

Draft Proposal for Establishing the
International Silage Science Society (ISSS)

The Continuation Group of the International Silage Conference

1. Background of ISSS

The series of meetings now identified as the International Silage Conferences started with a ‘Silage Seminar’ held in Edinburgh, Scotland, in 1970. This was restricted to individuals in the UK and Ireland involved in silage research and extension. The meeting was a success and a second meeting was held at Hurley, England, in 1972. A limited number of scientists from European countries were invited to participate. The meetings continued at two or three yearly intervals to become a global International Conference. The meeting held in Dublin, Ireland, in 1993 was entitled ‘International Conference on Silage Research’ and the following meeting in Aberystwyth, Wales, in 1996 adopted the name International Silage Conference. Subsequent meetings have been held in Sweden, Scotland, Northern Ireland, USA, Finland, Brazil, Germany and now China.

A ‘Continuation Group’ took on responsibility for selecting the venue of succeeding Conferences in relation to bids from potential host countries. This comprised individuals who had taken the lead in organising previous meetings in the series who wished to continue an involvement with ISCs. Whilst this rather informal arrangement has successfully parented the Conferences, it is not suited to carrying out a wider range of initiatives relating to the advancement of silage science.

The organisers of the XIX ISC took the lead in suggesting the

establishment of a Society that would take on responsibility for continuation of ISC, but also have a wider role to promote silage science and its application. This idea has been developed jointly by the Chinese organisers of the XIX conference and the Continuation Group. The Continuation Group propose that the International Silage Science Society be established.

2. ISSS Mission

To promote and advance silage science and technology through research, education and industry for enhanced fermented feeds for animal production and for efficient biomass preservation for bioenergy, biorefineries, and environmentally-friendly recycling of agricultural and food industry by-products.

3. Ethos of ISSS

The ISSS is initiated by the ISC Continuation Group following a proposal by the organizers of the XIX International Silage Conference. It is a non-profit international organization voluntarily organized by the scientists and industrial society related to silage science and technology, with a preliminary aim of establishing an international platform and network to prompt worldwide exchanges and communications on silage research, extension and education. Importantly, the ISSS is not confined to researchers, but open to all involved in the silage industry. Therefore, the society is constituted from both academia and industry.

4. ISSS Objectives

The proposed objectives listed below will need refinement and confirmation after the Society is established.

i. Facilitating the organization and continuation of International Silage Conferences

ii. Establishing an effective and permanent website

Once the agreement on ISSS is reached, the Secretariat of ISSS will take charge of creating the website under the guidance of the Executive Committee. This will include the appointment of coordinators at the continent and/or country levels in order to provide information for the website

iii. Further improving the impacts of silage research and technology worldwide

- Increase and broaden the attendance at ISC worldwide
- Build up international networks on silage research, extension and education
- Highlight the importance of ensilage in animal production, animal food quality and safety, bioenergy and biorefineries and environmentally-friendly treatment of by-products
- Strengthen the interactions between academia and industry

iv. Extending silage science and technology to regions of the world where it is undeveloped

Silage research, extension and education have great potentials in the less developed world to increase animal production and food supplementation, improve livelihoods, and even promote social and economic development. This would build on and extend the successful silage research, extension and education programs already in existence, particularly in Africa, Southeast Asia and China.

This objective can be achieved by:

- Disseminating silage and feeding technology and other practical management information through the ISSS website
 - Application to national foreign-aid programs
 - Application for funds from international organizations
- v. Providing a platform to encourage collaboration in silage and animal production research, including application for international research funds
- Representatives and members of ISSS can share funding information from different countries, foundations, international corporations, and international organizations through the website of ISSS.
 - Members of the ISSS can also collaborate in forming international research teams to apply for research funds from different sources.

To achieve these objectives effective communication and information are important and the establishment of ISSS will enhance these contacts.

vi. Consider the publication of a peer-reviewed journal concentrating on silage. At present it is difficult to identify the best journal for publishing

research on silage. This problem may increase with the increase in research on silages for purposes other than animal feeding. The publication of a dedicated journal would provide a focus for all silage research and thus increase its impact. It would also provide the possibilities for the production of special numbers based on papers presented at ISC.

5. Organization of ISSS

5.1. ISSS leadership-Executive Committee

i. Honorary Advisory Committee

Roger Wilkins (UK), Richard Muck (USA).....others

ii. President of ISSS, elected from the Executive Committee

iii. Membership of the Executive Committee (EC)

Representatives of each continent: One representative for each of Europe, Asia, North America, South America, Africa and Australasia – **total of 6.** *The continents that are very active in silage research will tend to have more representation anyway, with representatives from previous conferences (and possibly industry representatives).* If regions are under-represented, then the EC could co-opt other members.

Representatives as organisers of previous ISCs: We specify this as the organizers of the 3 directly previous ISC, a representative of the present ISC and a representative of the following ISC. Thus with ISSS being formed at Beijing, the members in this category would initially be

Marketta Rinne, Luiz Nussio, Karl-Heinz Suedekum, Fuyu Yang and Xusheng Guo. When a decision is made on the venue of the XX ISC, the hosts would propose a person to join the EC. Marketta Rinne would retire from the EC at the XX ISC (and so on). This would give a total of 4 or 5 members. All those listed above are still active silage researchers.

Representatives from Industry: The above members could be either from academia or industry, but are most likely to be from academia. The proposal is to have **2 members from industry**.

This gives a total of 12 or 13 members for the EC.

- Identification of regional members of the Executive Committee

The appointment procedure of regional members is suggested to follow the model of the International Grassland Congress. Their procedure as below.

The Continuing Committee appoints a 'Nominations Committee' at the beginning of the Congress. They are charged with discussing informally with delegates present at the Congress from the particular regions, who would be an appropriate person to represent the region and seeking this person's agreement. The Nominations Committee are expected to consider the balance of their nominations in relation to, for instance, expertise, career stage and gender. The persons identified are announced at the end of the Congress. When ISSS is established the Nominations Committee would be appointed by the Executive Committee, but to start the process in Beijing, the Nominations Committee would be appointed by the Continuation Group.

The Nominations Committee are required to consider the importance of silage research of a country, candidates' expertise, career stage and gender.

- Establishment of Rotation for EC

It is suggested that once everything is established a person should

serve on the EC for two terms (where one term is the interval between two ISCs, normally 3). In order to avoid all the continental and industry representatives on the EC changing at the same time, it is suggested that initially some representatives are nominated to serve for one term and some for two terms. We will need to agree on which are being nominated for each category. For industry, it is easy – one person for 1 term and the other for 2. For continental representatives we suggest that for this inaugural EC representatives for Asia, South America and Australasia be nominated for two terms and for Europe, North America and Africa for one term

iv. Duty of the Executive Committee

Engage in and fulfill the objectives of ISSS.

5.2. *Membership of ISSS*

- The membership could be at an individual level, but affiliate membership or membership by national and international bodies (*e.g.* National Grassland Societies) and industry personnel are also warmly welcome. Membership could be categorized by individual membership, affiliate membership, student membership, full membership, *etc.*
- As a starter, all attending an ISC could automatically become a member (or alternatively be invited to ‘opt in’) and others involved in silage research and development could request to become members

- Members of ISSS could come from academia and industry. The Executive Committee can invite regional members to join ISSS.
- Those who involved in silage research and development could request to become members.

5.3. *ISSS Secretariat*

- It is proposed that the offer made to house the Secretariat at Lanzhou University be accepted. The State Key Laboratory of Grassland Agro-ecosystems can provide necessary support to the Secretariat. The Secretariat, together with the members of the EC, will form a network. There would also be the possibility of identifying branch secretaries from different continents to further improve the efficiency of ISSS work.

6. Funding resources of ISSS

An important task for the EC will be to decide on the best approach to fund ISSS. The funding required will depend on the activities that are to be initiated and their costs. Sources of funds that should be considered include:

i. Capitation fees at registration at ISC

This approach is followed by the European Grassland Federation and a small charge of, say 20 US\$ could provide starter funds and not prejudice attendance at a conference.

ii. Membership fees

Membership dues could be varied based on the category (eg individual members, affiliate members, student members, life members) and could be at different levels for high income and low income countries. Care would be needed to avoid high administration and transfer costs in dealing small amounts of money.

iii. Financial support from sponsors

Sponsors could be from industry sectors, government, institutes, organizations, and foundations. Industry will be a key part of ISSS and we wish to maximize mutual benefits between research and industry and achieve win-win results. Industry support could be a main funding source, but we feel that ISSS should not be entirely reliant on industry or on individual companies.

7 The way forward

- i.** Members of CG confirm their agreement to this draft proposal
- ii.** The proposal is put on the ISC China website indicating that the CG is initiating the Society, and the proposal will be submitted for agreement at ISC China
- iii.** The CG organize a core group to work on establishing the Society including the preparation of initial budgets, the composition of the Nominations Committee and potential members of the EC.