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Cornell scientist receives 2008 International Award for Research in Agrochemicals

By Joe Ogradnick

David Soderlund, professor of insecticide toxicology and entomology chair at Cornell University's New York State Agricultural Experiment Station in Geneva, received the 2008 American Chemical Society (ACS) International Award for Research in Agrochemicals, at its national meeting in Philadelphia Aug. 19.

The award, conferred annually by the ACS, recognized Soderlund's "pioneering research and continuing discoveries on the insect sodium channel and insecticides that disrupt its action." The award recognition included a daylong symposium in Soderlund's honor entitled, "Molecular Mechanisms of Insecticide Action, Selectivity, and Resistance."

Soderlund, who joined Cornell in 1978, is a leading international authority on the toxicology and mode of action of insecticides affecting ion channels. Soderlund is best known for his research on the pyrethroids and other compounds affecting voltage-sensitive sodium channels, the work that formed the basis of this award.

Soderlund was among the first in the insecticide toxicology research community to incorporate molecular biology tools into insecticide action and resistance research. His work, which includes studies of sodium channels from rats and humans as well as insects, has identified molecular mechanisms of resistance to pyrethroids in insects and factors that contribute to the safety of these insecticides to humans. His use of cloned human sodium channels in cell expression systems demonstrates the intrinsic sensitivity of humans to insecticides, which has important regulatory implications.

Soderlund received his B.S. in biology from Pacific Lutheran University in 1971 and his Ph.D. in entomology from the University of California at Berkeley in 1976. After postdoctoral research at Rothamsted Experimental Station in England, he joined the department of entomology at the Geneva Experiment Station. Soderlund is also director of the Northeast Region IR-4 Program, part of a national cooperative program between the USDA and land grant universities to register crop protection tools for use on specialty crops.

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David Soderlund

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