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**Announcements**


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**Assinsel Prize 1982**

The International Organisation of Plant Breeders for the Protection of Plant Varieties, Assinsel, decided to create an Award for scientists whose basic research work made a considerable contribution to the improvement of plant breeding methods for the benefit of agriculture and horticulture.

This Award is granted every four years, starting from 1978, on recommendation of an independent jury consisting of University professors in Plant Breeding and Genetics, viz. Prof. Dr. Ir. J. Sneep from Wageningen, Netherlands, Prof. Dr. Y. de Marly from Paris, France, and Prof. Dr. R. Riley from Cambridge, United Kingdom.

Forty years ago it was felt by a small group of pioneers that new original developments of plant material should be protected by legal means in order to provide the atmosphere of security in which long term breeding projects can be initiated and accomplished. Successful breeding means progress on which our wellbeing and our wealth depend very strongly, both in established and in developing systems of society.

The inspiring, now regretted Mr. Ernest Tourneur from France, together with breeders from Holland, Germany and Denmark, founded Assinsel in November 1938 at Amsterdam. The president's office was taken over in 1967 by Dr. Carl-Ernst Büchting from Germany, and in 1981 by Dr. C. Mastebroek from the Netherlands.

The principal objective of Assinsel was to obtain official international Protection for new varieties of plants and to secure for plant breeders the reward for their original work on an international basis. The aims of Assinsel today are still to make a contribution to the recognition of the importance and value of the plant breeder's profession and activities, and to defend the interest of breeders at international and national levels.

Twenty nations are represented in Assinsel, grouping over 400 members. The activities of the organisation cover the fields of cereals, maize, forage grasses and forage legumes, vegetables, potatoes, sugar and fodder beets and grape vines.

The first major aim of Assinsel was fulfilled when the International Convention for the Protection of new Varieties of Plants was signed on the 2nd December 1961. Six nations signed, followed by three more the year after.

Soon national laws appeared in Great Britain, the Netherlands, Germany and Denmark. Today many other nations have followed, adopting Plant Protection laws, and ratifying the Convention of Paris whose executive body, U.P.O.V., is seated in Geneva, Switzerland.

A different development took place in the USA, when this nation issued a Plant Protection Act for sexually reproduced plants in 1970. A Diplomatic Conference, held in October 1978, arrived at a conciliation of the principles of the two systems.

Both are designed to grant the right of protection to plant breeders, thereby promoting progress in agriculture in the public interest. It can be expected that there may be in the near future one world-wide coherent system of plant breeder's rights.

The Assinsel Prize 1982 for scientists improving the world's food production potential, was granted this year to Dr. Colin N. Law (UK) and Dr. Ir. Jan E. Parlevliet (Holland). Both scientists have received Sfrs. 5 000,- for their work at the occasion of the Assinsel World Congress, June 3rd, Venice, Italy.

Law succeeded in using advanced DNA-techniques to locate the inheritance of grain proteins and baking quality of wheat – the number one world food crop. He improved plant growth of wheat by designing new biometrical methods of selection.

Parlevliet developed new insight to obtain durable resistance to pests in food crops. He created new concepts and strategies to help farmers with improved disease resistance in crops and to relieve the environment of pesticides.



Dr. C. N. Law (left) and Dr. Ir. J. E. Parlevliet (right)