

ASIAN SEED

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE ASIA & PACIFIC SEED ASSOCIATION



Chia Tai Holds 1st Fair for 4 Years

SE Asia's seed giant
attracts professionals
and consumers



New Zealand Study Tour

The inside
story on the
NZ seed industry



Indian Seed Congress

'Love for
agriculture'
theme for ISC



Seed for Thought

Right place, right time
for New Zealander
John McKay

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New Zealand Study Tour





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ASIAN SEED

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APSA Members Tour New Zealand

A warm welcome to 2015 to all APSA members. I hope that you are getting ready to enjoy what promises to be an exciting year for the association and the seed industry in general. There is much work to be done before the next Asian Seed Congress in Goa in India in November but if the success of the ASC in Macau is anything to go by, it will be a great event.

This issue of Asian Seed magazine focuses on the New Zealand seed industry, which was the subject of an APSA seed production study tour last December. APSA members from India and China joined APSA Director Dr. Burns and Managing

Editor John Clewley on a trip that included meeting all the key seed people from both the private and public sectors, and lengthy field and seed facility visits. APSA members on the tour were impressed with not only with the warm hospitality of their hosts but also with the professional manner in which the seed industry in New Zealand is operated.

Turn to page 12 for more details on New Zealand, which includes the seed production tour, a short history of the New Zealand Grain and Seed Trade Association (one of the oldest in the region), profiles of the nine New Zealand seed companies that participated in the tour and key

contacts in the seed industry. Fourth generation seedsman John McKay, the Managing Director of South Pacific Seeds completes the New Zealand focus with a fascinating story on his life in seeds in Seed for Thought on page 34.

For the first Office Bearer's meeting of the year, I joined OB members – Avtar Dhindsa, Brenda Dossey and Jack Metzelaar and APSA Director Tom Burns – in Goa. Normally, the OB meeting would have been held at APSA's headquarters in Bangkok but it was decided that it should be held in Goa so that the OB committee could meet with members of the National Organising Committee (NOC) for ASC 2015 and an event planner to discuss the details of the Congress (for the OB meeting turn to page 29).

The OB and NOC made a site survey of the facilities to be used during ASC 2015. The OB reviewed the venue and explored all the options as proposed by the NOC. Overall, the venue hotel, the Grand Hyatt Goa coupled with the hotels located nearby offer what APSA members want with respect to meeting colleagues and clients.

I have to say that the Congress site has a very relaxed atmosphere that I'm sure will appeal to all of our members; both the Cocktail Party and Grand Banquet will be held on the lawn, overlooking the beach, and members will be able to enjoy the sunset while they attend the two events. I'm certainly looking forward to ASC 2015. I'm sure I'll be seeing you there. ☺




Photos by John Clewley



APSA Director Dr. Tom Burns receives a gift from the Chairman of the Vietnam Seed Trade Association Mr. Tran Manh Bao. Mr. Bao led a delegation in January to APSA's Bangkok HQ to discuss the best ways to promote the seed industry in Vietnam (for more details on the visit see page 32).





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2015, The Year Ahead...

This issue of the Asian Seed is all about New Zealand. While, as a competitive Australian, I struggle to admit New Zealanders' prowess in sports that we compete in, their high standard and professionalism in seed production is unquestioned. In December 2014, the New Zealand Grain & Seed Trade Association (NGSTA) and APSA organised a seed production tour of Canterbury, New Zealand. The participants came from China and India (unfortunately, participants from Pakistan and Myanmar were unable to obtain visas in time) and while the numbers attending were small, the quality and enthusiasm of the tour was impressive. You can read more about the study tour in this issue and I would recommend that all members take time out

and consider New Zealand for your seed production needs. The study tour of New Zealand has generated a lot of interest, with calls from members, particularly in China and India, to host tours of both seed production and the markets in their respective countries in 2015. More details of these study tours will be available soon, so be sure to check the APSA website regularly.

Last year saw the hosting of the Congress in Macau and I think all members would agree that it was perhaps one of the best Asian Seed Congresses to date. In reflecting on the Congress in Macau, everything that members expect of a Congress was covered. All the boxes were ticked and Macau has set a high standard for future Congresses. In moving

forward, APSA has taken steps to better plan for future Congresses, not just in the standards but also in securing future locations that would allow members to better plan their activities. While the central point to the Congresses remains the trading tables, many members see great value in the booths. Knowing three or more years in advance where Congresses will be provides organisations with the time needed for future planning. With this in mind, APSA has tentatively secured venues for 2016 in South Korea and 2017 in the Philippines; discussions are under way for 2018, 2019 and 2020, and the countries under consideration include Vietnam, Nepal, Thailand, Dubai and Singapore.

As you know, the 2015 Asian Seed Congress will be held in Goa, India, and preparations are in full swing for what will be one of the largest Congresses held to-date. A tremendous amount of time and planning has already gone into organising this Congress, which has included three days of meetings in January at the venue hotel (Grand Hyatt, Goa) attended by APSA's Office Bearers, members of the Indian National Organising Committee (NOC) and Secretariat staff. The aim of the meetings was to consider all Congress details, from "getting there", to accommodation, venue, facilities, post-congress tours and atmosphere. Goa offers a great location not only for members to do business but also to relax. More details will be available through the APSA website and registration will open on 1 June. Just a reminder:



If companies want to book booths or trading tables, they should starting planning now. While there will be over 150 trading tables, these and the booths tend to get booked out very early. It is also important for companies to ensure their visibility through a sponsorship presence at the Congress. Sponsorship packages will be available in the coming months and I would urge all interested members to consider their marketing strategies for the Congress now.

A reminder about visas for members who will attend the Congress in Goa; visas are one of the facts of life when it comes to travelling and for a number of countries including Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, Sudan, Iraq and China there are always additional frustrations. Special arrangements are being made by the NOC to facilitate visa approvals and more details will be available shortly on the website. APSA staff will be coordinating with Executive Committee Members, seed

associations and individual APSA members, particularly in Pakistan and China, to facilitate visa applications and approvals. I would ask that all members attending the Congress in Goa, regardless of country of origin, apply for their visas 90 days in advance (i.e. late August). Please do not leave your applications to the last month as you may not receive your visa in time to attend ASC 2015.

As you would have noted in the inaugural Presidential speech of Zhiping Wang at the General Assembly in Macau, high on the list of issues for APSA in 2015 is to adopt the Intellectual Property Rights of Plants policy paper. In moving forward with this, a workshop to discuss the draft paper will be held on 18-19 May in Bangkok. The participants in the workshop will come from the seed associations in the region and will review the draft with the support of the Intellectual Property Rights Working Group, which was established in 2012. Following

the report from the workshop, the Executive Committee will propose a final version for adoption by the General Assembly.

This year the Activity Groups (AGs) and Crop Groups (CGs) (previously known as the Standing Committees and Special Interest Groups) will be organising activities for 2015 and 2016. Each committee will be meeting on a quarterly basis via conference calls to discuss and plan the activities for the year. More information on the committees and committee members can be found on the APSA website. As I mentioned earlier, study tours are high on the list and this year the Hybrid Rice CG, under the direction of Rakesh Chopra (Chair), Xiaobo Zhu (Co-Chair) and Frisco Malabanan (Secretary), will be hosting tours of the rice production areas in southern China and India in August and October, respectively. More information will be available on the APSA website.

Enjoy this issue of Asian Seed. 🌱



Photos by John Clewley



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Left to right: Jack Metzelaar, Elio Lanvertu, Franck Berger

HM Clause India Opens New HQ and Seed Centre

HM Clause India, which was founded in 2001, inaugurated a new Seed Processing Centre and Head Office in Medchal, Hyderabad on 11 February 2015. The opening ceremony was presided over by Mr. Eric Lanvertu, the Consul General of France, HM Clause Deputy Managing Director Mr. Franck Berger and V.P. of Sales Asia and APSA's Treasurer Mr. Jack Metzelaar. The new facility will provide a comprehensive range of seed services for both HM

Clause and Century Seeds in India and the rest of Asia.

The opening of the new Seed Processing Centre is part of a two-year project to develop HM Clause's Indian market presence. In addition to the new Seed Processing Centre, on 17 February 2015 a new full-service Research and Breeding station in Arjunabettahali village, near Bangalore in Karnataka state was inaugurated. HM Clause Research Director for Asia,

Dr. Narendra Singh told local media that "The new facility will allow us [HM Clause] to create innovative new varieties to meet the needs of the Indian farmer." He added that the facility would be mainly used for R&D of vegetable crops such as tomatoes, hot peppers, okra, eggplants, watermelons, cucumbers and gourds. HM Clause has 22 similar research stations around the world. 🌱

Source: Indian media, agencies

EU Changes Rules on GM Crop Cultivation

In January 2015, members of the European Parliament approved by a large majority new rules for the cultivation of genetically modified (GM) crops in European states, which are currently grown in only five of the 25 countries in the European Union (EU). Only one crop, a type of maize known as MON 810, is grown commercially in the EU.

The new law only applies to crops and does not cover GM material

used in animal feed. Under the law, national governments are able to ban any GM variety and biotech companies are able to negotiate directly with elected governments on GM crops rather than with the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA).

GM crops are widely used in the US but nine countries in the EU (Austria, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Luxembourg

and Poland) have opposed their cultivation. According to EFSA as of September, 2014, 49 GMOs (Genetically Modified Organisms), which include eight GM cotton varieties, 28 maize, three oilseed rape, seven soybean, one sugar beet, one bacterial biomass and one yeast biomass, have been approved and authorised for cultivation. 🌱

Source: BBC News, agencies

Changes to the OECD Seed Schemes

The OECD Seed Schemes, established in 1958, are a set of international standards for field inspection and certification of the most important agricultural and vegetable species. The Schemes aim to harmonise seed certification; thereby facilitating and promoting international seed trade. The seven Seed Schemes establish rules and standards for varietal inspection and certification of OECD listed varieties. Fifty-eight countries across the world are currently a member of one or more of the OECD Seed Schemes.

The List of Varieties Eligible for OECD Certification covers 200 species – including all major crops

– and more than 53,000 varieties. OECD statistics indicate that the total weight of OECD certified seed traded corresponded to 470 million kg in 2010. The electronic database of the list of varieties was launched in 2011 and provides an online search facility for OECD listed varieties.

Among the emerging issues in the OECD Seed Schemes are the role of biochemical and molecular techniques in describing and identifying varieties; the extension of the seed lot size for Poaceae seed; guidelines for complex multiplications abroad; and electronic systems of seed.

In order to assess the current and future needs of international certification, the Technical Working Group on Varietal Purity and Varietal Identity has developed new definitions and procedures to be introduced into the Schemes.

The OECD has announced that the Seed Schemes have been reorganised to enhance efficiency and to offer the 58 countries that have joined the Seed Schemes better value for the cost of joining them (see link below). 🌱

<http://www.oecd.org/agriculture/code/oecdseedschemesrulesandregulations.htm>

ESA States Case for Seeds at European Parliament

At a luncheon hosted by MEP Mrs. Marit Paulsen in January 2015, the European Seed Association (ESA) officially presented its 'Speak Up for Seeds!' Vision Statement to members of the European Parliament and the European Commission. The luncheon was also attended by Agriculture Commissioner, Phil Hogan.

The event was a follow-up to a report by MEP Paulsen on plant breeding innovation called "What

Options to Increase Quality and Yields?" which was adopted by the EP in January as well. The report suggested that plant breeding was a crucial in addressing the challenges of food security, sustainable farming and climate change. Commissioner Hogan said that 'Plant breeding is among the fundamental activities that ensure food security. There is a need to highlight the importance of research and innovation in the field of agriculture.'

Mr. Garlich von Essen, ESA's Secretary General noted that the luncheon meeting was an "important confirmation of the importance Europe attaches to plant breeding innovation. We are very much looking forward to continuing and broadening this debate in the coming months." 🌱

Source: www.euroseeds.org/speaking-seeds-european-parliament



Photos by John Clewley

Chia Tai Holds First Fair for Four Years

It has been four years since Thailand's seed company Chia Tai held its biannual fair at Chonchareon Farm in Kanchanaburi province in Western Thailand. Chief Operating Officer Manas Chiaravanond said the reason for the delay was simple, "When we have new products, new varieties then we have something to show but we've been developing them and also renovating and replanting the grounds of the farm, and these things take time." The 100 hectares facility is housed on an oasis of greenery, surrounded by mountains, which separate Thailand and Myanmar.

The Chia Tai Fair, which Chiaravanond claims to be one of the biggest seed events in the world, has grown exponentially since its inception in 1999, as he recounts, "In 1999, His

Majesty the King asked for seeds for a variety of watermelon, the Charleston Grey from the USA. I found some and the King invited the COO at the time, Wanlop (see photo opposite) and myself to the palace to discuss Open Pollinated (OP) and hybrid seeds. Wanlop invited His Majesty to our research station at the farm."

When the auspicious day arrived on 9 September 1999 for the Royal visit, HRH the King was unable to attend, so his daughter HRH Princess Sirindhorn went by helicopter in his place. "It was amazing. Despite unusually cold weather we had a perfect crop of watermelon. There were about 1,000 people outside who wanted to catch a glimpse of HRH Princess Sirindhorn, so we invited them in. And that's how the fair started."

The Chia Tai Fair has grown at pace since then, from 15,000 who attended the first nine-day fair in 2000 to more than 300,000 who attended the 7th fair in 2011. "It was a bit like a field trial at first but now it has a bit of everything," he said. "And what we really try to do is to bring together consumers and seed business, to show the latest agricultural innovations, from the professional seed side to home gardening."

As it was the cool season ('winter' seems too harsh a word in Thailand) when flowers bloom, the site was filled with striking-looking vegetables, like huge 80kg-plus Atlantic giant pumpkins, and technicolour swathes of flowers.

The concept/theme for this year's fair was: "eating rice as a staple,



Chia Tai bosses past and present – brothers Wanlop (left) and Manas



Chia Tai COO Manas Chiaravanond inspects field trials



highlighted sweet watermelons and balloon-shaped squash. Just to the side of this zone was the hugely popular flower nursery with its more than 200 species of flowers, including dwarf cosmos, mint begonia and blue sage.

The Home Gardening brand of seeds and related technology is a relatively new venture for Chia Tai and there were plenty of interested city-dwellers around this sector. COO Chiaravanond said that the new brand was launched five years ago and has grown by a factor of five since then, leading to sales of about 1 million Baht (\$33,300) a day at the Fair.

COO Chiaravanond explained that in addition to the Thai consumers and farming families who attended the fair, some 200 professional clients visit at the same time to view the four hectares of commercial trials just adjacent to the Fair site. He said that the trials are among the largest in the world. On the day Asian Seed visited, clients from Chile, China, India and the USA were busy checking out lines of the latest hybrid vegetables.

Asked what he would consider the highlight of the fair, COO Chiaravanond laughed. "You know 200 Thai journalists turned up to this year's press conference for the Fair and they all asked the same question - 'what's the highlight?' – so I gave them the answer I always give: "The whole fair is the highlight!" 🍌

More information on Chia Tai Group from: www.chiataigroup.com.



eating vegetables as medicine". COO Chiaravanond said that the aim was to encourage Thais to eat more vegetables and for urbanites to grow their own in whatever space they had (even vertically). He also noted that the Fair was in synch with the promotion of domestic agrotourism in Kanchanaburi Province. It is worthwhile remembering that Thailand is a food exporter and many families are still heavily involved in agriculture.

The first pavilion just by the entrance showcased artistic works, homemade glass pots, and vegetables and flower displays. Past the entrance, the site featured six zones each showing different kinds of agriculture and plants. Importantly, education and knowledge sharing was high on the agenda: in the

garden devoted to heirloom plant conservation, for instance, visitors were able to find out the difference between OP and filial hybrid (F1) seeds from plantings of eggplant and bitter melon, as well as chilli and bird peppers.

At various points in the zones, stalls were busy providing information on the health benefits of fresh pumpkin juice and pumpkin ice-cream or how lycopene from tomatoes had anti-cancer properties. But perhaps the biggest attraction was the tunnel made into a flower archway with bitter gourds growing and hanging down – a favourite photo op for many visitors.

Also popular was the vertical growing and hydroponic technologies on show, as well as a series of greenhouses that



The Canterbury Plains – a patchwork quilt of arable and pastoral farming.

NEW ZEALAND STUDY TOUR

APSA members journey into the heart of NZ seed production

Delegates on APSA's first study tour since the 2013 trip to Myanmar were warmly welcomed by representatives of the New Zealand seed industry in early December in Christchurch as the APSA Seed Production Study Tour to New Zealand got underway.

The delegation visited the country to learn about New Zealand's vegetable seed production expertise, regulatory regime for the import and export of seeds and to seek new business opportunities. New Zealand Grain & Seed Trade Association (NGSTA) Secretary General Thomas Chin said, "The tour is about showing APSA delegates what we do, how we do it and how Asian seed companies can benefit from New Zealand companies' seed production set up."

APSA members attending were Mr. Venkatarayappa Manjunatha of Rasi Seeds (India), Mr. Vaibhav Kashigar of Ankur Seeds (India), Mr. Dinesh Raushan of Nuziveedu Seeds (India), Mr. Zhang Qunjie and Ms. Xiuying Gao of Beijing Jewelry Seeds (China), Mr. Li Xingchang of Shandong Huasheng Agriculture (China) and Mr. Zainan Li of Beijing Bio-Motor Seed (China); they were joined by translator Harriet Yining Zhang of the University of Auckland.

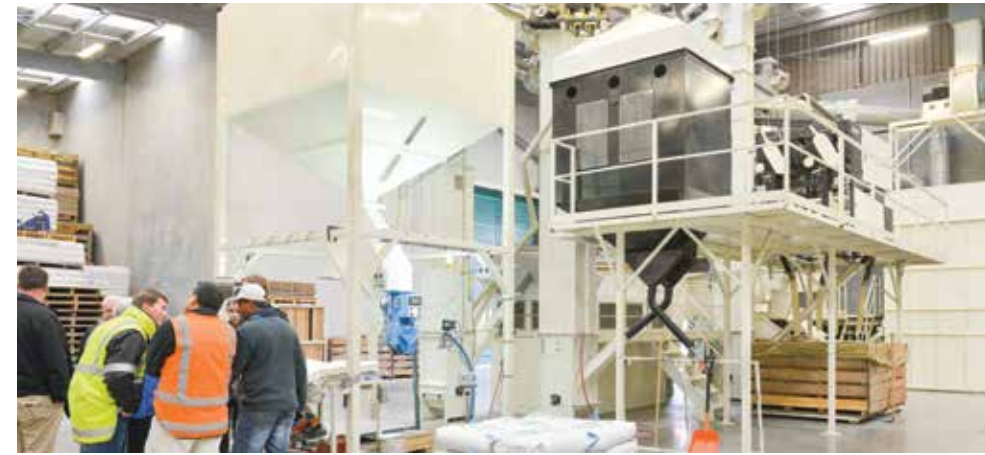
New Zealand Grain & Seed Trade Association (NGSTA) Secretary General Thomas Chin and Administrator Tricia Radford guided the tour group, ably supported by bus driver Pat. APSA's Director Dr. Tom Burns and Communications Officer John Clewley completed the tour group. 🐣

New Zealand photos by John Clewley

Canterbury Region, the heart of NZ's seed production



- 220,000 ha for seed production
- Major production area: Canterbury Lat 43°S, Lon 172°E
- Strict biosecurity regime – Disease-free status
- Irrigation – high quality water
- Fertile soils – free draining
- Long crop rotations
- Safe isolation distances for seed crops
- Wide range of crops grown
- Counter-season multiplication
- Farmer management expertise and skill
- Advanced machinery and techniques



Day 1 – Christchurch and Environs

Right and early on Tuesday morning, 9 December 2014, delegates clambered on to the tour bus for an appointment with the Ministry of Primary Industries (MPI) and a presentation by Mr. Dave Robinson on exporting seed to New Zealand, under the title ‘Seed for Sowing’. Mr. Robinson supervises border clearance and works with the National Plant Protection Organisation on biosecurity, particularly for the importing and exporting of seeds.

Delegates were thus able to see how seeds were dealt with by the country’s border clearance and biosecurity systems. Mr. Robinson went through the stages involved in assessing imported seeds, starting with import health requirements, the Plant Biosecurity Index (or PBI, to see if the seed is permitted entry or only with conditions) and the conditions that had to be on any Phytosanitary Certificate (IPC).

Mr. Robinson noted that New Zealand had very strict border controls in place. He said that every consignment of seed imported into New Zealand had to be inspected by the MPI (for more details see page 24) for live insects, weed seeds, soil issues and pathology (for example, to see if fungi was present). “We need clean, pest-free, pure seed,” he said. He noted that most of the seeds imported were either flower, chicory or research seeds (i.e. carrots, beets, wheat, barley and peas). “But,” he added, “We’ve noticed an increase in seeds from Asia, such as pak choy and radish for some time now.”

The delegation then went the Inspection room to see seed samples kept in the seed library (for identification) and to see how a pea soak test was conducted. The final part of this visit was a bug lover’s treat: the Entomology

Laboratory and specimen collection. Staff at the Entomology Laboratory said that inspections often revealed insects and they would determine if they were a risk or not. Just recently, the laboratory was put on high alert after a stink bug was found on an imported Barbie doll!

The second stop on Day 1 was to the Government-ownedASUREQuality’s Lincoln Plant Health Laboratory, a service provider for the MPI and the only facility for seed health testing facility in New Zealand. Senior Scientist Rouke Bakker said that the facility’s main business was to test seeds for crops such as radish, carrots, cabbage (and other Brassicas), beet and onion in order to issue a phytosanitary certificate; the delegates were also introduced to the internet-based Seed Crop Isolation Distance (SCID), a voluntary scheme organised with the cooperation of the local seed industry.

Mr. Bakker also showed how a typical consignment of seeds for export would be analysed at the Laboratory and what the procedure entailed.

The final activity of the day was to view crop production for a number of important crops such as spinach, beetroot, hybrid cabbage and carrots. Chris Burrows of Townsend Seeds explained the growing techniques for silver beet seed, while Steve Forrester of Smith Seeds explained the agronomy behind hybrid spinach cultivation.

An action-packed day was brought to an exciting close as delegates were given a bird’s-eye view of the pristine Canterbury Plains during a helicopter ride that was provided by Midlands Seed. The view from the clouds was spectacular. 🌄

Day 2 – On the Road to Ashburton, NZ’s seed capital

To get an idea of how developed the system for seed cleaning and treatment is in New Zealand, the tour party visited one of the major seed cleaning companies, South Island Seed Dressing in Ashburton, New Zealand’s seed capital. Director Brent Clarke said that the facility can clean, treat, process and package seeds to order. He gave the example of carrots (New Zealand produces 50% of all the world’s carrot seeds), which can be processed and treated at 600-1,000kg/hour.

As New Zealand’s dairy farming remains important, rye grass is a top crop for cleaning, as are all kinds of peas. However, Clarke noted that this is changing. “Asian vegetable seed processing is growing steadily,” he said. He said that was why they had developed a new facility mainly for carrot, Asian vegetable and beet seeds, and a new line that uses state-of-the-art seed machinery, each costing around NZ\$700,000 and imported from the USA.

Apart from the pristine environment in New Zealand, another aspect of farming methodology that impressed APSA’s tour participants was the use of high technology and mechanization. The Carr Group (Canterbury Seeds) hosted a visit to their agricultural machinery showroom in downtown Ashburton to see some of the latest harvest equipment and precision planting machinery by major suppliers like Claas. As Dinesh Raushan noted, “At home ... production is done by hand. We don’t have the huge machinery that you have here in NZ.”

Craig Carr of Canterbury Seed said that there were few workers in the fields because farmers were using

technology to become more efficient and as a result they were able to use less chemicals on their fields.

After a lunch of fresh salmon sandwiches, the tour party visited seed multiplication fields to see a range of popular Asian greens – spinach, beetroot, peas, hybrid cabbage and carrots – being cultivated. Mark Collie of Canterbury Seed was on hand to explain the details of the how the crops were grown. The group also took time to consider the irrigation techniques and irrigation rigs used on the Plains.

The last call on Day 2 was to a visit Stradbroke Robotic Dairy operated by the Carr Group in Mayfield. The facility is virtually hands-free, with all aspects of milking the cows done entirely by computer-controlled milking units. Paul Tocker said that the facility was the first of its kind to be installed in New Zealand. He added that land use was changing in the Plains as rainfall was not sufficient for dairy farming and previously only sheep farming and some arable farming were possible. Irrigation, which started some 15 years ago, had transformed arable farming and offered the possibility of growing grass and thereby expanding dairy farming.

Mr. Tocker added that mixed farms, which featured cattle, arable farming for grass and grain (to feed the cows) and other arable farming were rapidly becoming the norm due to pressure from the higher profits available in dairy shifting to specialist seed production or moving to fringe areas. Competition between arable and dairy farming remained intense he said. 🌾



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Day 3 – To Wakanui, Methven and the Southern Alps

The final day of the tour started bright and early at the farm of Eric and Maxine Watson. Much to the astonishment of APSA members from India, only two people worked this 500-hectare facility, which produces wheat, barley, rye grass, spinach, pak choy, red beat and corn salad. It is fully-irrigated and members were able to not only see the kinds of machinery and technology used for planting, weeding, harvesting and drying, they were also shown how the micro-processor-controlled irrigation units worked. To be able to do so much with only two people and to a high standard of quality was impressive.

In the fields, tour party members were shown the damage caused to a hybrid spinach crop by recent heavy hail.



John McKay of South Pacific Seeds (see also page 34) then led the party to fields of hybrid radish, hybrid spinach and hybrid red beet. He showed how the crops developed and what problems were encountered during cultivation. Morning tea was taken in the tiny town of Methven, just prior to comprehensive tour of SPS' main facility; SPS produces and processes every part of the seed chain itself – it is one of the few seed companies in New Zealand to clean, dry and treat seeds at its own treatment centre, which was built in the late 1960s. Mr. McKay reminded everyone that the country produces more than 50% of the world's supply of carrot, beet and radish seeds. Canterbury, he said, was carrot capital of the world.

After studying the seed industry hard for several days, the group was then given a well-deserved break in the foothills of the spectacular Southern Alps for a lunch date at the homestay sheep farm, Middle Rock Farm (www.middlerock.co.nz). But prior to that, the shepherd at the farm showed everyone how sheepdogs rounded up a flock of sheep. It was a rare treat to see working dogs in action.

The last stop on the tour was to New Zealand Agriseeds' main facility, a 220 ha research farm west of Christchurch to see plant breeding related to high producing pasture varieties (the base feedstock for pastoral farming is ryegrass/clover). NZGSTA President and Agriseeds Director John Duncan guided members round the facility, paying particular attention to the 12-year ryegrass breeding programme. "We do traditional plant breeding here but the need to consider genetic technology is becoming more evident," he said, "But as this is expensive we contract this out here or in Australia." He said that while APSA members were mainly interested in vegetable seed production, pastoral farming remained the bedrock of the New Zealand economy, accounting for 12% of GDP and 35% of export earnings (see page 20 for more details on NZ's economy).

With most of the trip now over, the return journey back to Christchurch offered the chance to reflect on what had been the best Study Tour APSA has had. The night previously, at a dinner for all participants, several of the APSA party thanked their New Zealand hosts for a splendid trip, which they said was very worthwhile in terms of exposing participants to the New Zealand seed industry and for making contacts between Asian companies and New Zealand companies. They also underlined how much they had enjoyed the hospitality of their hosts and their sense of fun. Clearly, business can be fun, too.

Venkatarayappa Manjunath of Rasi Seeds, India summed up the feeling of the tour party at the dinner: "What we have seen is amazing in New Zealand – good climate, soils, high technology and breeding skills. We have limited area for our seed production so we are interested in New Zealand. It will be good for us and our Chinese friends to do business in New Zealand." 🐣

Weekend focus

Mid Canterbury arable farmers are sowing the seeds of success

Mid Canterbury's small seed multiplication industry started just over 20 years ago with a 30kg bag of pak-choi seed, and has grown into a multi-million dollar venture. Rural reporter Michelle Nelson looks at its potential.

OUR VIEW

Visit is a big deal

By Graham

A visit of Asian seed company executives presents another chance for Mid Canterbury - the seedbed of New Zealand - to expand its reach into increasingly broad, global markets. The executives from China, Pakistan, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam are from companies that are not already doing business with our world-famous farmers and horticulturists. But their countries are hot on New Zealand partnerships and their visit is another chance for local businesses to further connect their presence in markets with plenty of potential. That is a simple proposition made more nuanced by the way these countries are modernising their approach to agriculture and commerce. Takii has a rapidly growing, outward-looking economy bolstered by affluent middle classes keen on products underpinned by the best of crops Mid Canterbury expertise and enterprise can provide. They are growing their capacity to provide domestic and animal feed crops and they are diversifying into crops that support areas as varied as pharmaceuticals and energy. They can learn a lot about seed multiplication in a district that has already proven itself one of the most effective seed-growing, exporting and supporting in the world. Mid Canterbury's growers, scientists, consultants and engineers continue to develop techniques and efficiencies that will be attractive to countries

APSA Study Tour in the NZ Media

Asian group to visit seed growers

Tim Cronshaw
tim.cronshaw@press.co.nz

Canterbury growers are confident a visit by Asian group of vegetable seed producers this week will result in increased seed exports to Asia already worth \$15 million a year.

The managers of 17 seed companies from China, Myanmar, Pakistan, Thailand, and Vietnam have yet to use the services of growers here for multiplying seed in their off-season.

Canterbury growers are world leaders in increasing seed numbers for northern hemisphere companies.

The Asians seed breeders and producers will start their study of New Zealand's vegetable seed production expertise and search for new business opportunities tomorrow.

New Zealand Grain and Seed Trade Association (NZGSTA) manager Thomas Chin said the "influential" group would gain an insight into how high quality vegetable seed crops were grown, processed and exported.

The study tour would hopefully produce new customers with an appreciation of the processes and investment the industry had in seed multiplication.

Insight: New Zealand Grain and Seed Trade Association manager Thomas Chin is hopeful the study tour will produce new customers.

"The Asians have asked us to organise a tour and I guess it's a bit of an honour that they recognise New Zealand as a high quality seed producer. The reputation of our primary sector is recognised by these people and we have some strategic advantages in seed production here that are world beating."

Chin said Canterbury growers naturally had high sunshine hours, temperate climate, irrigation and free draining

fertile soils on top of outstanding farmer knowledge and sophisticated technology.

"New Zealand's expertise in seed multiplication is highly regarded globally and our production is in huge demand."

The Asian group will visit seed cleaning and seed treating warehouses, meet with key government officials and view top crop growing operations.

Growers mostly centred in Canterbury supply more than 50 per cent of the world's supply of hybrid carrot, radish and beet seeds each year.

A wide range of other specialist vegetable and Asian brassica seed crops are exported such as kale, pak choy, and chiu sum.

Chin said the \$15m worth of vegetable seed exports to Asia could be easily increased by \$5m in the next few years.

In addition to writing new business, Chinese brassica seed exports to China were reinstated, exports could easily be tripled, he said.

"We have an idea the contact generated by the study tour will translate into new partnerships and business being written in the coming months."

The study tour was arranged by NZGSTA and the Asia & Pacific Seed Association to encourage new trade.

Visit aims to open up seed market

The study tour is a great opportunity for New Zealand growers to showcase their expertise in seed production to a group of international visitors. The group will visit seed cleaning and seed treating warehouses, meet with key government officials and view top crop growing operations.

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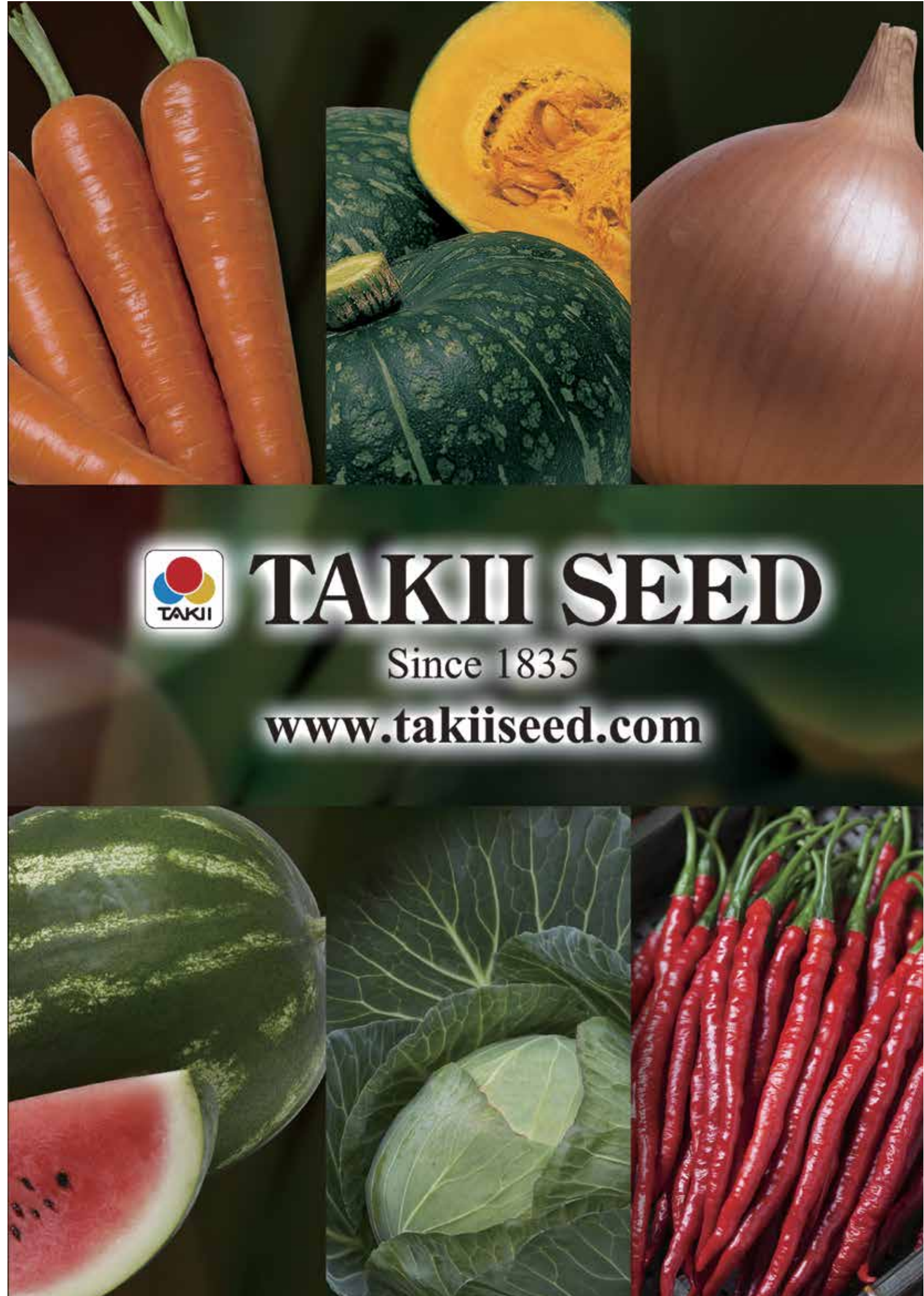
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The APSA Seed Production Study Tour of New Zealand attracted a great deal of interest from the NZ media, both nationally and locally. Tim Cronshaw, the farming editor of the Christchurch-based national newspaper, *The Press*, wrote several articles to preview the tour and then interviewed APSA Director Dr. Tom Burns during the tour for another story on interest from Asian seed companies in the seed business in New Zealand.

The local Ashburton newspaper, the *Ashburton Guardian*, wrote a two-page glossy feature on the tour after rural reporter Michelle Nelson joined the group for part of the tour. In addition to print publications (and their online versions), specialist agricultural sites and publications like *Farmers Weekly* also covered APSA's study tour.



TAKII SEED

Since 1835

www.takiiseed.com

The New Zealand Seed Industry

An island nation with just over 4 million people, New Zealand, at 17 million hectares has about the same land area as the UK or Japan. The farming land area is about 15 million hectares and the climate is mainly temperate with some sub-tropical microclimates in the extreme north of the country. New Zealand is well known for its long agricultural history and global success for its pastoral farming. The agricultural sector contributed 50% of total exports, or about NZ\$30 billion in 2013 (see the Fact Box below).

The pasture seed industry began with English ryegrass, which was imported during the 1800s. Improving pastureland required seed multiplication, which provided the basis for the seed industry. New Zealand’s young and pest-free soils, long crop rotations, low humidity, warm days and cool nights provided the perfect conditions for seed production and multiplication. Most production takes place on the east coasts of both islands, but the Canterbury Plains is the most important area for seed production; this is where all the companies participating in the Study Tour are based.

The first European settlers brought their own seeds and root stock and most famers saved their own seed. Pioneers of the early days included Arthur Yates and Frederick Cooper and they opened small seed shops, effectively beginning the seed trade in New Zealand (Yates would also dominate Australia in the early days as well).

Seed production for vegetable seeds was important in the early days of farming, and has since grown into

a major (mainly) export business. The pioneer for this work was Ross Smith, founder of Smith Seeds, who began by multiplying seeds for the Thai-based seed company, Chia Tai, in the early 1980s.

The seed industry has developed exponentially since then. Seed exports in 2013 were NZ\$192 million, up 14% on the previous year (see table below) and crops on the list were exported to 60 countries. Herbage seed (ryegrass etc.) accounted for 53% of total seed exports, while vegetable seeds accounted for 47%.

Australia was the largest single market at 16%, mainly for pasture seed but Northern Hemisphere and Asian markets for vegetable seeds remained steady. The Netherlands was the largest vegetable seed market by value, for carrot, radish and other vegetable seeds (New Zealand produces 55% of the world’s carrot, radish and beet seeds).

The only blip on trade with Asia was the detection of the blackleg pest that ended the brassica seed trade with China, worth around US\$4 million, in 2011.

NZGSTA’s Thomas Chin expects the value of seeds for Asia to increase from the current value of around US\$15 million over the next few years. “Seed production will continue to grow,” he said. “And it will continue to be big business for New Zealand.”

Note that the NZ grain and seed industry operates in a totally free economy. It has no import or export tariffs, exchange controls or government interference and there are no subsidies. 🇳🇿

Major Seed Crops 2013	FOB (\$NZm)
Ryegrass	69.5
Carrot	27.8
Radish	25.9
Clover	22.8
Veg. Not Specified (incl. Asian Brassicas)	19.8
Cabbage	4
Silverbeet	3.5
Kale	3
Beetroot	2.8
Brown top	2.6
Onion	2.3
Cocksfoot	1.9
Tall fescue	1.3
Turnip	1.3
Other	3.8
Total All Seed Exports	192.7

Source: NZGSTA

On a NZ-wide basis the NZ Grain & Seed industry has

220,000ha production area

2.4m tonnes production

\$192m exports (grass, clover, peas, specialist vegetables, grains) 2013 data.

13,000 employees

Total seed exports = NZ\$192 million (10-15% by value goes to Asia)



Left to right: The NZGSTA Team – Tricia Radford (Administrator), John Duncan (President) and Thomas Chin (General Manager).

Inside the NZGSTA

The New Zealand Grain & Seed Association is one of the oldest seed associations in the APSA region. It was formed in 1919 mainly to determine the terms of trade between members in New Zealand (local associations formed the first one in 1908 in Canterbury), in order to create an equitable playing field for all members as prior to that the terms of sale and purchase for grain, seeds and produce were chaotic, leading to losses and even bankruptcy.

NZGSTA membership is open to those companies engaged in the grain and/or seed trade in New Zealand. The NZGSTA has more than 80 members, from sole traders to multinational companies. The NZGSTA’s mission is to create a favourable political, economic and commercial climate for its members, to become the foremost authority on the seed industry and to facilitate the successful operation of its members’ see trade both domestically and internationally.

The activities of NZGSTA’s members include:

- Research and development of new varieties
- Seed production
- Seed marketing in New Zealand and internationally
- Processing and distribution of grains and seeds
- Providing support services to growers
- Providing support services such as seed testing, broking and grading

General Manager Thomas Chin said that although pasture seed has been the main seed export from New Zealand, there is a rapidly increasing trend towards vegetable seed production for the populous markets of Asia. He noted that foreign seed companies were increasingly recognising New Zealand’s seed companies for their professionally run businesses. “New Zealand’s expertise in seed multiplication and production is now highly regarded globally. Production here is in huge demand,” he said. 🇳🇿

Website: www.nzgsta.co.nz

Early Seed Farming in New Zealand



Sowing The Seed



Packing Out the Seed



Cleaning Grass Seed



Carting Seed Into the Store

Photos courtesy of NZGSTA

Participating New Zealand Companies



AsureQuality Ltd

A commercial company wholly-owned by the New Zealand government and set up to provide food safety and biosecurity services to the food and primary production sectors. AsureQuality has a Plant Health Laboratory in Lincoln, close to the main seed production area of Canterbury; it is the only Ministry of Primary Industries-approved seed health-testing laboratory in the country. Tests seed samples to ensure they meet phytosanitary requirements. The laboratory is approved to four MPI (Ministry of Primary Industries) standards and offers access to molecular testing facilities.

Contact:
Gerard Lysaght at gerard.lysaght@asurequality.com
Website: www.asurequality.com

CANTERBURY SEED

Canterbury Seed Company Ltd

Canterbury Seed Company is part of the family-owned agribusiness Carr Group. With over 400 staff, the group operates in New Zealand, Australia, India, Africa and the Middle East. Canterbury Seed is involved in seed production and seed marketing, especially for pea, forage, vegetable seed and grains. Seeds are marketed to 40 countries. The Group also runs the Stradbrook Robotic Dairy farm and sells and provides services for major agricultural machinery brands through its Claas Harvest Centre Canterbury in Ashburton.

Contacts:
Craig Carr at Craig.carr@winslowltd.co.nz and
Tom Sherratt at tom.sherratt@canseed.co.nz
Website: www.canseed.co.nz



Midlands Seeds Ltd

Established in 1990, Midlands Seeds was set up to produce and export arable crops. Since then the company has grown rapidly to become one of the country's leading producers and marketers of vegetable and herbage seeds, dried peas and oilseeds, and cereal grains. Research currently includes high value hybrid vegetable seeds. The company operates contract hybrid seed production using high-technology precision machinery. Additionally, the company is also involved with quality honey production and export, as well as cold-pressed oilseed production.

Contact:
John Fulton at john.fulton@midlands.co.nz
Website: www.midlands-seed.co.nz



New Zealand Agriseeds Ltd

Established in 1987, Agriseeds is a plant breeding, production and marketing company, mainly specialising in pasture varieties; although the company has bred and selected some of New Zealand's best known ryegrasses, cocksfoots and clovers, it also breeds brassicas. The company's main facility is a 220 ha research farm, east of Christchurch and is the centre for plant breeding, product development, laboratory work, seed production and farm management. Agriseeds is a member of the Royal Barenbrug Group, one of the world's leading grass seed organisations.

Contact:
John Duncan at jgd@agriseeds.co.nz
Website: www.agriseeds.co.nz



PGG Wrightson Seeds

One of the largest seed production and marketing companies in the Southern Hemisphere, PGG Wrightson Seeds focuses on vegetable and pea seed multiplication. The company is based in New Zealand and Australia with production sites in a range of climatic zones around the world, including Uruguay, Argentina and Brazil. The company processes and treats seed at its seed processing plant in Ashburton, and evaluates varieties at its research centre in Kimihia in Canterbury.

Contacts:
Stephen Mulder at smoulder@pggwrightsonseeds.co.nz
or Alec Wu at awu@pggwrightsonseeds.co.nz
Website: www.pggwrightsonseeds.com



Smith Seeds

Established in 1990 by seed veteran Ross Smith, Smith Seeds specialises in contract vegetable seed production, and is now run by sons Grant and Mike. Smith Seeds was one of the first New Zealand seed companies to produce seed from Asian clients' own stock. The company utilises its in-house Total Seed Management system, which encompasses every aspect of seed production, management, harvesting, cleaning, purity/quality analysis, packing and shipping to produce high quality seeds for the Asian, European and US markets.

Contact:
Grant Smith at info@smithseeds.co.nz
Website: www.smithseeds.co.nz



Established in 1997, Townsend Seeds International is a producer and supplier of vegetable, forage and pasture seeds, and cereals for domestic and international markets. Townsend specialises in the multiplication of seed lines and the production of vegetable seed for overseas customers. Main products include garden peas, Chinese cabbage, choisum, pakchoi, kale, mustard, rape, and radish seeds. Customers send their stockseed for sowing in the spring (September/October); harvest takes place in February/March. Based in Lincoln, just outside Christchurch, in the Canterbury Plains, the company supplies markets in Asia, Europe, the Americas and South Africa.

Contacts: Lynn Townsend at lynn@seeds4u.co.nz or Chris Burrows at chris@seeds4u.co.nz
Website: www.seeds4u.co.nz



South Pacific Seeds

Established in 1992, South Pacific Seeds is a subsidiary of South Pacific Seeds of Australia (formed in 1986 from Yates Australia). It is a vegetable seed production company, based in Methven in Canterbury. Operating contract production in the greater Canterbury area, SPS offers a wide range of vegetable seed crops for overseas markets. The company provides a complete service, including seed treatment at its vegetable processing and cleaning facility in Methven. It recently opened a seed coating operation in Pukekohe to service local growers and distributes Enza Zaden hybrids through the Terranova brand.

Contact:
John McKay at jmckay@spsnz.co.nz
Website: www.spsnz.com



South Island Seed Dressing & Storage Company

South Island Seed Dressing & Storage Company was formed in 1991 and is based in Ashburton. The company provides a comprehensive range of services to arable farmers in New Zealand and overseas, including crop receipt and testing, crop storage, drying, machine cleaning, treatment application, packaging, machine dressed storage, container loading and transportation. The company also offers 'Seed Safe' brand High Cube containers that can be placed directly in the field. In 2012, SISR bought a former seed site in Tasmania, Australia and opened a new seed centre, Tasmanian Seed Dressing and Storage Company.

Contact:
Brent Clarke at brent@siseed.co.nz
Website: www.siseeds.co.nz

Ministry of Primary Industries

The Ministry of Primary Industries (MPI) was formed by a merger between the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, the Ministry of Fisheries and the New Zealand Food Safety Authority. MPI is also the NPPO (National Plant Protection Organisation) for New Zealand.

MPI's brief is to facilitate export opportunities for the country's primary industries, improve sector productivity, and to increase sustainable resource usage and protection from biological risk. The Ministry's Operation Branch & Border Clearance Services Directorate is responsible for the inspection of and clearance of all seed for sowing imported into New Zealand. 🐛



Entomology Laboratory Specimen Collection

Import Requirements



MPI brochure on pests and diseases

Phytosanitary Certificate (IPC), which must:

- Be in English
- State Genus and species
- Ensure research seed has the original IPC accompany the consignment
- Give copy to NZ importer

MPI's Dave Robinson said that seed was held at Border Clearance for a number of reasons, such as: insufficient documentation; IPC did not have correct additional declarations or did not list species' name; fungicide treatment rate was not in metric system or the product was listed but not the active ingredients; and the seed was contaminated with weed seed requiring identification and/or dressing. 🐛

Tips for Export Documentation

- Seed must be declared on the package and import documents as 'Seed for Sowing' (Import Health Standard 155-02-05 Seed for Sowing)
- Seed must be securely packaged
- Seed lines must be clearly marked on packages
- Research seed packages must have a copy of the IPC on the outside of the box and the original on the inside 🐛

Website for step-by-step guide on importing seed to New Zealand:

www.mpi.govt.nz/importing/plants/seeds-for-sowing/steps-to-importing/

www.biosecurity.govt.nz/regs/imports/plants/seeds

www.stats.govt.nz (for figures on agriculture, imports, exports etc.)

www.tourismnewzealand.com

APSA to Convene Workshop to Finalise IPR Position Paper

In the absence of strong Intellectual Property Right (IPR) protection, private seed enterprises have little incentive to conduct expensive R&D that can create new and useful products. A distinctive feature of the seed industry is that innovation is heavily dependent on sizeable R&D investments.

The Asia & Pacific Seed Association (APSA), which draws its members from across the region, has prepared a draft 'Position Paper on Intellectual Property Rights' to guide its members in conducting their seed business. To further this process, APSA will hold an IPR workshop to finalise the draft Position Paper before recommending it to its members at a future General Assembly.

The IPR Workshop will be convened on 18-19 May, 2015 in Bangkok. The two-day workshop includes presentations from resource persons on various relevant treaties and agreements related to IPR on Day 1 to prepare workshop participants for a review of the draft Position Paper on Day 2.

Members of APSA's Working Group on IPR have taken the lead on this important issue and they will be supported by resource persons from the International Seed Federation (ISF), the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV), Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) among others, besides the members of APSA Working Group who prepared the Position Paper. 🐛



ASIAN SEED – THE NEXT ISSUE

Biodiversity and Intellectual Property Rights

Expert views on biodiversity, APSA's Working Group on IPR, all the treaties and conventions explained and how they affect the seed business in the Asia-Pacific region.

Also in this issue – IPPC report from Rome, coverage of the African Seed Congress in Zimbabwe and much, much more.

Contact APSA secretariat for details of advertising rates at: apsa@apsaseed.org

APSA
THE ASIA & PACIFIC
SEED ASSOCIATION
apsaseed.org



Innovations and Technology Key to Seed Industry Growth

The National Seed Association of India (NSAI) organised the sixth edition of the Indian Seed Congress 2015 (ISC 2015) at Agra on 13-14 February 2015. Nearly 550 delegates, representing the seed industry, scientific community, development organisations, policy makers and farmers from more than 15 Indian states (provinces) and 14 countries, participated in this important seed industry event. The theme for the Congress was 'Love for Agriculture'.

Mr. Radha Mohan Singh, Union Agriculture Minister, inaugurated the Congress in the presence of Mr. Y.S. Chaudhry, Union Minister of State for Science & Technology and Mr. Ramashankar Katheria, Union Minister of State for Human Resource Development.

The Union Agriculture Minister lauded the efforts of the seed industry in transforming agriculture in the country. He assured those working in the industry of the Ministry's continuing support for agriculture and he indicated that the New Seed Bill, which has been pending approval for many years, would be taken up by the Parliament shortly. Coupled with the newly introduced National Mission on Agricultural Extension & Technology with its submission on Seeds & Planting Material, these efforts are expected to trigger growth in the industry. He appreciated the role of the newer technologies in the development of instruments for increased productivity and improved biotic and abiotic tolerance. He said that a substantial increase

in productivity was the only answer to achieving food security in an efficient and sustainable manner

The Congress was structured to include, besides scientific and technology-based lectures, an exhibition showcasing new seed and seed-related products by more than 30 companies, and business sessions at more than 20 trading tables and rooms.

The scientific lectures were spread over six technical sessions, focusing on, 'Opportunities in bilateral trade'; 'Emerging opportunities in seed industry'; 'Role of technology and emerging issues'; 'Policy and legislations: Impact on seed industry'; 'Role of enabling services in seed industry' and a roundtable discussion on 'Global Seed Industry'. The technical sessions included eminent seed industry leaders, scientists/agriculture administrators and support service executives.

Delegates also enjoyed convivial networking and socialising at the cocktail party and gala dinner, which were accompanied by live music and dance performances by popular artists. The post-congress tour, besides covering the historic Taj Mahal and Agra Fort sites, also included a site visit of the research farm of a leading seed company; additionally, prizes were awarded for the three best exhibition stalls. Bayer Bio Sciences, Du Pont Pioneer, Nuziveedu Seeds, Ankur Seeds, Akyurek Technology, Kaveri Seeds and Mahyco Monsanto Biotech Ltd. were the sponsors of the ISC 2015.



ISC photos courtesy NSAI

ISC – Africa-India Seed Bridge

The Syngenta Foundation For Sustainable Agriculture (SFSA), which is steering the 'Africa-India Seed Bridge' – an international seed industry initiative in cooperation with the NSAI aimed at connecting with emerging seed markets across Africa – conducted a session to review the progress of trials of over 100 varieties of vegetables and field crops from more than 20 Indian seed companies across sites in Mali, Senegal, Malawi, Zimbabwe and Kenya, during the Indian Seed Congress 2015 at Agra on 13 February 2015.

Representatives from leading Indian companies, including Ankur, Ganga Kaveri, HM Clause, Limagrain, Kaveri, Mahyco, Nuziveedu and Rasi, discussed the performance data of their varieties with Dr. Ian Barker and Dr. P.R. Dasgupta (SFSA) and representatives of two African seed companies.

The crops being trialed at present include beans, cowpeas, groundnut, maize, pearl millet, pigeon peas, sorghum, soybean, sunflower and wheat under field crops and eggplant, okra, onion, tomato and watermelon under vegetables.

The project is a part of SFSA's 'Seeds2B Africa' initiative under which the Foundation provides information on the crops in demand and on varieties suitable for the region, supports trials of the varieties across the region using national or regional protocols, gives advice on national and sub-regional registration of varieties and secures intellectual property protection.

The Project is being implemented with assistance from an African technology partner, in this case the African Agricultural Technology Foundation (AATF). Currently, the Seed Bridge is being scaled up to reach more countries and include more crops. The partnering companies appeared satisfied with the progress and looked forward to cornering a share of the \$400 million seed market in sub-Saharan Africa, excluding South Africa. This market, which accounts for only 10% of the total seed use at present in Africa, is projected to quadruple to \$1.6 billion over the next 10 years.



Eitsuo Sakuraba, Director General of Food Industry Affairs Bureau, presents a gift to Dr. Burns.

Japan's MAFF Visits APSA

Representatives from Japan's Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) paid a courtesy call on APSA in January to discuss three important issues: The East Asia Plant Variety Protection Forum (EAPVP) meeting to be held in July in South Korea; ways of broadening cooperation between Japan and APSA on programmes; and the latest developments related to Indonesia's new Horticultural Law and its implementation.

The MAFF delegation was led by Mr. Eitsuo Sakuraba, Director General of the Food Industry Bureau, Mr. Katsuhiro Saka, Director, new Business and Intellectual Property Division, Food Industry Affairs Bureau and Mr. Koichi Okamoto, First secretary, Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Embassy of Japan, Thailand.

The EAPVP Forum meeting to be held in South Korea was discussed,

and MAFF representatives invited APSA to send a representative to make a presentation to the Forum. APSA Director Dr. Tom Burns suggested that a draft of APSA's draft IPR Position Paper on plant policy could be presented as well. MAFF representatives said that an invitation would be sent out to Director Burns to attend the meeting.

The EAPVP Forum was set up by MAFF in November 2007, following a workshop on the "Cooperation and Harmonization in Plant Variety Protection in the Asian Region", which was held in Japan. Agriculture Ministers then agreed that the 10 ASEAN countries plus Japan, China and South Korea (i.e. ASEAN plus three) would work together towards greater cooperation and harmonisation of Plant Variety Protection in the Asian region.

MAFF delegates also said that there was a need for more cooperation in the region generally.



On the issue of Indonesia's controversial Horticulture Law, Mr. Sakuraba said that Japan had some concerns over the impact of the new law and that he would welcome clarification on the legal rulings related to the case. Director Burns said that APSA was monitoring the situation.

More information on the EAPVP Forum can be found at: <http://eapvp.org>

ASEAN-JAPAN Partnership Programme

Japan's MAFF team was also in Bangkok to promote a new partnership scheme between Kasetsart University in Bangkok (where APSA's HQ is located) and Japanese industry, "Development of the Food Value Chain through ASEAN-Japan Partnership". The programme was supported by the Japanese private sector through well-known companies such as Ajinomoto, Fuji Oil, Kirin, Asahi, Megmilk Snow Brand and Kokubo & Co. APSA member, the Japan Seed Trade Association (JASTA) also joined the programme in order to promote the seed industry and to explain the importance of the Japanese seed industry to livelihoods in the ASEAN region.

The main aim of the three-year programme was "to develop and strengthen the Food Value Chain (FVC) in Thailand, in the 10 ASEAN countries and in the world," according to Katsuhiro Saka of the New Business and Intellectual Property Division at MAFF.

The opening ceremony and symposium for the event were held on 23 January at Kasetsart University, during which several keynote addresses were made

on subjects such as 'Japan's Way of Adding Value in Food Industry'. The main focus was on human resource development in food-related areas through a partnership with ASEAN universities. The symposium was followed by a Japanese cuisine reception at a nearby hotel which treated participants to local food from the four seasons, prepared by Chef Takuya Iguma.

Part of the programme included a lecture on the Japanese seed industry, which was given by Dr. Tatsuya Mochizuki, Technical Advisor to JASTA, to Kasetsart University students in 27 January as part of their course requirements.

Dr. Mochizuki explained in the lecture that seeds were the starting point of the FVC. He gave students the background to how seeds were developed by the seed industry to carry desirable traits, how the market for vegetables had developed over the past 150 years and why vegetable consumption in Japan has declined. He noted that the professional market for vegetable seeds in Japan was worth, at the wholesale level, more than US\$600 million, and that domestic seed production only

provided 10% of the vegetable seeds used in Japan, while 90% were sourced overseas.

He also said that MAFF was committed to developing seed markets in countries like Thailand as part of the Partnership Programme. "[The] seed industry is the driving force of food security and a joyful life," he said. He added that seeds were a critical part of the upstream side of the "AgriFood Value Chain" and he said that high quality seeds were key to preventing losses at production sites.

Dr. Mochizuki and his colleagues suggested that private sector involvement would be in projects such as developing a high quality integrated system from seed research to seed production, logistics, quality control and wholesale in an ASEAN country. The idea they suggested would be to create production areas of value-added seeds at overseas operating bases using (and therefore introducing) Japan's quality seed technology.

The partnership programme was also launched in Malaysia in March and will then travel to Indonesia.



Acting Vice-President of Kasetsart University Associate Professor Dr. Bordin Rassameethes and Mr. Eitsuo Sakuraba exchange gifts.





Office Bearers' Meeting 29 and 31 January 2015

A packed agenda for the 42nd OB meeting meant that the meeting was held over two days on the 29th and 31st of January at the Grand Hyatt Goa Hotel in Goa, India, the venue for this year's ASC 2015.

The first meeting of the new OB reviewed the financial reports for 2014 and accepted them as written. Approval was also given for other initiatives including the continued development of the APSA website.

Then the OB also reviewed initiatives to improve the membership database, a proposal which will be submitted to the EC meeting in June. The OB suggested that APSA should be more proactive in its membership activities.

On IPR issues and draft APSA policy paper on IPR, it was agreed that APSA would hold a two-day IPR workshop in May. The workshop will feature presentations by IPR resource persons (i.e. ASTA, ISF, Plantum, UPOV etc.) on Day 1 and a plenary session for APSA members from the region only. The IPR paper will be presented to the General Assembly for ratification. Related to this was the proposal for APSA to mention IPR problems in Asian Seed magazine regularly.

For the idea of creating a Manual of Trade for the seed business, the OB proposed that APSA look to host a workshop for members on how they could access information on the movement and trade of seed in the region. The workshop could

be hosted by the Activity Group on Trade and Marketing.

Finally, the OB agreed that APSA should push for more advertisers for Asian Seed magazine via an email appeal and the introduction of a classified section and to see if the APSA logo could be registered as a trademark.

It was agreed unanimously that the next OB meeting in August should be held in South Korea as the Korea Seed & Variety Service (KSVS) and the Korean Seed Association (KOSA) had proposed to host the Asian Seed Congress in 2016. By meeting in August members would be able to review the facilities and progress for ASC 2016 in advance of contract signing in October 2015. 🐼

OB Meeting #42 Held in Goa, India

Office Bearers Meet Indian NOC to Discuss ASC 2015 in Goa

The Office Bearer's (OB) meeting January was moved from its usual venue, Bangkok, to Goa, India to enable the four Office Bearers – APSA President Zhiping Wang, immediate past President Avtar Singh, Vice President Brenda Dossey and Treasurer Jack Metzelaar – and APSA Director Tom Burns to meet with the Indian National Organising Committee (NOC) to review the details of this year's Asian Seed Congress, which is to be held in Goa in November.



Office Bearers' Meeting with NOC 30 January 2015

APSA Secretariat, represented by Director Tom Burns and Events Organiser Duangchai Pancom met first with OB members, Grand Hyatt Goa hotel staff and Mr. Arjun Narne, Director of KW Conferences (India) and the ASC 2015 event organiser on January 29 to survey the ASC site and discuss details of the Congress.

On 30 January, the OB met with the same group, along with the NOC. The OB decided that all Congress activities should be held at the

Congress venue and not shifted off-site, as there was a proposal to place the trading tables and booths in a temporary hangar.

The NOC reported that 240 rooms had been blocked at the Grand Hyatt Goa, and a further 260 at four hotels (Bambolina, Citaded de Goa, Chances Hotel and Sandalwood) near to the Congress venue; shuttle buses would be arranged to take delegates to the Congress venue.

Although most of the Congress activities would be held inside the

Congress venue, it was agreed to hold the Cocktail Party and Grand Banquet on the hotel's lawn area, which is by the beach and would enable delegates to enjoy the tranquil beachside setting.

The OB members thanked the NOC for attending the meetings, which enabled APSA's representatives to consider the upcoming Congress in detail well in advance of the event. 🐼

Viet Seed Association Tours Thailand



Photos by John Clewley

A delegation from the Vietnam Seed Trade Association (VSTA) visited APSA's headquarters in Bangkok on 19 January for a meeting with APSA Director Dr. Tom Burns.

The delegation was led by Mr. Tran Manh Bao, the Chairman of the VSTA and Vice-General Secretary Mr. Hang Phi Quang. Joining them were Mr. Hang Phi Quang, Chairman/CEO of the Southern Seed Corporation (SSC), Mr. Nguyen Thi Tam, Chairman of the Vietnam High Technology Agricultural Seed and Material Jointstock Company and Mr. Nguyen Thanh Vu, Vice-Director of Thua Thien Hue of Seeds and Cattle and Poultry Breeds Joint-Stock Company.

They were accompanied by Dr. Bui Ba Bong, a rice expert from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and a former Vice-Minister at the Ministry of Agriculture in Vietnam. Dr. Bong recently collaborated with

APSA on a workshop on hybrid rice that was held in Bangkok in 2014.

Mr. Bao gave a presentation on the status of the seed industry in Vietnam. He gave some basic facts and figures on the market (see Fact Box below) and also noted that only publicly listed companies could be 100% foreign owned; private companies were required to be at least 51% owned by a Vietnamese partner.

Approximately 30% of agricultural production was exported said Mr. Bao, and crops included maize, rice, coffee, cashew nuts, soybean and black pepper; and a range of vegetables, including cucumber, tomatoes, bitter gourd and mustard. He said that the seed business in Vietnam was relatively new and that it was important to expand this trade and develop contacts with other seed companies in the region. Furthermore, collaboration with private companies

was fundamental for many Vietnamese seed companies as R&D in the country was still in its infancy and needed to be developed; he hoped that APSA's members would help with this process. He noted that the Government was proposing that all seeds sold may need to be locally produced after a two-year period of sales; he suggested that this would be an issue for both local and international companies.

To promote the seed industry in Vietnam, Mr. Bao invited APSA to join a delegation to meet the Minister of Agriculture in May to discuss issues related to the seed industry in Vietnam. Finally, the VSTA expressed interest in hosting a future Asian Seed Congress in Vietnam. Vietnam was previously the host country for the 2002 Asian Seed Congress in Ho Chi Minh City. 🌱

More information from: <http://vietnamseed.com.vn>.

Vietnam Seed Industry Fact Box

- ▶ Vietnam has 415 seed businesses, not including cooperatives.
- ▶ Two former seed state companies operate as joint-stock companies: Vinaseed or National Seed Company (NSC), which specialises in rice seed and the Southern Seed Company (SSC), which specialises in maize seed.
- ▶ VSTA has 130 members (70% seed companies), including eight international companies and five Chinese companies (as of 2011); the VSTA was founded in 2007.
- ▶ There are 129 provincial seed centres (originally state agencies but now joint-stock companies).
- ▶ Between 1977-2005, 575 new crop varieties were developed (177 rice varieties, 75 maize, 15 potato and seven cassava varieties: Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development [MARD] figures)
- ▶ Annual seed imports valued at US\$150 million
 - Imports 15,000 tons of hybrid rice from China/year (75% of total demand for rice seed), worth US\$21 million
 - Imports 80% of vegetable seeds from Thailand, China, Japan, South Korea and France, worth US\$70 million

(Figures: ReSAKSS Asia report on Vietnam's seed industry, November 2014)

New APAARI Director Visits APSA

The newly appointed Secretary General of the Asia-Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutions (APAARI) Dr. Raghunath Ghodake paid a courtesy call to APSA's Headquarters on the campus of Kasetsart University in Bangkok in January. Dr. Ghodake has replaced Dr. Raj Paroda, who was APAARI Secretary General for many years and retired at the end of 2014.

APSA and APAARI have a longstanding agreement that allows each organisation to grant reciprocal membership; moreover, the two institutions have collaborated on several projects over the years.

Prior to joining APAARI, Dr. Ghodake was the Director General of the National Agricultural Research Institute (NARI) in Papua New Guinea, a position he held for 17 years (1997-2013). Although a graduate of the Indian Agricultural Research Institute, he has spent more than 28 years working in Papua New Guinea and the Pacific region.



Photos by John Clewley

In talks with Dr. Burns, Dr. Ghodake gave an update on the recent APAARI General Assembly, which he said had decided to encourage greater cooperation and closer collaboration with the private sector. As a consequence, the General Assembly proposed that a member of the private sector should take a seat on APAARI's Executive Committee and it was proposed that APSA should take this seat as the private sector representative in 2015, initially as an observer. APSA Officer Bearer's Committee at their meeting on 30 January, agreed to the proposal and assigned APSA Director Dr. Tom Burns to represent the association.

APAARI's most recent major event was the 12th Asian Maize Conference and Expert Consultation on "Maize for Food, Feed, Nutrition and Environmental Security" held on 30 October to 1 November 2014 in Bangkok. More information and access to APAARI's newsletter can be found at www.apaari.org. 🌱

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Right Time, Right Place

By John McKay



Photo by John Clewley

John McKay, Managing Director of South Pacific Seeds (NZ) is a fourth generation Kiwi seedsman. He talks about his life in seeds and how the seed business fits New Zealand's agricultural profile.

On a late Autumn day in 1991 while I was harvesting a crop of evening primrose seed at our farm, I had a chance meeting with Mark Hancock of an Australian seed company, South Pacific Seeds (SPS). He was driving past the field and decided to stop to ask me what we were doing. One thing led to another and after some successful hybrid vegetable seed trials on our farm, Mark and his father Phil asked me to join SPS and help them in New Zealand.

Looking back, I've had some wonderful experiences that have contributed to the way progress has been made. I grew up on a family farm, on which my father grew Cocksfoot (Orchard grass or Dactyl) seed, which was quite rare in those days because it was a difficult crop, notorious for uneven ripening. We had only old machines, which often required repair and innovation to keep them running and there was plenty of physical work. But it was a good training on the mechanization of agriculture.

As a teenager I joined a USA high-school programme for kids learning agriculture called 4-H, (Head, Hands, Heart and Health). I was a New Zealand Young Farmers Club exchange student with 4-H, staying with eight different farm families for three weeks each in Oregon and Missouri. US farm family life was an inspiration, especially for its strong work ethic and family activities. One host farmer, who ran a successful farming machinery business told me, "Hire good staff and circle like a buzzard".

Then I attended Lincoln Agriculture University, which was a great place to study agricultural principles, especially for plants and management. Yet after we graduated, our management lecturer cautioned us by saying, "It is what you do from today onwards that will make the difference", which is the best advice I've heard and was so close to my father's motto, "All progress begins with activity".

With my parent's help I was able start farming at Methven, a tiny town near the Southern Alps, on the western Canterbury plains.

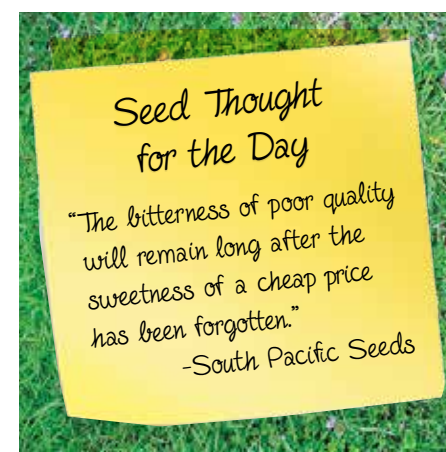
It is a good place for grain and seed production, but because New Zealand is an island in the southern oceans,

there are some challenges, such as summer rainfall and strong winds that can damage crops. However, when new technologies like fungicides, seed pod sealing sprays and higher capacity farm machinery (to get the harvest in before the weather can damage it) are combined with a commitment to work hard, it is a reliable place to produce seeds. Indeed, our SPS team has proved this for high-quality hybrid vegetable seeds, which we supply to elite world markets; currently, we produce nearly 500 hybrid vegetable seed crops from 230 contracted farmers. The work does require considerable drive and commitment by all those involved. We are very fortunate to have farm-oriented people and a company culture that displays a tenacity of purpose not seen in the traditional seed company.

We are on our hands and knees at planting time, and in the fields all the time; we also provide management recommendations and help those farmers that don't have the right equipment. It's a bit like a saying I heard in Korea: "The best fertilizer is the farmer's footprint". We put bird's nets on many crops (600 ha), we harvest all the small and difficult crops and many radish crops using our own machines.

The company is proud of our customers and work well with them. We are close to our customers, and loyal to each other. It's a very special relationship in which TRUST is the key ingredient. There is something very special about trust in the seed business. Ignore it at your peril.

New Zealand is an important part of global seed production. If you want to produce seed in the counter season (the Northern Hemisphere Winter), then you need to look to the Southern Hemisphere. New Zealand has a similar latitude and climate to the traditional seed production areas of France, Italy, Korea, Japan, the USA and China, and there is a lot of upside to our potential here. 🌱



asian seed congress 2015

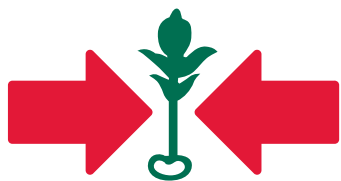
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