

From the Oat Newsletter, volume 50, 2006:

Dr. Solomon Kibite
Award for Distinguished Service to Oat Improvement



It is with great respect and honor that we honor the late Dr. Solomon Kibite, former AAFC oat Breeder and researcher at Lacombe, Alberta, Canada, with the 2006 Distinguished Service to Oats Improvement Award from the American Oat Workers. Dr. Kibite has been a student colleague, a professional colleague and collaborator, and a friend to many of us for the more than 30 years that he provided his outstanding service to the Canadian and international oat community.

Solomon, oat breeder and researcher at the Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada Lacombe Research Centre in Alberta, Canada passed away suddenly at age 54 on August 20, 2003. Solomon was born in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and grew up there during very turbulent times. He completed his B.Sc. degree in Plant Sciences at Alemaya College in Ethiopia in 1973 and then came to Canada where he earned his M. Sc. and Ph.D. in plant breeding from the Plant Sciences Dept., University of Manitoba. In 1980 he moved to the University of Alberta where he taught and conducted research on wheat and barley until 1984 when he joined AAFC as cereal breeder at Lacombe.

While initially responsible for wheat, barley and oat R&D, shortly after arriving at Lacombe Solomon's responsibilities became 100% oat and he excelled in his activity as

an oat researcher for nearly 20 years. During his all too short career he released 13 oat, barley and wheat varieties. His most recent oat release, AC Morgan, is an outstanding variety for the non-rust areas of western Canada with high grain yield potential, very good straw strength and good milling quality. Not only is it a widely grown variety; it will undoubtedly survive in the pedigree of many future western Canadian varieties.

Solomon's breeding materials have also found their way in numerous breeding programs around the world. He developed important germplasm with acid tolerance, herbicide tolerance, early maturity (the variety Lu), hullless types (the variety Boudrias), forage types (the variety Murphy) and with high levels of antioxidants, beta glucan, protein and fat. This material will be important in future Canadian and international oat varieties. He also developed techniques to more efficiently measure important quality traits.

Solomon was internationally respected as a Canadian member of the Executive Committee of the International Oat Conference, original Chair of the 2006 American Oat Workers Conference, and as an Assoc. Editor of the Canadian Journal of Plant Science. He served on the executive of the Western Expert Committee on Grain Breeding, the Prairie Region Recommending Committee for Grain, and many other regional and provincial committees.

In recognition of his outstanding contribution to western Canadian oat R&D Solomon was recognized by the oat producers of the area as the first recipient of the Kyrilchuk Award for Outstanding Contribution to the Oat Industry from the Oat Producer's Association of Alberta (now the Prairie Oat Grower's Association) in 1998.

Solomon was known as a real gentleman by the Canadian and International oat community. Colleagues from around the world have spoken fondly of their social interaction with Solomon who often enjoyed pleasant visits with many colleagues and their families. Solomon had the ability to foster much collaboration with scientists around the world that turned into friendships beyond the work.

We miss our respected colleague, his quiet efficiency and his great eye for oat. Solomon was a great colleague and, for many members of the oat community, a special friend.