



ISPP

International Society for Plant Pathology
(Professor Richard Falloon, President)



DPG

Report to ISPP from an Associated Society for 2003-2008.

Name of Society. Deutsche Phytomedizinische Gesellschaft e.V. (German Phytomedical Society)

Established: 12.10.1949

Web address for Society. <http://www.phytomedizin.org>

Name (s) of personnel preparing report. Dr. Falko Feldmann, Managing Director

Nominated Officers. Is the list for your society on the ISPP website correct? No

President Dr. Bernd Holtschulte (KWS AG, Einbeck, Germany, B. Holtschulte@kws.de

Managing Director Dr. Falko Feldmann (DPG, Braunschweig, Germany

Feldmann@phytomedizin.org).

Will a Society member be making corrections to the ISPP entry for your society on-line?

No (no adaption of ISPP function expressions possible)

Society Contact: Dr. Falko Feldmann; **Email** Feldmann@phytomedizin.org

Society membership. 1225 members in 2006; 1178 members in 2007; 1254 members in 2008

Report for 2003-2008.

• *Society Activities and publications.*

The German Phytomedical Society (DPG) is the largest scientific association in plant production in Germany. The Society is membership-based, and its members are professionals within the entire field of phytomedicine. Here, we define phytomedicine as the science of plant disorders (whether biotic or abiotic), their diagnosis, management and control. Phytomedicine deals with all infectious agents that attack plants, and also covers damage caused to crops by pests, diseases and weeds. Under our definition, we additionally include abiotic disorders such as drought, frost, flooding, poor drainage, nutrient deficiency, salt deposition and other soluble mineral excesses or wind, which may occur naturally or be man made. Other examples of man-made 'problems' include soil compaction, pollution of air and soil, salt applications on roads in urban areas, overuse of pesticides, as well as poor education and poor training of people working with plants.

The special fields of interest (competences) of the 1,200 individual DPG members clearly reflect the broad scientific range of disciplines and topics encompassed by phytomedicine. In essence, the activities of DPG members are centred around some 20 or so basic disciplines (e.g. mycology, virology, bacteriology, nematology and entomology). In a multidisciplinary sense, 10 core disciplines emerge, covering important areas such as disease monitoring, diagnosis, plant protection strategies and soil management. The extent of expertise within the DPG membership varies from discipline to discipline, but all areas of phytomedicine are covered. Within the membership, there is a balance between system-oriented, applied approaches to phytomedicine and basic research which may or may not have direct or indirect application. The former constitute mainly members from applied research and advisory institutions or organisations, who seek to provide or support solutions to plant protection problems, ideally in direct collaboration with advisors (practitioners), growers and agricultural companies. The latter include academic scientists in federal or university research institutes, whose links to DPG depend largely on their individual interests in plant protection issues. Thus, DPG comprises a community of experts professionally committed to the achievement and preservation of both the 'healthy plant' and 'healthy plant production'.

DPG is a scientific association with the purpose of promoting research in the entire field of phytomedicine and the application of the results gained thereby, primarily to advance education within plant health and to support extension services. The Society pursues its

goals through:

- a) organising or supporting scientific meetings and conferences;
- b) the joint organisation of national and international congresses, symposia etc. (e.g. the *German Plant Protection Congress* in co-operation with the Federal Research Centre for Cultivated Plants and the German Plant Protection Services; the International Symposium *Plant Protection and Plant Health in Europe* in co-operation with the British Crop Production Council);
- c) offering scientists opportunities to join 16 working groups (see below);
- d) establishment and development of relationships not only with other organisations that have similar aims and objectives but also with professional colleagues abroad;
- e) co-operation with universities and other training establishments, with the aim of providing advice in the establishment of study plans and education curricula;
- f) promotion of young scientists;
- g) provision of information to the general public on the aims and objectives of phytomedicine;
- h) publication of research results from the entire area of phytomedicine and the promotion of such publications (e.g. *Journal of Plant Diseases and Protection*, the DPG in-house journal *Phytomedizin*, specific proceedings of conferences and symposia as well as monographs in the annual publication *Phytomedicine Spectrum*);
- i) awarding of prizes and medals;
- j) promotion of the career, legal and social interests of its members, in collaboration with other (mainly national) organisations.

• *Funding opportunities* are available only for members of the Society
Plant pathology in the Region Served by the Society 2003-2008

• Many professions deal with phytomedical practices, especially plant protection: e.g. farmers, gardeners, forest proprietors or even private persons who observe that plant disease and pathogens impair the quality of the culture plant or that plant protection guarantees the high yield or quality of useful plants (including food crops and ornamentals). The large number of professions concerned with phytomedicine (such as those mentioned above) completes the spectrum.

In its 60 years' history, DPG has attracted a large number of people from a very wide range of professions. Virtually none of these professions operates in isolation; indeed, most work closely together with others. Consequently, it is easy to identify a large number of interactions between them, resulting in mainly four 'fields of action' at an interdisciplinary level: consumer protection and product quality, work safety and environmental protection.

These four action fields are directly correlated with phytomedical practices before, during or after plant production. If these or the core competences are, for example, communicated to the public or the media, a trans-disciplinary level is reached. The interrelationships between phytomedicine and important societal demands (e.g. those belonging to landscape, communication and consultation) are located at that level.

• It is the outstanding importance of social requirements which introduces new definitions of 'quality'. For example, over and above product quality, today's consumer is more and more asking how a product has been produced. He or she will no longer accept poor social standards (such as child labour), but is willing to pay a higher price for fairly produced goods. The inclusion of such social standards at the trans-disciplinary level, for example, creates the action field of 'production quality'. Phytomedicine must become aware of new action fields as they develop and itself become proactive under changing social demands.

- Important motors of change were the onset of globalisation of trade, the creation of international networks on every scale and the huge possibilities arising for those who were prepared for interactions and relationships with other parties. DPG started to integrate with several national and international networks more than fifteen years ago. However, it initially remained a mainly nationally oriented scientific society. In spite of this, DPG members (especially the researchers) intensified their co-operation with colleagues outside Germany and thereby turned DPG into a more internationally orientated organisation. The activities of the various DPG Working Groups bear particular testament to this.

- DPG is currently reorganising internally, to support communication with colleagues abroad. For example: the *Journal of Plant Disease and Protection* (cost-free for DPG members since 2006) will increasingly allow members to publish their findings, reviews and short communications explicitly for the readership worldwide interested in phytomedicine; conversely, international scientists will be able to communicate directly with DPG members by publishing their results in the same journal. During 2006, the DPG website had been given a new face, with internationally oriented pages that will include the new “Expert Network” of members (www.phytomedizin.org). Furthermore, the DPG Working Groups will emphasise the international flavour of their meetings and some will co-operate internationally with colleagues from other, especially European, countries; also, the presentations at the largest German congress dealing with phytomedicine (the Deutsche Pflanzenschutztagung) will be published on a new website (www.pflanzenschutztagung.de) and will inform the international audience about German activities in plant protection. One of the most important actions has been the introduction of an international symposium which DPG created, together with colleagues from BCPC (the British Crop Production Council), in 2005. The three-day symposium, under the umbrella title of *Plant Protection and Plant Health in Europe* will take place every two years, hopefully in a long-term co-operation with the Faculty of Agriculture and Horticulture of the Humboldt University, Berlin. The first symposium had the title *Introduction and Spread of Invasive Species* and brought together more than 120 specialists from 36 nations around the World. In 2007, the next symposium focussed on *Best Management Practices in Plant Production* and is recently followed by the symposium 2009 *Crop Resistance to Biotic and Abiotic Factors*.

- Finally, DPG established a *Committee for International Co-operation* connected to the Berlin-Symposium as Advisory Committee which will co-ordinate all relevant interactions of DPG with foreign associations with similar interests. In 2006, we started to invite people who are also involved in associations abroad to become members of this committee.

- With its wide membership, DPG includes a huge reservoir of scientific potential, not only for the benefit of the Society and its members but also for the public in general. As the oldest and largest lobby for phytomedicine in Germany, DPG is able to support and mould the development of phytomedicine on an inter- and a trans-disciplinary level, within scientific circles and in the public arena. As a partner, DPG can offer like-minded organisations a long-term partnership to further all aspects of phytomedicine, whether academic or applied. To this end, we would welcome contacts from all organisations that are seeking to establish such collaborative ventures in phytomedicine, as well as from individuals who wish to become DPG members.