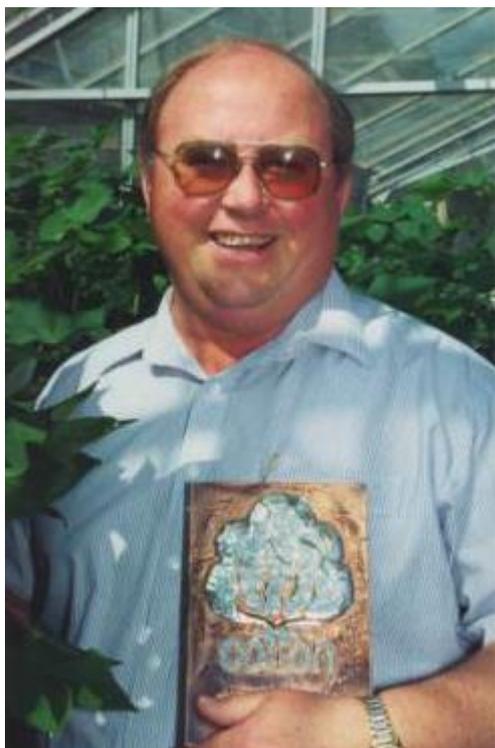


APPS Fellow

Dr Joe Kochman



Joe Kochman was a foundation member of the Australasian Plant Pathology Society (APPS). His contribution to Plant Pathology and Agricultural research, development & extension in Australasia was recently recognised by Joe being made a Fellow of the APPS, presented at the Adelaide Conference in September 2007.

Joe obtained his B.Sc., and later his Honours and PhD degrees at the University of New England, Armidale under the guidance of Dr John Brown. In 1974 he joined the Plant Pathology Branch in the then Queensland Department of Agriculture and Stock as a Plant Pathologist. Much of Joe's early research was with sunflowers, particularly in the identification of pathotypes of *Puccinia helianthi*, the casual agent of rust, and in the identification and development of germplasm with resistance to *P. helianthi*, and to *Alternaria helianthi*. He led a number of consecutive sunflower pathology projects in collaboration with the Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC), Cooperative Research Centre for Tropical Plant Pathology (CRCTPP), Agseed Research, Pacific Seeds and Pioneer Hi-Bred. He was a founding member of the Australian Sunflower Association and served as President, Vice President and a member of the working committee during his 20-year association with the sunflower industry. In 1990 Joe received the Australian Sunflower Association's Sunflower Award in recognition of his work on sunflower diseases.

In 1993 Joe discovered Fusarium wilt of cotton (caused by *Fusarium oxysporum* f.sp. *vasinfecta*) for the first time in Australia, and immediately embarked on an extensive R, D & E program to manage the disease. In 2000, Fusarium wilt caused an estimated \$57 million in losses to the Australian cotton industry. Joe has supervised a team of pathologists, extension specialists, agronomists and postgraduate students who have worked on all aspects of the problem, including containment, farm hygiene practices, rotational crops, and molecular characterisation of the pathogen.

He and his team have also collaborated closely with CSIRO and Deltapine to identify sources of resistance to the pathotypes of the pathogen in Australia. Joe has been recognised for his services to the Australian Cotton Industry through several Awards – the 1998 Australian Cotton Grower’s Association “Cotton Joe Kochman - Fellow, 2007 15 APPS April 2008, Vol 21 No. 1. Researcher of the Year”, and the 2003 Australian Cotton CRC “Achievement Award for outstanding Collaboration for Involvement in the activities of FUSCOM”.

Throughout his career, Joe has significantly contributed cooperative research in many areas. He was a member of a multi-agency team which developed the successful application for funding of the Cooperative Research Centre of Tropical Plant Pathology, in which he served as a Program and Project Leader. He was a member of the Grains Research and Development Corporation Oilseeds Taskforce, and a founding member of the Fusarium Working Group and the FUSCOM committees of the CRC for Sustainable Cotton Production and Australian Cotton CRC. He was also involved with the development of the CRC for National Plant Biosecurity.

Joe has had a significant involvement in biosecurity issues. His expertise was sought by the Pakistani government to develop protocols for testing of sunflower seed prior to export. He has provided valuable advice to biosecurity managers on operational procedures and scientific protocols for many biosecurity issues, including boil smut of maize, sorghum ergot (1996) and citrus canker (2004), and has undertaken several reviews on protocols for the importation of bulk grain into Australia.

Through his professional life of over 32 years, Joe has been committed to the training of younger scientists and technicians involved in plant pathology research. He has directly mentored plant pathologists who have been members of R,D&E teams which he has led readily providing advice and opinions, and encouraging them to explore new areas to further their Plant Pathology training. He has co-supervised 10 post-graduate students at several Universities, including the University of Queensland and University of New England, and has been asked to examine postgraduate theses from a number of Universities. Joe has been vocal in upholding high standards of training within the discipline.

Joe has played a very active role in Plant Pathology development activities within the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries, having been an active committee member of three Plant Pathology Development Workshops. Most of the Plant Pathologists and technical officers in Queensland (including those from external organisations eg., CRCTPP, AQIS, BSES) attended these 3 day workshops, where they were able to network with colleagues, participate in hands-on scientific workshops, visit field trials, and be trained in diverse aspects of Plant Pathology. Joe has also actively supported APPS, through his participation in regional APPS activities such as organising, chairing and presenting seminars, and by his attendance and participation in APPS conferences.

Throughout Joe’s career he has contributed significantly to the sustainability and profitability of agriculture in Australia, and to the future of Plant Pathology in Australia. For his services to Australian Agriculture he was awarded an Australia Day Achievement Medallion in 2006.

Malcolm Ryley & Gary Kong