Preface

It is safe to say that there has never been as much interest in pollinator health as there is now. In particular, there is heightened concern around potential impacts of pesticides on bees, and awareness that new and refined methods are needed to better characterize pesticide effects, exposure, and risks to pollinators. It is in this context that we can best appreciate the critical role of the Bee Protection Group of the International Commission of Plant-Pollinator Relationships (ICPPR).

It has been almost seven decades since the ICPPR was formed. Though there have been changes, the core goal remains the same: to promote and coordinate research on all aspects of the relationships between plants and pollinators. This includes studies on plants that require insect-mediated pollination; pollinator behavior on plants; the consequences of pollinator visits, or lack thereof, on plants; commercial and ecological management of pollinators; plant-based materials collected and modified by pollinators; and all aspects of pollinator protection. These goals are realized through the steadfast commitment of ICPPR to organization of specialized meetings, colloquia, or symposia, publication of proceedings from those meetings, and cooperation with other international groups with common interests. For example, ICPPR is one of 82 scientific commissions of the International Union for Biological Sciences, and recently partnered with the International Organization for Biological and Integrated Control (IOBC) to form the CroProlPol Working Group, which examines managed pollinators as disseminator agents for crop protection and pollination.

The Bee Protection Group continues to be the most active working group of the ICPPR, with a wide breadth of international participation, world-class expertise, and representation from academia, government, and industry. Our 13th International Symposium in València, Spain, on the Hazard of Pesticides to Bees was a resounding success. Attended by more than 150 scientists from 22 countries, the 3-day symposium hosted 39 talks and 36 posters over five sessions on: risk assessment; testing effects on honey bee brood; semi-field and field testing methodologies; testing methodologies for non-Apis bees; and, monitoring. In addition to wrap-up discussions, multiple formal and informal breakout sessions gave way to lively and productive conversations and debate on all facets of pesticide hazards to pollinators. This was delightful to see as it points to the engagement and passion of the group for the topic at hand, and will help ensure that our science on the topic will flourish, while methods of assessing the hazards of pesticides to pollinators continue to improve.

This 13th Symposium of the Bee Protection Group continues the group's mission of advancing pollinator protection. The organizers are to be commended for their diverse and timely scientific agenda, which was accompanied by an outstanding venue and a wonderful evening of history, culture, and dining in Valencia. The Proceedings presented herein highlight that while we have excellent systems in place to minimize the risk of pesticides to pollinators, the diversity of pollinator taxa, complexities of species interactions, the ever changing spectrum of active ingredients to which bees may be exposed, and increasing demands for refined risk assessment methods, mean that the ICPPR Bee Protection Group is sure to have ongoing questions and challenges to confront in the years ahead.

Chris Cutler, PhD

Executive Committee, ICPPR

Peter G. Kevan, PhD, FRES, FRSC, FRSB, FLS

Chair ICPPR & Scientific Director of the Canadian Pollination Initiative