

Reg Miller Award 2009

Trevor Wicks, plant pathologist

The 2009 Reg Miller award acknowledges the sustained contribution made by Dr Trevor Wicks (SARDI) to the Australian onion industry over the past 40 years. His contribution over that time has been in the provision of research, advice and diagnostic services to the industry on the management of a wide range of diseases.

Dr Wicks started his career as a cadet for the Department of Agriculture while studying for his BAgSc at the University of Adelaide. He completed a Masters in crop protection at Reading University (UK) and a PhD with the University of Adelaide. During that time he has worked in diagnostics and research in all areas of horticulture, making a significant contribution to the management of disease in many crops.

Trevor has been involved since the 1970s in the identification of onion smut, a notifiable quarantine disease in South Australia, as well as surveys to determine the extent of the problem in South Australia.

His recent research has focused on the identification of the causal agents of Mallee Onion Stunt (MOS), a widespread disease identified in the Murray Mallee in 2005. Trevor's research program, commenced in 2005–06, has identified *Rhizoctonia solani* AG8 (normally considered a pathogen of cereals) as the main cause of Mallee Onion Stunt. This has implications for onion growers in their use of cereal crops in rotation with onions. Recently,



Left: Trevor inspects an onion crop at Tepko in October 2008. Right: Trevor Wicks, May 2009.

it has been confirmed the same disease is present in the US.

Trevor's expertise in researching effective disease-management strategies for both soilborne and foliar diseases has provided substantial benefits to the industry, including raising awareness of the dangers of specific fungicide seed dressing for white rot management on seedling emergence and plant health and alternative strategies for managing metalaxyl-resistant downy mildew.

Trevor has had significant input into biosecurity outcomes for the onion industry, at a state level with identification of onion smut and pest risk analysis to enable continued

domestic trade, and at a national level by identifying potential threats for an Industry Biosecurity Plan.

This award is named for Reg Miller, a founding member of the Australian Onion Industry Association and the award's original recipient. It is given by the industry association in recognition of people who make an outstanding contribution to the industry. Nominations for the award are accepted annually until 1 August. Anyone in the onion industry may be nominated for the award, and anyone may make a nomination. For more information, contact the association office on (08) 8725 8862.