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2008 AARES Distinguished Fellow

John Mullen



John obtained his PhD from Texas A&M University in 1985, following graduation with B.Ag.Ec and M.Ec degrees from UNE. He was Principal Research Scientist and Research Leader, Economics Research, NSW Department of Primary Industry at the time of his retirement in March 2009. He also holds the position of Adjunct Professor at the University of Sydney and Charles Sturt University.

The major thrust of John's research program has been to enhance the efficiency of publicly funded agricultural research. Major components of this program have been concerned with estimating the returns from investment in R&D in Australian agriculture and evaluating the farm level impacts of new technologies. Using a unique dataset, he assembled back to 1953 on public R&D investment and broadacre productivity; he found that the return to public investment in agricultural research in Australia has remained the range of 15–40% despite a steady decline in investment. Recently, Australia has joined other developed countries in experiencing lower productivity growth in agriculture which may be partly related to declining investment in research. An important aspect of this work has been a consideration of the appropriate role of public and private sectors in the provision of research and advisory services to agriculture. Another dimension has been evaluating how the benefits and costs associated with new technologies or resource management strategies are shared between producers, processors, consumers and the broader community, noting that under normal market conditions, producers can expect a larger share of the benefits from traditional production research than

from research and promotion elsewhere in the marketing chains. John has recently been involved in research activities for ACIAR, in particular contributing his expertise in impact assessment studies in Asia. He is the author of a large number of professional papers in both Australian and international journals, as well as numerous other scientific reports and articles.

John has been a long-time supporter of AARES, to which he has contributed in many ways. These include a term as President in 2006, co-editor of the Society's Journal *AJARE* (2002–2004), AARES Councillor for NSW, winner of the best paper award in both *AJARE* in 1989 and *Connections* in 2007 and co-supervisor of the best PhD thesis winner in 2000. He has won many research grants from most of the Research and Development Corporations in Australia and from ACIAR.