

2014 JIM KUHN LEADERSHIP AWARD

*California Alfalfa & Forage Association,
Representing the Forage Growers of California*

Larry Teuber, Professor, University of California, Davis

The Board of Directors of the California Alfalfa & Forage Association (CAFA) is pleased to select Dr. Larry Teuber as the 2014 recipient of the Jim Kuhn Leadership Award. The Jim Kuhn Leadership Award is presented annually to a person or organization for their lasting contributions to the California alfalfa industry. The award was established in 2005 when Kuhn, an industry icon and forage innovator, was killed in a vehicle accident near his ranch in El Centro, CA. Nominees are judged on their knowledge of alfalfa, record of leadership and the extent and depth of their contributions to the California alfalfa industry.

This award is given, unfortunately, posthumously, as Dr. Teuber died earlier this year. He is survived by his wife Suzanne and two children Stephanie and Melissa.

Larry Teuber dedicated his career to the improvement of alfalfa. He worked as an alfalfa geneticist and was responsible for development of several germplasm sources and varieties that continue to benefit the industry today. He also taught future generations of plant breeders both on campus at UC Davis and as an instructor for the Plant Breeding Academy organized by the Seed Biotechnology Center. In addition to his breeding work, he designed several studies that evaluated alfalfa growth and development and led to recommendations about optimal planting date and dormancy evaluation that continue to guide the industry today.

When the silverleaf whitefly first appeared as a major pest in California's Imperial Valley in the 1990s, Larry Teuber dove headlong into an extended battle with the pest, using his genetic knowledge to develop new resistant lines. The silverleaf whitefly pulls vital nutrients from plants, and became a major pest in the Low Desert for many years. The whitefly reduces yields and secretes sweet 'honeydew' in massive amounts, leaving a rich environment for sooty mold fungi, which render the hay unsellable. As UC Davis' alfalfa breeder, Teuber brought a methodical, thoughtful approach to the project over many years, centered in the Imperial Valley. His work resulted in the variety UC Impalo WF, which was the first whitefly resistant variety developed, and is grown in non-dormant regions today.

On the whitefly breeding effort, UC Davis Plant Science Professor and strawberry breeder Doug Shaw noted "He knew what it was going to take, and within three generations he actually had the materials that have helped resolve that issue statewide. Both of us shared the goal to accomplish tangible research outcomes, not so much the basic and fundamental research" he says.



While Shaw and Teuber shared the joy of discovery, Plant Sciences' Charlie Brummer and Teuber grew close through the alfalfa breeding community. "We put grants together—they didn't get funded, but got outstanding reviews" says Brummer. "Coming to Davis, Larry and I had some opportunities to continue several alfalfa projects that, unfortunately, won't happen now." Charlie Brummer is an alfalfa and grass breeder that joined UC Davis in 2014 to lead the new Plant Breeding Center in the Department of Plant Sciences.

As with all his breeding and genetics work, Larry Teuber carried a professionalism that often pushed those he worked with to the limits of their skill, according to Kitty Schlosser, a colleague who worked closely with Teuber. He was a thoughtful and careful thinker and researcher.

In addition to making improvements in alfalfa varieties and forage production systems, Larry was dedicated to serving the seed industry. He was the principal investigator on key research related to enhancing pollination through ease of tripping, floral aromas, and nectar and pollen attractiveness; development of aphid, whitefly, and *Lygus* resistance; and evaluation of gene flow in alfalfa seed production systems.

His latest work on gene flow in a landscape setting under commercial conditions is being used to set isolation standards for seed production of GMO varieties to maintain genetic purity.

Dr. Teuber led the CA Crop Improvement Association and Foundation Seed operations for many years until his recent death in May, 2014. In these roles, he moved the organizations forward in use of technology to improve efficiency and communication and consistently promoted science-based decision-making.

A geneticist, a longtime teacher and an agronomist, Larry Teuber was just as much at home driving a combine harvester as he was with complex statistics. He did what he loved for all of his 37 years at UC Davis, slowing only when overwhelmed by sickness. In that time, he grew to also be a fixture in the nation's tight-knit alfalfa community.

Larry Teuber gave many years of dedicated service to alfalfa growers and to the alfalfa industry. It is with great pleasure that CAFA awards this year's Kuhn Leadership Award to Dr. Larry Teuber, Professor at University of California, Davis.

--Shannon Mueller and Dan Putnam, University of California