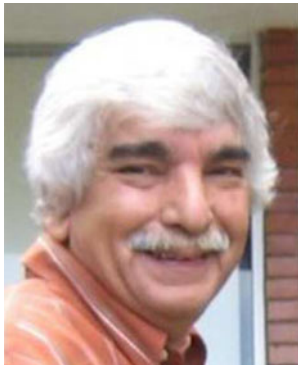


Obituary of Jose de Jesús Caballero-Mellado

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Jose de Jesús Caballero-Mellado, age 57, passed away on October 16, 2010 at Cuernavaca, Morelos, Mexico.

Jesús Caballero-Mellado was born on March 18th, 1953 in Tampico, Tamaulipas, Mexico. He graduated as a Chemist/Bacteriologist/Parasitologist in 1979 from the School of Biological Sciences of the Polytechnic Institute of Mexico located in Mexico City. In 1980, he established a Biomedical Research Center, which subsequently became the Microbiological Research Center

at the University of Puebla in the State of Puebla, Mexico. He also established the Soil Microbiology Group at this Center where he studied the distribution, ecology, and utilization of nitrogen-fixing bacteria, with particular emphasis on *Azospirillum* and *Acetobacter* (now known as *Gluconacetobacter*) *diazotrophicus*. In 1991, after a sabbatical year at the Nitrogen Fixation Research Center (presently the Center for Genomic Sciences, CCG) at the National Autonomous University of Mexico, he carried out his Ph.D. studies on bacterial genetic diversity, focusing on the recently discovered nitrogen-fixing endophyte *G. diazotrophicus*. In 1995, he joined the staff of researchers at the CIFN where he focused on the taxonomy, diversity, and microbial ecology of nitrogen-fixing bacteria and their agricultural applications. He was the leader of the Soil and Agriculture Microbiology Group in the Ecological Genomics Program at CCG.

Jesús Caballero-Mellado wrote more than 50 articles for scientific journals and books, supervised doctoral students, and cooperated successfully with national and international research groups. His important contributions to science were the application of *Azospirillum* inoculants to cereals in Mexico and his pioneering investigations on the plant-associated *Burkholderia* species. Jesús was a forward-thinking scientist who focused his research on producing biofertilizers, which are crucial for maintaining soil fertility.

Jesús received a number of national and international awards and honors including a medal of recognition for

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scientific activities by the municipality of Puebla (1990); the Emiliano Zapata medal in publication and research in agriculture by the Mexican Government of the State of Morelos (2008); and the AgroBIO Mexico award for research in Agriculture Biotechnology (2008).

He left behind two children, Erivan and Vanadice, his wife, Irma, and many friends, students, colleagues, and research collaborators. Jesús Caballero-Mellado was

truly a gentleman, as his name means, as well as a gentle man. His generosity and his commitment to discovering and developing inoculants and biofertilizers made him a dynamic force towards changing today's practice of adding chemical fertilizers to agricultural fields. Mahatma Ghandi wrote: "Be the change you want to see in the world". Jesús followed Ghandi's advice by forging a new path of scientific research, which we now need to continue.