



# IAPPS NEWSLETTER

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## BCPC MEDALS AWARDED AT BCPC INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS

BCPC has awarded its highest accolade, the BCPC Medal to Professor Ian Crute, Dr Nick Sotherton and Professor Helmut Van Emden. The presentations were made by BCPC President Hugh Oliver-Bellasis, at the President's dinner during the BCPC International Congress - Crop Science & Technology 2005, held at the SECC in Glasgow between 31 October and 2 November 2005.



"Being recognized by one's professional peers is something I value highly and the fact that BCPC should consider my contributions worthy of this award is something that gives me much satisfaction," said **Professor Ian Crute**, as he accepted this award of industry recognition. Since 1999 Ian is the director of Rothamsted Research. He was awarded the Research Medal of the Royal Agricultural Society of England in 1992 and became president of the British Society for Plant Pathology in 1995. He holds a visiting professorship at the University of Oxford and is a member of the BBSRC Strategy Board. In 2003, Ian gave a keynote address "*Increased crop productivity from renewable inputs - a scientific challenge for the 21st century*" at the first BCPC International Congress to be held in Glasgow.



In his career **Dr Nick W Sotherton** has focused on problem solving at the interface between agriculture and wildlife. In 1982 Nick joined the Game Conservancy Trust as manager of the Farmland Ecology Unit heading the highly influential Cereals and Gamebirds Research Project. In 1993 he became director of research in the Lowlands for the Game Conservancy and since 1998 has been director of research. Much of today's UK agri-environment policy options are based on the work of The Game Conservancy Trust and reflect Nick's belief that wildlife can thrive on modern, high input arable farms. "Clearly I am honoured, and delighted, at being awarded a BCPC Medal," said Nick. "Although, I am a little confused as well, my expertise is entomology but I do seem to have had a particularly long association with the BCPC Weeds Conferences where I have organized and chaired sessions when the event was run in Brighton."



**Professor Helmut Van Emden** on learning of his award said, "I am obviously thrilled at being awarded a BCPC medal, it really is a big compliment, and as an university academic it is good to have the practical side of teaching acknowledged as well as the academic," From lecturer in the Department of Horticulture at the University of Reading, 'Van' progressed to become head the department in 1986 before being appointed to the Chair of Horticulture. Between 1992 and 1997 he was head of the School of Plant Sciences and retired in 1999 to become Emeritus Professor. He is also a Rothamsted Fellow and has held visiting appointments at the Universities of Queensland and California (Berkeley). Most of Van's research has focused on insect-plant relations. He predicted, as early as 1990, some of the potential disadvantages of GM crops - a topic on which he has written and lectured extensively. Van has served as president of both the Royal Entomological Society and the Association of Applied Biologists, both societies have honored him with honorary fellowship/membership.

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## FOOD SECURITY THREAT CASTS A SHADOW OVER THE EMERGING PEACE IN BURUNDI

Just as the final votes were being cast in the successful multi-party elections in Burundi in Central Africa, offering hope for an end to 12 years of civil war, reports began to emerge of a new and quite different threat to the security of Bujumbura, the nation's capital city. From the fertile plains surrounding the city, and the slopes of the mountains rising up from the valley in which the Bujumbura lies, farmers began to notice dramatic changes to the crop on which they and many of the city's million plus population rely for their food security. Cassava, a versatile root crop that

constitutes a key staple component of the diet of many Burundians, has been under attack from a virulent pandemic of 'cassava mosaic' virus disease since 2002. It was at this time that the symptoms of yellowing, leaf loss and stunting were first noticed in the northern provinces of Kirundo and Muyinga. The disease has spread rapidly since that time through the heart of the country, leaving behind a swathe of cassava damaged so badly that the commonest response of farmers has simply been to abandon the crop. The UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimates that the epidemic has contributed to more than 40% lost crop production in northern provinces, and the degree of these losses looks set to increase still further as the epidemic spreads to the south and west. Trade has been hit too, as supplies of cassava products, such as fresh roots, dried chips and flour, have dwindled in both rural and urban markets, and prices have more than tripled.

Cassava mosaic disease is not new to this part of Africa. The weight of its impact has already been felt in many of the countries neighboring Burundi, including Rwanda, Democratic Republic of Congo and Tanzania. An epidemic of an unusually severe form of mosaic disease was first noticed in northern and eastern parts of Uganda in the late 1980s where it caused widespread food shortages and localized famine. From these early but threatening beginnings, the disease has spread to cover much of the prime cassava growing belt of East and Central Africa, reaching westwards as far as Gabon. Scientists at the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) and the UK's Natural Resources Institute (NRI), in a desperate race against time to mitigate the effects of the pandemic, have criss-crossed the region to monitor spread of the disease and co-ordinate management efforts. DNA fingerprinting techniques have been developed that are helping to trace the virus movements, forecast where the epidemic is going next and identify worst-affected regions

The Burundi Institute of Agronomic Science (ISABU) is leading the way in implementing a countrywide management program for the disease, with support from IITA, the East Africa Root Crops Research Network (EARRNET) and a number of other partners including FAO and a series of NGOs. Although initial progress has been slow (cassava normally takes a year to mature and is propagated through stem cuttings), the pace is increasing and there is a strong commitment amongst all partners involved to restore Burundi's cassava crop in the quickest time possible. "The impact of the epidemic in our country has been terrible" says ISABU's Cassava Program Leader, Simon Bigirimana, "but we have a solution: resistant cassava varieties". Simon speaks of the tremendous value of elite new mosaic-resistant varieties of cassava recently introduced to Burundi. Resistant varieties, initially developed through the continental breeding program of IITA, have been introduced into Burundi with assistance from EARRNET. Since 2003, the Burundi team has been pulling out all the stops, with support from a mitigation grant from USAID's Office for Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), to identify the best, most mosaic resistant varieties and multiply them up as rapidly as possible. By the end of 2006, tens of millions of life-saving cassava cuttings will have been produced through this support, providing hope for a people that have had more than their fair share of hardship in recent years.

A cassava leaf sits proudly at the centre of the flag of CNDD-FDD, the party that ran out as victor in Burundi's recently concluded multi-party elections. As the success of these elections brings hope to Burundians for a new era of peace and development, cassava too looks set to play a vital renewing role in the life of the nation.

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### **AN UPDATE ON PLANT PROTECTION WEBSITES**

The International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) based at Cali, Colombia, has the pleasure to announce a new website for the Crop and Agroecosystem Health Management Project, formerly called Integrated Pest and Disease Management Project: <http://www.ciat.cgiar.org/ipm/index.htm>

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The Invasive Species Information Node of the National Biological Information Infrastructure (NBII) is now hosting a website and links to the golden apple snail (GAS, *Pomacea* spp.), an important invasive alien species attacking rice,

taro and other plant species growing in aquatic environments: <http://invasivespecies.nbii.gov/goldenapplesnail.html>.  
The web page also includes the option to download the global information database on GAS.

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IAPPS Mission: to provide a global forum for the purpose of identifying, evaluating, integrating, and promoting plant protection concepts, technologies, and policies that are economically, environmentally, and socially acceptable.

It seeks to provide a global umbrella for the plant protection sciences to facilitate and promote the application of the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approach to a the world's crop and forest ecosystems.

Membership Information: IAPPS has four classes of membership (individual, affiliate, associate, and corporate) which are described [here](#).

The *IAPPS Newsletter* welcomes news, letters, and other items of interest from individuals and organizations. Address correspondence and information to:

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