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NEW YORK STATE AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION

GENEVA, NEW YORK 14456

A DIVISION OF THE NEW YORK STATE COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, ITHACA, NEW YORK  
A STATUTORY COLLEGE OF THE STATE UNIVERSITY



DONALD W. BARTON

DIRECTOR

R. E. KRAUSS

EDITOR

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GENEVA SCIENTIST--WELL ROUNDED INDIVIDUAL

Geneva, N. Y.--What is the man himself like that is named the individual who has made the greatest contribution to American agriculture during the past 1 to 3 years?

That is the distinction Dr. Wendell L. Roelofs has of Cornell University's New York State Agricultural Experiment Station's Department of Entomology at Geneva. He and a colleague, Dr. Harry Shorey of the University of California, Riverside, have been named 1977 winners of the prestigious Alexander von Humboldt Foundation Award for their contributions to American agriculture. Both work with insect sex pheromones (sex attractants) as a possible means of controlling economically damaging insects.

Many individuals still think of scientists as "that man in the ivory tower, surrounded by test tubes who spends his lifetime thinking in the abstract of ways to solve man's problems." Nothing could be farther from the truth when speaking of Dr. Roelofs, and he is fairly typical of the scientists who are responsible for the research developments that mean higher quality food products, better processing techniques, blemish free fruits and vegetables, and an adequate supply of food and fiber to take care of a population in this country that is expanding at the rate of a new Philadelphia each year.

Dr. Roelofs certainly has all the necessary scientific qualifications that are necessary to do his job. He received his Ph.D. degree in organic chemistry from Indiana University in 1964. He joined the Station faculty in 1965 as an assistant professor and was promoted to associate professor in 1969. He was promoted to full professor in 1976.

As a scientist, he is known throughout the world for his research on insect sex attractants, a field in which he is among the pioneering workers. His studies began in 1965 when he first came to the Geneva Station. In fact,

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he was the first non entomologist to join the Station's Department of Entomology. As a biochemist, it was felt that Dr. Roelofs could best serve the needs of New York agriculture by attempting to identify, isolate, and reproduce in the laboratory the attractant material emitted by many species of female moths at mating time to attract the male. He not only accomplished this feat with just one insect species, but during his 12 years at the Station has identified more than 100 separate attractants of different insects.

Later in his career, Dr. Roelofs developed highly refined tests which greatly speeded the process of identifying the attractant materials of different insect species. He has not been satisfied with just staying in his laboratory doing detailed studies and analyses, but has worked closely with other entomologists in the department to field test the artificially produced attractants. The results of these trials have been the development of a highly sophisticated monitoring system in many orchards throughout the country to determine insect populations. This has enabled scientists to make accurate predictions to growers regarding the amount of pesticides that have to be used to control a certain species of insect, and in some cases, has completely eliminated the use of one or more sprays where populations of a species have been found to be so low that they would not cause any economic damage.

So, here is a scientist that is creative, brilliant, and adaptable to changing conditions. He is dedicated to providing the safest and best possible control measures for insect populations. Now in his mid-30's, Dr. Roelofs has made a reputation for himself that has taken him to China as a member of the United States Insect Control Delegation, to the Netherlands to conduct additional research on sex pheromones, and to numerous scientific meetings not only throughout the United States but also in Japan, Israel, and other countries.

He was awarded the Entomological Society of America's J. Everett Bussart Memorial Award in 1973 and a Cornell University College of Agriculture Traveling Fellowship in 1974. Now, he is co-winner of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation Award, a competition so strong that it could have involved one or more of 100,000 scientists in this country working in the field of agricultural research.

That is the scientist part of Dr. Roelofs. Away from the office, he is almost as active socially and in the community as in his laboratory. He is an ardent lover of music, both classical and popular; he plays baseball well

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enough to be a member of a team that won the City of Geneva Championship. He was a leader in the development of recreational facilities that were constructed entirely by Station employees on the campus of the Station; he serves on numerous civic committees; and he has a sense of humor that not only shows frequently at social events, but is woven into any discussion he has of his very complex research program.

Dr. Roelofs is truly that kind of individual whom every department head wants as a member of his faculty. He has a keen sense of loyalty to his work and the institution which pays his salary, he enjoys passing his knowledge on to young graduate students just starting and allowing them to share in the credit for his research accomplishments, and he is, above all, an integral part of a large team that is dealing with the very difficult area of pest control and management.

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