

IFRG 2013 meeting report – Georg-August University, Gottingen 30/9-1/10/2013

The 2013 meeting of the Incubation and Fertility Research Group was held in the university town of Gottingen in central Germany. Gottingen is compact, historically interesting and the accommodation and the university venue were within easy walking distance. 58 participants (including 2 invited speakers) registered for the two-day meeting, which consisted of oral sessions on *Thermostimulation*, *The Influence of Incubation conditions on Performance*, *General Aspects of Incubation*, as well as a *Poster Session* and a workshop on *Egg quality*. Participants were drawn from within Europe (France, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, UK, Hungary, Poland, Italy, Eire) and outside (Israel, Turkey Taiwan, USA). The *Thermostimulation* session featured two presentations by Drs Yahav and Piestun from Israel and two presentations from Dr Tzschentke's group in Berlin. The session on the *Influence of Incubation Conditions* saw the first ever presentation from Taiwan at an IFRG meeting from Prof. Wang about the effects of incubation conditions on the sex ratio, as well as presentations about hatching time and broiler performance (O. Eibol, Turkey) and bone development in broiler hatchlings (Carla van der Pol, the Netherlands). The *General Aspects* session included further presentations on bone development (Roni Yair, Israel), energy utilization during development (Henry van der Brand, the Netherlands), mechanical effects on eggs during transport (Timea Torma, Hungary), and double-yolked eggs (Attila Salamon, Eire). This session was concluded by a stimulating review of recent advances in egg immunity studies given by Dr Yves Nys (France). The poster session also reflected the international flavour for the meeting with two contributions on fertility from Italy and two from France, as well as posters from the Netherlands, Poland and Turkey. The final session was in association with the Fundamental Physiology and Perinatal Development Workshop and was concerned with various aspects of egg quality. Prof. Nick Sparks (UK) provided a retrospective of the research of Prof. Ron Board of the University of Bath, who died earlier this year. Not only was Ron Board a founding member of the IFRG much of the research undertaken by him and his students underpins the science we do today. Nick provided both the detail and the context of his fundamental contributions to egg science and incubation research. The potential of sensor and other technologies for non-invasive assessment of egg quality were then reviewed by Bart de Ketelaere (Belgium) and two further presentations focused on the characteristics of egg quality in layers (Anke Forster, Germany) and broiler breeders (Guo Jun, UK). The success and appeal of this meeting is reflected in the wide variety of participants of which about half were from the industry. The meeting was held in conjunction with *6th Workshop of Fundamental Physiology and Perinatal Development in Poultry* and we are very indebted to Dr A R Sharifi for the excellent local organization at Georg-August University, Gottingen.

MB October 2013