

# Presentation of the Eminent Scientist Awards :

Dr. R. Keith DOWNEY and Mr. Jacques MORICE

Read by Dr. Rodney Mailer, Australia

Mr. President, members of GCIRC, distinguished guests, ladies and gentleman.

It is a great honour for me that I have been asked to present the awards for eminent scientist on behalf of the Groupe Consultatif International de Recherche sur le Colza. It is with double pleasure that I do this as we are to honour, not one, but two exceptional scientists within the field of rapeseed research.

It is appropriate that before I present these awards, I should explain the background and the significance of this presentation. The GCIRC decided to create an International award for Research on Rapeseed in 1983 to honour individual rapeseed researchers. The Board felt that development of the rapeseed industry had relied heavily on some specific and crucial scientific developments without which the level of scientific progress that has been achieved would not have been possible. The award was founded in recognition of these major developments. In 1985 the Board created an International Scientific Committee to choose the nominees. This Committee is made up of four GCIRC members. The Scientific Committee gathers information about possible nominees and meets at the General Assembly the year before an International Congress. The award to be presented is a medal.

The first award was presented at the 7th International Rapeseed Congress in Poznan, Poland in 1987. It was awarded to Professor Dr. B.R. Steffansson from the University of Manitoba, Canada for his work on rapeseed and his contribution to the new double zero «canola». The award was presented on the second occasion to Professor Ting-Dong Fu from the Institute of Crop Genetics and Breeding, Wuhan University, People's Republic of China. This award was presented at the Eighth International Rapeseed Congress in Saskatoon, Canada in 1991. Dr. Fu was recognised for his contribution to the development of hybrid cultivars in rapeseed. Dr. Fu developed the Polima male sterility system and opened up a new breeding pathway for rapeseed.

This is therefore only the third occasion on which these awards have been presented. As per tradition, nominations have been considered by the Board of Directors of the GCIRC. On this occasion, the choice between the two nominees was so difficult that both have been accepted for the award in 1995. As a result, in 1995, we again recognise two plant breeders, Dr. Keith Downey, Principal Research Scientist at Agriculture Canada Research Station, Saskatoon, Canada and M. Jacques Morice who for many years has been the Director of the «Station d'Amélioration des plantes» in Rennes, France.

From my research of the history of these two scientists, it was interesting to note that Dr Downey and M. Morice were born within two years of each other. Both men have worked and devoted their lives to rapeseed research for around 40 years. Their aims and achievements during his time have much in common.

## Dr. Keith DOWNEY

Graduated from the University of Saskatchewan in 1950 and completed his Master of Science Degree in 1952 in Field Husbandry genetics. He received his PhD in Plant Breeding genetics in 1961 at Cornell University. Dr. Downey initially started as a Technical and Research Officer in 1951 at Agriculture Canada in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. From there he moved through the ranks of Research Scientist, Acting Director, to Head of the Oilseed Section and finally to Senior Research Scientist Emeritus in 1993.

During Dr. Downey's career he has been presented with many medals, honorary life memberships and awards. These include :

Bond Gold medal of the American Oilseed Chemists Society : 1963

Grindley Medal, Agricultural Institute of Canada : 1973

Royal Bank Award : 1975

Officer of the Order of Canada from the Canadian Government : 1976

Century Saskatoon Agriculture Award : 1982  
Gold Medal, Professional Institute of Canada :  
1990

Honorary Doctor of Science, University of Sas-  
katchewan : 1994

Clark Newman Award from Canadian Seed  
Growers Association : 1994

and in March 1995, Dr Downey was awarded the  
Canadian canola industries highest honour, the  
Canola Council's James McAnsh Award.

Dr. Downey is the breeder or co-breeder of 13  
rapeseed/canola varieties and five condiment  
mustards many of which have dominated the  
Canadian production area. He has helped produce  
major changes in the nutritional quality of oil and  
meal of *Brassica* oil crops particularly through  
developing the first low erucic acid varieties of  
*Brassica napus* and *Brassica rapa* cultivars and  
the first double low (canola) *Brassica rapa*. He has  
also been involved in the development of the first  
low glucosinolate *B. juncea* strains. Together with  
quality improvements, these cultivars have  
represented major improvements in seed and oil  
yields.

Dr. Downey has authored some 200 scientific  
papers relating to Brassica oilseeds, several book  
chapters and co-edited the widely distributed  
book «Oil Crops of the World». He has taken part  
in many international trade and technical projects  
including two current oilseed improvement  
programs in China and India.

Dr. Downey officially retired from Agriculture  
Canada on June 30, 1993 but continues his  
active career as Research Scientist Emeritus at  
the Saskatoon Research Centre and as an  
adjunct professor of Crop Science at the Univer-  
sity of Saskatch.

### M. Jacques MORICE

Studied agronomy at the Ecole supérieure d'agro-  
nomie de Rennes (Higher School for Agronomy  
in Rennes) where he received his title «Ingénieur  
agronome». He received his Master of Science  
degree from the Université de Paris.

M. Morice has been involved in rapeseed research  
at INRA, 'the Institut national de la recherche  
agronomique' in France since 1956.

His activities between 1956 and 1973 have included  
many aspects of rapeseed biology and breeding.  
M. Morice was in charge of research on rapeseed  
at the «Station d'Amélioration des plantes» at  
Inra - Versailles. During this time his work  
included studies on floral biology and yield  
components. He developed the concept and  
methodology of breeding the pure variety or line

and produced an official definition of varieties  
for 'CTPS' (the Permanent Technical Committee  
for Breeding).

Following this development, he released Sarepta  
the first variety of this type, which became a  
model for French varieties in the field of private  
breeding.

M. Morice worked to improve resistance to  
Phoma lingam (also known as *Leptosphaeria  
maculans*). As a result he was successful in  
releasing a more resistant cultivar known as  
Major.

Furthermore, he worked to replace classical  
rapeseed varieties with low erucic acid types.  
He was again successful in his release of the first  
French winter rapeseed variety PRIMOR. M.  
Morice has continued to work on the  
development of methods to produce 00 - winter  
rapeseed varieties.

In 1973 M. Morice became director of the  
'Station d'Amélioration des plantes' in Rennes  
where he has worked until 1990.

During this period he was successful in  
producing other cultivars. In a cooperative  
program with INRA and SERASEM the 00 -  
variety DARMOR became available. Following  
up on this work and under Michel Renard's  
responsibility, a new variety SAMOURAI was  
produced.

M. Morice was involved in early studies on  
rapeseed hybrids including male sterility and  
heterosis. In conjunction with Michel Renard,  
and a co-operative program with SERASEM, a  
composite rape hybrid was released known as  
SYNERGY.

For many years M. Morice has been the co-  
ordinator of research on oilseeds including both  
rapeseed and sunflowers between INRA and  
other public and private research organisations  
such as AMSOL and CETIOM. He has been  
President of PROMOSOL, the organisation for  
funding INRA research with other organisa-  
tions. He is also a member of CTPS, the official  
authority for registration of plant varieties and  
seed control.

M. Morice has been a member of the GCIRC  
since its creation in 1977. He was President  
from 1982 to 1985, and as such was responsible  
for the International Rapeseed Congress in  
Paris in 1983.

The research activities of M. Morice have been  
wide ranging and include several bilateral  
programs between INRA and foreign organisa-  
tions in China, India, Morocco and Poland.  
Although he retired from INRA in 1991, M.  
Morice is still active in his role as co-ordinator  
and scientific adviser for SERASEM and other  
oilseed organisations.