

Rob Fryatt interviews: Myeon-Ha Park, the new President of FAOPMA

The January 2014 edition of International Pest Control carried a review of the successful 25th FAOPMA event, hosted last November by the Korean Pest Control Association (KPCA), in Seoul, South Korea. This included the annual general meeting of FAOPMA (Federation of Asian and Oceania Pest Management Associations) at which Myeon-Ha Park, president of the KPCA was inaugurated as the President of FAOPMA for the next two years. I took the opportunity in Seoul, to interview Mr. Park to understand more about the KPCA and what he sees as the goals for the FAOPMA organisation under his leadership.

Mr. Park, first of all congratulations on your appointment as President of FAOPMA. To many within the Asian market you are already well known through your work for FAOPMA and your tireless promotion of the recent conference over several years, but for many your name and face will be new. Perhaps we could start with you explaining to our readers about your career and involvement with the KPCA as their president?

I worked for several media companies that covered welfare and environment issues which stimulated my interest in these subjects. As a result I decided to set up my own pest management company and at the same time joined as a member of KPCA. After then, I was able to take several important roles such as Marketing Director, Regional President and Deputy Director. I was first elected as the president of KPCA in 2009. I have served as the president so far for 2 subsequent terms. Thanks to the kind and loyal support from FAOPMA members, I was elected as President of FAOPMA in 2011 at 23rd FAOPMA convention in Goa, India. At the same convention it was decided that 25th FAOPMA convention would be hosted by the KPCA in Seoul, Korea.

It was pleasing to see so many Koreans attending the FAOPMA conference in their own capital



Rob Fryatt and Myeon Ha Park in conversation

city. But to many in our great global industry, the market in Korea remains a mystery. Perhaps you could tell us a little about the national industry, for example the service value, number of companies and the key pests? Is there anything special about the Korean market that we you can share with us?

In Korea, there are about 4,700 pest management companies, most of them focusing on pest extermination and disinfection. The Korean pest management industry is directed by the Korea government, as it is mandatory for both initial and recurrent training. There is also a government certification system. The key pests in Korea are mosquitoes, which may surprise many people, as our location is so far north! The KPCA has a core value which is that we ensure that pest management services and skills from the larger cities are replicated into small cities and towns and into less developed areas to improve comprehensive public health.

I was impressed by both the venue and organisation of the event in Seoul. Much of that, I know, was down to the hard work of the organising committee. The KPCA seems a strong and well-structured Industry Association. Please tell us more about the KPCA, its membership and structure. In the UK for example we only have a two year term for each president. This is clearly not the case in Korea?

KPCA is a very open and progressive organisation. Anyone in the pest management business can freely join or indeed withdraw from KPCA. Our association structure consists of 6 sub-committees that focus on areas of the industry and 16 city/provincial branches. KPCA believe continuity is important so we have a 3 year term for each president with one further term of reappointment permitted.

Thank you for those insights into the Korean industry and market. Let's now turn to FAOPMA. It is pleasing to see further national industry associations joining FAOPMA once again and widening the representation across the region. How can FAOPMA encourage more national industry associations to join and widen participation even more?

Personally I absolutely agree with the approach we have to member recruitment and encouraging more national associations to join FAOPMA. But it is important to consider carefully the situation of each country. Of course, we ask each national country member to do their best in promoting our federation. I believe we need to take every chance to share and build our friendship and our network.

What do you see as the challenges facing FAOPMA over the term of your presidency and beyond! How do you see FAOPMA approaching these?

There are many new environmental problems and changes that impact on our industry and our market. I believe it is difficult for our busy pest management professionals to keep up with the new trends in our industry and to share information effectively. To assist with this, FAOPMA hosts its annual convention and exhibition, rotating between different member countries around the region. Recently we have considered the request to host a bi-annual event to ensure that the industry can better allo-

cate resources for exhibitors, sponsors and presenters within the Asia/Pacific region. In the AGM last year, FAOPMA members decided to continue with an annual convention as they believe that even our one meeting each year does not create sufficient opportunity to learn and share experiences with each other. We need as an industry, to be sure we do not face any unfortunate challenges or risks in the future.

The next full FAOPMA event is planned for September 2015 in Penang, Malaysia. This is an intelligent move which allows the Pest Summit in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia to be the main event in South East Asia this year. FAOPMA has however, also announced a November meeting in Hong Kong. Can you share with our readers a little more about the plans for this?

This year the FAOPMA event in Hong Kong will not be a full package of convention and congress as has been usual for FAOPMA events. It is thanks to the ideas and work of our administrator, Catherine Yan, that we will be able to meet this year in Hong Kong. We plan to host a small leadership meeting with short sessions and without an industry show. Without doubt, we will give great support to our member PCAM (Malaysia) for a successful Pest Summit Event this year in Kuala Lumpur in September and look forward to the 27th FAOPMA in 2015 to be held in Penang, Malaysia.

Comparisons are often made between CEPA, as a European Confederation, and FAOPMA, in the Asia Pacific region, as they are both confederations of national industry associations. It is true that FAOPMA, CEPA and even the NPMA in the USA, are the key regional representation and influencing organisations within the industry at a global level. CEPA has European legislation as a binding factor. The NPMA broadly operates as a national association with a large

international membership. What do you see as the key binding factors that allow FAOPMA to add value to its regional industry?

I personally have a high respect for both CEPA and the NPMA. Both organisations have scale and development which we admire. We often have much to learn from our “sister” organisations, but it is important to understand that FAOPMA, representing Asia and Oceania, is very different from CEPA or NPMA. In our region, every country is different from one another in terms of political system, growth and development of the pest management industry and the maturity of markets. So, maybe we are not yet ready to consider further “binding factors” yet. Beyond that, FAOPMA needs to focus on how we naturally develop membership by creating more values and promoting awareness of the “Brand FAOPMA”. But we do need to take every action to build closer relationships with CEPA and NPMA, especially given the unique opportunity to build a global standard for the pest management industry.

In Europe, CEPA opened up its membership, first to international manufacturers and distributors and then further to more than one industry association in each country. Europe has the binding force of European legislations under which the industry must operate, but opening membership has permitted CEPA to speak for the industry with one voice. Can you see this ever happening with FAOPMA and if you do, how could this happen?

The membership structure of CEPA is a very attractive case that we need to consider within FAOPMA. It is important to understand that FAOPMA is also becoming more open and welcoming. We have changed our membership system within our constitution, so that we can consider more than one organization from each country. In the past we were the same as the “Old CEPA” accepting only one organization per country. This

change was made because our members felt FAOPMA needs to be promoted locally as well as internationally. As I have commented, for sure FAOPMA will keep open ideas to new membership, structure and promotion.

Mr Park, do have any final comment for the readers of International Pest Control.

I would like to thank International Pest Control for your continued support, interest and promotion of FAOPMA. We are proud that you are our official magazine. Doing this interview has made me realise the responsibility I have as President of FAOPMA, which encourages and inspires me with great enthusiasm for this responsibility. I hope this interview is informative for many readers of International Pest Control and helps you to know more about KPCA and FAOPMA. We welcome you to visit us in Korea!

After a period of turmoil and change FAOPMA has benefitted from the stability of the extended presidency of David Gay from Australia and the professional support from Catherine Yan and the Hong Kong office. It is clear that FAOPMA can look forward to continued stability under the leadership of Myeon-Ha Park. With the lead that CEPA has shown to develop a common European Standard for pest management through the CEN process, it is clear that the global pest management industry is benefitting from working in closer collaboration. It is clear that Myeon-Ha shares this view and will support activities that will ensure that FAOPMA is ready to play its important part within the global industry. Once again, it is evident that the long term approach of Asian cultures creates the environment for stability and growth and FAOPMA under its new leadership will sustain this attitude for many years to come.