EDITORIAL

The application of the knowledge of insect biology to improve conditions for mankind has been the focus of papers published in the *Bulletin of Entomological Research* since its foundation more than 90 years ago. However, during that period huge strides have been made in this science, not least in the development of insecticides for insect control. However, of greater interest are the developments in ecology and genetics that have raised the profile of insects to the forefront of scientific endeavour as models for the study of ecological and evolutionary theory. The diversity of life cycle strategies found among insects, that so tax the applied entomologist when trying to manipulate insect populations to limit the damage caused by pests and vectors, is also the key to the developments in evolutionary and population regulation theory. Yet it is questionable whether these scientific developments have been applied effectively to develop solutions to remove the constraints placed on mankind by insects. I remain surprised by the number of papers submitted to the *Bulletin of Entomological Research* that have a narrow focus and that take little account of the huge literature that is available to authors from their desktops. CABI *Publishing*, the publishers of the *Bulletin of Entomological Research*, are just one of the many organizations that have very good information systems that can assist greatly in providing access to this literature. Authors can use these facilities to ensure their research is placed in a wider context than the particular system on which they work and so remain of interest to a wider readership.

The effective use of insecticides requires ever greater knowledge of their targets as products become more sophisticated and the public pressure to reduce their use increases. Yet such views to reduce insecticide usage may be a luxury of the developed world; in many regions insects contribute greatly to shortages of food and the ravages of disease. Insecticides still have a very significant role to play in the alleviation of hunger and improvement of health. However, pulling through the knowledge of genetics and ecology into the science of applied entomology will help greatly in the delivery of insect control solutions that have long-term viability while meeting the desire to limit further damage to our already highly managed environment. I hope that more authors will attempt to bring together some of the threads that I have outlined above to provide solutions to problems rather than to provide yet more 'observations and exceptions'. This is particularly relevant in the application of genetics in applied entomology. There are too many studies that describe and quantify the genetic variation within species – but descriptions of this kind are of little value unless they are put in a wider context. Data must be related to the biology of the species and put in a context that leads to novel solutions to key problems.

As I enter my last year as Editor-in-Chief of the *Bulletin of Entomological Research*, I would like to convey my thanks to John Badmin, the Executive Editor, who continues to carry a huge load in the liaison with authors to achieve the smooth passage of papers to publication. I am also grateful to the support of all on the Editorial Board who do so much to identify and work with referees and promote the *Bulletin*. Finally, I would like to thank CABI *Publishing* for their continued support for the written word when electronic information and communication is increasingly dominating our lives. Efforts are being made to use these electronic technologies to speed and streamline the processing of manuscripts submitted to the *Bulletin of Entomological Research* through the editorial office with the aim of reducing the time taken from submission to publication.

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