



INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL FOR THE STUDY OF VIRUS AND VIRUS-LIKE DISEASES OF THE GRAPEVINE (ICVG)

February 2007

NEWSLETTER No 20

Dear Colleagues,

The 20th Newsletter is mainly dedicated to the last meeting of ICVG and the resignation of Dr. René Bovey as a longstanding secretary of ICVG.

The 15th Meeting of ICVG, 3 - 7 April 2006, Stellenbosch, South Africa

The 15th meeting of ICVG was successfully organized under the direction of Professor Johan Burger from Stellenbosch University with the support from the South African Society for Enology & Viticulture (SASEV). 137 participants were registered and more than 100 came from abroad.

The complete extended abstracts and the program are available in the "archive" of the ICVG homepage at: <http://www.icvg.ch>. The PDF document can be downloaded.

Reviews, oral presentations and posters focussed on the following topics:

0. Grapevine virology highlights 2004 - 2005
 1. Viruses of the leafroll disease complex
 2. Fanleaf, fleck and other spherical viruses
 3. Emerging diseases and diseases of unclear aetiology
 4. Advances in transgenic resistance
 5. Viruses of the rugose wood complex
 6. Phytoplasmas
 7. Advances in diagnosis
 8. Advances in epidemiology
 9. Advances in virus elimination, virus control and crop performance

Extensive literature reviews figure in the extended abstracts of the introductory reviews.

At the end of the meeting, Professor Martelli declared that the scientific level increases steadily. Among many new results, he pointed out some highlights:

- a) Improved knowledge of the molecular interaction between viruses and the grapevine.
- b) Further taxonomy criteria are needed for the classification of grapevine viruses; a 20% genetic difference may not be sufficient to distinguish between virus species in certain genera.

- c) Development of "transgenic virus resistance" is particularly interesting for grapevine, since there is little natural resistance available.
- d) Present data indicate low risks of genetic recombination in transformed vines exposed to natural infection.
- e) Significant shift in virus vector research: between 1970 and 1990 nematodes were studied; today mealybugs are a major concern. South-African studies represent pioneering work on the epidemiology of grapevine leafroll and the control of re-infection in the vineyard.
- f) Consolidated data on the detrimental effect of viruses should help us to influence the policy makers in viticulture.

A pre-conference tour in the Stellenbosch region and two technical tours on Wednesday 5 April and Friday 7 April illustrated well the proficient, three centuries old South African viticulture. The technical tours included the visits of:

1. Vergelegen Wine Estate, Somerset West, one of the oldest and foremost Wine Estates in South Africa .
2. Plaisir de Merle, renowned for its exclusive range of top quality wines, that dates back to 1687 when the French Huguenot, Charles Marais and his family were granted land by Governor Simon van der Stel. A mother block used for producing propagation material and a commercial vineyard were visited.
3. Phytosanitary, viti- and viticultural development of KWV Vititec clonal plant material, and Wine tasting of KWV brands in the Cathedral Cellar.

The conference was nicely complemented by a traditional South African "spitbraai" at Kanu Estate on Tuesday 4 April and a most enjoyable Congress dinner at MOYO - SPIER .

Meeting of the Steering committee

A brief meeting of the Steering committee was held on Monday 3 April at the Conference venue. The following members participated: G.P. Martelli, J.T. Burger, M. Fuchs, R. Johnson, M. Maixner. E. Tanne and P. Gugerli.

Dr René Bovey's resignation was received. The Steering committee remains most grateful to him for his commitment to ICVG and proposes P. Gugerli as a new secretary. The president also asks him to report from the meeting and to hand over the certificate of Honorary Secretary of ICVG. (This happened indeed at P. Gugerli's home in May 2006 at Genolier, Switzerland, during an evening spent together in company of Idelette Bovey and Maja Gugerli – Idelette and René Bovey are still very entertaining and also keep their large garden and house going; they look forward to attend the next meeting in Europe).

General Assembly

The General Assembly took place on Tuesday 4 April at the end of the afternoon session under the presidency of Professor Giovanni P. Martelli. It was attended by most of the participants to the meeting.

1. The president announces the resignation of Dr René Bovey as a secretary of ICVG. In the name of group, he expresses his sincerest thanks for his longstanding commitment for the success of ICVG (see below). He awards him the distinction of Honorary Secretary of ICVG and presents the certificate to be handed over by P. Gugerli.
2. Dr Paul Gugerli is elected as a new secretary of ICVG. The committee was not changed otherwise and the actual members and their addresses are listed on the homepage of ICVG.
3. An updated Directory of Major Viruses and Viruses-like Diseases of Grapevine has been published in *Options Méditerranéens*, ser.,B, No 55, Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Valenzano, Bari (CIHEAM / IAMB), 2006. It also contains Dr René Bovey's latest Bibliographic Report 1998-2004 on Viroses and Virus-like Diseases of the Grapevine. It has been distributed in January 2007 to all members of ICVG free of charge. It will later be added to the archive of ICVG homepage (<http://www.icvg.ch>). It is hoped that a CD copy will also be made available at a later date.
4. The president will address members in different countries in order to get access to publications that are not listed in public reference databases in order to continue, with the help of the new secretary, the bibliography of ICVG.
5. The new secretary exposes the actual list of members and invites the participants of the meeting to check their data and to send any modification per e-mail to paul.gugerli@acw.admin.ch (note new e-mail address valid since June 2006).
6. Venue 2008: The president reminds that ICVG meetings should be held successively in various vine growing regions from the Northern and Southern hemisphere. According to the proposal from the Steering committee, he invites Dr Elisabeth Boudon-Padiou from INRA Dijon to evaluate the possibility to organise the next meeting in France. Dr Boudon-Padiou agrees to explore the opportunity to host the meeting. Further offers are open from Canada, New Zealand, Chili and some interest from Austria.
7. The president and the committee are most concerned about the new EEC Directive on the marketing of grapevine propagation material. The guidelines retain the lowest possible virus controls measures. It appears to be extremely difficult to get the recommendation of ICVG through. What should be done ? Dr M. Fuchs proposes to collect and to compile together with Dr R. Johnson solid data in order to underline the view of ICVG virologists. Everyone is invited to communicate his most consolidated data on the detrimental effect of virus infections on grapevine. Dr V. Savino reminds that the recommendation prepared at Locorotondo must be sent to every government (see document on <http://www.icvg.ch>). Dr P. Cobanov proposes to invite decision makers to our meetings. According to the president, this has always been done in the past with little success. Dr W. Jelkmann proposes that we should primarily convince nurserymen. It is also mentioned that growers in the South might be more concerned with virus diseases than those from northern countries. We should address growers associations.

The president thanks the assembly for the active participation.

The scientific meeting ends by lunch-time of Friday 7 April. Professor Martelli expresses that the meeting gave an excellent review of the present state of knowledge and future research directions, fulfilling the goal of ICVG to bring the benefit from science to the wine-growing

industry and viticulture in general, in all countries. On behalf of the Committee of ICVG and of the participants in the Meeting 2004 in Stellenbosch , the president expresses the sincere thanks to:

- Professor Johan Burger and the organizing Committee of the meeting
- The students of Stellenbosch University
- South African Society for Enology and Viticulture (SASEV) and, in particular Mrs Melinda van der Ryst
- Grapevine Industry of South Africa for the organization and wine
- All participants for their contributions

Professor Burger thanked the president, expressed his pleasure and that of all the members of the organising committee in welcoming the meeting and wished all the participants a good journey back to their homes.

Dr René Bovey becomes ICVG first Honorary Secretary

In the 19th newsletter, *René Bovey* announced that it was his last ICVG Newsletter. For various reasons, he decided to give up the post of secretary of ICVG that he held since the foundation of our group in 1964 with a short interruption between 1984 and 1987, when Professor Belli took over for three years.

René Bovey was not only ICVG secretary but first of all the main initiator of the working group on grapevine viruses and related pathogens. The idea of creating an independent study group where scientists could freely exchange information on grapevine virus and virus-like diseases came out during a meeting on grapevine infectious degeneration organized by the Office International de la Vigne et du Vin (OIV) at Lisbon in 1962. As René Bovey was secretary of the Symposium on Fruit Tree Virus Diseases, he suggested first to creating a section on grapevine viruses. The idea was that many virologists at this time were interested in both fields of fruit tree and grapevine virology. However, several colleagues of northern European countries were not in favour of this proposal, as they were not interested in grapevine virology. It was therefore decided to create a separate group. The first meeting took place at the Federal Agricultural Research Station of Changins, Switzerland in 1964. A provisory committee was set up with following members: *E. Baldacci*, Italy, *R. Bovey*, Switzerland, *A. Ciccarone*, Italy, *H. Dias*, Portugal, *W. Gärtel*, Germany, *Wm.B. Hewitt*, USA, *A. Vuittenez*, France. At the next meeting in 1965 at Davis, USA, *Professor Hewitt* was elected as president. During the 42 years that elapsed since the foundation in 1964, there have been altogether 15 meetings, and the number of members has grown from less than 20 to more than 200.

Secondly, *René Bovey* is the author of numerous scientific contributions and editor and co-editor of major compilations of scientific data on grapevine virology and related fields. The book on Virus and Virus-like Diseases of Grapevine published by Editions Payot / La Maison Rustique / Verlag Eugen Ulmer is just one example. The directory of major virus and virus-like diseases of grapevine (*R. Bovey* and *G.P. Martelli* 1992, Mediterranean Fruit Crop Improvement Council MFCIV and ICVG, 111 pp), and the highly appreciated bibliographic reviews initiated by *A. Caudwell*, 1965 (Bibliographie des viroses de la vigne des origines à 1965. Office International de la Vigne et du Vin, Paris, 76 pp.) and continued by *A. Caudwell*, *W.B.Hewitt* and *R.Bovey*, 1972 (Les viroses de la vigne. Bibliographie de 1965-1970. *Vitis* 11, 303-324), *W.B. Hewitt* and *R. Bovey*, 1979 (The viroses and virus-like diseases of the grapevine. A bibliographic report 1971-1978. *Vitis* 18, 316-376), *R. Bovey* and *G.P. Martelli*, 1986 (The viroses and virus-like diseases of the grapevine. A bibliographic report, 1979-1984. *Vitis* 25, 227-275) and finally by *R. Bovey*, 2000. (Bibliography on grapevine virus and virus-like diseases 1985-1997, *Options Méditerranéennes* ser. B, No 29,

Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Valenzano, Bari (CIHEAM / IAMB). They are now also available on the homepage of ICVG. *René Bovey* continued this remarkable work far ahead of his official retirement in 1984. The most recent bibliographic compilation covers the years 1998 to 2004. As mentioned above, it is now available. René Bovey's contribution and commitment to ICVG is therefore outstanding and spans over almost half a century.

Having had the privilege to work together with *René Bovey* for 8 years in the department of plant protection at Nyon and, since his retirement, by even more frequent contacts, I personally appreciated him as an exceptional colleague with great scientific and cultural wisdom and human sensibility.

We reiterate our deepest gratitude to *René Bovey* for his vast contribution to ICVG and we all say "au revoir" at the next meeting.

Various

List of ICVG members and this 20th Newsletter will be added to the Internet homepage of ICVG.

Homepage address: <http://www.icvg.ch>

Changins/Nyon (Switzerland), 14 February 2006.

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