

FIRMS Network Update
Outcomes from the recent Steering Group meeting
September 2016 to February 2017

- **Updated Good Practice Guide**
 - The update (to align the guide with updated standards and guidelines as well as technical developments) is well underway with Jim Carter and Phil Dunn acting as editors. It is still on schedule for release (as a free download) later on in 2017.
 - The additional content covering compound-specific isotope analysis, sulphur isotopes and improvements to hydrogen isotope ratio measurements is mostly complete, and has almost doubled the length of the guide.
- **A letter has been drafted and sent to the AOAC** regarding out of date practices within their official methods, together with an offer to assist in revision of these methods. We will keep our members informed over the outcome.
- The latest version of the **FIRMS Network newsletter** is complete. If you would like to be added to the mailing list please contact news@forensic-isotopes.org.
- **The FIRMS website** has been discussed by the Steering Group:
 - We realise that it is not updated very often at the moment but we are endeavouring to change this and provide more regular updates.
 - We are sorry that the forum on the website is not being used frequently and as this facility isn't free, we are going to have to close the forum shortly unless there are strong objections from the FIRMS membership and wider community. Please let the Steering Group know your thoughts (firms@forensic-isotopes.org).
 - Any FIRMS member wishing to highlight a forthcoming meeting, conference, workshop, training opportunity or employment vacancy on the website should contact the FIRMS communication officer Rob Posey (news@forensic-isotopes.org).
- **Review of the 2016 Conference**
 - The Steering Group discussed the merits of holding the last conference in conjunction with the ANZFSS Symposium.
 - While there were some benefits (a potentially wider audience and fewer organisational requirements for the FIRMS SG), there were also some downsides (e.g. the lack of a keynote speaker in front of the entire symposium and the presence of parallel sessions that may have drawn away some of the audience).
 - We have learnt from this experience and therefore, should the SG decide to have a joint conference in the future, we can make improvements.
 - The workshop received good feedback from the participants.
 - The **special issue of Science and Justice** for research presented at the conference is being edited by Jim Carter and Phil Dunn. Please remember to submit your manuscripts before the **deadline of the end of May 2017** (special@forensic-isotopes.org).
- **Questions for our membership:**
 - Do you have any suggestions for materials to be included within the PT scheme in future years?
 - Are there any individuals or institutions that you know of which would be a good addition to the FIRMS Network?