Preface

E. A. Ueckermann

Published online: 26 February 2010
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The first reference to eriophyoids was apparently made by Reaumur (1737) who referred to galls and erineae caused by arthropods. He described them as maggots which was more correct than subsequent taxonomists who considered them fungi. The first genera were described in the middle of the nineteenth century, namely *Eriophyes* by Siebold and *Phytoptus* by Dujardin. Studies of the morphology of these mites were introduced by the remarkable work of Nalepa (1887) with his astounding accuracy in view of the optical equipment then available. During the twentieth century Keifer made a considerable contribution to the knowledge of eriophyoids, which established a firm foundation for future research. Mainly single species were described then and this resulted in many loose entities. Due to the lack of keys, thoughts to establish order gradually took shape and resulted in a series of books, namely *Mites Injurious to Economic Plants* by Jeppson et al. (1975), *Catalog of the Eriophyoidea of the world* by Amrine and Stasny (1994) and *World Crop Pests. Eriophyoid mites. Their Biology, Natural Enemies and Control* edited by Lindquist et al. (1996).

The need to continue with the ordering of the Eriophyoidea house, remained in the minds of eriophyoid specialists and was recently triggered by a series of e-mail conversations between Enrico de Lillo and Anna Skoracka. With the support of the world eriophydologists, they proposed a special eriophyoid session to the organizers of the 6th EURAAC symposium (Montpellier, July 2008). In the meantime they started by sending questionnaires to all eriophyoid specialists for their comments and the reaction was overwhelming. Unfortunately, financial, personal and health restraints have limited the presence of specialists like Jim Amrine, Jan Boczek, Evert Lindquist, George Oldfield and Valery Shevtchenko. In spite of this, about 30 specialists took part in this special session during which they took stock of the progress in a selected pool of eriophyoid research projects, since the red book of the *world crop pest* series on eriophyoid mites (Lindquist et al. 1996). Another aim of this session was to establish closer collaborations between all eriophyoidologists. It was also decided during this symposium to combine all the presented

E. A. Ueckermann (✉)
ARC Plant Protection Res. Inst., Private Bag X134, Pretoria 0001, South Africa
e-mail: ueckermannE@arc.agric.za

papers and more in a special Proceedings publication. Jan Bruin, the co-Editor-in-Chief of *Experimental and Applied Acarology*, was approached and immediately reacted positively.

Fourteen informative papers dealing with eriophyoids, their DNA, species interactions, quarantine importance, host specificity, potential as bio-control agents of weeds, chemical control, behaviour, their role in fungal pathogen epidemiology, influence in forests and on ornamentals, collecting and mounting techniques and their interaction with crops are presented here. This is an extensive and valuable update to eriophyoid science and a must for present and future researchers in this field.

Sincere thanks to all the contributors and *Experimental and Applied Acarology* for their important role in this milestone in eriophyoid research.

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