



NEWSLETTER

CANADIAN SOCIETY for HORTICULTURAL SCIENCE
SOCIÉTÉ CANADIENNE DE SCIENCE HORTICOLE

Your executive / Votre exécutif

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<i>In this issue</i>	<i>Page</i>
President's Corner	2
Message from the Secretary-Treasurer	4
Tribute given to Dr. Don Craig	4
Organic Vegetable Project in Nepal	6
The Canadian Agri-Science Clusters	11
2010 Annual Meeting	12
Upcoming Horticultural Meetings / Conferences	12

PRESIDENT'S CORNER



Greetings!

This is my first official report to CSHS' members since my nomination during our last annual meeting in Quebec City. It is unusual for the President of this Society to keep quiet for so long but I had a lot on my mind and needed time to reflect on matters that I feel are important to the future of our Society. You are most likely to find the flavour of the following lines different from what you have been accustomed to in this section of your Newsletter. Blame it on the French blood that flows in my veins.

New team and old faces

Let me first thank David Percival for all his efforts and good work during his mandate as President of the CSHS.

Thank you also to Samir Debnath for his continuous efforts in preparing the Newsletter during the last 2 years.

A warm welcome goes to Kris Pruski for accepting the position of secretary-treasurer. Please, send all relevant information to Kris that will make it available to all our members through the Newsletter and our website under the well appreciated contribution of Shahrokh Khanizadeh. Shahrokh was elected editor in chief of the Canadian Journal of Plant Science. My congratulations go to Shahrokh for this recognition of his qualities as an editor and a skilled researcher. Last but not least, mes sincères remerciements à Yves Desjardins pour avoir orchestré notre réunion annuelle avec les étudiants en horticulture de l'Université Laval. Consider these few words in French as a token of appreciation for having these francophone students presenting their work in English. I wish that all of them will join our Society and bring a lifelong contribution.

Membership

If one would like to compare the age structure of our Society with the one of any civilized country, this person would rapidly come to the conclusion that our "birth rate" is insufficient to sustain the burden associated with an aging population. In other words our Society has been unsuccessful in attracting and retaining new members. As a Society, we have to question ourselves about what should be done to become attractive to students and scientists. It could be argued that we have done a lot over the last decade by offering generous financial incentives (student travel award, best poster award and best oral presentation award). Obviously this approach has its limitation and seems to have little if any effect on membership retention.

Meetings

Low membership also impacts on the amount of work done by members when organizing annual meetings. The situation is such that we do not have enough members to realistically hope organizing on our own an annual conference in Alberta, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island and Saskatchewan where we have less than 10 members. Over the past few years, we were fortunate enough to join other Societies in joint meetings. To that respect, Plant Canada has offered

outstanding occasions to meet with colleagues from other Societies and I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to all CSHS members for their valiant efforts.

Visibility

An important part of the cost of every item you will ever buy is used for publicity. This is obviously done for one purpose in mind: get yourself known. Over the past 5 years (as you secretary-treasurer and as you vice-president) I tried to build a data base containing information about sites such as high-schools, universities and companies where we would find potential new members. To attain this goal I went to our members at our annual meetings and in each issue of our Newsletter asking for help. My calls went unanswered. I also requested pictures to include in a brochure that I was willing to prepare with the help of our graphic designer. Again I was faced with emptiness.

The first million is always the hardest to earn

With critically low attendance to our last few annual meetings we have to make renewed efforts to become more attractive to corporate members. Such members are vital for the financial survival of our Society. I am calling upon our senior members who have well established network and are in excellent position to attract new corporate members.

Should we buy a GPS?

At times I had serious doubts about the vision of our Society. Despite its respectable age, the CSHS seems to be in an identity crisis. The exact reason of this situation eludes me and I find some comfort in thinking that horticulture as a discipline is probably the most eclectic grouping of research fields. Have any of our members ever considered himself/herself a horticulturist or rather a plant physiologist, a molecular biologist, a plant breeder or something else? If we want our Society to survive and grow we need to find a common denominator that will unite the various disciplines and bring back some momentum. Should we dissolve our Society, should we merge with other Societies? Sooner or later there will be no sand left to burry anybody's head.

2010

This is not the title of a new sci-fi movie but rather an excuse to announce that there will be no annual meeting in 2010 unless a group of bold and daring members decide to take the torch (a good idea in this Olympic year). I will be there to support to the best of my capacity such group but I cannot and will not do it alone. However, 2011 meeting is expected to be quite a crowd pleaser when CSHS will join other Canadian scientific societies in Halifax during Plant Canada 2011 meeting. Visit our website for additional information.

The spirit of the season

I would like to wish all of you and your relatives a prosperous New Year and my apologies for that gut-spilling session.

Denis Charlebois, Ph.D.

President of CSHS

Denis.Charlebois@agr.gc.ca

Telephone: (450) 515-2026

MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY-TREASURER



Dear Colleagues,

As for the President, Dr. Denis Charlebois, this is my first official report to CSHS' members since accepting the position of secretary-treasurer. There was a number of information sent to me over last few months, though only now I am making it available to all the members. It is unusual for the Secretary-Treasurer not to communicate with the members for so long but it was a bit rough start for me, especially after accepting a new position of fruit horticulture professor here at Nova Scotia Agricultural College (NSAC) in Truro last July. Besides teaching, I had a massive task of organizing the fruit horticulture research program for NSAC and most of my time has been taken away. I am also quickly learning the format of the newsletter and trying to include all the information I received from our members. I had planned to release this newsletter just before Christmas but did not succeed. My sincere apology.

I hope everyone had a great Christmas and I wish all of you a happy and prosperous New Year 2010.

Kris Pruski, Ph.D.
Secretary-Treasurer of CSHS
Associate Professor Fruit Horticulture
Nova Scotia Agricultural College
Truro, NS Canada B2N 5E3
kpruski@nsac.ca
Telephone: (902) 893-6032

Tribute given to Dr. Don Craig

Canada Post Rhododendrons stamps and the tribute given to Dr. Don Craig

Material provided by Bob Murray

Canada Post stamp designer, Isabelle Toussaint, selected the Rhododendron for their 2009 flower series when visiting Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Atlantic Food and Horticulture Research Centre, Kentville during Rhododendron Sunday in 2008. Two cultivars, *Mist Maiden* and *Minas Maid* stamps were unveiled at the Kentville Research Centre on March 13, 2009, and recognition was made to Agriculture Canada's plant breeder, Dr. Donald L. Craig.

Dr. Kenna MacKenzie, Acting Research Manager, at AFHRC Kentville introduced Dr. Craig to the many people who attended this event, including Research Centre staff, both past and present, enthusiastic stamp club members, Canada Post delegates, members of the media and general public.

Dr. Kenna MacKenzie made an excellent introduction about Dr. Craig's involvement in his plant breeding program. There are many new people today who did not know Don, as well as newer members of CSHS. With this in mind, I thought I would include the major section of Kenna's introduction.



PHOTO: Dr. Don Craig and Dr. Kenna MacKenzie viewing the framed Rhododendron stamp items presented to AFHRC by Genevieve Latour, External Communication Manager - Atlantic, Canada Post, Halifax.

Dr. MacKenzie: “We are pleased that Canada Post chose to use Rhododendrons from our plantings as the model for their Flower series this year. The featured flowers include ‘Mist Maiden’ a very popular cultivar used by many breeders in their programs, and one of its offspring, ‘Minas Maid’, a cultivar that was bred at AFHRC.

Our research centre grounds feature one of the most renowned collections of rhododendrons and azaleas in Atlantic Canada. Some 85 years ago, the first rhododendrons were planted at the station by Dr Saxby Blair, the first superintendent of the farm.

But it was Dr. Donald Craig, who initiated rhododendron research here at this Station in 1952. He was joined in 1957 for 10 years by Mr. George Swain. They collaborated on the collection, breeding and

selection of rhododendrons with excellent winter hardiness adapted to the local area, and Dr. Craig continued with this work until he retired in 1983. As a result, the community at large enjoys the magnificent plantings that are found on our grounds today.

Between 1973 and 1983, twelve cultivars were released from this station. These all have the distinction of being adapted to the Atlantic region with winter hardiness most notable. I should also mention that 'Minas Maid', was the first red-flowered rhododendron released from the program.

We are pleased to have Dr. Craig here with us today. Dr. Craig, who retired after 35 years of service with the Canadian Government, was a distinguished breeder of small fruits and ornamentals who received much recognition for his research. The Rhododendron Society of Canada began in 1972 mainly due to the success of the Rhododendron research program at Kentville.

Of special mention, Dr. Craig was responsible for initiating the first Rhododendron Sunday at our Centre in 1967; the year his collaborator, George Swain, left the Centre. And this tradition continues today – generally held on the second Sunday in June.

It is my pleasure to invite each of you to visit the Atlantic Food and Horticulture Research Centre at any time from early June through early July to enjoy the beautiful display.”

News item prepared by Robert A. Murray, P.Ag.
member CSHS, retired horticulturist, Berry Crops,
NSDAM, Truro, NS

Organic Vegetable Project in Nepal

Material provided by Dinah Ceplis

The newsletter provides an opportunity to identify potential interest from CSHS members in volunteering to form a project coordinating committee for an organic vegetable project in Nepal and in partnership with CSA, if the feasibility report is positive. The members would form a committee and select coordinator(s) to be the liaison with Tom Beach at AIC.

In addition, we would like to inform CSHS members of the current partnership project in Ghana which expires in March 2011. Josee Owen, Merv Pritchard, Mary Ruth McDonald had a teleconference meeting last October and want to inform members that we are in the very early stages of developing a project proposal between CSHS and the Ghana Institute of Horticulturists (GhIH) - this proposal would be sent to the Agricultural Institute of Canada (AIC) by late May 2010 for consideration when AIC applies to CIDA for new international program funding beginning in April 2011. This is an opportune time for members to identify their interest in participating in the coordinating committee for this dry season vegetable production project with Ghana.

If any member wants to contact Josee, Mary Ruth, Merv or Dinah directly to ask questions before volunteering, we would be glad to speak with them. Many thanks for the interest.

Further on the subject: Josee Owen presented an overview of a potential project in Nepal at the CSHS annual meeting in June (as well as an update of the CSHS project with Ghana Institute of Horticulturists). Since that time, the Sustainable Agriculture Development Project (SADP) in Nepal <http://www.sadpnepal.org/> has continued corresponding with the AIC. Tom Beach, International Program Coordinator at AIC, in consultations with Josee, extended an invitation to Dinah Ceplis to participate in an upcoming project feasibility trip in early December. Dinah Ceplis, past coordinator of the CSHS twinning project with the Ghana Institute for Horticulturists, has accepted an offer to join an AIC team as a representative of CSHS on an exploratory trip to Nepal for a potential new project. She will join Tom Beach, Coordinator of the International Twinning Partnership Project (ITPP) of AIC and Dr. Derek Lynch, Canadian Research Chair in Organic Agriculture, Department of Plant Science at Nova Scotia Agricultural College and a member of the Canadian Society of Agronomy.

The focus of the feasibility trip is:

1. To meet the Board of Directors, staff and members of SADP in Nepal to discuss how the ITPP works, roles and responsibilities for implementing an ITPP project and the potential for collaboration on a project.
2. To meet other potential stakeholders including producer groups, women's groups, non-governmental organizations, government departments, funding agencies, marketers and processors.
3. To meet the potential beneficiaries of a project, review the current project work, the successes, challenges and where an ITPP project may be able to support the work.
4. To gather information and obtain relevant background documents and reports on organic agriculture in Nepal, production practices, technology available and marketing options and assess the current situation and potential for improvement.
5. To gather information on farmers and organizations - numbers, locations, needs and motivation to adopt technologies with specific discussions on the need for developing markets, making organic production profitable and tracking positive environmental changes due to organic practices.
6. Where possible, to compare the environmental impact of new production practices being promoted to the impact of usual production practices.
7. To identify the initial elements for a project plan and budget and a timeline to complete a project proposal for phase one to take place from early 2010 to March 31, 2011.
8. To develop a draft work plan with roles and responsibilities for final completion of the phase one proposal.

Upon Dinah's return, a report will be submitted to CSHS executive. CSHS can then decide if a partnership appears to be feasible between SADP, CSHS and CSA. CSHS would need to recruit members to identify their interest to participate in the project to the CSHS executive and Tom Beach at AIC. Dinah is a current volunteer member of the CSHS-GhIH project team (since 2000 and co-coordinator of the project from 2000 to 2006), current volunteer member of the Tanzania Project Canadian Coordinating Committee (since 2006), and currently is a part-time paid contractor as International Gender Equality Program Officer of AIC. CSHS will also need to decide what the partnership with CSA would look like, if the project proceeds. This would be a first to have two Canadian organizations partnering on an international project with AIC and an overseas partner.

The issues that the new CSA executive raised with Tom Beach in a September 2009 conference call are:

1. They are very interested in becoming involved internationally. AIC would keep them informed as we progressed on the initial visit and would seek their formal approval if there were a next step (as outlined in the feasibility report outline).
2. They expressed several areas of concern that are very appropriate for the initial visit discussions. They want to be sure that the project is based on sound science and that the partner organization match is appropriate to a scientific society. They also want to be sure that the project will have a direct impact on those in need.
3. CSA is pleased to be getting involved internationally and wants to raise their profile and broaden their activities. CSA presently does not have an international project, although one member is involved in an AIC soil science project in Viet Nam.

Next is the outline for the feasibility report, which will be initiated in December (deadline date to be determined, but likely would be late December 2009 or early January 2010). Responding to the following will be appreciated:

- *Clarify the interests of CSHS in developing a new partnership with both CSA and SADP.*
- *Confirm the organizational interest of CSHS for an organic agriculture project in Nepal.*
- *Brief description of the expectations of CSHS in establishing the project.*
- *Technical skills and experience that CSHS members can contribute to the project.*
- *What are the reasonable timelines to identify new members for this project?*

Project Feasibility Studies and the AIC International Program

When the AIC Project Review Committee assesses a project proposal, they are assessing the feasibility of the project. Are the project goals realistic? Do the project goals fit with the stated purposes of the overall program? Do the partners come from organizations the program can support? Do the partners have the capacity to effectively manage the project? Are the in-kind contribution requirements attainable? And so on, through the criteria for project selection. When the partners are able to provide this detailed information, it is possible to reach a reliable decision on the feasibility of the project.

When is a Feasibility Study Done?

In many cases, project proposals come to AIC through existing connections between professional or scientific organizations. There is an established relationship, the partners are known to each other, they already have some experience in advancing a common project concept, and have sufficient shared knowledge to prepare a joint proposal. In these cases, an initial feasibility study is not required for the partners to develop a project proposal.

In other cases, AIC may be approached directly by an overseas organization with a project concept. The concept is first presented to the appropriate AIC Member Organization or Association to determine if they would be interested in exploring the partnership further. Alternatively, an AIC Member body may approach AIC with a project concept they would like to explore for partnership potential. In these instances, a feasibility study may be supported to determine whether a viable joint project proposal could be developed.

Steps for a Feasibility Study

1. Initial communication and assessment

Both the Canadian and the overseas associations explore the potential for working as partners:

- Facilitate discussions within each association about a partnership project.
- Communicate by long distance to initiate a working relationship.
- Do preliminary research about both associations, the project country and locale.
- **Clarify the interests of each organization in developing a partnership.**
- **Assess whether these interests fit with the AIC international program purposes and capacity.**

Considerations for both organizations:

- Barriers to communication - technology, language
- Timeliness of communication
- **Organizational support vs. individual interests**
- Quality of information exchanged
- Congruence with AIC international program interests

If both associations are satisfied with the results of the initial communication and assessment:

- Jointly plan a feasibility study site visit
- Submit a feasibility study proposal to the executive of both organizations for comments and approval, and then to the IADC for consideration.

2. The feasibility study plan and proposal for site visit

Select the feasibility study team:

- The study team should be composed of at least two members each from Canada and the overseas country.
- One of the team members should be familiar with the potential Canadian partner organization and one with the potential overseas partner organization.
- At least two team members should be experienced with the scientific area of the proposed project, and at least one of the Canadian members should have experience in working with international development projects.
- At least two of the team members should have a non-vested interest in the outcome of the study, e.g. not be a potential coordinator for a longer-term project.

Prepare the feasibility study proposal. The proposal provides a summary of the initial communications and assessment, along with the following information:

- *Profile* of the two partners:
- Contact person and contact information for both associations.
- **Brief description of the expectations of both partners in establishing the project.**
- **If known, international development and technical skills and experience that both groups can contribute to the project (if unknown, this information could be included with results for the study).**
- **Examples of current or past activities of the partners in strengthening institutional capacity and (if applicable) in household food security endeavours, and a review of results accomplished and restraints encountered.**
- **A checklist of information known/needed on organizational structure, financial management and control, governance and operation for both partners.**

Identify the main *objectives* for the feasibility study. Following are examples:

- **Establish an effective communication network between partners.**
- **Determine the priority needs to be addressed in the joint project.**

- *Define potential outputs and outcomes for a longer-term project.*
- *Determine the requirements to manage the joint project.*
- *Assess the capacity of both partners and identify existing resources.*
- *Determine what baseline information is necessary for a longer-term project, how it will be collected and analysed.*
- *Identify indicators to measure change and monitor output and outcome results.*
- *Identify timelines for project implementation*
- *Determine how the project proposal will be planned and written in a collaborative way, and identify timelines for proposal preparation.*
- *Identify the methodology that will be used to achieve the feasibility study objectives:*
- *Select research method(s) - group meetings, focus group interviews, interviews with key leaders and potential collaborators, participant observation, potential project site visits, use of checklists and surveys, resources and documents collection.*
- *How will project participants, direct and indirect beneficiaries, and strategic collaborators be identified?*
- *How will opportunities or barriers for gender equity, and youth participation be revealed?*
- *How will existing resources (money, materials, knowledge, skills, time) be inventoried and assessed?*

Develop a *budget* for the feasibility study:

- Cost all steps, including preliminary discussions/communications, feasibility study preparation, conducting the study, follow-up analysis, and proposal preparation. List costs for transportation, food and accommodation (costs must be in accord with prevailing Treasury Board of Canada Guidelines)
- List in-kind contributions of time and other resources.

3. **After the feasibility study site visit**

The feasibility study team prepares a report on the study with a recommendation to proceed or not to proceed. A copy of the report is provided to the executive of each partner organization and to the AIC International Program Coordinator.

If the team recommendation is not to proceed, the International Program Coordinator will follow-up with the executive of the partner organizations, and may suggest other agencies that could be better placed to support the interests.

If the recommendation is to proceed, **and** this recommendation is accepted by both partner organizations and AIC, the next step is to prepare a full project proposal.

For questions and further details please contact:

Dinah Ceplis, P.Ag.

email: dinah.ceplis@gmail.com

The Canadian Agri-Science Clusters

Material provided by Amy Argentino (CHC)

The Canadian Agri-Science Clusters is an initiative launched under the federal government's Growing Forward - Growing Canadian Agri-Innovations Program. The purpose of the program is to help industry-led agricultural organizations pull together national scientific and technical resources to establish clusters in support of innovation and research. Projects for the program must focus on the pre-commercialization development of new agri products, practices and processes in Canada that will make agriculture more profitable and competitive.

To date, the Canadian Horticultural Council (CHC) has undertaken a number of activities to gather input from members, including: a member survey; Innovation and Research Symposium at the March 2009 AGM; the formation of the Science Advisory Committee (SAC) by way of resolution at the 2009 CHC AGM; numerous SAC conference calls; face-to-face SAC meetings on June 3-4, 2009 and December 8-9, 2009; and commodity groups establishing their national research priorities in collaboration with their value chain partners.

The CHC Blueberry Working Group is meeting December 17, 2009 to establish a list of issues facing the Small Fruit industry and identified possible projects to be advanced under the Agri-Science cluster application which must be submitted by January 31, 2010.

Please be advised that an email has been sent on December 17, 2009 seeking an expression of interest from researchers in Canada who are currently working on or who can undertake Small Fruit related research with deliverables before March 31, 2013. The deliverables must focus on the pre-commercialization development of new agri products, practices and processes in Canada that will make the small fruit industry more profitable and competitive. Funding for these projects is based on a 25% industry and 75% federal government contribution.

If you are interested in working on the Agri-Science cluster priorities for the Small Fruit industry please contact me prior to January 5, 2010 with a brief summary of current or proposed work relevant to the priorities. I will follow up directly by January 7, 2010 with those who provide an expression of interest with a brief summary.

If I have omitted anyone in this email distribution that you believe should receive this email please forward it to them.

Thank you,
Amy

Amy Argentino
Project Coordinator
Canadian Horticultural Council
9 Corvus Court
Ottawa, ON K2E 7Z4
T. 613 226 4880 (ext. 208)
F. 613 226 4497
aargentino@hortcouncil.ca
www.hortcouncil.ca

2010 Annual Meeting

Material provided by Denis Charlebois

Greetings to all,

On a business note, considering the (extremely) low attendance at the 2009 annual meeting, I propose to give it a rest for 2010 (i.e. no annual meeting in 2010).

We have alternative options. Bob Bors got in touch with Lorraine Beaudette from the Organic Connections (<http://www.organicconnections.ca/index.html>) that would be willing to “accommodate” CSHS (meeting November 21-23). My fear is that we have very few members in Saskatchewan (only 3 and all retired) and it will be almost impossible to get things organized. There would also be the possibility to join the CSA-CSSS annual meeting in Saskatoon (June 20-24) but again the lack of members in this province would be a problem. I would prefer to invest our efforts in the next joint meeting in Halifax in 2011. Of course, CSHS is your Society and I would be glad to help any of our members how would be willing to get organized an annual meeting in 2010.

I firmly believe that our efforts should be directed towards increasing our membership, making us more visible and more appealing. I am still hopeful that members will help in building a data base of institutions teaching horticulture where teachers/researchers and students alike can be reached and convinced to join our Society. We should also make efforts to attract corporate members.

I welcome all comments/suggestions.

Denis

President of CSHS

Denis.Charlebois@agr.gc.ca

Telephone: (450) 515-2026

Selected Upcoming Horticultural Meetings / Conferences

1. Scotia Horticultural Congress 2010, January 25-26. Old Orchard Inn, Greenwich NS
2. Nova Scotia Fruit Growers' Association Annual Convention, January 26-28, 2010. Old Orchard Inn, Greenwich NS
3. Canadian Horticultural Council 88th Annual General Meeting, March 2 - 5, 2010, Quebec
4. European Organic Forum, 5th International Meeting on Processing and Marketing, May 6-7, 2010, Warsaw, Poland www.organic-marketing-forum.org
5. International Association for Plant Biotechnology World Congress 2010, June 6-11, St. Luis, Missouri, USA <http://www.iapb2010.org/>
6. 28th International Horticultural Congress, Lisboa – Portugal, August 22-27, 2010 www.ihc2010.org

The deadline for abstract submission for IHC has been extended to January 31, 2010



Contact us

For more information or for membership forms, contact the executive or:

Kris Pruski, Ph.D.

Secretary-Treasurer of CSHS

Associate Professor Fruit Horticulture

Nova Scotia Agricultural College

Truro, NS Canada B2N 5E3

kpruski@nsac.ca

Telephone: (902) 893-6032

Fax: (902) 897-9762