



## MiSAC competition 2010: food safety and barbecues

The 22nd Annual Microbiology in Schools Advisory Committee (MiSAC) competition was to design a storyboard for a television advert to promote food safety at barbecues. SfAM provided this year's sponsorship for the competition, including £1,000 in prize money for the winning entrants and their schools

The topic and format of the entries were chosen to encourage the participants to develop an appreciation and understanding of the simple steps that can be taken to prevent food poisoning. Entries were invited in two age groups:

**11-14 years (Key Stage 3)**

**14-16 years (Key Stage 4)**

Almost 300 entries were received involving more than 400 students from nearly 50 schools and colleges in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland; an entry from a Ministry of Defence school in Cyprus maintained the international appeal of the competition.

mention of foodborne microbes such as *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter* was a requirement and reference to correctly storing food, cooking it properly and preventing cross-contamination from uncooked to cooked foods was considered favourably. The judges looked particularly for originality, eye-catching design, a title that immediately indicated the purpose of the storyboard, a clear sequence to the panels that maintained viewers' attention, sound factual and scientific content, an appropriate approach to communicating science to a television audience, and use of the entrant's own words.

The judging panel consisted of SfAM representatives Professor Martin Adams of Surrey University, Dr Lucy Harper,



KS3 1st prize winning entry from Henrietta Roseboom of Ipswich High School



KS4 1st prize winning entry from Katherine Stahl of Pocklington School, York

The concept of this year's competition was challenging, yet the high quality and creative approach of the entries in both age groups was very impressive and imaginative. Many entrants clearly relished the opportunity to express their artistic talents and as well as the prize winners for each age group, a number were awarded commendations for concept, content and design. For example, the judges were particularly impressed by the clarity and quality of the cartoons by Katherine Stahl of Pocklington School, York (KS4, 1st prize winner) and the artistic skills demonstrated by Ancella Ho of St Anselm's School, Canterbury (KS4, Commended for design). Judges also commented on the entertaining nature of the storyboard created by KS3 1st prize winner Henrietta Roseboom of Ipswich High School as well as the professional appearance of the entry by Joseph Brown of Portsmouth Grammar School (KS3 3rd prize winner).

There was an excellent level of adherence to the overall entry rule of submitting an A3-size storyboard containing six panels, and a good grasp of what makes an effective storyboard, aided by the guidance provided for entrants. The

the Society's Communications Manager, and Dr Anthony Hilton of Aston University and winner of the SfAM Communications Award 2009, together with the Chairman and other members of MiSAC. The facilities were provided by the Society for General Microbiology whose staff also bore the task of receiving and processing the entries at its headquarters in Reading.

In addition to the winners in 1st, 2nd and 3rd places in both age groups receiving money prizes, they and those awarded commendations were given a memory stick loaded with Micropod podcasts from SfAM. All students who participated were given a certificate of entry, a much appreciated feature of the competition, and their school received some microbiology teaching resources and a summary report on the competition.

Next year's competition will be on 'famous fungi' and will be sponsored by the British Mycological Society.

**Dr John Grainger**, Chairman, MiSAC

**Dr Lucy Harper**, Communications Manager, SfAM