

The Reg Miller Award 2002

Timothy Shadbolt 1951–2002



THE AUSTRALIAN Onion Industry Association is proud to announce that Tim Shadbolt has won the 2002 Reg Miller Award, posthumously. Quite a few applications were received by the committee but it was felt that Tim's particular contribution to the industry, in the face of a battle against cystic fibrosis which, sadly, ended on 24 June 2002, made him the clear winner.

Tim, a fresh market onion grower and, later, a seed grower for New World Seeds, was known in the onion industry across Australia for his knowledge of the onion crop. "Shaddy" was well respected and well known particularly in the Swan Hill seed-growing community over many years.

Tim served on the executive of the AOIA for three years, bringing a practical, no-nonsense viewpoint to discussion. He had the onion industry at heart throughout his time on the

association board.

After his health declined in recent years, Tim became a full-time field officer for the specialist onion seed company JARIT (Aust) Pty Ltd (and formerly New World Seeds Pty Ltd), headed by the Rumsey family. Tim's knowledge of onions and their peculiarities solved many a field problem during his time as field officer, and he brought a level of professionalism to the seed industry in the Swan Hill region not seen previously. Correct storage for difficult onion varieties between seasons was one of Tim's success stories and, together with the best establishment method on plant out, has helped to boost seed yields for growers (and seed companies!) dramatically.

Tim's eye and expertise in the variety selection process led to the release of the varieties Wilkar and the popular Lawan to the onion industry some years ago. Coppertone, another product of Tim's selection work, will be seen as a follow up to Lawan in growers' planting schedules. This aspect of Tim's professional life also helped maintain seed company mother seed or planting stock to the high standard required of the industry.

Shaddy's knowledge of onions and their varietal differences became known across Australia as he travelled, particularly in Western Australia where his son resided. Tim's contribution to field advice on varietal behaviour will be missed by all who had contact with him.

Tim had a passion for doing things right, as he saw them, including his self-taught computer skills and his ability to generate comprehensive reports, summaries and progress of the onion seed crop, its costs/outcomes and likely grower returns. He was always conscious of the seed growers' necessary bottom line and always argued strongly for a fair return in this regard. This led to many improvements in the relationship of grower and seed company.

On a more personal note, Tim's optimistic approach to life saw him through many health crises, culminating in a double lung transplant a few years ago at the Alfred Hospital in Melbourne.

His love of the job and singleness of purpose kept him going through the low spots, and he was able to celebrate his 50th birthday late last year surrounded by family and grandchildren. Tim's love of family often took him to Sydney to visit daughter Kelly, and to Perth to visit son Brad.

Tim's strong work ethic, his methodical approach and his rapport with growers were unique. Tim's contribution to the industry is suitably recognised with the Reg Miller Award. Tim, his skills and his advice will be greatly missed.

—Tony Rumsey