



TRUST FOR ADVANCEMENT OF AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES  
(TAAS)  
IARI, New Delhi, India

## **DR. M. S. SWAMINATHAN AWARD**

for  
**LEADERSHIP IN AGRICULTURE**

*Presented to*

**Dr. Surinder K. Vasal**

### **Citation**

Dr. Surinder K. Vasal is an accomplished Plant Breeder and Geneticist whose work on maize led to the development of high quality protein maize (QPM). He, alongwith his colleague, Dr. Evangelina Villegas shared the 2000 World Food Prize for their valuable contributions.

Dr. Vasal was born in 1938 in Amritsar, India. He took Ph.D. in Genetics and Plant Breeding from the Indian Agricultural Research Institute, New Delhi. Dr. Vasal began his career as a researcher in the Department of Agriculture, Himachal Pradesh and later worked as Maize Breeder at the Himachal Agriculture College.

In 1967, Dr. Vasal took up an assignment with the Rockefeller Foundation in Thailand to conduct research on maize in close collaboration with the National Corn and Sorghum Research Center of Kasetsart University. From there, he moved to the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT), Mexico in 1970 and supervised the high lysine maize program. He also held positions of Germplasm Coordinator, Head of Maize Research and Coordinator of Asian Regional Maize Programme. Dr. Vasal was honored to be the first distinguished scientist at CIMMYT.

With the development of Quality Protein Maize, the amino acid content in the diets of several millions has improved since 1990s. Quality Protein Maize Germplasm, developed by Dr. Vasal, is now being used worldwide for developing QPM cultivars. Dr. Vasal has developed important concepts and methodologies and released a large number of promising inbred lines for use by the maize researchers worldwide.

In 1997, Dr. Vasal took up a new role, leading CIMMYT's Asian Regional Maize Program in Thailand. He strengthened regional hybrid research activities and coordinated the Tropical Asian Maize Network (TAMNET). He specifically played an important role in human resource development by training hundreds of young scientists from the developing countries.

Dr. Vasal is a member of the American Society of Agronomy, the Crop Science Society of America (whose Presidential Award he won in 2000), and India's National Academy of Agricultural Sciences. He has received the 1996 International Service in Crop Science Award and the 1999 International Agronomy Award, in addition to accolades from the Governments/Institutions in Honduras, Peru, Panama, India, Vietnam, Bangladesh and a few other countries. He is also the recipient of Chinese Friendship Award of 2001.

The Trust for Advancement of Agricultural Sciences takes pride in honouring Dr. Vasal with the Third Dr. M.S. Swaminathan Award for Leadership in Agriculture on this day, the 3<sup>rd</sup> May, 2008.

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