

NEW ZEALAND PLANT PROTECTION MEDAL



This medal is awarded by the New Zealand Plant Protection Society to honour those who have made exceptional contributions to plant protection in New Zealand in the widest sense. The medal is awarded for outstanding services to plant protection, whether through research, education, implementation or leadership.

In 2011 the New Zealand Plant Protection Medal was awarded to Dr Jim Walker, primarily for his leadership and vision that have been crucial to helping New Zealand apple exports maintain their international competitiveness and market access to over 60 countries.

After graduating with a M. Hort. Sci. (Hons) from Lincoln College, Jim began his career in 1978 as a scientist with DSIR in Havelock North, Hawke's Bay. At that time, pipfruit production was dependent on calendar-based spraying of broad-spectrum insecticides. However, Jim was at the forefront of research into pest ecology that ultimately provided the foundation for the integrated fruit production (IFP) and organic pest management programmes practised today. Jim was awarded a fellowship to study at Washington State University, and he returned in 1985 with a PhD in Entomology.

Jim is one of those rare people whose influence has made a real difference to a major horticultural sector. Jim's outstanding achievement is the pivotal role he played in the development and implementation of IFP for the pipfruit sector during the 1990s. Today, he continues to provide vital leadership for the on-going refinement of this programme, as it evolves to meet ever more stringent export market requirements. Each year Jim makes numerous presentations at grower meetings, technical workshops and sector conferences, to present research results and convey technology transfer solutions. He has the knack of imparting information clearly whatever the audience.

Jim's special talents include being an astute scientist with the ability to interact with Government bodies, yet being equally comfortable talking with and to growers. One of Jim's strengths is his deep understanding of a wide range of issues facing the horticultural sector. During his career, Jim's research interests have included insect population dynamics, pest and natural enemy interactions, pesticide risk reduction and the special issues posed by organic production systems. Further key research areas are biological and chemical pest control methods, as well as pheromone technology in its various guises. Jim has also been instrumental in developing computer software tools for the horticultural industry.

Jim's expertise is demonstrated by the high regard with which he is held throughout the country and internationally. He is a regular scientific advisor on phytosanitary issues to help New Zealand's case in market access negotiations with overseas countries. Recently he served as a technical expert on the New Zealand team that successfully negotiated at the World Trade Organisation in Switzerland, to gain access for our apples into Australia. Jim also provides crucial guidance for the application of IFP to other sectors including winegrapes, summerfruit, citrus and onions. He is always generous about sharing his time and knowledge with colleagues, visitors and people from industry, and is regularly consulted by government agencies. Jim's international reputation is evident in the many requests to speak at overseas conferences, or to provide scientific and technical expertise for a range of countries.

Lastly, Jim's achievements encompass approximately 60 papers in scientific journals that he has written or co-authored, including over 45 in *New Zealand Plant Protection*. He also has well over 100 other publications, such as popular articles, conference proceedings, industry manuals and sector reports.