Obituary

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Jeff Ladd

Jeff Ladd, a world-renowned soil biochemist, died on July 2009. He was awarded the prestigious Prescott medal by the Australian Soil Science Society in 1993 and honoured with a lifetime achievement medal at the Enzymes in the Environment Conference in Granada, Spain, in 1999.

He was born in Adelaide, South Australia, and studied at The University of Adelaide, where he obtained his B.Sc. and M.Sc. He obtained his Ph.D. at the Sheffield University in the UK. Jeff Ladd was appointed to the CSIRO Division of Soil in 1954 in Adelaide, where he was a distinguished soil scientist and retired in 1995. The CSIRO Soils Division and the nearby Waite Institute have been recognised as a world centre for soil science by many internationally renowned soil microbiologists and soil biochemists.

Research by Jeff Ladd has given fundamental contributions to better understand the meaning of measurements of soil enzyme activities, the state of enzymes in the soil matrix, the role of microbial biomass in turnover of soil carbon and nitrogen, plant available nitrogen and bacterial degradation of phenolic components of humus. Data from his studies have been used in international models to predict the effect of environmental changes on soil organic

pools in soil. His laboratory attracted many scientists from all over the world. Some of them are established scientific stars such as Jenkinson, Burns, van Veen, Merckx and Killham.

Ladd has been the editor of one volume of *Soil Biochemistry*, and he had an impressive publication record. Two of his papers (van Veen et al. 1985; Amato and Ladd 1988) were among the most cited of those published in *Soil Biology and Biochemistry* (Burns 2004).

Although his scientific contribution was very important, the most relevant aspects of his career were his leadership, enthusiasm and humanity.

References

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