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Program Introduction for the 48th Annual Florida Pesticide Residue Workshop

The 48th annual Florida Pesticide Residue Workshop (FPRW), held July 19–22, 2011, at the TradeWinds Island Grand Resort, St. Pete's Beach, FL,, continued with the three-day format and included six oral and two poster sessions. There were eight vendor seminars, two held Sunday evening and six during the breakfast and lunch breaks. The exposition attracted 34 vendors, who displayed their solutions for food safety analysis. For the first time, the FPRW offered a one-day short course on the Sunday preceding the meeting. As always, the forum on mass spectrometry was well attended and spawned a lively discussion.

The FPRW continued to expand, both locally and internationally. In addition to the customary audiences of scientists from federal and governments and industry, an increasing number of participants from academia and international organizations registered for the meeting. Due to the increasing popularity of the FPRW, this year, a record was set for the number of attendees (323), the number of oral presentations (33), and the number of posters (111). The one-day short course titled "Understanding and Optimization of LC/MS/MS to Develop Successful Methods for the Identification and Quantitation in Complex Matrices" was given by one of the renowned educators in liquid chromatography–mass spectrometry (LC-MS). The course was well attended by 34 participants from different parts of the world, indicating that there is a significant need for continuing education in the latest analytical techniques for residue analysis.

The oral sessions opened with a keynote presentation from the director of the U.S. EPA Office of Pesticide Programs emphasizing the importance of pesticide residue data in the calculation and assessment of exposure risks. From academia, three opening presentations then followed on "Integrated Multiresidue Analysis of Pesticides and Mycotoxins", "Food Consumption and Pesticide Exposure", and "Pesticide Residues in Imported, Organic, and 'Suspect' Foods." The opening session ended with a unique, educational musical presentation: "A Musical Look at Contemporary Food Safety Issues", which got the audience singing along.

In addition to the standard sessions devoted to Advances in Analytical Methods for Chemical Contaminants and to Pharmaceutical and Veterinary Drug Residues, the 48th FPRW included new sessions devoted to the Gulf BP oil spill effects on food and water, global harmonization of residues, and international monitoring programs. Twenty-one of the 33 presentations were from scientists in the United States, distributed as follows: federal government (9), state laboratories (2), academia (3), and industry (6). The remaining 13 presentations were from international scientists from Canada (2), South Korea (2), and 1 presentation from each of Brazil, Uruguay, Costa Rica, Sweden, Italy, the Czech Republic, Japan, Australia, and Egypt.

The 111 poster presentations were divided into two sessions: (1) The Gulf Oil Spill Effects on Food and Water, Pharmaceuticals and Veterinary Drugs, and International

Monitoring Programs and (2) Advances in Analytical Methods for Chemical Contaminants. Seventy-five posters came from scientists in the United States and were distributed as follows: federal government (17), state laboratories (6), academia (1), and industry (51). Thirty-six posters were from scientists from Brazil (9), South Korea (9), Colombia (7), Canada (3), Uruguay (2), and 1 poster from each of the Czech Republic, Germany, Japan, Switzerland, Portugal, and the United Kingdom.

For many years, the FPRW has focused on various chemical residues — not just on pesticides. The analysis of melamine, mycotoxins, PAHs, synthetic hormones, antibiotics, and other pharmaceutical residues are hot topics among residue chemists, and there were presentations on all of these issues at the meeting. In recent years, the growing numbers of attendees and presenters from abroad has enriched the program and broadened the networking opportunities for all attendees. Recognizing this evolution, the FLAG Works Board of Directors approved a proposal to change the name of the Florida Pesticide Residue Workshop to the North American Chemical Residue Workshop (NACRW). No name can express the complete character of this meeting or its rich history, but the board and the meeting's organizers believe that NACRW better reflects its geographical and topical breadth. Furthermore, there is a need for a single meeting at which food safety experts from throughout the region can share new techniques and find answers to current chemical residue problems. Since the end of FPRW 2011, both names are being used in correspondence and on the Web site (<http://www.flworkshop.com/>). The transition period during which we refer to both names will last two years. The changeover to NACRW is to be fully effective at the 50th Workshop in 2013.

Notably, the 48th FPRW witnessed the retirement of its founder, George Fong, who organized this meeting for nearly five decades. George established the first unnamed intra-laboratory personnel gathering in Tallahassee, FL, during the holidays of 1964. The following meeting in 1965 was held at the Sanford field laboratory, followed by the 1966 workshop in Winter Haven, FL. The annual gathering soon became known as the Florida Pesticide Residue Workshop and was attended by people from government agencies such as the IR-4 program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, and state laboratories. In those early days, each participant gave a short talk about the work they were doing at their agency. In recognition of George's many years of dedicated service to the food safety community, the board of directors of FLAG Works (the sponsor of the FPRW) created the George Fong Distinguished Service Award. Appropriately,

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George Fong was the recipient of the inaugural award, which he accepted during the opening ceremony.

The 49th annual Florida Pesticide Residue Workshop/North American Chemical Residue Workshop will be held at the TradeWinds Island Grand Resort in St. Pete Beach, FL, on July 15–18, 2012. Information on this upcoming meeting can be found at <http://www.flworkshop.com>.

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Notes

The authors declare no competing financial interest.