

Annual Meeting PestNet Moderators

Wednesday 11 January 2012, 6 pm EST (Australia)

1) Introduction

The meeting was held on Skype. Those taking part were Bob Macfarlane, Wilco Liebregts and Grahame Jackson. Unfortunately, Charles Ssekyewa did not take part due a miscalculation of the time difference between Uganda and Australia.

A copy of the Agenda is provided in Appendix 1.

2) Minutes of last meeting 12 June 2011 – Matters arising

There were no matters arising, and the minutes were accepted. They have been placed on the PestNet website:

<http://www.pestnet.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=nrfy2d8JSn4=&tabid=1094&mid=2395>

3) Election of office bearers

The present Chair (GJ), Secretary and Treasurer (WL) were re-elected.

4) Finance

• Bank accounts

The US dollar account has not been used for some time and is dormant. Pestnet is paying some US\$80 a year in fees. WL will activate the account with a transfer of US\$100 from the Fijian dollar account. If the account is still not used, say in the next 4 months, WL will close it and to transfer the money into the Fijian dollar account.

There are two items in the accounts that are not specified. It is thought that they are the website fees for 2010, but WL will check.

A financial statement for the year 2011 is provided, Appendix 2. In future, a statement of accounts will be presented to moderators every 6 months, irrespective of the number of transfers that have been made. See Appendix 2 for the format.

• Efforts to raise funds

It was noted that PestNet has few funds in hand. Income during the years was obtained from a review of Biosecurity Australia's draft recommendations for taro imports into Australia, and fees for PestNet as webmaster for the International Network for Edible Aroids (INEA).

The monies accrued allowed CS to attend agriculture extension and organic growers' meetings in Nairobi in November in order to promote PestNet.

There are a number of funding opportunities in the future:

- ACIAR ICM project PC/2010/090 will finance an evaluation of PestNet. This is unlikely to increase PestNet's coffers substantially, but it may give

suggestions on enhancing its income. WL suggested that Rutger Engelhard would be a suitable person to do the evaluation. WL to provide details.

- PHAMA (AusAID) to fund a taro survey in Australia for *Taro vein chlorosis virus* and *Tarophagus Proserpina*, two quarantine concerns. The suggestion has been made, but so far there has been no response from PHAMA.
- Crawl Fund Foundation has been asked to fund a camera-training workshop for the Pacific partners of PC/2010/090, with Gerald McCormack as trainer.
- Pestnet will receive 10% of the annual fee for maintaining the INEA website from this EU-funded project.

Funds are needed for two priorities: a) CS to attend meetings in Africa to advertise PestNet, and b) for a new flyer which omits the Pacific and Asia and states that anyone worldwide is welcome to join.

5) PestNet operations

- Video and Powerpoint presentation

Both these have been completed, and the video has been placed on the website. Both were done cheaply although the results are good. Some changes are needed to the last slide of the Powerpoint presentation to convey the fact that PestNet is collaborating with CABI to pilot plant health clinics in the Pacific. The clinics will be piloted under the ACIAR project PC/2010/090.

- Diagnostics improvements

Recently, about 30 entomologists were contacted and about half have said that they were prepared to be PestNet associates. They will not join PestNet but don't mind being sent the occasional email for comment.

In addition, BM has obtained a list of entomologists and plant pathologists from a New Zealand project for the Pacific. One of the files lists major diseases worldwide and experts who might be contacted for information. There are also lists of international and NZ experts. Pestnet (GJ) will write to some of these people.

Pestnet members have been told about the recent recruitment of "associates".

- Pestnet Summaries

The website pages containing the Summaries – summarises of the discussions – has been redesigned so that they open quickly. However, they are in a mess, with no coherent form. BM will look at the moths and butterflies and suggest how they can be reformatted. Chris Reid will be asked again if he can edit beetles.

- Website

There is need to update the biographical data of moderators on the website (and flyer). It is assumed at all the moderators wish to continue to be involved. BM will ask those people who were not present at the meeting if they wished to continue to be moderators.

The Plant Protection Resources pages have not been updated for several years and there seems no point in retaining them. They should be removed from the website (GJ).

- Collaboration with SPC

Pestnet met with SPC in July last; the idea was to develop an MOU with SPC as a start to closer collaboration. However, since the meeting, nothing has happened except for one or two emails from Roy Masamdu. WL will see the Acting Director of the land Resources Division, Inoke Ratukalou, to see if the MOU can be expedited.

- Workshop on camera training

A camera training proposal has been written and submitted to the Crawford Fund. The workshop lead will be taken by Gerald McCormack who will show how take high quality images of pests and diseases for identification. The ACIAR Pacific Crops coordinator, Fiji, has given support. The training will complement the work of ACIAR PC/2010/090 which is supporting the work of Pestnet.

- Caripestnet

There has been little activity on Caripestnet for some time. Looking at the numbers of messages over the years, there were about 200 the first year, then numbers halved in the next 2 years, and halved again from 2007. At present, there are about 50 messages a year, and mostly these messages are duplicates from PestNet, alerts for meetings, and reports put out by Ron. Burrow the list owner. GJ wrote to Ron twice; the first time Ron said that he would respond after talking to other members, but nothing came; a second email was sent, but there was no response.

GJ has written to Guy Mathurin in St Lucia, and Guy suggests GJ writes another email to Ron, and if there is no reply he will talk to him. Guy is supportive of the amalgamation, saying that it is difficult to get participation in e-groups in the Caribbean, and this is a way of ensuring that people's questions get a response.

6) Meetings

CS attended the CTA-funded international conference *Innovations in Extension and Advisory Services* held in Nairobi, Kenya from 15-18 November 2011. PestNet applied for a grant but was refused. It was also asked to pay USD300 registration fee. Not only was PestNet not supported by CTA, but also it was not allowed to present a paper or a poster! However, it was decided to fund CS to attend, which he did for 1 day, paying a USD90 registration fee. This at least gave him an opportunity to distribute PestNet flyers.

There were other meetings in Nairobi at the same time, and CS met with people attending the International Ecological Organic Agriculture Conference, UNEP, and the Ecological Organic Agriculture Initiative. He also met with colleagues arranging the upcoming 2nd African Organic Conference (1st-4th May 2012, Lusaka, Zambia. (CS is General Secretary and Board Member of the International Society for Organic Agriculture Research). PestNet could be represented at this meeting, but may need to contribute teas and lunch (**need an explanation about this**).

CS has registered his interest to attend the 3rd IAALD Africa Chapter conference, to be held in Johannesburg, South Africa, 21-23 May 2012 (<http://www.iaald.org/news/third-iaald-africa-chapter-conference-may-21-23-2012>).

The theme of the conferences is e-agriculture for improved livelihoods and food security in Africa. The conference blurb states:

The conference activities will comprise of an exhibition showcasing e-agriculture initiatives and activities; pre-conference workshops, seminars and training; and the main conference which will include presentations and panel discussions. Prior to the conference, an online global discussion on e-Agriculture in Africa will be organised on the e-Agriculture.org platform.

However, the CS is less inclined to attend and sees other ways of bringing PestNet to the attention of researchers and others in Africa.

CS has been put in touch with two “net-savvy” persons in Uganda suggested by Giacomo Rambaldi of CTA. They are Erne and Robert Kibaya. Robert is Executive Director/Founder of Kikandwa Rural Communities Development Organization - KIRUCODO, Mukono, Uganda. It seems from initial correspondence that the organisation can help to promote PestNet using a bunch of social media “tools” (blogs, Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, etc.). There was also the suggestion of using workshops and contacts with NGOs to get knowledge of PestNet to farmers. None of this has been done as PestNet will have to pay, and it does not have sufficient funds.

PestNet was invited to a joint meeting of the *The American Phytopathological Society* and the *International Association for the Plant Protection Sciences*, 6-10 August 2011. Geoff Norton of CBIT, UQ, Brisbane, is President of IAPPS. PestNet was offered USD1000 to go attend and give a lecture about the organisation. A Powerpoint was made for the occasion, and this was presented by George Wall from the University of Guam. George tells us that the presentation went well, and there were many questions about PestNet.

PestNet was also invited to the *Biosafety & Biosecurity International Conference*, Jordan, 13-15 September 2011. This conference was organised by an NGO, International Council for the Life Sciences, an organisation established to look at the benefits and related risks to public health, safety and security of the advancement of the life sciences. The mission of the ICLS is to safeguard the opportunities offered by the advances in the life sciences and their application “through the provision of best practices, standards and codes of conduct”. PestNet was invited to tell the meeting how it goes about its work getting pests identified and alerting members to pest outbreaks.

7) House keeping

- Moderating messages

BM will make dot points how to moderate messages. And he will once again tell members how to send messages to PestNet to improve the chance of a useful response.

- Promotional material

The PestNet leaflet and poster needs to be reprinted to remove mention of the Pacific and Asia. GJ has contacted Zoo (Helen Simenic), the company that designed the flyer and organised its printing, and now has the Indesign files that were originally created. Zoo has sent the files for the fridge magnet. Those for the poster were not found in the company's archive.

GJ will follow up and see if the files can still be used, with edits, for printing and what the costs will be. Ideally, it is time to re-design the flyer, etc., but it is unlikely that PestNet will be able to raise sufficient funds for this. It might be a good idea to change the caterpillar on the first page for the one on the website, which is a better image, and perhaps change the fruit fly, which people mistake for a bee on the inside pages!

WL has some spare posters and will send them to CS. GJ will check if he has some spare flyers to send.

- **Any other business**

There was none.

- **Next meeting**

The next meeting will be in the first week July.

Grahame Jackson
Sydney
15 January 2012

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AGENDA

Participants:

Wilco Liebregts, Fiji
Bob Macfarlane, NZ
Grahame Jackson, Australia

Apologies:

Banpot Napompeth, Thailand

1. Secretary's report: Minutes of last meeting – 12 June 2011
2. Treasurer's report: Statement of accounts – 1 Jan to 31 Dec 2011
3. Election of office bearers
4. Operations:
 - a. Video and Powerpoint
 - b. Diagnostics
 - c. Summaries - need for edits to the database (how?)
 - d. The website - plant protection resources (do we need them?)
 - e. SPC MOU – what's the latest?
 - f. Workshops eg camera training – report on progress for Crawford funding CariPestNet
 - g. CariPestnet
5. Meetings:
 - a. Charles' meetings in Nairobi (also Erna & Robert; Georg IITA)
 - b. Other meetings in Africa
 - c. Hawaii and Jordan
6. Housekeeping:
 - a. Moderating – need for rules?
 - b. More leaflets/Posters?
7. Other business
8. Next meeting