

Editor's Note: IR-4 Highlights by the Executive Director is an outreach feature of the Newsletter, focused primarily on articles in this issue.

IR-4 Highlights

I don't know about the rest of you, but I am ready for spring to arrive after one of the coldest winters in recent history in the Northeast and twice our annual average snowfall. However, the winter months are never slow or down time in the IR-4 Program as the Study Directors/Coordinators complete the protocols for the 2003 field research program, the Regional Field Coordinators (Edith Lurvey/Northeast, Satoru Miyazaki/Northcentral, Charlie Meister/Southern and Becky Sisco/Western) and Paul Schwartz/ARS finalize the GLP field sites and Regional Laboratory Coordinators (Pim Larsson-Kovach/Northeast, Dick Leavitt/Northcentral, Matt Hengel/Western and Jau Yoh/Southern) along with the ARS Chemists (Emy Pfeil, Todd Wixson and Steve Meinhardt) analyze samples from the 2002 field research program while the Quality Assurance Unit (regional and Headquarters staff) performs audits on reports being prepared by the Study Directors for the EPA's 2004 Work Plan. On top of this, our partnership meetings with the crop protection industry, regulatory agencies (EPA, California DPR and Canada's PMRA), commodity groups and the land grant university system continue.

Clearly, however, the highlight of this quarter has to be the 40th Anniversary Reception hosted by our Commodity Liaison Committee in Washington, D.C. on February 26th with Senator Patty Murray and Congressman Doc Hastings (both from the minor crop state of Washington) providing welcoming remarks to the 100 plus IR-4 staff and IR-4 friends in attendance. The regions, Headquarters and several commodity groups had great poster presentations and everyone had a fine time in looking back over 40 years of accomplishments that have resulted in over 6500 food use clearances, nearly 10,000 ornamental use clearances and over 300 biopesticide clearances. The group had even more to celebrate with the announcement that Congress had provided an additional \$408,000 (\$258,000 for CSREES and \$150,000 for ARS) for IR-4 in the 2003 budget. This is a remarkable event given the fact that there was no increase included in the President's 2003 budget proposal and Congress was pressured to hold program funding steady or cut when possible. The increase can be directly attributable to the efforts of our Commodity Liaison Committee under the leadership of Rocky Lundy, Executive Director of the Mint Industry Research Council, who worked with Senators, Congressional Representatives and their staffs' to support the IR-4 funding initiatives. Many thanks to Rocky and the CLC for their hard work! Rocky is also to be thanked for all his efforts in

conjunction with Headquarters staff (Jerry Baron, Diane Infante, Cheryl Ferrazoli and Sherri Nagahiro) to organize the Anniversary Reception and work out all the security details imposed by having it in the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

The Spring Project Management Committee Meeting was also held in D.C. on February 25th and 26th to address the funding increase and a number of other important program and policy issues. The PMC agreed to provide the Western Region with additional funds from the CSREES increase for expenses associated with conducting the field residue program. The remaining CSREES funds were divided between the four regions and Headquarters to cover inflationary costs since the last increase. The PMC also approved the New Technology Teams' recommendation to fund 48 projects (9 Early Stage and 39 Advanced Stage) from the 108 project proposals submitted as part of the 2003 Biopesticide Research Program for a total of \$427,000 (\$400,000 from the budget plus \$27,000 unfunded from previous years programs). The split was 25% for Early Stage and 75% for Advanced Stage Proposals. The PMC also approved the report from The Quality Assurance Review Team (Willis Wheeler/Chair of Wheeler and Associates and former IR-4 PMC Chair, Wynn John/DuPont, Paul Schwartz/ARS and Ken Kanagalingam/AJK Consulting and former EPA manager) entitled "Assessment of the IR-4 Quality Assurance Process". The QA Review Team spent three days (November 19 to 21, 2002) at Headquarters interviewing all components of QA program. Their report was complimentary of the current program and made a number of recommendations for additional improvement. The entire report can be found on the IR-4 website (www.cook.rutgers.edu/~ir4). The QA Review Team Report will be a completed section for the May overall IR-4 Program Review being conducted by CSREES and ARS at Headquarters on May 20th to 22nd.

Headquarters also published two important reports this quarter—the 2002 Annual Report and the 2003 Crop Grouping Symposium Proceedings. Cheryl Ferrazoli has taken over for George Markle as the Annual Report Editor as well as the Editor for the Newsletter and Publishing Coordinator helping George Markle and Sandy Perry, Proceedings Editors, with the Symposium Proceedings. Cheryl's doing a great job filling a large void left by George Markle's retirement in January after 39 years with the IR-4 Program. The Headquarters staff along with a number of his Rutgers University and minor crop friends were able to wish George a well deserved rest at his Retirement Luncheon on February 6th where I had the distinct honor of presenting him with the IR-4 Hall of Fame Award as unanimously approved by the PMC at our fall meeting. George has been granted emeritus status by both Rutgers University and IR-4 and will continue his involvement with IR-4 on special projects like the Crop Grouping Symposium Proceedings and the third edition of Food and Feed Crops in the United States.

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Finally, we wish Marcia Mulkey, Director of the Office of Pesticide Programs at the EPA, the best of wishes in her new position as Visiting Professor at Temple University's Beasley School of Law as part of the Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA) program. Prior to Marcia's two-year IPA assignment in July, she will spend four months working with the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) on a guide to help countries implement an International Code of Conduct on the Distribution and Use of Pesticides. Assistant EPA Administrator Steve Johnson praised Marcia for her OPP leadership the past five years guiding OPP through the implementation of the FQPA and noted, "We all owe Marcia an enormous debt of gratitude for her distinguished leadership and public service". I wholeheartedly endorse Steve's comments and add that Marcia has provided strong manage-

ment support for the IR-4/EPA partnership initiated in 1999 by Jim Jones and me. It was also great to learn that Jim will be taking over Marcia's responsibilities as OPP Director and will select an interim Deputy Director to fill the post he is vacating. We congratulate both Marcia and Jim and wish them well in their new positions. We look forward to continue working with Jim and the OPP Management Team (Debbie Edwards/Director Registration Division (RD), Margaret Stasikowski/Director Health Effects Division (HED), Pat Cimino/Minor Use Team Leader and Hoyt Jamerson/Minor Use Officer) and numerous RD and HED staff members who work with IR-4 as part of the Technical Working Group to support registration of crop protection tools for minor crop growers.

Article by Bob Holm

Assessment of the IR-4 Quality Assurance Process

At the July, 2002 meeting, the IR-4 Project Management Committee (PMC) approved a proposal to evaluate the IR-4 Project's Quality Assurance Unit (QAU). To complete the task, the PMC established a Quality Assurance Review Team to perform the following tasks:

- Evaluate the structure and operations of the IR-4 QA program in the context of the IR-4 Project's current and planned objectives, time-lines and financial support.
- Assess the status of the QA program in meeting the regulatory requirements of EPA.
- Provide an assessment of QA's strengths and weaknesses.
- Offer recommendations for increased efficiencies and/or reduced costs of operations.

The process was composed of information gathering, careful consideration of that information and the completion

of a report that was presented to the PMC. Information was gathered from US EPA's Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assistance, Dr. Robert Holm (IR-4 Executive Director), Tammy White (IR-4 QAU), IR-4 Study Directors, IR-4 Field Research Directors, IR-4 Laboratory Research Directors, and selected field cooperators.

The Review Team was pleased with the input from all groups. It was thoughtful, insightful and positive. The observations/findings were categorized into four broad areas: quality assurance, training, communications and management. The Review Team considered the findings and offered seven recommendations to the PMC. Willis Wheeler presented the Report to the PMC in late January and summarized the report on February 25, 2003 during the PMC meeting. A complete copy of the review can be found on the IR-4 website (www.cook.rutgers.edu/~ir4).

Article by the Quality Assurance Review Team, Willis Wheeler, Chair