Awards Presented in Crop Science, 2002

ALLAN K. STONER
Frank N. Meyer Award

Allan Stoner was born at Muncie, IN, in 1939. He attended Purdue University, where he received a B.S. degree in horticulture and a M.S. degree in plant breeding and genetics. In 1965, he received a Ph. D. degree in horticulture from the University of Illinois under the guidance of Dr. A. E. Thompson. Since 1965, Dr. Stoner has been employed by the USDA, Agricultural Research Service at Beltsville, MD. Initially, he conducted research to breed insect-resistant tomatoes. Later his responsibilities were increased to include the breeding of widely adapted, high quality, and multiple disease and pest resistant tomatoes. This work resulted in the release of nine cultivars adapted to the eastern USA and numerous multiple disease and insect resistant breeding lines.

In 1980, Dr. Stoner was named Chairman of the Plant Genetics and Germplasm Institute at the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center. In this position, he was administratively responsible for several laboratories, including some engaged in the acquisition, maintenance, documentation, and utilization of plant genetic resources, in support of the U.S. National Plant Germplasm System (NPGS). From 1988 to the present, he has served as Research Leader of the National Germplasm Resources Laboratory (NGRL), whose programs support the NPGS.

During the early 1980s, Dr. Stoner was involved in the decision to create the Germplasm Resources Information Network (GRID) to document the NPGS germplasm collections. He has subsequently guided GRIN’s development into what is widely recognized as the world’s premier genetic resources database or information system. The GRIN database has become a critical tool used by administrators, managers, and curators to manage the approximately 450,000 germplasm accessions maintained by the NPGS. GRIN also provides germplasm users, worldwide, ready access to information on the contents of the NPGS collection and passport, characterization, and evaluation data on the germplasm, thereby encouraging its use for improving agriculture. Dr. Stoner was instrumental in the creation of the pcGRIN software, which operates on a personal computer and can be used to document and help manage relatively small genetic resources collections. The International Plant Genetic Resources Institute (IPGRI) has recognized the potential usefulness of the pcGRIN software, particularly for germplasm collections in developing countries. IPGRI has translated pcGRIN into Spanish, distributed it to genebanks in 36 South and Central American, Caribbean, and African nations, and trained over 150 of their personnel in its use. The pcGRIN software has also been provided to cooperators in Asia, Europe, and the Middle East by the NGRL.

As research leader of the NGRL, Dr. Stoner is responsible for the Plant Exchange Office which documents germplasm entering the NPGS, facilitates domestic and foreign exchange of germplasm, establishes acquisition priorities within and across crop groups, and manages the USDA plant exploration program. The latter activity involves the funding and coordination of approximately eight to 12 national or international collecting trips per year to acquire landraces, wild crop relatives, and other germplasm for inclusion in the NPGS.

During the 1980s, Dr. Stoner was involved in the creation of 40 crop germplasm committees, comprised of crop specialists from the public and private sectors, to provide a mechanism for crop specific technical input to the many components of the NPGS. Since their creation, Dr. Stoner has facilitated the committee’s activities. He has also served on numerous local, national, and international committees concerned with policy and operational issues related to genetic resources preservation and utilization, and has organized numerous symposia, workshops, and meetings dealing with these and related subjects. He has provided essential information to external panels reviewing the NPGS and prepared summaries and interpretations of their findings to help curators and managers improve all aspects of the program.

Dr. Stoner has communicated regularly with administrators, scientists, and curators associated with foreign national and international agricultural research center plant genetic resources programs regarding policies and procedures, germplasm exchange, collection documentation and management, training, etc. These interactions have occurred through personal visits, participation in reviews of national genetic resources programs, and international meetings. Since 1980, he has welcomed to the USA, and provided orientation to, hundreds of political leaders, government officials, and scientists interested in genetic resources preservation and utilization.

WALTER R. FEHR
Monsanto Crop Science Distinguished Career Award

Walter R. Fehr was born 4 Dec. 1939, and grew up on a farm near East Grand Forks, MN. He was active in 4-H and attended high school at the Northwest School of Agriculture of the University of Minnesota at Crookston, MN. He attended the University of Minnesota where he was introduced to plant breeding by Dr. Jean Lambert, a barley and soybean breeder in the Department of Agronomy and Plant Genetics. He had the privilege of serving as an undergraduate research intern for Dr. Lambert and Dr. Donald Rasmussen and was given the opportunity to begin his graduate research project during his senior year. He completed his B.S. degree in Agronomy in 1961 and his M.S. degree in Plant Breeding and Genetics in 1962. In 1962, Dr. Fehr and his wife Elinor began a 2-year term at the Congo Polytechnique Institute in the Republic of Congo where he taught agronomy. When they returned to the USA in 1964, he began his Ph.D. program in the Department of Agronomy at Iowa State University. His major professor was Dr. Charles Weber, a leading soybean breeder and geneticist. Dr. Fehr completed his Ph.D. degree in 1967 and became an assistant professor in the Department of Agronomy at Iowa State University. He currently is a Charles F. Curtiss Distinguished Professor of Agriculture and the Director of the Office of Biotechnology.

During his 35 years as a member of the plant breeding faculty in the Department of Agronomy at Iowa State University, Dr. Fehr has been active in undergraduate and graduate education in plant breeding, basic research in soybean breeding and genetics, and soybean cultivar development. His positive undergraduate research experience with Drs. Lambert and Rasmussen at the University of Minnesota led him to