

Deutsche Phytomedizinische Gesellschaft – the German Society for Plant Protection and Plant Health (DPG) – organizer of IPPC 2015

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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 1,400 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 including law). 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 'healthy plant production'.

Aims and objectives of the Society

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 Agriculture and Forestry 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 24 working groups;
- 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*, and *Spectrum Phytomedicine* for specific proceedings of conferences and symposia);
- 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.

Membership

The Society consists of a) Full Members, b) Promoting Members, c) Corresponding Members, and d) Honorary Members.

Full Members are individuals with qualifications from a scientific university (including applied



sciences), who are, will be or were active in the area of phytomedicine. Their admission takes place, by application, with the endorsement of an existing Full Member, via the First Chairman. Those studying phytomedicine of PhD students may become Full Members of DPG as well, with the endorsement of a university professor or a training leader attached to the application for membership. Promoting Members include affiliated organisations, scientific institutes, companies and individuals that wish to promote the activities of the Society. Corresponding Members can be appointed by the DPG Board, if a close connection of these persons to the Society is desired. Finally, in order to honour select individuals, persons of high achievement in phytomedicine or the Society may be appointed as Honorary Members. Honorary Members have the same rights as Full Members.

The membership is not restricted to individuals from Germany. Currently, 20% of the members come from abroad. However, the main language spoken within DPG is German.

The diverse membership of DPG, by its very nature, largely defines the role of the DPG, and each member is equally important in enabling DPG to achieve its aims and objectives. The goals of DPG are largely geared to societal benefits, and phytomedicine is considered a fundamental part of food production for our population in a merging Europe and under conditions of modern-day global trade. Our members not only promote and advance research in phytomedicine but also support its implementation directly to the plant production industry, or indirectly through training, education and consultation.

Awards of DPG

DPG first presented the ‘**Anton de Bary Medal**’ on the 100th anniversary of Anton de Bary’s death. The medal is awarded annually by the Board of DPG to individuals with outstanding scientific achievements in phytomedicine. Members of DPG are entitled to propose candidates, and the announcement of the honoured person is made on the 26th January, the birthday of de Bary.



The ‘**Julius Kühn Prize**’ is awarded as a contribution to scientific work leading to the development of ecologically and economically based plant protection. The prize, which includes a donation of 2,000 Euro, is presented every two years, for outstanding work by scientists below the age of 40, at the biennial German Plant Protection Congress.

The ‘**Honour Needle**’ of DPG is awarded to professional colleagues for outstanding achievements in applied phytomedical research, or for the development of plant protection measures and their integration into plant protection practices, and is presented by the DPG First Chairman at a DPG meeting of members.

Phytomedicine in a societal context

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 83 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.

The Working Groups of DPG

Most important for all activities within DPG are the meetings of its 24 Working Groups. On average, the Working Groups are attended by 45 people, which means an active participation of 30–40% of the DPG membership. Meetings of the Working Groups promulgate information exchange, and can be regarded as the driving force for all of the activities within DPG. Brief descriptions of the main activities of some of the Working Groups are given at the end of this paper.

DPG turns outwards

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 20 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 (see below) 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 2012, the DPG website will be given a new face, with internationally oriented pages that will include the new “Expert Network” of members and partners (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 in 2005. The three-day symposium, under the umbrella title of *Plant Protection and Plant Health in Europe* takes place every two years, in a long-term co-operation with the Faculty of Agriculture and Horticulture of the Humboldt University, Berlin, and the Julius Kühn Institute, Quedlinburg.

Additionally to these activities DPG is supporting important international events like the yearly *Tropentag* organised by its partner ATSAF.

DPG as a partner

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 a 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 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.

IPPC 2015 in Berlin, Germany

In Honolulu the Governing Board of IAPPS decided to carry out the next IPPC in Berlin in 2015. DPG will take over to organize this congress. The congress will have the title “Food for all through appropriate plant protection” and will highlight the progresses of plant protection strategies to overcome the hunger in developing countries.



During his visit in Berlin in September 2011, Dr. Geoff Norton as IAPPS president, Dr. Gerhard Gündermann as representative of IAPPS North Europe and the DPG board (Dr. Bernd Holtschulte, 1st chairman and Dr. Falko Feldmann, managing director) figured out a memorandum of understanding which will be the base of the future co-operation between DPG and IAPPS. DPG is looking forward to informing the IAPPS community about the ongoing process in this newsletter from time to time.

Already now you are welcomed to visit the symposium website www.ippc2015.de and, of course, the website of DPG www.phytomedizin.org.