



Press Release for the GCHERA World Agriculture Prizes 2018

EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE

October 28, 10 am, Nanjing, China

October 28, 2 am, UTC (GMT)

Professor Eric Danquah plant geneticist and inspirational leader in Ghana and renowned soil scientist Professor Rattan Lal in the US each received the GCHERA World Agriculture Prize 2018 at the award ceremony on 28 October 2018 at Nanjing Agricultural University Peoples Republic of China. Each prize of 100,000 USD is generously sponsored by the Education Development Foundation of Nanjing Agricultural University and Da Bei Nong Group.

Professor Eric Danquah GCHERA Laureate 2018



On 28 October Professor Eric Danquah of the West Africa Centre for Crop Improvement (WACCI) at the College of Basic and Applied Sciences of the University of Ghana received the GCHERA World Agriculture Prize 2018 at a ceremony at Nanjing Agricultural University, Peoples Republic of China.

With this award GCHERA (*Global Confederation of Higher Education Associations for Agricultural and Life Sciences*) recognizes Professor Danquah's exceptional and significant life time achievements in the field of agricultural and life sciences.

John Kennelly, President of GCHERA, in presenting the award said: **"Eric Danquah established the West Africa Centre for Crop Improvement (WACCI), led a maize breeding program which has released three high yielding maize varieties in Ghana, created the Seed Science and Technology International MPhil degree program, and significantly contributed to the establishment of the Biotechnology Centre at the University of Ghana.**

The establishment of WACCI by Prof Danquah provided an environment where young people were inspired to pursue careers in plant breeding. Over 100 students from 19 African countries have had the life transforming opportunity to receive a

world class education in plant breeding. His encouragement and support of women to study in this area has been especially noteworthy as today over one third of the students enrolled in the program are women.

Many of the graduates have gone on to develop improved varieties of commercial and indigenous crops in their home countries. These highly trained professionals will continue to produce improved varieties of the staple crops of Africa for decades, thus extending the legacy of WACCI in improving the lives of small farmers as well as contributing to global food and nutritional security.

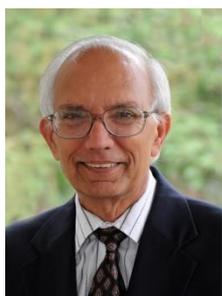
Professor Eric Danquah when accepting the award announced that he will donate the award money to support the establishment of a foundation to support and encourage talented but needy students to study agriculture at the University of Ghana

Professor Ronnie Coffman, Professor of Plant Breeding & Genetics and Director of International Programs, College of Agriculture & Life Sciences, Cornell University, USA said: **“Professor Dr Eric Danquah has been the driving force behind the West Africa Centre for Crop Improvement (WACCI), training the next generation of African plant breeders in Africa for Africa. This is a breakthrough effort to establish and sustain the science needed for the improvement of lives and livelihoods in rural Africa.”**

Prof. Ebenezer Oduro Owusu, Vice Chancellor, University of Ghana said “Eric Yirenkyi Danquah is highly industrious, internationally-minded person who exhibits high sense of responsibility with outstanding leadership skills. In view of his capacity to transfer theoretical knowledge to practical application, he has been a key originator, contributor and innovator of many of the agricultural concepts and ideas that have led to the development of many seed varieties and training of plant breeders from all over Africa. He has contributed immensely to the agricultural revolution of Africa, and instrumental in the alleviation of poverty in Ghana and beyond.”

Professor Samuel Kwame Offei, Pro Vice-Chancellor at the University of Ghana said "Prof Eric Danquah is a scientist with an uncommon passion to enhance food security on the African continent. He has led initiatives to develop vital scientific solutions to resource and biotic constraints in agricultural production, and made significant achievements in the development of high performing crops. Through his leadership, a critical mass of plant geneticists has been equipped with the skills to integrate genomic innovations in crop improvement programmes, thereby, influencing the career trajectory of many young scientists in the sub-Saharan region."

Professor Rattan Lal GCHERA Laureates 2018



On 28 October Professor Rattan Lal of the Carbon Management and Sequestration Center at Ohio State University, USA received the GCHERA World Agriculture Prize 2018 at a ceremony at Nanjing Agricultural University, Peoples Republic of China.

With this award, GCHERA (*Global Confederation of Higher Education Associations for Agricultural and Life Sciences*) recognizes Prof. Lal's exceptional and significant life time achievements in the field of agricultural and life sciences.

John Kennelly, President of GCHERA, in presenting the award said “**Professor Rattan Lal is globally recognized for his contributions to education and research in the sustainable management of world soils. His specific focus has been on the management of soil physical, hydrological and mechanical properties to minimize risks of soil degradation, and to restore degraded and desertified soils through sequestration of atmospheric carbon dioxide in soil and vegetation.**

His mentorship of hundreds of students who have gone on to hold leadership positions in academia, government and industry ensures that his legacy will continue for many decades through the work of his students.

Rattan Lal has worked for 50 years to enhance the prestige of the agriculture profession in general and that of soil science in particular. His membership of scientific boards and advisory panels, and the many fellowships that he has been awarded testify to his international status. Being the current President of the International Union of Soil Sciences (Vienna, Austria), he is the global ambassador of soil science and agriculture. “

Professor Rattan Lal when accepting the award announced that he will donate the award money to support further the work of the Carbon Management and Sequestration Center of the Ohio State University for which he has been the founding director since 2000.

Gary Pierzynski, Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Education at Ohio State University and former President of the Soil Science Society of America said “Dr Lal has amassed an impressive body of work that has produced great benefits for our soil resource around the world. In my own international travels I frequently encounter colleagues and former mentees of Dr Lal who attest to the positive impact he has had on natural resource conservation and the soil science profession.”

Jeff Sharp, Director, School of Environment and Natural Resources, Ohio State University said “ Professor Rattan Lal's focus on restoring soil health through carbon sequestration is significant, not only to the goal of increasing global crop yields but also to the goal of sequestering atmospheric carbon dioxide in soil as humus. His impact on the scientific community is substantial, particularly his extensive professional leadership roles and his commitment to mentoring scholars from around the world at the Carbon Management and Sequestration Center.

BACKGROUND

The GCHERA World Agriculture Prizes

The GCHERA World Agriculture Prize (WAP) was proposed by both Prof. ZHAI Huqu, the former President of the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CAAS) and Prof. ZHOU Guanghong, the President of [Nanjing Agricultural University](#) (NJAU) and Chairman of Education Professional Committee (EPC) of the Chinese Association of Agricultural Science Societies (CAASS) on October 20, 2012 in the occasion of NJAU's 110th anniversary. The prize was approved at the GCHERA General Assembly in Uruguay on 29 October 2012. The prize is now generously sponsored by the Education Development Foundation of Nanjing Agricultural University and Da Bei Nong Group.

The two World Agriculture Prizes are awarded yearly to academic/faculty members from higher education institutions working in the disciplines relating to the agricultural and life sciences. One prize is awarded to an academic/faculty member from a country classified as having a developed economy and the other prize from a country not so classified.

The World Agriculture Prizes aim to encourage the global development of the mission of higher education institutions in education, research, innovation and outreach in the agricultural and life sciences by recognizing the distinguished contribution of individuals to this mission.

GCHERA The Confederation of Higher Education Associations for Agricultural and Life Sciences

The Global Confederation of Higher Education Associations for Agriculture and Life Sciences (GCHERA) was established in 1998. In 2011 the governance structure was changed so that instead of individual university membership, its membership is now made up of 15 worldwide higher education associations who themselves represent individual universities in the agricultural and life sciences areas. See www.gchera.com

For example, China is represented by the Education Professional Committee of the Chinese Association of Agricultural Sciences Societies, in Europe by the Association for European Life Science Universities, in the USA by the Association of Public and Land Grant Universities, and in Africa by RUFORUM the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture.

GCHERA's mission is to encourage mutual understanding and global cooperation among the higher education associations and to provide, within the global context, leadership in education, research and innovation in the agricultural and life sciences.

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