



**The 10<sup>th</sup> Australasian Plant Virology Workshop,  
Hanmer Springs,  
19<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> November 2012**

**Brief Report**

The 10th Australasian Plant Virology Workshop was the latest in the series convened by the Plant Virology Working Group, a Special Interest Group of the Australasian Plant Pathology Society. This very successful workshop, attended by 60 delegates, was held at the Heritage Hotel in Hanmer Springs (approximately 2 hours drive north of Christchurch) in November 2012. The hotel, the town of Hanmer Springs and alpine vista of this part of the Hurunui region of Canterbury provided an ideal setting to continue and foster the interactive and collegial tradition of past APVW workshops.

The meeting commenced on Monday evening with a welcome function at the Hotel. Over the next two and half days delegates enjoyed 43 Oral and 12 Poster presentations. On Tuesday morning, D/Prof James Dale presented the REF Mathews Memorial Lecture. After a couple of personal anecdotes of interactions with Dick, James outlined the many roles viruses play in the genetic improvement of bananas in East Africa against the background of research in the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Grand Challenges: Global Health initiative to enhance the level of vitamin A in banana fruit.

The meeting program was structured into five reach themes:

- New tools and technologies
- New and Emerging Viruses and VLOs
- Control and Eradication
- Interactions with Hosts and Vectors
- Genomes and Genetics

**Table 1. Number of oral and poster presentation by research theme**

Research Theme	Oral	Poster	Total Presentations
REF Matthew's Memorial Lecture	1	-	1
New tools and technologies	6	2	8
New and Emerging Viruses and VLOs	8	4	12
Control and Eradication	1	1	2
Interactions with Hosts and Vectors	19	4	23
Genomes and Genetics	8	1	9
Totals	43	12	55

Building on the foundation of the inclusion of virus-like organisms in preceding workshops the organising committee took the opportunity at this meeting to integrate virus-like organism

research into the program based on research theme, rather than by taxa. To further unify the science being presented by research theme, the presentation of a poster précis was incorporated into the oral sessions, rather than being run as a separate poster session. Feedback from delegates on this integration was positive.

**Best poster or oral presentation by a student.**

The APPS Management Committee offered a three year subscription to APPS as the prize for the best poster oral presentation by a student. Fifteen enrolled post-graduate students attended the meeting (out of a total of sixty) and presented progress on their research. A small anonymous committee was formed and asked to nominate the best student presentation. The quality of the student presentations was very high: many displayed a very good understanding of the wider context of their research. All the students were a credit to themselves, their supervisor(s) and their university.



The committee had a very difficult task to nominate a winner from such a talented group. It is extremely encouraging that such a strong group of students is training for a career in plant pathology.

The winner was Daisy Stainton, PhD Candidate at the University of Canterbury whose oral presentation was on 'Recombination and re-assortment events detected in the multi-component Banana bunchy top virus (BBTV)'. Daisy is pictured above being congratulated by Grant Smith, Chair of the Organising Committee at the conclusion of the Workshop.

**The 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> APVWs.** The small size and engaging environment of the APVW meetings is a strong driver for many to retain the existing separate, currently biennial meeting cycle. With the reality of the ongoing economic situation and a desire to maximise the value of this Special Interest Group, a view emerged that partial integration (timing just before the biennial APPS meeting with a day 'overlap') might be a more sustainable future meeting model. After discussion around these options and voting (simple majority) on proposals it was agreed:

1. The 11<sup>th</sup> APVW would be held as a separate meeting in south-east Queensland in approximately 18 months (ie about the middle of 2014): Ralph Dietzgen and James Dale co-conveners.
2. The 12<sup>th</sup> APVW would be held in conjunction with APPS 2015 in Western Australia, in late 2015. Brenda Coutts and colleagues to convene and investigate partial integration into the APPS meeting.

After the 12<sup>th</sup> APVW the Special Interest Group has the opportunity to consider the structure and timing for the next meeting based on experiences gained from the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> meetings.

**Many thanks to our Sponsors.** We are indebted to APPS for their ongoing support for our meeting, in particular the loan funds which helped meet venue deposit payments prior to registration being open. The surplus from the 9<sup>th</sup> APVW meeting was also most welcome, also being used to meet costs prior to registration fees being paid. We hope to be able to provide a surplus forward to the 11<sup>th</sup> APVW: at this time the value of that surplus is unknown. We also wish to thank and acknowledge the support of Plant & Food Research and the Plant Biosecurity CRC. The generosity of all our sponsors has made this workshop possible.

