

New all female research link with Pakistan

Funding worth £30,000 has been awarded to an all female research project between the University of Stirling's Institute of Aquaculture and the University of Karachi's Centre of Excellence in Marine Biology. The award was made as part of the British Council and the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan's Joint Higher Education links programme. This was one of 35 new links announced as Phase II of the programme. <http://www.britishcouncil.org/pakistan-new-links-announced-under-phase-ii-of-hec-bc-jhe.htm>

The three year project has the aim of strengthening teaching and research in shellfish aquaculture. As part of the programme, Dr Zarrien Ayub and Dr Ghazala Siddiqui will spend a month at Stirling developing their teaching and research capabilities in aspects of shrimp and bivalve culture. Stirling researcher Dr Janet Brown will also visit their facilities in Pakistan.

Dr Brown said, "It makes sense for female academics to be involved in developing shellfish aquaculture since employment prospects in the shellfish industry in Pakistan are often uniquely attractive to women, particularly in culturing bivalves such as oysters. Shrimp farming can also provide good job opportunities in the processing of shrimp."



Pictured above Dr Zarrien Ayub at the launch of the programme in Islamabad December 2nd 2006 speaking to the Chairman of Higher Education Commission, Pakistan and Federal Minister, Prof. Dr. Atta-ur-Rahman.

Edward Branson

On 14th November 2006, Edward John Branson, BVetMed, BSc, MSc, MRCVS and RCVS Specialist in Fish Health and Production, of Red House Farm, Llanvihangel-Ystern-Llewern, Monmouth, Gwent passed away.

We record the passing of Edward Branson, a man without equal in many ways; his humour, gentleness, compassion, empathy, enthusiasm, sense of adventure, intelligence and love for family made him a wonderful person to be with. His death came as a great shock to family, friends and colleagues in aquaculture and veterinary science.

A man of presence, being six foot seven inches tall and having an impressive intellect, once met, he was never forgotten. His legacy encompasses many treasured memories and a lasting affect on fish welfare, not only in the United Kingdom, but around the world.

Edward went on to the Royal Veterinary College in London University and after qualifying in 1979 he moved to a mixed practice in Somerset, which his where he met his lifetime partner Teona Dorrien-Smith. After some time travelling and working in small animal practice he enrolled for a Master's degree in Aquatic Veterinary Studies at Stirling University, which he found fascinating.

On completing these studies in 1987, Edward and Teona, with their new son Oscar, moved to Ireland, where he worked at the University of Galway helping the developing salmon farming industry. He worked there in close collaboration with the Diagnostic Unit at Stirling, to which he later returned for further work in salmon farming, both in Scotland and overseas, notably in Chile. In this period, Edward earned a reputation as an excellent pathologist with outstanding diagnostic abilities. This reputation rightly stayed with him for the rest of his career. In 1994, the family moved to a derelict farm near Monmouth in Wales and, while Edward began a career as an independent fish consultant, they set about restoring the listed farmhouse and bringing the farm back to life, eventually gaining certified organic status.

On becoming independent, Edward was recruited to work with Skretting as a fish health consultant and combined this with part-time lecturing at the Veterinary School of Bristol University and work for various aquaculture businesses. His comprehensive knowledge and willingness to share and explain his knowledge meant that everyone who was privileged to work or study with him now knows far more about fish health than ever they could without him.

Despite his success as a fish vet, Edward had doubts about the desirability and sustainability of intensive fish farming. Also, on environmental grounds, he greatly regretted the frequent flying needed for his work. Increasingly he wished for a career change into environmental consultancy, which, had he lived, may have come about. However, as it was, his driving passion in his work as a vet was fish welfare and he worked tirelessly out on the farms, on veterinary committees and in the Soil Association, to improve welfare through better practices and by setting effective standards. Edward was instrumental in establishing the Fish Veterinary Society and served on the committee in various capacities for many years, including being the President from 2001 to 2003.

Outside work, Edward was someone you could consult about anything and his advice was always valuable. He was a genuinely interesting person who could talk at length about a wide range of topics, especially music and rugby. Perhaps, what really set Edward apart from others was his wit and sense of fun, and his ability to get on with all kinds of people of all ages. Anyone that knew him will remember that infectious laugh of his! He was a true gentleman and will be sadly missed, but there will be reminders: improved standards of fish welfare and the many pairs of size 14 wellington boots distributed around the UK — ready for Edward.

Donations in memory of Edward Branson can be made to the Gwent Healthcare Trust, marked for the Nevill Hall Hospital Stroke Unit.

A full obituary can be found at: http://fishupdate.com/news/fullstory.php/aid/6463/Tribute_to_Edward_Branson.html

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