

Dr. Luis Fernando Aldana de León

Dr. Luis Fernando Aldana de León was a researcher that developed his professional career at the Institute of Agricultural Science and Technology (ICTA) in Guatemala. Additionally, he was professor at Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala teaching plant breeding, plant genetics, and experimental designs. To his students he always instilled the love to the field, making famous the quote of Dr. Norman Borlaug “To produce the land it is necessary to leave the office, go into the field, get the hands dirty and to sweat, it is the only language understood by the soil and the plants”. In his office at ICTA Labor Ovalle, where he worked his last years in the Bean and Wheat Breeding Programs, he had a photograph where he was next to Dr. Borlaug, Nobel Peace Prize due to his fight against hunger. He also had another photograph where he was welcoming Dr. Sanjaya Rajaram, researcher and Director of the Wheat Program at CIMMYT. Dr. Aldana collaborated with many world-renowned researchers but he was characterized by being humble, noble and dedicated to his work.

At the beginning of his career, he worked during many years in the Wheat-Breeding Program at ICTA, making thousands of crosses, and evaluating hundreds of them in the field through field tests, to develop and release varieties such as ICTA Don Vale, ICTA Sibilia, and ICTA Cumpalé. In his last years, he dedicated his time to evaluate climbing beans for farmers in the highlands of Guatemala. He loved to be at the field and he dedicated lot of hours to be there. Thanks to his dedication in 2017, ICTA released the first two climbing bean varieties: ICTA Labor Ovalle and ICTA Utatlán.

All people that had the privilege to know Dr. Aldana agree that he loved his job, he used to say: I thank God to work in an institution that has been a blessing to many people. He always emphasized his gratitude to the institution for giving him the opportunity to grow as a professional including a master degree and a PhD.

He was a man dedicated to his job, to his family and always that he had the chance he raised his hands and thanked God, he urged people to never lose faith and hope in their selves and in God.

We will always remember him with love and we hope to see him again.

See you soon Dr. Aldana.

By: Jessica Moscoso. Bean breeding associate researcher at ICTA.