Minutes

J. J. Farmer III, *Secretary*
Barry Holmes, *Chairman*

International Committee on Systematics of Prokaryotes

Subcommittee on the taxonomy of *Enterobacteriaceae*

Minutes of the meeting, 28 July 2005, San Francisco, CA, USA

Session 1. Open meeting

Minute 1. Call to order and welcome. The meeting was called to order at 09:00 on 28 July 2005 in room 232 of the Moscone Convention Center by subcommittee member J. J. Farmer who had organized the meeting following consultation with current and former subcommittee members, plus officers of the International Committee on Systematics of Prokaryotes, about the need to reactivate the subcommittee.

Minute 2. Background and historical information, most recent meetings and activities, and reactivation of the subcommittee. The *Enterobacteriaceae* Subcommittee is one of seven established January 1, 1950 under the authority of the International Association of Microbiologists by the International Committee on Bacteriological Nomenclature to study the problems of taxonomy of several groups of micro-organisms [Breed & Cowan, *Int Bull Bacteriol Nomencl Taxon* 1 (1951), 45–46]. It was extremely active from 1950 to 1986, but much less so in the last 20 years. The last published minutes were from the meeting some 20 years earlier in Manchester, UK, in 1986. Personal recollections of current or former members indicate that subcommittee meetings were held in September 1990 in Osaka, Japan and on August 19 1996 in Jerusalem, Israel. However no minutes were published from these two meetings. Apparently many of the officers and members have retired or otherwise become inactive in the subcommittee. A list of current members and officers was not available and the subcommittee did not have an internet site. Subcommittee member J. J. Farmer wrote to Jongsik Chun, Secretary for Subcommittees, International Committee on Systematics of Prokaryotes (ICSP), Hans G. Trüper, Chairman Judicial Commission and Brian J. Tindall, Vice-Chairman Judicial Commission about the need to reactivate the subcommittee. Brian J. Tindall responded on behalf of the ICSP and was enthusiastic about having a meeting to reform the subcommittee at the IUMS Congress in San Francisco. The Secretary for Subcommittees scheduled an *Enterobacteriaceae* Subcommittee meeting at the Congress and listed it in the official programme (page XIII).

Subcommittee member J. J. Farmer discussed the reactivation issue with Don J. Brenner, a former Subcommittee

chairman, and with as many other members of the subcommittee that he could reach. It was agreed that efforts should be made to contact current and former subcommittee members and others who have expertise and interest in the nomenclature and classification of *Enterobacteriaceae* and invite them to attend the meeting to reform the Subcommittee. J. J. Farmer agreed to act as ‘*pro tem* Secretary’ and as convener of the reactivation meeting in San Francisco. A stated goal was that officers would be elected at that time. Because current subcommittee membership was unclear it was decided to have this as an open meeting, rather than as a closed meeting as indicated in the official programme (page XIII). The organizer prepared a ‘meeting notice’ and tried to distribute it as widely as possible, including to interested persons at the IUMS Congress in San Francisco.

Minute 3. Record of attendance. Three remaining subcommittee members were present – J. J. Farmer, P. A. D. Grimont and B. Holmes, as were several invited guests – Karl A. Bettelheim, Francine Grimont, J. Michael Janda and Y. Kosako.

Minute 4. Opening remarks by the organiser. J. J. Farmer opened the meeting with a special welcome. He outlined the issue of the recent inactivity of the subcommittee and contacts that he was able to make with subcommittee members and ICSP officers.

Minute 5. Approval of agenda. The convener outlined an informal agenda and indicated that the main purpose of the meeting was to reactivate the subcommittee and to solicit input from all those present. The first agenda item would have those present identify themselves and provide any information that might be helpful in the efforts to reactivate the subcommittee. After these informal discussions a logical next step in the reactivation process would be to elect officers and new members. There were no objections to this plan for the meeting.

Minute 6. ‘Around the table’ discussions about reactivation. The discussions were in relation to efforts to reactivate the subcommittee. J. J. Farmer outlined the history that led to his correspondence with officers of the ICSP about the need to have a reactivation meeting at

the IUMS Congress in San Francisco. Current subcommittee members and guests expressed enthusiasm for the idea that the Family *Enterobacteriaceae* would again assume the important role that it had for over 40 years (see: <http://www.the-icsp.org/subcoms/Enterobacteriaceae.htm>, for minutes, reports, and special publications). All were enthusiastic about helping with this effort.

Minute 7. Election of officers and members. An informal election was held which resulted in the following Subcommittee membership: B. Holmes (Chair; UK), J. J. Farmer III (Secretary; USA), K. A. Bettelheim (UK), R. R. Colwell (USA)*, P. A. D. Grimont (France), J. M. Janda (USA) and Y. Kosako (Japan). (*R. R. Colwell was not present at the subcommittee meeting or Congress, but subsequently accepted the invitation of the subcommittee to become a member). Addresses and contact information for members of this and other subcommittees are given at: <http://www.the-icsp.org/contacts.htm>

Minute 8. Transfer of the gavel from the convener to the newly elected Chairman. Newly elected Chairman B. Holmes thanked the subcommittee for expressing its confidence. He then discussed that an initial step in the reactivation of the subcommittee would be to establish pages on the ICSP web pages. (These pages are now in place and can be viewed at: <http://www.the-icsp.org/subcoms/Enterobacteriaceae.htm> as part of the ICSP site: <http://www.the-icsp.org/default.htm>)

The *Enterobacteriaceae* Subcommittee internet site lists officers and members, subcommittee meetings that have been held, published minutes, published reports, special publications, and a list of past officers.

(Subsequently the Subcommittee expressed its thanks to the Chairman for all his efforts in establishing the internet site.)

Minute 9. Other business – ‘Around the table’ informal discussions

(i) Problems noted in recent manuals and handbooks. Several subcommittee members have authored chapters in new editions of *Bergey's Manual of Systematic Bacteriology*, *Topley and Wilson's Microbiology* and *Microbial Infections*, the *Manual of Clinical Microbiology*, *The Prokaryotes* and

The Enterobacteriaceae. Several problems in the *Bacteriological Code* and the nomenclature and classification of *Enterobacteriaceae* have been discussed or noted. It would be useful if the subcommittee looked into these issues and offered advice or gave its opinions on the best solution or resolution.

(ii) Minimal standards. The concept of ‘minimal standards for the description of new taxa of *Enterobacteriaceae*’ has been discussed, but no subcommittee recommendation has been made or a document proposed for approval. This topic could include commercial and other practical methods for identification.

(iii) Working groups. Traditionally working groups of the *Enterobacteriaceae* Subcommittee were formed based on ‘related’ organisms such as ‘The Working Group on *Proteus*, *Providencia* and *Morganella*’. Efforts should be made to find and preserve reports, letters, and other items that may have survived from the groups. Other work on the family has centred on veterinary microbiology, water microbiology, plant pathology and on endosymbionts of insects. Workers in these areas might be interested in forming working groups under the Subcommittee.

(iv) It has been published that a *Serratia* species can form spores [*Int J Syst Evol Microbiol* **53** (2003), 253–258]. Is this a biological impossibility or a startling but confirmed finding? A Subcommittee member might address this published paper to confirm or deny its finding?

(v) *Salmonella* nomenclature has been stabilized greatly, but there are still some problems.

(vi) Changes in postal regulations have added restrictions on shipping living cultures. This has inhibited the exchange of cultures and thus has made collaboration and joint studies more difficult.

Minute 10. Date and location of next scheduled subcommittee meeting. These will be organized by the officers and scheduled at the IUMS International Congress on Bacteriology in Istanbul, Turkey, August 5–9, 2008 (<http://www.iums2008.org/>).

Minute 11. Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at 10:39 on 28 July 2005.