



BRITISH GRASSLAND SOCIETY

MEMBERS NEWSLETTER

July 2009

NEW TO BGS COUNCIL

Our recent AGM saw some new appointments to Council, as Dave Roberts of SAC took over as this year's President. Our Treasurer for the last three years, Tony Evans of Andersons Farm Business Consultants in Leicestershire was accepted as President-Elect, leaving us needing a new Treasurer and we are pleased that Paul Munson, a farmer-turned-accountant from Monmouthshire is taking up this post. Also appointed was Helen Mathieu of British Seed Houses, based in Cheshire, as National Member.

Regional reps now taking their seat on Council are Andrew Best for Scotland, Tom Craig for Northern Ireland, Paul Robinson for Northern region, Sara Gregson for the South East and Tony Walkers is taking over a year early for the South West.

Other Council members Sarah Byford (Immediate Past-President), Lois Philipps (Hon Sec), Tim Mayo, Athole Marshall, Elaine Jewkes, Heather McCalman (Wales rep) and David Rhodes (Central rep)

We wish to sincerely thank those retiring from Council for their valuable input into the society, who are Richard Ratcliffe, Mark Rutter, Michael Shannon, Harold Stevenson, Tom Rawson, David Harding and Laura Biddick-Bray.

BGS 9th Research Conference

September 8th-9th, 2009

Harper Adams, Newport, Shropshire

With sessions on improving production from grass, environment and biodiversity, agronomy of forage crops, health and welfare and knowledge transfer, this event will offer highlights of the latest research and development in these areas.

A programme and application form is enclosed or available on www.britishgrassland.com where you can also see a full list of the poster presentations.

We are grateful for sponsorship from GrowHow UK and the Stapledon Memorial Trust. 

Proceedings for the first eight Research Conferences can be purchased on one keyword searchable CD, making it far more valuable as reference material.

So complete your set or reduce the weight on your bookshelves by buying a copy now. Members price £40 or £60 for non-members and £100 for libraries and institutions. Please order in our online bookshop or send a cheque to the BGS office.

BGS Innovation Award

We have great pleasure in announcing this year's joint winners of the BGS Innovation Award - as Dr John Vipond from SAC and Mr Marcus Maxwell Scottish sheep farmer, for their Development and Promotion of forage aspects of Easycare sheep systems in the UK.

This award seeks to recognise people currently making an outstanding contribution to development, understanding or application of grassland and forage crop husbandry and technology.

We hope to present the award to both John and Marcus in the near future.

The judges will reveal why they chose these joint winners in the next BGS Grass and Forage Farmer magazine, published September 7th.

New members

If you have a friend or colleague you think should join BGS, please ask for an application form or see our website for more details of the benefits of membership. Its easy to join online using a credit or debit card.

Keep up to date with BGS and industry news on our website www.britishgrassland.com

The new BGS website has been receiving many hits and good feedback from users, who tell us its so much easier to use than the previous website, aided by the drop down menus. The news content is regularly updated so be sure to check it out frequently to see reports from events, BGS and industry news.

Recent news items include reports from the Summer Meeting, a YFC Grassland Challenge Event and Sarah Byford's year as President. There are also factsheets are from the Catering for Horses Today event.

Continued overleaf.....

BGS Nutrient Wise Demos

BGS Nutrient Wise Demos is BGS's biggest investment in its future for many years. Council has decided our pilot site should be funded solely by BGS to maximise the benefits to BGS and local society members.

Our pilot site is being managed by Creedy Associates in Devon, lead by John Morgan who is also secretary of the Devon Grassland Society and on the farm of one David Munday, who as well as running a dairy herd has been running farmer training events as one of the Creedy team. Also on their team are Brian Pain and Briony Burge.

In mid-July, large plots involving a number of methods of introducing clover into an existing sward were set out with the aim of achieving a clover percentage which will allow fertiliser to be reduced. Smaller clover plots which will show what different clover percentages in a sward look like and red clover have also been set up. Slurry plots will be set up shortly.

Our first visitors will be invited to spend half a day at the site, mainly through local grassland societies, in small groups from September 29th to Oct 1st, with more planned for March 2010 and a corporate members day in late October. The aims for future years is to obtain funding for further sites and this is already being investigated.

If you would like to visit the Demos this autumn, please contact the BGS office, giving your name, contact details and number in your group. Further details will appear in the September Grass and Forage Farmer.

Legacies to the Travel-Bursary fund

If you have enjoyed taking part in BGS activities, please consider helping us to boost the funds for bursary awards with a legacy. This will allow us to support younger people in their search for grassland knowledge. All you need to do is notify your solicitor or put a note in your will stating the amount of legacy, and our name, address and charity no. 261800.

National Grassland Management Competition Presentation

The announcement of the winner of the 2009 BGS National Grassland Management Competition, generously sponsored by GrowHow and DLF-Trifolium, will take place at the Dairy Event and Livestock Show.

Six of seven BGS regions are submitting entries for the National Competition this year, so the judges will have a difficult task ahead no doubt.

Please join us on the afternoon of Wednesday, September 16th at 4pm, on the DLF-Trifolium stand to find out who has won and why.



BGS Grazing Partners

In June BGS held its first training course for farmers to mentor other farmers in their grassland management, in the Grazing Partners pilot year.

The nine trainees included beef, sheep and dairy farmers. We hope they will visit up to three farmers who want help with their grazing management over the coming year and some visits have already been set up.

If you know anyone that wants some help with grassland management, please contact Sara Gregson for more details on 01799 530934 or sara@saragregson.co.uk or see the BGS website.

The partners in 2009 are sponsored by DairyCo, EBLEX, The National Trust and BGS - with Duchy College Rural Business School VTS funding through the Rural Development Programme for England in the south west

BGS DIARY DATES 2009-2010

Sept 8-9th: BGS 9th Research Conference, Harper Adams, Shropshire

Sept 7-9th: EGF 15th Symposium, Czech Republic

Sept 16th-17th: Dairy Event and Livestock Show and announcement of the winner of the BGS National Grassland Management Competition

Sept 29th-Oct 1st: BGS Nutrient Wise Demos group visits

Spring 2010: Spring Farm walks series with RABDF

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