

**Report on the WPSA Working Group 6 (Incubation & Fertility Research Group)
Meeting: 3rd-4th September 2008 at Moorfield's Hospital, London, UK**

In September 2008 the 33rd meeting of the Incubation & Fertility Research Group (WPSA Working Group 6) was held at the Moorfield's Hospital Clinical Tutorial Complex, the City of London, UK. Thus, we reverted to our usual pattern of a September annual meeting after Glasgow in July 2007. Nearly thirty delegates attended this enjoyable and successful meeting, with participants from eight different countries (from as far a field as Italy, Germany, Belgium, Turkey, Israel and Jordan). As always there was a wide-ranging programme held over the two days. The highlight of the first day was the keynote presentation by Amos Ar, Tel Aviv University, Israel. Professor Ar's presentation, '*Improving hatchability by a special egg coating*' demonstrated that by the application of this inexpensive treatment the proportion of high conductance eggs was substantially reduced – probably due to sealing micro-cracks in the shell. This was an excellent example of basic science applied to the benefit of the industry. We were also fortunate to have Silvia Cerolini, University of Milan, to lead a fertility session reviewing her work on sperm cryopreservation in a variety of poultry. There was also a fertility poster session. For the first time, the meeting dedicated a session to nutrition with contributions from Andrew Ball (UK, '*The role of carotenoids in breeding poultry*'), Mariane Debonne (Belgium, '*Effect of dietary lysine, linoleic acid and vitamin B of broiler breeders on embryonic growth, hatching parameters and post hatch performance of their progeny*'), Okan Elibol (Turkey, '*Effect of broiler breeder female feeder space during the laying period on egg production and percentage floor eggs.*') and Amir Ghane (Canada, '*Egg size and stage of lay effects. The effects of early feeding on poult feeding behaviour.*'). On the second day the focus was on incubation only with thought-provoking presentations by Charles Deeming (UK) on '*Egg size and embryonic growth: a hypothesis*' and Anouk Witters (Belgium) on the effects of high CO₂ on embryonic development.

With the usual mix of researchers and commercial participants there were some lively discussions over refreshments and during the conference dinner held on the evening of the 3rd in a nearby Greek restaurant. The participants at the business meeting decided that the 2009 meeting would be held in central England, possibly Cambridge, in the first week of September. Dr Victoria Hurst of Bernard Matthews Ltd, this year's able organiser agreed to organise again. Full details of the 2009 meeting, and a report of the 2008 programme, will be posted at www.ifrg.org.