

IPNI Science Award Goes to Dr. John Ryan of ICARDA

The International Plant Nutrition Institute (IPNI) has named Dr. John Ryan of the International Center for Agricultural Research in Dry Areas (ICARDA) as the winner of the 2008 IPNI Science Award. Dr. Ryan is Soil Fertility Specialist/Principal Scientist/Consultant, located at Aleppo, Syria. He receives a special plaque plus a monetary award of US\$5,000.00 (five thousand dollars).

“We are honored to announce John Ryan as the recipient of the IPNI Science Award. He is a truly outstanding scientist and most deserving of this recognition. His distinguished career has included teaching, research, extension, and service. And Dr. Ryan has been prolific in the number of quality publications he has authored, co-authored, contributed to, or edited,” said Dr. Terry L. Roberts, President of IPNI. “Dr. Ryan has worked in diverse countries during his career and has bridged the gap between the developed and undeveloped world.”

Dr. Roberts also acknowledged the other outstanding nominees for the award, and encouraged future nominations of qualified scientists. Private or public sector agronomists, soil scientists, and crop scientists from all countries are eligible for nomination. This is only the second year the IPNI Science Award has been presented. The previous recipient in 2007 was Dr. M.S. Aulakh of India.

Born in Tipperary, Ireland, from a farming background, Dr. Ryan earned his B.Agr.Sc. in 1967 at University College Dublin. Dr. Ryan subsequently received his Ph.D. in Soil Science at University College Dublin/National University of Ireland, in 1971. Later, while serving as a post-doctoral researcher in soil science in the Soil and Water Science Department as a Fulbright Scholar at the University of Arizona, he earned his M.S. in Agricultural Education. In 1999, he was awarded the Doctor of Science (D.Sc.) degree by University College Dublin based on significant published work.

Before joining ICARDA, Dr. Ryan was Soil Fertility Specialist/Professor of Agronomy with the University of Nebraska, working with the USAID/MIAC-Maroc Project based at Aridoculture Center, Settat, Morocco, from 1987 to 1992. From 1975 to 1986, he was Professor of Soil Science at the Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences, American University of Beirut, in Beirut, Lebanon.

At ICARDA, Dr. Ryan’s innovative strategic research (soil fertility/ agronomy/ crop nutrition) has involved wheat, barley, chickpea, lentil, vetch, and medics, focusing on sustainability in long-term cropping systems in rotation trials. Other crop-focused concerns include water and nutrient use efficiency, supplemental irrigation, wastewater use, and conservation tillage. His work on efficient fertilizer use for the past three decades has been a factor in the 10- to 20-fold increases in regional fertilizer use.


Dr. Ryan’s other significant contributions include increasing awareness of micronutrients for crop growth and nutritional quality in Middle Eastern soils and demonstration of the potential of legume-based, cereal rotations to sequester carbon and improve soil quality and crop water use efficiency. While

his work is directly related to the Mediterranean, it has implications outside the region. His innovative research has led to publication of more than 165 journal articles, 16 books, 25 chapters, 24 internal articles, 48 conference proceedings, 170 abstracts, and 30 reports.

During his career, Dr. Ryan has served on editorial boards of three international journals and four regional journals. He is a member of the American Society of Agronomy (serving as Chair of its International Division), the Soil Science Society of America, the Crop Science Society of America, the International Union of Soil Scientists (serving as Chair of its Soil Fertility and Plant Nutrition Division, 2002-2010), and the Soil and Plant Analysis Council. He served on the World Phosphate Industry’s Scientific Advisory Committee (1997-2007) and is involved in several scientific networks.

Dr. Ryan is a Fellow of the American Society of Agronomy (1998) and the Soil Science of America (1999). He received the International Soil Science Award (1997), the International Service in Agronomy Award (2004), and the International Service in Crop Science Award (2008), being the only scientist from the CGIAR to receive all three international awards from the Tri-Societies. In 2007, he received the Soil Science Distinguished Service Award from Soil Science Society of America, and the Benton Jones Award from the Soil and Plant Analysis Council from North America. He was also the recipient of the prestigious International Crop Nutrition Award from the International Fertilizer Industry Association (IFA) in 2006, and was accorded the “Distinguished Citizen Award” from the University of Arizona (2000). In recognition of his lifetime services to international soil science, Dr. Ryan was recently announced as Honorary Member of the International Union of Soil Scientists (2008); the Award will be presented at the IUSS World Congress in Brisbane, Australia, in 2010.

The IPNI Science Award is intended to recognize outstanding achievements in research, extension, or education, with focus on efficient and effective management of plant nutrients and their positive interaction in fully integrated crop production that enhances yield potential. Such systems improve net returns, lower unit costs of production, and maintain or improve environmental quality. The recipient is selected by a committee of noted international authorities.

More information and nomination forms for the 2009 IPNI Science Award are available from the headquarters or regional offices of the organization, or from the website: www.ipni.net/awards. 



Dr. John Ryan