

## CLOSING CEREMONY

Prof. Gian Paolo Vannozzi  
*President of the International Sunflower Organization*

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The closing ceremony of the 13th. International Sunflower conference is being held today in the ancient city of Volterra, in the beautiful hall kindly made available to us by the Cassa di Risparmio bank of Volterra, to whom I express my heartfelt thanks, as also to the Mayor, the Local Council and the Mountain Community who have all assisted us in making your stay in this magnificent city more pleasant.

The 13th. International Sunflower Conference was attended by researchers from 26 different countries throughout the world. A total of 223 reports were presented, of which 83 concerned the sector of agronomy, 81 the sector of genetic improvement, 35 were on defense, 20 on feeding and technology, and 4 dealt with economics.

The scientific level of the presentations was exceedingly satisfying and I am sure that the discussion session and the many informal contacts and exchanges among participants will provide a further boost to research on this oilseed crop in all sectors of study.

Sunflower cultivation is currently expanding to new areas, in Africa, South America and Asia. Unfortunately in Europe, however, i.e. in the area where highest yields are obtained, and in the European Community in particular, sunflower is encountering a number of serious problems. Under the new Community agricultural policy, as has been extensively illustrated in the economic reports presented to the Conference, sunflower is heavily penalized, in that the price level is such that in many areas it is not profitable to grow this crop.

This phenomenon is particularly marked in the Mediterranean areas, with Tuscany - the region where this conference is taking place - being particularly hard-hit. It is well to remember that sunflower is one of the few rotation crops available in Mediterranean climate environments. Its disappearance from the cropping system could result in a further drive to grain cultivation, which is already burdened with surpluses, or to a return to the practice of letting land lie fallow.

Current Community policy is destroying an important agricultural situation by failing to take into account the peculiar characteristics of Mediterranean agriculture, which is already heavily penalized by unfavorable and unpredictable climatic trends compared to the more fertile areas of central Europe. The Board of the International Sunflower Association intends to engage in strong action to counter this approach, and hereby invites all members to exercise pressure over the responsible authorities in order to achieve prompt resolution of this situation

that is penalizing the poorer agricultural areas. We are not asking for privileges, but simply that the Mediterranean areas be granted the same contributions as the areas benefiting from more favorable climates.

Yesterday a meeting of the Board of the Association was held and composition of the board was reassessed. The trust my colleagues have placed in me, and the expressions of goodwill I have received from all sides - which I will endeavour not to disappoint - have persuaded me to stay at the helm of our Association for another four-year period. Unfortunately, however, the General Secretary Mr. Colin R. Seecombe, who in fact on the occasion of the 12th. Conference announced his intention of stepping down from this position, will now be leaving us. In taking reluctant note of his decision, I feel it is my duty to thank him on behalf of all the members of the executive Committee for the valuable contribution he has made.

The new secretary is to be Mr. André Pouzet, Director of Cetiom, an interprofessional organization that has been extremely active in promoting the spread of oilseed crops and sunflower in particular in France. I extend a warm welcome to him and on behalf of all the executive Committee. I wish him luck in his new task, confident that his professional expertise and his in-depth knowledge of the field will provide a boost to the development of our Association.

Dr. Jacques Morice has ceased his activity at Inra (France) on account of having reached the age limit, and has asked to be replaced as a member of the Executive Committee. In accepting his request, I would like to thank Dr. Morice for his work on the Committee. As a replacement, Dr. Felicity Vear has been nominated. For many years Dr. Vear has been active in the field of research on sunflower, achieving excellent results at the Inra station of Clermont Ferrand (France). No other modifications were carried out in the composition of the Executive Committee of the Association.

The 14th. International Conference will take place in China in 1996. Unfortunately the Vice-President of the Association, Dr. Zhov Yuheng, was unable to attend this year's Conference on account of grave family problems; for this reason I am not at present in a position to specify either the place or the date at which the Conference will take place. The appropriate information will be forwarded as soon as possible.

The Executive Board has established that the 15th. Conference is to be held in France in the year 2000.

Times are changing and our association has decided that we must also move with the times. The moment has come to alter the statute in order to allow greater participation by all members, above all from a financial point of view. For one important issue upon which attention has focused recently is the increasingly perceived need to have a scientific journal devoted to our own field, with assessment by referee, in order to ensure elevated scientific quality. The Executive Committee has entrusted me and the General Secretary with the task of studying

various different possibilities for alterations to the Statute. Within next year you will receive our proposals for alteration, which must be approved in the constituent assembly on the occasion of the 14th. Conference.

We have now reached the most important moment of this concluding ceremony: the awarding of the Pustovoit Prize. It should be recalled that this prize is awarded on the occasion of an International Sunflower Conference to scholars who have made a crucial contribution to scientific progress in sunflower cultivation. For this prize three scholars have been chosen, who unfortunately, on account of age limits, are no longer actively engaged in scientific research, but who made very significant contributions to sunflower cultivation during the course of their career. It is with great pleasure that I hereby inform you that the recipients of the U.S. Pustovoit Awards are Dr. A.B. Dyakov (Russia); Dr. G. Teodorova (Bulgaria); Dr. Piquemal (France).

The following tributes illustrate the motivations in virtue of which they have been awarded the prize. The motivation of Dr. G. Piquemal will be read by Dr. Felicity Vear, member of the Executive Committee, who for many years has worked with Dr. Piquemal on sunflower research.

The 13th. Conference is approaching its closure. In wishing everyone a pleasant journey home back to their families and their work, I would like to thank you all most sincerely for your participation, and once again I wish to express my deepest thanks to Prof. A. Benvenuti and all the members of the Department of Agronomia of the Faculty of Agrarian Studies of the University of Pisa for the excellent organization of this conference.