

Two special mentions went to ENEA Casaccia for the project “*Morenut: merging innovation and traditions to boost hazelnut sustainable economic development*” and to the University of Tuscia, for the project “*Metagenomic and non destructive sensor for microbiome mapping and nut quality in hazelnut chain: metasensnut*”.

The proposals were received, evaluated, and ranked by an external and independent scientific commission, established by the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore of Piacenza, and coordinated by Professor Lorenzo Morelli, President of the Agricultural, Food, and Environmental Sciences Department, based on a scorecard promoting innovation, sustainability, and ease of implementation of the projects presented.

International experts of the sector, such as Thomas Molnar, Jean-Luc Reigne, Marco Scortichini e Ximena Rueda participated in the event as well.

These awards prove once again Ferrero’s **constant dedication** towards **quality’s excellence** and towards **innovation**, the **continuous search for sustainable agricultural practices**, and its **respect for the environment**, elements that have determined the company’s global success.

A PRIZE OF RECOGNITION FOR ANTONIO J. FELIPE AND RAFEL SOCIAS I COMPANY

The Alianza Agroalimentaria Aragonesa (Aragonese Agri-Food Alliance) recognized the research efforts of A.J. Felipe and R. Socias i Company in the development of new almond cultivars and their effective transfer to the almond growers. They received the Prize on October 23, 2014 and in that occasion they said the following words of thanks:

Words of Antonio J. Felipe:

Fist I feel obliged to express our gratitude to the Alianza Agroalimentaria Aragonesa and, according to its part in it, to the College of Agricultural Engineers, for conced-

ing this prize, highly gratifying to me since I have been retired for more than 16 years, at an age when one usually only keeps good souvenirs and experiences from the professional times. At this moment I only expect that the persons with whom I shared efforts, illusions and works, those I knew along the years or only met a few times along my professional activity, may remember me with affect or sympathy, at the same level of my feelings towards them.

The less agreeable moments have fallen in oblivion, more and more with time, and it is satisfactory to say that they were the least.

Once I made these allusions to my personal feelings, I would like to leave some token that this prize may have been granted to Rafel and me because we have headed a team working in close collaboration during many years in order to better know and improve the almond plant material.

I want to remember and share this distinction with all those collaborating in our work with their contributions of any kind. But, since they are so many, the attempt to name all of them would be impossible. However, it is of justice to especially recognize the valuable collaboration of all the people from the Unidad de Fruticultura, from the colleague researchers to the field workers, as well as to the doctoral students, the scholars and all those spending some time with us. Our gratitude goes also to all those collaborating with our work even not being CITA personnel.

It is convenient to remember that fruit tree breeding is a very time requiring job. The years of work in planning, developing and coordinating all the different tasks in order to reach the established objectives must be counted in decades. As a consequence, many people take part in this work with contributions of all kind.

In order of not wasting uselessly years of work, a previous and clear knowledge of the problems to be solved must be



Dr Antonio Felipe and Dr Rafael Socias i Company received the prize from Mr Joaquín Olona, Counselor of the Department of Rural Development and Sustainability of the Aragon Regional Government.

reached in order to plan carefully the procedure to follow and to arrange all the required resources. plant material, facilities, funds, etc.

Our activities on almond breeding started in 1965, devoting the first stage to compile information on the problems affecting almond growing in the different Spanish growing regions, reaching the following conclusions:

- The usual cultivars were early blooming.
- Late frosts were very frequent.
- Very low presence of bees, absolutely required for cross-pollinating the self-incompatible cultivars then grown.
- The only rootstocks were seedling almonds.
- In order to improve almond production cultivars solving these pitfalls were required, as well as rootstocks more efficient and suitable for irrigation.

At the beginning we looked to establish a large and diverse almond collection. It included mainly cultivars from the Mediterranean countries, but also from California, Northern Africa and the then Soviet Union. I must mention the guidance of Dr. Grasselly, from the French INRA in this beginning as well as his collaboration during all time. We assembled more than one hundred cultivars, including also our prospection, thus allowing the observation of the wide genetic variability of almond.

At the same time Rafel Socias i Company went to complement his formation with a post-graduate scholarship at the University of California at Davis, under the guidance of Dr. Dale E. Kester, the highest world authority on almond and of fond memories for many of us. When he returned to Spain we had the fortune of his integration in the Unidad de Fruticultura to collaborate in the team of almond research. Since then, his fondness, enthusiasm, clinical eye and scientific preparation has been the motive power of the almond cultivar breeding in our group. Soon after his incorporation, I shifted to work mostly on rootstocks.

I shall finish concluding:

The result has been that the team working on almond breeding in Zaragoza has ob-

tained a series of cultivars allowing the solution of many of the problems found at the beginning of our work. The cultivars put at the disposal of the Spanish growers were at that moment the mostly advanced in solving these problems. It is satisfying to see that they continue improving not only the almond production in Spain, but also in other countries.

To complement the improvement of the plant material, our team has also worked in breeding new rootstocks, probably the mostly efficient, at least for almond, among those available at present. They have also contributed to the improvement of almond production searched by us.

We must recognize that all the problems have not been yet fully solved. However, some important advances have been obtained and some ways were laid out, being adopted by other research teams.

I finish restating my thanks to the Alianza Agroalimentaria Aragonesa for the Prize and to all you for your attention.

Words of Rafel Socias i Company:

Firstly I would like to thank the Alianza Agroalimentaria Aragonesa for this recognition. It is specially valued as it comes from civil society, meaning that our work has actually reached the final recipients for whom we undertook our work. I have always believed that research must give something back to society as a service for the funding we receive from it. These funds are administered with austerity by the Government, who in turn do not always appreciate the results. Consequently, since it is recognition from Society and not from the Administration, it has special significance for me, and for which I am sincerely grateful.

Secondly, as Antonio has already done, I would like to extend my gratitude to all those that have worked with us over our years of research. It is impossible to name them all. Agricultural research is a work of synthesis, where the efforts of all must be united, as with any agricultural production, where the synthesis of many factors contributes to the success of production: plant material, soil, climate, orchard management... Therefore, I would like to share

this recognition with all those that have been involved in this work.

Thirdly I must express my personal gratitude to Antonio Felipe for many reasons. I repeat that all of us working in plant breeding drink from wells we have not dug and are warmed by fires that we did not build. However, when Antonio started his work on almond in 1965, there were very few previous works and he had to start by digging the well and lighting the fire. I have been able to profit from his work, and therefore feel the need to express special acknowledgement of it. Therefore, please allow me to say some words directly to him.

Thank you, Antonio, for your tenacity. You undertook the commitment to work on almond even though some in charge of fruit research did not support your dedication. Time has shown their lack of vision through the success of your work.

Thanks, Antonio, for your confidence. Even though the same person did not want me to work with you on almond research, you made my collaboration possible. I hope that I have been worthy of the confidence you placed in me then.

Thank you for your example. You know that I believe that an agricultural researcher must be humble because he is aware of how much he does not know. He must be open, in order to transmit what he knows. And he must be adaptable, in order to give a lecture in an international symposium or a talk in the smallest village. And you have been an example of all of that, together with two other leading researchers whose names I do not want to forget at this moment, Mariano Cambra and Manolo Carrera.

Thanks for your teaching. I had the enormous privilege of having known the three leading almond researchers of the 20th century: you, Dale Kester and Charles Grasselly. I have been able to admire your dedication and collaborate in your work. Very few people have had the opportunity to be proud of such masters.

Thank you for your dedication. My opinion that engineers must not give answers but provide solutions has been fully demonstrated with you. The Spanish almond sec-

tor has found many solutions to its problems thanks to your work. The success of 'Guara', with such an Aragonese name, probably does not compare with any other in the history of Spanish agriculture.

Upon your retirement, my efforts for you to receive the Great Cross of Agricultural Merit was to no avail due to the Administration's lack of generosity, conferring you the Medal alone, even upsetting our autonomous authorities. However, civil society today recognizes your merit.

Thank you finally, Antonio, for allowing me to accompany you for many years in your research. And my most sincere thanks to the Alianza Agroalimentaria Aragonesa for their recognition of my endeavour, which is no more than the continuation of Anto-

nio's work. At this moment, my only wish is that the well will not run dry and the fire will not burn out.

Thank you very much.

CASTANEA, A JOURNAL ON CHESTNUT

Since 2014, the Department of Agriculture, Forest and Food Sciences (DISAFA) of the University of Turin and the Regional Chestnut Center of Piemonte publish an online Journal, CASTANEA (ISSN: 2284-4813) that offers scientific and technical

contributions by researchers, technicians, traders and people interested in chestnut cultivation. Thanks to the contribution of many experts in chestnut cultivation, CASTANEA represents in particular an overview of Italian chestnut statement, with constant insights dedicated to the chestnut producing countries in the world. The underlying concept of the magazine is that chestnut has not only an important history, but also a promising future. For this reason the magazine is dedicated especially to the new generations, adopting a young language, and a modern form of communication. Online journal version can be consulted at www.centrocastanicoltura.unito.it/newsletter.html and an email could be sent to centro.castanicoltura@unito.it requesting to receive the magazine via email.

