

Horticulture Group

Newsletter



Issue 1 / January 2009

Editorial Welcome

Welcome to the first edition of the 2009 Newsletter!!

An insight into the Romanian Mushroom industry

Mike Hall (Chairman)

Production of edible fungi in the United Kingdom rose by 48% between 1982 and 1993. This increase was largely stimulated by a Mushroom Growers' Association publicity campaign that emphasised the versatility and nutritional benefits of *Agaricus bisporus*.

One understandable side effect of this campaign was to project the British market as being more attractive to other nations that were geared up for export. Because the product is highly perishable, the main exporters by the mid 1990s were the Netherlands (c.12% market share) and Ireland (c. 11%). UK consumption is now relatively static and remains low compared with many other EU countries. With the increased awareness

surrounding locally sourced food, 'five-a-day' and with the credit crunch, it is difficult to read how the market may develop. In 2004, wholesale values of the crop exceed £225m in Britain with 73% of all supplies going directly into supermarkets.

Whereas in the mid-1990s there would have been in excess of 350 UK producers, the number has now fallen to substantially lower levels. The reduction was initially due to imports from Ireland and the Netherlands but increasingly both of these countries are now reducing their activities and this country is importing from Poland and Hungary.

Some 'experts' believe that the UK market can be stimulated further, particularly by foreign imports. Data indicates consumption at 2.9 kg/person/year compared with

In this issue

Title	p. #
Mushrooms	1/2
Group Development	1
Industry News	2/3
Events Calendar	4
Non-SCI Events	4
Letters to the Editor	4

Group Development

As we enter into 2009, the Horticulture Group will be looking to add to the impressive start that they had in 2008.

They will shortly announce details of the conference to be held on Wednesday 30 September 2009 – **'Plants to the Rescue!!'** which will emphasise how important plants in our surroundings are to build social and mental well being and welfare. At this time of economic and social crisis, the particular role plants can play in helping disadvantaged, distressed and disabled members of society will be examined.

Further events will be announced and will be found at <http://www.soci.org/SCI/events/event.jsp?Division=HRT>.

For those of you who are members of the Group, please remember to log on to the Members Forum <http://92.52.100.201/Home/Forum.aspx> and join in.

Erin Taylor (Group Dev. Mgr)

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

British Columbia at 6.5 kilo, Germany on 3.5kg and France at 3.3kg.

Of course, other countries have penetrated the British market in the way in which the Dutch and Irish have done. In particular, it is certainly worth keeping an eye on Hungary and Poland where one of the trends has been to produce the oyster mushroom, which usually goes under the species name *Pleurotus ostreatus*. However, it is recognised that the demand for this product is unlikely to exceed 5-8%

of total consumption or export demand. Within Romania there has been a steady increase in the production of 'mushrooms' (*Agaricus bisporus*) in the last few years. Most of these still find their way into cans for domestic consumption or for export.

With increasing interest in healthy diets, concern about health care costs and food scares associated with meat products, there remains scope to extend and expand markets for foodstuffs such as edible fungi.



Industry News

New Year Honours

CBE - Professor Colin Dennis DL for services to the Agri-Food Industry (Warwickshire) Director General, Campden BRI
OBE - Dr Alan Barber for services to the Environment (Bristol) - Amenity
MBE - Syd Allen Wright Chief technician for Insect Survey, Rothamsted Research for services to Science
www.honours.gov.uk/lists/2008honours.aspx

Sustainable Urban drainage solutions

New government legislation on the supply and use of water has come into force. For further information visit:
www.defra.gov.uk/environment/water/strategy/index.htm
www.environment-agency.gov.uk/business/sectors/36998.aspx

Year in Industry Programme

The School of Environmental Sciences (ENV) at the University of East Anglia is running an undergraduate 'Year in Industry'

programme as part of the 1st degree, on tasks as diverse as flood protection, energy efficiency, carbon reduction, corporate social responsibility and land contamination. Contact the Director of the programme, Steve Dorling (s.dorling@uea.ac.uk, 01603 592533), to discuss how to get involved. Steve can help you advertise opportunities directly to students and organise 1-2-1 meetings and interviews with them.

Biosciences - Free courses

www.bioscience.heacademy.ac.uk/events/bioevents.aspx

New EU Pesticides regulations

MEPs voted overwhelmingly in favour of the new regulation governing authorisation of plant protection products and the sustainable use of pesticides. However, Hilary Benn has revealed that the UK government will vote against ratifying this directive. (*Hort Week*, 23 Jan 2009)

'Mathematics for the Green Industry'

www.wiley.com

Keeping cherries dry

A new temporary tent-like rain cover for cherry trees that provides as much protection as polytunnels is being produced by agrotexiles company Capatex. (*The Fruit Grower*, Dec 2008).
www.capatex.com

Non-food oil crop research

The ICON project is a global collaboration involving scientists from 11 countries (including Dr Peter Eastmond, Warwick HRI) in partnership with industry. The ICON project intends to develop new crops that produce liquid waxes that would provide a sustainable alternative to a range of products that are currently made from crude oil.
www.icon.slu.se/ICON/

Reducing GHG emissions from the food chain

A recent Food Climate Research Network report, *Cooking up a Storm* (www.fcrrn.org.uk) concluded that it would be possible to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from the UK food system by 70% by 2050.

Industry News cont...

More Seasonal workers this year

Home Office Minister Phil Woolas revealed in December that the SAWS allocation would rise by 5,000 in 2009, although it will still be restricted to Bulgarian and Romanian workers. The SAWS scheme has historically enabled mainly students from EU countries to work on a temporary basis in the UK and return when the season closes. The move reduces the threat of labour shortage and crop wastage, and helping to ensure the long-term viability of the sector (FPJ, 9 January 2009)

UK leads in fresh prepared food

The UK is leading the way in the global fresh prepared food market according to the Icelandic food giant Bakkavör Group's chief executive Ágúst Gudmundson in an address to the recent Oxford Farming conference. 'We were shocked to see the state of the factories and food industry in the US - they are 40-50 years behind the UK,' he said.

The UK accounts for 80% of Bakkavör's business, with leafy salads alone representing a £432m market, to which it contributes 130m bags a year. The company now has 66 factories across the UK, China, Belgium, Italy, France, Spain, the Czech Republic, South Africa and the US, following an acquisition spree in its 22 years of business (FPJ, 9 Jan 2009).

Focus on soils

England's farmers and growers face the challenge of increasing yields while reducing inputs, improving soil health and enhancing the environment. The Royal Agricultural Society of England commissioned a report to understand how realistic these demands are in the light of current trends in soil and water management. The report,

prepared for the RASE's 'Practise with Science' Advisory Group, was launched on 23 October 2008. To hear a recording of an interview with Professor Richard Godwin on the BBC Today programme, visit www.rase.org.uk

Fewer flowers from Holland

The 2008 AIPH/Union Fleurs International statistics book suggests that the UK is the world's second largest importer of flowers and plants, after Germany. However, statistics for the year to date from the Dutch Agricultural Wholesale Board (HBAG), indicate that British sales of flowers and plants have dropped sharply. Imports into the UK from Holland have decreased by 17% (Floraculture International, Dec 2008).

There is much going on at the moment to promote UK grown, cut flowers and foliage for the floristry industry and to find new products to add to those already on offer.

www.flowers.org.uk/industry/uk-origins.htm

www.flowers.org.uk/flowers/seasonal/seasonal-index.htm

Isabella Welles Hunnewell Internship 2009 at the Arnold Arboretum

The Arnold Arboretum (Boston, MA, USA) is looking for serious students of plant science, botany, horticulture, nursery management, and landscape architecture. Applications close 15 February 2009

www.bgci.org/resources/job/0248/

Apricots could be a crop of the future.

Nurseryman and grafter Will Sibley has been carrying out some variety trials in mid-Cambridgeshire. Apricots are vulnerable to frosts at flowering time but they suffer few pest attacks when grown in the UK,

and few seasonal disease attacks. There is hope that new selections and cultivars coming out of various breeding programmes in both northern and southern hemispheres may generate useful varieties (*The Fruit Grower*, Dec 2008)

New turf fungicide

Syngenta has launched a new fungicide for high-performance turf disease control. Instrata contains long-lasting residual control of fludioxonil - the first new contact active ingredient for turf diseases for over 20 years (*The Landscaper*, Dec 2008)

Valentines Day

With Valentine's Day falling on a Saturday, a special delivery of flowers to the office on Friday will get the weekend off to a good start!!!! Alternatives to the red rose include new varieties shown at Hortifair last October - Rosa Zazu (green & red), Alstomeria Himalaya (large snow white flowers) or a Lisianthus - Eustoma russellianum 'Adom Red Picotee' (white buds with dark red edge) (*Florist Wholesale Buyer*, Jan 2009).

For that special treat - David Austin hand-tied bouquets of English Cut Roses

www.davidaustinroses.com/english/advanced.asp?PageId=1960

Garden Press Event

The RHS has agreed to hold an annual shows press conference at the Garden Press Event on 5th February at the Royal Horticultural Halls in London.

Up to 200 journalists are expected to attend. There will also be a press reception at the London Flower Show which will take place between 17-18 February (*Hort Week*, 12 Dec 2008).

www.gardenpressevent.co.uk

Events Calendar

Event Name	Date	Venue	Contact
GM Crops: Real benefits, Real concerns?	March 11, 2009	University of Huddersfield	Erin Taylor erin.taylor@soci.org
An evening with Don Curry	March 23, 2009	SCI Headquarters London	Erin Taylor erin.taylor@soci.org
Pesticide Application in Sport, Leisure & Amenity Areas	May 19, 2009	SCI Headquarters London	AAB anna@aab.org.uk

Other Events that may be of interest

British Plant Fair, Stoneleigh Park - 5 February 2009
<http://www.britishplantfair.co.uk>

Gan Trade Show, West Parley (r Bournemouth) - 11 February 2009
<http://www.ganshow.com>

Salon du Vegetal, Angers, France - 17-19 February 2009
<http://www.salonduvegetal.com>

The physics of soil-plant interactions - 18 February 2009
<http://www.soils.org.uk/soilPhysics.htm>

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

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

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

If you would like to advertise a forthcoming event please contact.
erin.taylor@soci.org

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

International Trials Conference: Assessment of Ornamental Plants. – 6-8 July 2010
<http://www.rhs.org.uk/plants/ornamentals2010.asp>

Letters to the Editor

If you have anything you would like to ask, then please email your query to Erin Taylor at erin.taylor@soci.org.uk 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:

Horticulture Group Contact Details

Mike Hall
Peter Grimby
Sue Grimby
Erin Taylor

Chairman
Treasurer
Newsletter co-ordinator
erin.taylor@soci.org

T: +44(0)2075981594