



## **George Fedak presented with a gold medal by the Ukrainian National Academy of Science.**

This past December, Dr. George Fedak, of the Ottawa Research and Development Centre of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, was honoured by the Ukrainian National Academy of Science for his scientific work and his collaborations with Ukrainian scientists. Although George has spent most of his time working with barley and wheat, he has also done much to contribute to oat research.

The original article concerning the award is here:

<http://www.nas.gov.ua/UA/Messages/News/Pages/View.aspx?MessageID=3685>

Thanks to Oksana Korol (also of ORDC, AAFC) we also have an English translation of the portions relating to George:

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### **“Professor G. Fedak and Dr. V. Morgun were awarded a Gold Medal in honour of Vernadskyj by the Ukrainian National Academy of Science**

The National Academy of Science (NAS) of Ukraine has awarded the Gold Medal, Order of V.I. Vernadskyj\*, to Professor George Fedak.

On December 27, 2017, the Presidium of NAS of Ukraine, responding to the results of a competition for the year 2017, awarded Gold Medals in honour of Vernadskyj to Dr. Volodymyr Morgun and Professor George Fedak for outstanding achievements in the fields of genetics and plant breeding for agricultural plants.

The Gold Medal in honour of Vernadskyj by NAS of Ukraine is the highest honour awarded to domestic and overseas scientists for outstanding achievements in the fields of natural, technical, and sociological sciences.

President of the NAS of Ukraine Dr. B. E. Paton stressed that the scientific research performed by the 2017 competition winners has been instrumental in producing hundreds of productive varieties of wheat, corn, and barley, and is well known around the world.

### **Biography**

George Fedak is a world-renowned scientist who has made an invaluable contribution to cereal research; in particular, barley and wheat.



The wide field of his scientific interests covers such topics as intergeneric hybridization of cereals, research and selective breeding of genes found in wild/native species, molecular genetics and molecular cytology, research of QTL loci in populations of doubled haploids, development of physical maps of ESTs induced by fungal infection in wheat, and pyramiding of disease resistance genes.

He has developed modern methods of researching haploid populations using molecular markers, different methods of haploidy-production, embryo rescue for wide hybrids, and callus culture for induction of chromosome recombination, among others. His theoretical studies have been practically implemented in the form of several Canadian barley cultivars. As a result of producing conventional and interspecific hybrids, he has developed unique germplasm, which is used in breeding programs for resistance against *Fusarium* species.

George Fedak was born on December 28, 1940, in Hudson Bay, Saskatchewan, Canada. In 1963, he received his BSA with distinction from the University of Saskatchewan in the field of Crop Science. His PhD, received from the University of Manitoba (1969) and PDF, done at the Ottawa Research Station (1970), were both in the field of Cytogenetics.

Currently, he is an Adjunct Professor in the Department of Biological Sciences at the University of Manitoba and a member of the Associate Graduate Faculty at the University of Guelph. His academic career includes reviewing and making recommendations on promotion and awards documents for a number of Canadian and U.S. university professors, serving on a review panel, evaluating research proposals for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and serving as a scientific liaison for NSERC grants at McGill University and the Plant Biotechnology Institute of NRC. Prof. Fedak has co-supervised students from Laval University, the University of Guelph, the University of Manitoba, and the Ministry of Education in China, and has been an external examiner of Ph.D. theses from a number of Canadian universities, as well as the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences and the University of Sydney. He has received research grants from the Western Grains Research Foundation, the Ontario Oat and Barley Council, Ontario Wheat Producers, and more. He is also active in the wider scientific community, being a representative of the Genetics Society of Canada to the Expert Committee on Plant Gene Resources, as well as the coordinator of linkage mapping studies on barley chromosome 7 for the International Barley Genetics Coordinating Committee. From 1990 to 2000, he was an associate editor of the journal *Genome* and is currently serving on the editorial board of the *Wheat Information Service* and *Ukrainian Journal of Genetics and Plant Breeding*. In addition, he was one of the coordinators of a consortium on oat molecular marker mapping funded by the Quaker Oats Co..

The work of Dr. Fedak has been highly recognized by the Canadian government. He received a certificate of achievement "For exceptional collaborative research and technology transfer work on the Oat Genome Project", funded by Quaker Oats Canada and an Agcellance Award "For exceptional research and innovation as a member of the Oat Genome mapping project", presented by the Minister and Deputy Minister of Agriculture, respectively. For his



achievements in genetics research and service to the society, Dr. Fedak received the President's Award from the Genetics Society of Canada.

George Fedak has authored more than 200 research publications published in established scientific journals, as well as 13 book chapters.

In addition to these achievements, Dr. Fedak has a high standing in the international scientific community. He was invited to deliver keynote addresses at International Barley Genetics Symposia held in Edinburgh, Scotland, 1981; Okoyamo, Japan, 1986; and Helsingborg, Sweden, 1992. He was also invited by the world-renowned IAEA/FAO to be an expert member of the Research Coordination Group on "Radiation induced mutations and other advanced technologies for production of seed crop mutants suitable for environmentally sustainable agriculture". Dr. Fedak has been invited numerous times to be a keynote speaker and participant at international conferences held, among other locations, in the former USSR and later in independent Ukraine.

George Fedak continues to maintain close ties with the Ukrainian scientific community. He is currently a member of the editorial board of a number of Ukrainian scientific journals, and provides Ukrainian biological scientists with significant information and important scientific periodicals such as Genome and the Canadian Journal of Plant Pathology."

\* Vernadskyj was a famous geochemist, as well as the founder of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine and its first President. More here: [Who is V.I. Vernadskyj?](#)

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Congratulations, George!