

COMMERCIAL FARMERS' UNION OF ZIMBABWE OSCAR AWARD 2012

The Zimbabwean Farming Oscar Award has a long and proud history, having been introduced in 1961 by the late Mr. CG Tracey during his term as Vice President at the Commercial Farmers' Union. He introduced the award in recognition of "those people who have generally done well for agriculture."

This annual Oscar has become known as the "Farming Oscar" to be given to some person or persons who have given outstanding service to agriculture, and has been awarded to people who have contributed to the industry in its widest sense.

Over the years winners have been chosen from the practical and scientific disciplines of agriculture, as well as from the administration and leadership roles with the winners selected in recognition of having contributed significantly to the agriculture progress in Zimbabwe.

This year's winner is no exception, and fits the required profile as having given outstanding service in the advancement of agriculture over his entire career.

This year's recipient was born in Harare. He went to school at Bishops Lee and Rusawi School where he ended his junior school as Head boy. He then moved onto Peterhouse high school. His education at schools was always a border.

After school he enrolled for military training and then moved onto Cape Town where he did his B SC. There after he moved onto Onderstepoort where he graduated with his PhD in 1970. Our worthy recipient holds a PhD in the "Historical, virological and ecological aspects of rabies in Zimbabwe."

He married in 1970 and went into private practice. After one year he decided that private practice was not for him and joined the Department of Veterinary Services as a Pathologist.

I wish I had the right words to accurately articulate the enormity of this man's efforts and achievements for conservation in our country.

Over several decades Zimbabwe has deservedly earned a reputation as being one of the world's forerunners in the field of wildlife veterinary knowledge and expertise. In this the Wildlife Veterinary Unit (WVU), under the leadership of this year's recipient, has long played a central role in leading the sector towards a deeper understanding of wildlife management, chemical immobilisation and translocation of wildlife, ecology of wildlife disease, appropriate cognisance and positioning of wildlife within the tapestry of overall economic diversification and animal disease risk as well as implementation of suitable and pragmatic control measures against such disease risks. All this has contributed to the basis of successful private wildlife based land use and conservation in Zimbabwe, particularly on the large conservancies in the south eastern lowveld (SEL) where the majority of the country's wildlife on private land and over 85% of the country's black rhino now reside.

Over and above his legendarily encyclopaedic knowledge of his subject matter and his vast experience in the field of wildlife veterinary science, it is the enormous amount of energy that he has put into so many and such varied avenues of endeavour through his incredible work ethic that is most remarkable. It is his ability to multi-task multiple and diverse projects which is truly mind-boggling - from disease surveillance and control in wildlife populations, through clinical wildlife practice, drug and disease training, regulation and control, to animal welfare, and rhino conservation - his achievements are innumerable and his efforts seemingly inexhaustible. He deservedly is widely regarded as a pioneer and mentor in the branch of wildlife veterinary medicine - in no small part through his building up and maintenance of the world renowned Zimbabwe Dangerous Drugs Course which continues to grow from strength to strength. His experience and dedication to Rhino conservation in Zimbabwe has been instrumental in the incredibly courageous rhino conservation efforts of this country for which we all owe a huge debt of gratitude.

It is also his meticulous attention to detail and his methodical approach, most obvious in his approach to a post-mortem - which unrolls like a painting on the canvas of a master artist - that has underpinned his effectiveness as a champion for the causes he has supported in his distinguished career.

Although one cannot help but feel a pang of sadness and empathy for the recipient as he closes a monumental 36 year chapter with the Department of Veterinary Services we can at least take comfort in the fact that he is retiring from a job but not from his vocation- far from it.

He is author and co author of many scientific papers that will always remain part of his legacy. If anybody wants to know anything about wildlife diseases, wildlife ranching, conservation medicine, crocodiles and ostriches, then they must go to our recipient; he will have the experience in whatever matter you may have been involved with.

Dr Markus Hofmeyer Head of the Veterinary Wildlife Services from SANPARKS South Africa says the following of our recipient. "There are two persons in my mind that have the most experience with wildlife diseases in Southern Africa. One of them is our worthy recipient. A Kenyan Vet also described him as an icon of the wildlife world.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is my honour to present to you the Commercial Farmers' Union of Zimbabwe Farming Oscar Award winner for 2012.

He is DR. CHRISS FOGGIN.

Commercial Farmers' Union
5th July 2012
Zimbabwe
HWO