

PREFACE

The Wolf Foundation began its activities in 1976, with an initial endowment fund donated by the Wolf family. The Foundation's founders and major donors were Dr. Ricardo Subirana y Lobo Wolf and his wife Francisca. The annual income from investments is used to award prizes and scholarships, as well as fund the operating expenses of the Foundation.

One of the aims of the Wolf Foundation, as stated by the law is “to award prizes to outstanding scientists and artists — irrespective of nationality, race, color, religion, sex or political views — for achievements in the interest of mankind and friendly relations among peoples” in the fields of agriculture, chemistry, mathematics, medicine and the arts. The official prize award ceremony takes place at the Knesset building (Israel's Parliament) in Jerusalem and the President of the State of Israel hands the awards to the winners. Through the years, the Wolf Prize has become one of the most prestigious prizes. In agriculture, it is probably the most highly esteemed prize in the world.

The list of laureates in agricultural sciences from 1978 to 2008 contains 41 scientists in fields such as genetics, bio-control, ecology, plant sciences, animal breeding, soil chemistry and physics, and plant biochemistry. Because of the depletion in natural resources, agricultural development and human well-being became one of the major concerns in the world. The Wolf Prize winners in the field of agriculture are awarded for their remarkable innovative and pioneering discoveries, development of new technologies and/or extraordinary contribution to agricultural research, ecological conservation and food produce.

Now, at the end of 2008, there is an extremely high interest in agriculture, as the concern of the world's population is not only food supply but also alternative sources of energy and nutraceuticals.

In this volume, we documented the Wolf Prize winners' bibliography, curriculum vitae (CV), autobiographical accounts and/or reports on their work and achievements by others, important papers, lectures and other relevant information. We did our best to include the data of prize winners who are no longer with us.

The diverse fields of interest of the laureates provide a unique overview of the work done by exceptional scientists in different institutes around the world. I wish to share with the readers some of the deliberations and excitement involved in discovering novel ideas and approaches, and reassessing the old ones. In rare disclosures, updated findings alongside their views and speculations on various

subjects in agriculture are offered in this volume. I sincerely hope that the readers, be they researchers, students, biotechnologists, or extension specialists, find the following pages stimulating and exciting as I did.

I would like to thank my talented secretary Mrs. Nili Ben-Yehezkel for putting this volume together with all of her enthusiasm and devotion, and to the prize winners and colleagues who helped in collecting the material for the volume.

I would also like to thank my publisher, World Scientific Publishing Co., especially Ms. Joy Quek, for her cooperation and assistance.

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