

In Memoriam:

Dr. H.R. von Uexküll, 1925-2005

Dr. Helmut R. von Uexküll, a recognized world authority in tropical agriculture and a leader in agricultural progress in Southeast Asia, passed away January 13, 2005, in Germany. He served for many years based in Singapore as Director of the East and Southeast Asia Program of PPI/PPIC and the International Potash Institute (IPI) before retiring in 1990.

Born in Latvia/Lithuania in 1925, Dr. von Uexküll earned his Ph.D. in 1954 from the University of Goettingen, Germany. He worked with the Overseas Agricultural Department of the German Potash Industry before joining the American Potash Institute (now PPI) and IPI in Hong Kong as Director, Mission to Southeast Asia. His responsibilities were expanded in 1964 when he was appointed Director, Association for Potash Research, Tokyo, Japan. In 1974, he became Director of the East and Southeast Asia Program and established the office in Singapore.

Through the years, he encouraged research and greater understanding of fertilizers and crop nutrition throughout East and Southeast Asia, including South Korea, the People's Republic of China, the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam, Thailand, Burma (Myanmar), and many other countries. Dr. von Uexküll was active in international professional societies and published widely in English,

Spanish, Turkish, and Bahasa Indonesia.

He was a pioneer in discerning the intricacies of oil palm plant nutrition, and especially the critical roles of potassium and chloride to sustained high production. His

work was widely respected and he put great importance on improving the well-being of the people of East and Southeast Asia. He also was deeply involved in developing a technology to rehabilitate the vast, formerly forested, areas of tropical savannah in Indonesia.

Those who knew and worked with Dr. von Uexküll described him as funny, wise, a natural gentleman, a fantastic raconteur, a great teacher, an expert landscape reader, a practical geologist, a prankster, and wonderful traveler.

"Helmut von Uexküll will surely be missed," said Dr. David W. Dibb, PPI President. "He lived a full, joyful, and productive life, leaving a legacy that will extend through the ages in his family, with his friends, and in the agriculture of Southeast Asia, which he loved. We send our best to his widow, Ines, and to their family." **BC**



H.R. von Uexküll