

Agricultural Scientific Societies Report July 2002

Background

In July 2002, representatives of the AIC Scientific Societies met in Guelph to discuss enhanced cooperation and communication among agricultural science societies within Canada. The discussion centered upon the possibility of holding occasional joint annual meetings and the need for scientific societies to be involved at other levels, such as setting research priorities, etc. Dr. Karen Beauchemin and Dr. Gary Kachanoski were asked by the group to explore possible mechanisms for the Societies to have a greater leadership role in Canadian agriculture.

Update

Dr. Kachanoski met with the national committee of the Deans of Agriculture Colleges in January, 2002, to discuss a possible leadership role for scientific societies. As a result of this initial meeting, representatives of the AIC Scientific Societies met with the national committee representing the Deans of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine on April 26th in Ottawa. The scientific societies were represented by Karen Beauchemin (CSAS), Lianne Dwyer (CSAM, CSA) and Mike Trant (CAES). Ed Gregorich (CSSS) was unable to attend due to a family emergency. Also present was Gordon Dorrell (Acting Assistant Deputy Minister, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada).

The intent of this meeting was to discuss possible joint initiatives between the Science Societies and the Deans' Committee to deal with agricultural research and education issues in Canada. Discussions focussed on how the universities and the Scientific Societies could jointly play a pro-active role in championing agri-food research in Canada. Also discussed was the potential of broadening this partnership to include Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and other select partners. There was a general consensus by the Deans' Committee that this initiative be explored further and a subcommittee was formed to make this happen. The committee is chaired by Moura Quayle (University of British Columbia) and includes representation by the Scientific Societies (Karen Beauchemin/Gary Kachanoski). Potential models to be explored include a National Academy of Agricultural Science or a Council for Agricultural Science.

This initiative is a positive first step for the Scientific Societies in terms of participating in national decision making with respect to agricultural issues and priorities. It will also help ensure communication among societies, even though Societies may no longer hold annual meetings together.

Submitted by Karen Beauchemin