

# CAWS Student Travel Grant Report

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The CAWS Student Travel Grant supported my conference trip to the 2016 Weed Science Society of America / Southern Weed Science Society Meeting in San Juan, Puerto Rico from February 7<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup>, 2016. The WSSA meeting boasts the largest attendance of any annual weed science meeting in the world, and this year was no exception. The 2016 WSSA/SWSS meeting had 564 total presentations across four days and 252 posters available for viewing and presentation during the week. I presented a paper and a poster, as overseas students were allowed to compete in the poster competition. My poster was grouped within the agronomic posters section, titled: “Control of *Chloris* spp. with four different spray qualities across six post-emergence herbicides”. People were very interested in the work, and especially enjoyed hearing the story of how a student from the US chose to do his PhD in Australia.

My paper was on Thursday, in the Equipment, Application, Adjuvants and Formulations Section titled: “Balancing coverage and spray drift are not mutually exclusive – both can be achieved.” This talk comprised much of my PhD thesis topics and discussed the future for application technology in Australian and global agriculture. The topic of spray application break-throughs is gaining immense interest, especially in the US where additional herbicide-tolerant crops are entering the market, and with them, concerns of spray drift and effective application are shaping decisions at the farm level. I was able to listen to many talks on this subject, both from the industry companies producing these traits, and the research at the universities ensuring that these technologies are added to the market with proper research trialling behind them.

It was a great experience to meet many of the researchers in the Caribbean area of the world and learn about the specific weed and application scenarios they face. We heard presentations from the leaders of Puerto Rico about some initiatives they have undertaken to connect agriculture to education, by implementing school gardens as part of the primary school curriculum across the

island. Additionally we learned about a government program to connect local growers with schools, where local agricultural commodities and produce now comprise 60% of school lunches, up from 25% just five years ago.

Without the support of the Council of Australasian Weed Science Societies, this trip would not have been possible. I was able to meet with department heads of hopeful future employing universities and discuss many career options in the US, which would not have happened if I didn't attend this meeting. I think the support of CAWS is not just helpful from a monetary aspect, but is unique in the sense that no other students at the conference had an endorsement from any type organisation like this one. It was an honour to feel as if I were representing all of the Australian and New Zealand Weed Science Societies at the WSSA/SWSS meeting, which is certainly some big shoes to fill! I am so appreciative of the CAWS and its support. Thank you, thank you, thank you!!!

