Training of Animal Science Professionals for meeting the challenges of the XXI Century

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Date: Tuesday, 2 March 2010
Time: From 4-5pm
Place: Molecular and Chemical Sciences Lecture Theatre (G33), UWA, (Fairway, Entrance No. 4, Car Park 14 and 21)

Animal production must play a vital role in achieving food security, promoting economic growth and reducing poverty and social inequalities in our nations. The new animal scientist needs to be a leader of change and sustainability. Creating this new animal scientist requires a process of introspection and, if necessary, a transformation of the programs that have been offered to train these professionals, to provide the students with a broader view of their profession and the important role that they need to play in the future of our society. Our challenge is to make animal scientists understand that our profession is an important activity for the development and stability of our nations. Programs training animal scientists need to include at least professionals with a strong scientific and technological background; with the necessary skills and abilities to successfully operate animal production units (including “down-stream” activities in the agrifood chain); with strong ethical, social and environmental conscience; and with the skills needed to create successful networks for collaboration. In essence, the education of the animal scientist of the 21st Century is much more complex than at any other time in our history. We as mentors have the responsibility to initiate these changes and break out of our traditional comfort zones, constantly asking ourselves if what we are doing makes a difference for the future of the world.

Dr Miguel Garcia-Winder is an agronomist with specialty in Animal Production. He holds a MSc (University of Nebraska in Animal Science) and a PhD (West Virginia University in Reproductive Physiology). He has served as researcher and professor as well as public officer and private consultant. Since 2002 Dr Miguel Garcia-Winder was Director for Agribusiness Competitiveness at the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture (IICA) where he was Head of the Inter-American Program for the Promotion of Trade, Agribusiness and Food Safety. He was responsible to lead and coordinate hemispheric and global initiatives in diverse areas related to the development of competitive agribusiness, looking specially to the development of sustainable and innovative agribusiness models for the small and medium size producer and family agriculture, the development of new market organizations, entrepreneurial capacity building, regional integration, strengthening of agrifood chains, the development of rural agroindustry, trade policy and regional integration. Recently his personal efforts have focused on developing meaningful and sustainable ways to link small farmers to markets as a way to raise their income and to contribute to food security in the region and to find innovative agribusiness models to add value and improve competitiveness.