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2008 AARES Distinguished Life Member

Malcolm Wegener



Dr Malcolm Wegener is a senior research fellow and former lecturer in agricultural and resource economics at The University of Queensland. Mal obtained both a bachelor's and a master's degree in agricultural science at The University of Queensland, where he also completed his PhD. He worked for the Queensland Department of Primary Industries as a regional agricultural economist and represented the Queensland Government on several statutory marketing boards. He then worked for the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations before joining the university in 1991. He continues to have a strong involvement in sugar industry research through the Cooperative Research Centre for Sugar Industry Innovation through Biotechnology.

Dr Wegener's main professional interest in his career of 40 years was in production economics and farm management. More recently he has become involved in the evaluation of agricultural research and in helping to change the role of agribusiness in both Australia and overseas. He is interested in the economic and environmental implications of the production of biofuels from crops and in the interaction between improved environmental management on farms and industry income, in the Australian sugar industry in particular.

Dr Wegener has long been involved with the sugar industry as a researcher, information manager, and crop modeller. He was involved in the first rigorous attempt to model growth and development of a major agricultural

crop in Australia when he was seconded to CSIRO Division of Tropical Crops and Pastures in 1986 to work on the development of the Auscane crop simulation model.

Over the past 10 years, Mal has been a seconded staff member of both the CRC for Sustainable Sugar Production based at James Cook University and the CRC for Sugar Industry Innovation through Biotechnology at UQ. He is recognised as the leading Australian academic with an interest in the economics of the sugar industry. He is especially interested in the interaction between economics and environmental impact in determining the sustainability of primary industries. His current international research interest is in helping to evaluate mechanised cane harvesting in the sugar industries in south China and India and in improving the nutrition of sweet potato in the Papua New Guinea Highlands.

Dr Wegener has a long record of service to the Australian Agricultural and Resource Economics Society. He is currently a Council Member and was Treasurer of the Society between 2000 and 2005. He is a past president of the Queensland branches of both the Australian Agricultural and Resource Economics Society and the Australian Institute of Agricultural Science. Between 2004 and 2007, he was deputy-chair of the organising committee for the 26th Conference of the International Association of Agricultural Economists held at the Gold Coast Convention Centre in August 2006.