The terms ‘quality-standards’ can be applied to many characters of the products, for example:
- biochemical characters as they affect suitability for end use;
- product uniformity – cultivar, growing conditions, size, maturity;
- microbiological safety;
- Pesticide and mycotoxin contamination;
- pest infestation;
- degree of fissuring or broken grain;
- sprouting;
- aging and oxidation effects; and
- time to process of prepare.

Quality and grade standards are the sum of all these factors as they affect marketability, consumer appeal and suitability for purpose.

The cover of the conference handbook showed the ‘Temple of Heaven’ a place of ‘Supreme Harmony’ and considered to be where Earth is closest to Heaven and the place at which the Emperor paid homage to the Gods of Earth and Harvest Prayers for a good crop and harvest – a symbolic quality assurance – acknowledging the importance of adequate food for the well-being of the people and the popularity of the Emperor.

This summer has been particularly challenging for our hosts? extensive flooding has
- affected both quantity and quality of grain;
- hampered research; and
- provided extra communication problems for the conference organisers.

I take this opportunity to commend the organisers for their efforts as well as those who have assisted in other ways to ensure the success of the meeting.

The session on quality and standards contained two keynote and 9 general papers covering aspects of produce quality for cereals in international trade in the plenary keynote address by Dr Fleurat-Lessard, wheat and flour, including the keynote address by Dr Skerritt, rice, rapeseed, soybeans, fruit and vegetables, and other commodities.

Important issues covered include:
- assessing and testing for quality – tests should be reliable, rapid and cheap;
- grading and segregation systems for superior quality product;
- physical and chemical treatments to improve quality;
- understanding the biochemistry and structural elements of quality.

In summary, quality is the critical issue confronting agricultural production into the future.