

Trust for Advancement of Agricultural Sciences (TAAS)
Avenue II, Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI)
Pusa Campus, New Delhi - 110012

**Dr S.K. Vasal Young Scientist Award for Innovation
in Hybrid Research**

Background

Dr S.K. Vasal Young Scientist Award for Innovation in Hybrid Research instituted by TAAS to recognize the enormous contributions of Dr SK Vasal, a world renowned maize breeder who was the recipient of World Food Prize in 2000 for his outstanding work on the development of quality protein maize hybrids at the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT), Mexico. The award is instituted through an endowment established at TAAS through generous contributions made by Dr S.K. Vasal.

Contributions of Dr SK Vasal

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, along with his colleague, Dr Evangelina Villegas shared the 2000 World Food Prize for their valuable contributions. He did his Ph.D. in Genetics and Plant Breeding from the Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI), New Delhi and started his career as a researcher in the Department of Agriculture, Himachal Pradesh and later served as Maize Breeder at the Himachal Agriculture College. He also worked with the Rockefeller Foundation in Thailand on a research project on maize in close collaboration with the National Corn and Sorghum Research Center of Kasetsart University. Dr Vasal moved to the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT), Mexico in 1970 and supervised the high lysine maize program. He held positions of Germplasm Coordinator, Head of Maize Research and Coordinator of Asian Regional Maize Program. 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. The QPM is referenced as "miracle maize" because of its role in alleviating malnourishment. This was accomplished by Dr Vasal by adopting several breeding approaches. Using a vast genepool of maize genetic resources, he developed donor stocks from which many QPM germplasm lines were generated through a modified backcross program and various recurrent selection procedures. Dr Vasal has developed important concepts and methodologies and released a large number of promising inbred lines for use by the maize researchers worldwide. A large number of maize varieties are grown commercially in several developing countries of Asia, Central and South America, and Africa and created a great impact on food production in the world. 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 also honored Dr Vasal with the Third Dr MS Swaminathan Award for Leadership in Agriculture in 2008. He is such a dedicated person that even after retirement from active service long back, he continued teaching Genetics and Plant Breeding courses in IARI, New Delhi and Punjab Agricultural University PAU), Ludhiana

Objective of the Award

The major objective of Dr S.K. Vasal Young Scientist Award for Innovation in Hybrid Research is to recognize the contributions of young scientists (both men and women) who have shown professional excellence in innovation in hybrid research for developing improved hybrids of crops through a spectrum of science based activities that are efficient, cost effective and can be achieved in a relatively lesser time and also designed strategies to maximize the use of plant genetic resources together with heterotic groupings and patterns. The award is to encourage young scientists who have worked with utmost dedication for developing innovative technologies and/or hybrids that have impacted or likely to impact both productivity and overall agricultural growth.

Eligibility

- The Award is to be given annually by TAAS to an Indian scientist.
- The Award is meant as an incentive for the young scientist (men or women) for his innovative research.
- A deceased person will not be considered for the Award. However, the Award may be given posthumously in the event of demise of awardee.
- The age eligibility is up to maximum of 40 years.

Description of the Award

- The Award consists of a cash prize of Rs. 1,00, 000 (Rupees one lakh only), a citation and the plaque.

Procedure for application/nomination

- Application must be submitted in the prescribed application form (attached) through proper channel, with specific recommendations of the Head of Institution.
- Five hard copies and one soft copy of the application /nomination form be submitted by the due date announced.
- Application will be valid only for the year for which applied.
- Application received after the due date will not be entertained.
- Application completed in all respects and accompanied with all attachments be sent to:

The Secretary
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Pusa Campus, New Delhi - 110012
Phone: +91-11-25843243; +91-8130111237
Email: taasiari@gmail.com
Website: www.taas.in

Selection Procedure

- Selection of the Awardee will be made by a Selection Committee of eminent experts constituted by the Board of Trustees of TAAS.
- The Selection Committee will critically examine the information provided in the nomination form with specific focus on the significant contributions, awards and honours, and quality of publications of the nominee.
- The recommendations of the Selection Committee will be considered by the Board of Trustees for final decision.
- The deliberations of the Board of Trustees relating to final selection will be kept confidential.
- The selection made by the Board of Trustees will be final and no representation against the decision will be entertained.