

# The Future of Weed Research in the UK

at Home Grown Cereals Authority, London

19 November 2008

(BASIS Points have been applied for)

There has been a long-term decline in the number of weed specialists in UK research institutes and Universities, especially among young scientists entering the profession. A recent survey reported in the European Weed Research Society newsletter reported that the estimated mean age for a UK EWRS member was 54 years old. 65% of members were over 50 years old, 31% were over 60 years old, and only one member was under 30 years old. This situation reflects a concurrent decline in funding for weed research provided by the major UK funding bodies. Yet there are many continuing and emerging issues which require the expertise of the weed research community if they are to be resolved. Some weed species continue to be a major constraint on crop production and their control represents a significant component of production costs. Resistance to herbicides is an increasing problem. The declining range of herbicides available to growers, specially for minor crops, means that alternative methods of control need to be considered. Such issues seem likely to achieve greater prominence in the light of recent forecasts of increased pressure on global food supplies and the need to increase food security. Weed management on organic farms is a major issue, and from an environmental perspective there is increased awareness of the importance of many weed species as key components of the agro-ecosystem, as highlighted by the large body of research on declining farmland bird species. Furthermore, many species of the arable flora are themselves declining and threatened, so that their conservation has become an issue of increasing concern. The need for integrated, sustainable approaches to weed management has never been greater, yet the research expertise to develop such approaches is rapidly disappearing.

This one-day conference will consider future needs for weed research and training of weed specialists from the points of view of industry, funding bodies and research organisations themselves, through presentations by a range of invited speakers and discussions.

#### Further information to follow

Contact us via [www.aab.org.uk](http://www.aab.org.uk)

or

email: [anna@aab.org.uk](mailto:anna@aab.org.uk)

We look forward to welcoming you to the conference

ASSOCIATION OF APPLIED BIOLOGISTS

*President: Professor Peter J Lea, BSc, PhD, DSc*

A one day conference

at Home Grown Cereals Authority,  
London

on 19 November 2008

FIRST ANNOUNCEMENT

The Future of Weed  
Research in the UK



Association of Applied Biologists  
The Warwick Enterprise Park  
Wellesbourne, Warwick CV35 9EF, UK

Registered Charity No. 275655

Telephone: +44(0)1789 472020

Facsimile: +44(0)1789 470234

E-mail: [carol@aab.org.uk](mailto:carol@aab.org.uk)

<http://www.aab.org.uk>

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