field including tomato mosaic virus and *Impatiens* necrotic spot virus (*Hort Week*, 20 February 2009)

Defra must support research

Vegetable and potato grower Mark Tinsley told the annual ADAS /Syngenta vegetable conference that MAFF and then Defra had failed to support horticultural initiatives as much as the arable and livestock sectors. In particular he criticised Defra's abandonment of horticultural research. Above every-thing else, the decline in horticultural research must be reversed, Tinsley told his audience. (*Hort Week*, 6 February 2009)

Industry News cont...

New products at GAN

Certis promoted the IPM benefits of their latest insecticide **Floramite** for use as part of a programme against two-spotted spider mite and other pests.

Fargro showed their new biofungicide **Serenade ASO**, for use against *Botrytis* in strawberries. They also demonstrated new Flower Bags made from biodegradable jute material.

Death to Knotweed

London Underground company Tubelines has trialled the herbicide picloram on its trainlines in a bid to eradicate Japanese knotweed. It reports a 94% kill rate. Picloram, the active ingredient in Tordon, has the potential to make large savings against using glyphosate treatments (*Hort Week*, 16 January 2009).

Business/Credit Crunch

The government is creating a new panel - Small Business Finance Forum - to monitor how banks lend to small businesses. It will monitor and enter into a constructive dialogue with individual lenders on the availability, risk and overall cost of SME (small and medium sized business) lending. To sign up for e-alerts use the link: www.berr.gov.uk

R&D

Sniffing out pests and diseases

Electronic noses or e-noses that detect volatile chemicals in the air could help alert protected crop growers to early signs of pest and disease attack. Researchers at Lancaster University have shown that e-noses can distinguish chemicals generated by healthy plants from those plants attacked by pests and diseases. Nigel Paul of Lancaster Environment Centre said 'some insect predators use the change in volatiles as a means to detect pests. (*Hort Week*, 16 January 2009).

Ozone post-harvest storage

Biofresh has launched ozone storage units called the **smartpallet** for post-harvest storage and transit. The bio-fresh system cleanses contaminated air, inhibits fungal development and prevents fungal sporulation, without leaving chemical residues. Prof. Jerry Barnes of Newcastle University says it provides a solution at all points in the supply chain adding 'I can see a point when every home has a biofresh ozone drawer in the refrigerator' (*FJP*, 23 January 2009).

<http://www.bio-fresh.co.uk>

Slow warm-up avoids condensation

The first phase of work on the GrowSave 'focus nurseries' for 2008/9 is now complete and has demonstrated how effective and energy-efficient humidity control can be achieved for poinsettias. They particularly wanted to show how to avoid condensation on the crop. 'Condensation occurs when the plant temperature is lower than the dew point of the greenhouse air,' said Tim Pratt of FEC Services. 'Growers can avoid the problem by ensuring that the greenhouse air temperature does not rise too quickly during the morning warm-up so that the plant warms up at about the same rate as the air' (*HDC News*, February 2009)



Photo by Peter Grimby

Photosynthesis viewed in a flash

Using ultra-short laser pulses, scientists hope to understand how plants harvest the Sun's energy. These laser flashes lasting one ten-thousandth of a billionth of a second enable them to 'see' how proteins pull electrons out of water molecules. They hope this will lead to an understanding of how plants are able to transfer energy across large molecules.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/sci/tech/7873294.stm>

Climate Change

Scientists at the University of Kassel in Germany have produced maps showing how and where future water stress could occur in 10, 40 and years time. Not good news for those in the south east of England or with holiday homes in Florida!

<http://newsvote.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/sci/tech/7821082.stm>

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/sci/tech/7821082.stm>

Worldskills

UK competitions support the government's skills strategy by helping to raise standards of training and performance, promoting world class skills and international competitiveness. Entries for Floristry, Environmental Sciences and Landscape Gardening close on 9 April 2009. For more information call 0800 612 0742 or visit:

www.worldskillsuk.org

IPM Essen

The effects of the credit crunch on home markets combined with the potential boost to exporters given by the decline in the value of the pound, resulted in the largest group of UK companies for a number of years at this key event for plant producers and garden centre buyers.

eEvents Calendar

Event Name	Date	Venue	Contact
Education - What's in it for me? Course Progression and Careers	2 March 2009	Sparsholt College, Wiltshire	Nik Thompson nik.thompson@sparsholt.ac.uk
GM Crops: Real benefits, Real concerns?	11 March 2009	University of Huddersfield	Erin Taylor erin.taylor@soci.org
An evening with Don Curry	23 March 2009	SCI Headquarters London	Erin Taylor erin.taylor@soci.org
Pesticide Application in Sport, Leisure & Amenity Areas	19 May 2009	SCI Headquarters London	AAB anna@aab.org.uk

Other Events that may be of interest

IPM Dubai - 3-5 March 2009
<http://www.ipm-dubai.net>

British Plant Fair - 5 March 2009
www.britishplantfair.co.uk

IFE London - 15-18 March 2009
<http://www.ife.co.uk>

eFig - 26-27 March 2009
<http://efigsite.34sp.com>

Seminar on the Environmental Risk Assessment of Pesticides (SERAP) – 26 March 2009
<http://www.pesticides.gov.uk/corporate.asp?id=2608>

International Conference, Advances in Plant Virology – 1-3 April 2009
<http://www.aab.org.uk/contentok.php?id=73&basket=wwsshowconfdets>

Plant Health Problems – 9 May 2009
<http://www.edenproject.com/whats-on/talks-and-courses/eden-horticulture-course-plant-healthproblems.php>

International Trials Conference: Assessment of Ornamental Plants. – 6-8 July 2010

VII International Symposium on Soil and Substrate Disinfestation. - September 13-18, 2009, Leuven (Belgium)
<http://www.ishs.org/news>

If you would like to advertise a

forthcoming event please contact.
erin.taylor@soci.org

In the next issues;

- Exporting in the credit crunch
- The National Horticulture Forum

Quote of the month

'Do we need expensive inspirational speakers at conferences when we have so much to learn from each other' says Peter Seabrook (*Hort Week*, 13 February 2009)

If you have anything you would like to ask, then please email your query to Erin Taylor at erin.taylor@soci.org or post a letter to Erin Taylor, Group Development Manager, SCI, 14-15 Belgrave Square, London SW1X 8PS.

For submitting ideas or to volunteer to be part of a committee or a group, please contact:

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