

# **JIM KUHN LEADERSHIP AWARD**

**California Alfalfa & Forage Association**

## **Dr. Vern Marble, Forage Specialist, UC Davis**

The California Alfalfa and Forage Association is pleased to present the 2006 Jim Kuhn Leadership Award to Dr. Vern Marble, long-time Forage Extension Specialist at the University of California, Davis. Dr. Marble's over 30 years of service to the California and national alfalfa industries richly qualifies him for this award.

The Jim Kuhn Leadership award was established in 2005 to honor a grower or industry member who makes a significant and lasting contribution to the California alfalfa and forage industry. Jim Kuhn was an Imperial Valley alfalfa grower and dairyman, and a founding member of CAFA who served three terms. He was widely recognized not only for his innovative farming enterprises, but also for his state-wide leadership in the industry. See 2005 California Alfalfa Symposium Proceedings, <http://alfalfa.ucdavis.edu> for a description of the award and Jim's life. Tragically, Jim Kuhn died in 2005 in an automobile accident. The first award was given posthumously in his name December, 2005, and we are pleased to give the second award to Vern Marble, who was close to the Kuhn family, and an outstanding representative of the California alfalfa industry for many decades.

Dr. Marble was known for many years as 'Mr. Alfalfa' in California, and has a tremendous depth of knowledge about this crop, about the history of alfalfa in the West, breeding, genetics, pest management, forage quality—just about any subject related to forage crops. He is a true leader for forages. He was instrumental at promoting the introduction of multiple pest resistant varieties, particularly CUF 101 in the 1970s and 80s, which had a tremendous impact on California producers and on alfalfa producers worldwide. In some countries, the introduction of CUF 101 was so revolutionary, that growers mark the history of alfalfa in those countries as 'before CUF101' and 'after CUF101', particularly Argentina, Middle East, and Australia. He exhibited leadership in introducing forage testing to the industry, and promoting standardization, co-founding the National Forage Testing Association (NFTA) in the 1980s.

Dr. Vern L. Marble retired September 30<sup>th</sup> 1991 after 34 years service with the University of California, Davis, as extension forage crops specialist. Dr. Marble is a native of Utah where he earned B.S. and M.S. degrees at Utah State University. After two years of military service, he came to the University of California where he earned his Ph.D in 1957 with a major in plant physiology. After only a short time as an agronomist with the Chevron Chemical Co., he accepted an extension appointment at Davis.

Dr. Marble has been author or co-author of over 230 popular and technical publications during his career while providing statewide leadership to the important alfalfa hay and seed production industry. He devised the alfalfa hay quality evaluation system used by hay growers and dairymen in California. He also chaired the National Alfalfa Hay

Testing Association, a program aimed at eliminating test differences among states. An important part of his applied research was on alfalfa varietal evaluation and production of high quality hay and seed.

During his career, Dr. Marble has been a consultant in more than a dozen foreign countries. He completed an FAO evaluation of alfalfa research capabilities in the Near and Middle East, as well as a book on alfalfa production for the region. He has served on various university committees concerned with programs and policies in agricultural research and extension. In recognition for his work, Dr. Marble had received numerous awards and in 1990 received the Outstanding Alfalfa Extension Specialist Award for the USA from the American Society of Agronomy.

This leadership award is richly deserved for a lifetime of leadership on behalf of Dr. Marble. This award is particularly poignant, since Vern knew the Kuhn family very well, as he did many of the producers in California, and grieved with the family at the loss of Jim last year. On many of his trips to the Imperial Valley, Dr. Marble would visit with Fritz Kuhn, Jim Kuhn's father and discuss all matters alfalfa, and as Jim emerged as the manager of the Kuhn Ranch, he worked also with the new generation of leaders.

The California alfalfa industry, represented by the California Alfalfa & Forage Association, is proud to present this award to Dr. Marble for his many years of service and exemplary leadership to the California forage industry.

*--Dan Putnam and Steve Orloff  
On behalf of the  
California Alfalfa & Forage Association  
and the UC California Alfalfa Workgroup*