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July 10, 1998

Report to the committee on International Deer Congress, Hungary, 1998

Dear members of the committee.

Thank you for the award of £300, used for travelling to Hungary for the 4th International Deer Congress. I feel the meeting was both enjoyable, and more importantly useful, for a number of reasons.

- 1) I met a number of deer biologists from all over the world, many of whom I only knew of through the literature. As I said in my letter of application this would perhaps be my only opportunity to meet such people during my spell as a PhD student in Edinburgh. Furthermore, I became aware of a number of projects previously unknown to me, several of which are of interest to both myself and other members of the Molecular Ecology group here in Edinburgh.
- 2) My talk detailing my work to date was well received. Although I was not yet in a position to present any final results I feel it was important to let others know the nature of work I was pursuing. Also this was my first opportunity to speak at an international conference.
- 3) By talking and meeting other scientists, I was able to describe some of the recent advances made on the genetics side of the Rum red deer project. A number (most) of the scientists present knew of the Rum project, but perhaps not of some of the genetical aspects of this long-term multi-disciplinary study. I was the only member of the Rum project at the conference, and it was important that somebody was present to describe recent work on a study that is renowned world-wide for its contribution to the understanding of deer biology.

- 4) At the workshop on genetics and genetic markers, there was an attempt to set up an exchange of information through electronic media – either email lists or preferably a web site. Although this may take a while to gather momentum it is hoped that the ball has been set rolling. As one of the principal contributors to the deer genetic map it was important that I was able to discuss this initiative with others.
- 5) The conference gave me an opportunity to liase with my New Zealand collaborator, Dr Mike Tate. We discussed work we have been carrying out together, mapping genetic markers in deer, and how we might write and publish these results. Mike is extending his European trip to Edinburgh, and we plan to discuss our results and start to write these papers. The conference gave us an opportunity to encourage other deer geneticists to participate in this project.

Without the funding from the James Rennie Bequest it is unlikely I would have been able to raise the necessary finances for such a trip, and so I am extremely grateful for the award. I hope that other recipients have benefited equally well, and that other students go on to receive similar help. This is particularly important now that support from funding bodies for postgraduate students to visit overseas conferences appears to be diminishing.

Yours sincerely

Jon Slate

