

# China does it differently

The market for pest control products and services in China is growing at a dramatic rate – as recorded in **Pest 58: August & September 2018**. When it came to hosting the Federation of Asia & Oceanic Pest Management Associations (FAOPMA) Pest Summit our intrepid reporters found things are definitely done differently in China. Stephen Doggett from the Department of Medical Entomology at Westmead Hospital, NSW, Australia was one of the speakers. Gerwyn Jones is the Asia Pacific manager for PelGar International and was responsible for his company's exhibition stand.

The FAOPMA-Pest Summit was held in Shenzhen, a city of 13 million inhabitants, lying in Guangdong Province in southern China. It was hosted by the China Pest Control Association and ran from 26-29 September. FAOPMA is an assembly of the pest management industry associations across the Asia-Pacific and Greater China regions. The theme of the meeting was Pests and Health.

There were some 2,200 conference delegates, representing 28 countries, 600 of whom came from outside China. Last year the meeting was held in Chiang Mai, Thailand and was viewed as an extremely well-run event with an exemplary scientific programme and exhibition. Did this year's meeting match up? The answer in both our reporters' opinion was: "Well, almost!"

Things didn't get off to a good start. Using the online registration process, many registrants didn't receive confirmation of registration and payment. Presentation titles were changed without consulting speakers and communication generally was, shall we say: 'challenging'. The programme itself was only finalised a few weeks prior to the meeting, meaning delegates did not register as there was no way they could determine if it was relevant to their business. Once it was available, for many based outside China

there was insufficient time to apply for visas.

Once at the event, the printed programme was little more than a vague guide. Yet, despite these problems, there were a number of notable highlights.

The international keynote speech was provided by Dr Claudia Riegel, director of the Moorish and Termite Control Committee from New Orleans, USA. She gave a fascinating account of zoonotic diseases (those spread by vectors like fleas, ticks and mosquitoes from animals) through the ages from Roman days to the present.

Dr Jianguo Xu, National Institute for Communicable Disease Control and Prevention, gave the local keynote talk. His presentation also focused on zoonotic diseases occurring within China.

In Stephen's opinion, the highlight of the presentations came from David Gay, the



past president of the Australian Environmental Pest Managers Association who was recently awarded the prestigious Order of Australia medal for services to the industry. David initially focused on employee entitlements and the challenges these present. However, while laws are present to ensure protection for employees and employers, a good working relationship should be based on more than the law. Job security is the number one reason why an employee stays with a company. David discussed one of the greatest challenges this industry faces; how to attract and keep the best employees.

Dr Hyung Wook Kwon, of Incheon University in Korea, covered the use of the Internet of Things for mosquito surveillance whilst Stephen Broadbent from Ensystex, Australia discussed rodent control focusing on the need to move to more humane killing



FAOPMA President Huang Xiaoyun



Dr Claudia Riegel



Dr Jianguo Xu



Representatives from the Member Associations of the Federation of Asian & Oceanic Pest Management Associations (FAOPMA)

of rats and mice. Internationally, there has been a move away from glue boards, as they do not kill humanely and also rodenticides due to potential non-target effects. Some plastic traps designed to crush rodents have been found to perform poorly, leading to unacceptably slow and painful deaths. Now a number of countries require rodent control devices to meet ethical standards and more countries will head down this path.

Dr David Lilly from Ecolab Global Pest Elimination discussed the potential of fruit (vinegar) flies as vectors of food-borne diseases and reviewed why we should not be complacent about small flies.

Our reporter, Stephen Doggett, principal author of *Advances in the Biology and Management of Modern Bed Bugs* spoke on bed bug control in low income housing and on aircraft; the two scenarios he considers are the most difficult in which to control bed bugs.

On the exhibition side, there were approaching 200 exhibitors. For Gerwyn Jones, this was not a new activity as this was PelGar International's fourth FAOPMA conference. Gerwyn reports a level of anticipation and excitement for this event being held in mainland China. However, his concerns started to creep in some months beforehand – communication was worrying. Even a week before the event commenced, details had still not been finalised.

On the day of set-up Gerwyn arrived at the venue enthusiastic and keen to get the stand prepared but: "To the amusement of the Chinese conference staff, who enjoyed the spectacle, I had to put the stand up in complete darkness and with no air conditioning."

At the exhibitor registration desk it became obvious that this was going to be an 'interesting' experience. They had no reference of PelGar being at the exhibition, even though the company name was on the huge printed exhibitor board behind them. Thankfully Gerwyn had had the foresight to print everything out prior to arrival, once provided with this information it resembled something from a Monty Python sketch and exhibitor passes, but nothing else – not even a conference programme – were handed over.

During the first day there was a noticeable lack of water and food at the venue. At previous FAOPMA conferences there had always been cold drinks at hand and food to snack on during intervals. Gerwyn had to buy a carton of water bottles for the stand so that the team could keep hydrated. The lunch provided was in the form of vouchers for the McDonalds located in the basement.

One of the most frustrating parts of both the conference and exhibition was the lack of personalisation of the name badges – they just said 'Exhibitor' or 'Delegate' – so no one had any idea who they were talking to or where they were from!

There were only a handful of British companies present, the most



Some of the Aussies at FAOPMA, from left: Stephen Doggett, David Gay, Vasili Tsoutouras and David Lilly

obvious being PelGar International and PestWest Starkeys. *International Pest Control* magazine had supported the event in advance, so one had to feel sorry for publisher, Ras Patel, who had his entire stock of magazines, which he had planned to give away to delegates, confiscated at the border as they had not been pre-screened and cleared by the Government.

Not unexpectedly, the majority of exhibitors and delegates came from mainland China and there were plenty of products made in China on sale.

Whilst organisational issues emerged, it is important to realise that China is bound by social and political constraints. For example, all conferences in China must be approved by the Government, which makes advertising difficult. Hence the lack of an advertised programme. Whilst most professional pest managers in the Asia-Pacific region are hungry for scientific knowledge, the Chinese are more interested in business and cultural aspects with less emphasis on the scientific lecturers. By understanding these cultural differences and limitations, we can come to appreciate the challenges of operating an international meeting in such a country.

The next FAOPMA summit will be in Daejeon, Korea in September 2019. There is no question that the Koreans are one of the world leaders in pest control and this will be a meeting not to be missed.



The presenters 'thank you gift' was great – a glass laser etched with a picture of the speaker; both personal and unique

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Chun Siew, right, PelGar distributor from Pherotools Malaysia, with Rupert Broome on the PestWest stand



Visitors from Rentokil Hong Kong on the PelGar stand



Gerwyn Jones, left, with Ethan Vickery from VM Products, USA