



Rabobank

*Media Release
September 18, 2012*

Leading scientist receives 2012 agribusiness leadership award

Internationally-renowned scientist Dr Jim Peacock AC has been named 2012 recipient of the Rabobank Leadership Award, in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the food and agricultural industries.

Dr Peacock – Australia’s former Chief Scientist and currently Fellow and Chair of CSIRO’s Office of the Chief Executive Science Team and Distinguished Professor at the University of Technology Sydney – was presented with the award at the annual Rabobank Leadership Award Dinner in Sydney last night.

In addition to serving as Chief Scientist to Australia, from 2006 to 2008, Dr Peacock headed CSIRO’s Plant Industry division for 26 years, pioneering research which led to numerous advances benefiting global agriculture.

Announcing the 2012 award winner, Rabobank Australia & New Zealand Group Chief Executive Thos Gieskes said the work undertaken by Dr Peacock over more than 40 years had “resulted in a broad and deep impact on agribusiness in Australia and well beyond”.

“Jim Peacock’s career is exemplary of a successful marriage of science and industry. He is a visionary leader who has made not only an outstanding contribution to science in Australia and internationally, but to industry-partnered science which has been of enormous benefit to agriculture and agribusiness around the globe,” Mr Gieskes said.

“Jim has long been acknowledged as a global leader in plant science, at the forefront of modern biotechnology research. And it is from this vantage point that he has played a key role in developing new biological innovations and fostering their application into the agribusiness industries.”

These achievements have included:

- developing gene technology research programs to benefit Australia’s important crop and pasture species, championing new approaches to wheat, barley and cotton breeding
- facilitating the first commercial introduction of a transgenic crop – insect-resistant cotton – in Australia, which has been critical for the sustainability of the local cotton industry
- initiating the development of a low-GI and high-fibre CSIRO variety of barley, BARLEYmax, now available on supermarket shelves
- founding the Gene Shears biotechnology company to commercialise ribozymes, a technology with significant potential for agricultural products and medical applications
- establishing Grain Gene, an alliance to work on projects of importance to the wheat industry and



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- involvement in development of the High Rainfall Zone Wheat Alliance between New Zealand and Australian research groups and wheat-breeding companies to develop new high-rainfall wheat varieties.

In their most recent research, Dr Peacock and his colleagues have made fundamental advances in the molecular basis of plant hybrid vigour. With hybrids providing much greater yield to farmers than the parent varieties, this is an area of great potential for the challenge of providing food security for the world's growing population.

Mr Gieskes said in addition to Dr Peacock's invaluable contribution to innovation in agribusiness, he had been "an outstanding champion and passionate advocate" for science in the wider community, and particularly with younger generations.

"Jim is a committed, energetic and inspirational leader in the science world. His personal commitment to science, his belief in science and its benefits for industry and society – along with his ability to bring the excitement of modern science to the public, and in particular promote science education in the school system – has been of enormous benefit to this country."

Among his achievements in this area, Dr Peacock was instrumental in establishing the Discovery Centre in Canberra, an interactive outreach centre which showcases CSIRO's activities to students and the general public. He initiated a number of programs to build scientific interest and skills among school children, including Primary Connections for Australian primary schools, Science by Doing for secondary school science teachers and Scientists in Schools, which forms partnerships between teachers and scientists (with more than 1600 partnerships existing in Australian schools today).

Dr Peacock was awarded a Companion of the Order of Australia (AC), the nation's highest honour, in 1994, for his contribution to science and scientific education in schools. He is a recipient of the Prime Minister's Prize for Science and a CSIRO Medal for Lifetime Achievement, in addition to numerous international honours.

The Rabobank Leadership Award is a key recognition of achievement in, and contribution to, Australia and New Zealand's food, beverage and agribusiness industries.

A peer-judged award, the judging panel comprises recipients of previous Rabobank agribusiness leadership awards including industry leaders Doug Rathbone, Donald McGauchie, Allan McCallum, John McLean, Max Ould, John Watson, Nick Burton Taylor, Robert Hill Smith, Dr Bruce Lee and last year's winner Bega Cheese executive chairman Barry Irvin.

The Rabobank Leadership Dinner was held at the Art Gallery of New South Wales. Keynote speaker was Group Managing Director of Coca-Cola Amatil Terry Davis, who spoke on the company's development into the Indonesian market.

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Rabobank Australia & New Zealand is a part of the international Rabobank Group, the world's leading specialist in food and agribusiness banking. Rabobank has more than 110 years' experience providing customised banking and finance solutions to businesses involved in all aspects of food and agribusiness. Rabobank is structured as a cooperative and operates in 47 countries, servicing the needs of more than nine million clients worldwide through a network of more than 1600 offices and branches. Rabobank Australia & New Zealand is one of Australasia's leading rural lenders and a significant provider of business and corporate banking and financial services to the region's food and agribusiness sector. The bank has 93 branches throughout Australia and New Zealand.

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