

OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTIONS TO ANIMAL WELFARE RECOGNISED UFAW Medals awarded to exceptional animal welfare scientists

The two 2016 winners of the Universities Federation for Animal Welfare (UFAW) Medal for Outstanding Contributions to Animal Welfare Science have been announced. A commemorative medal and award will be presented to Professor Donald Broom and posthumously awarded to Professor Christopher Wathes, who sadly passed away in May, at the Federation's Conference 'Recent Advances in Animal Welfare Science V' to be held in York on the 23rd June.

The UFAW Medal recognises exceptional achievements of individual scientists who have made fundamental contributions to the advancement of animal welfare over a number of years. The award is open to individuals, anywhere in the world, whose research, teaching, service and advocacy has significantly benefited the welfare of animals. UFAW was very pleased this year to recognise the remarkable achievements of both Don and Christopher. Appointed in the mid-1980s as the first professor of animal welfare in the world, Professor Donald Broom has had an exceptional and sustained influence on animal welfare science thinking in the United Kingdom, Europe and many other countries. The breadth of his contributions to the discipline, the seminal nature of his evolving thinking at the moving frontiers of its development during the past 30-35 years, and his unfailing encouragement and support for others who have participated in and made their own distinct contributions to this science are exceptional. With well over 350 peer-reviewed publications, books and textbooks to his name it is not possible to read learned treatises or other commentaries on animal welfare science without frequent reference to Professor Broom's thinking.

Not only did Professor Broom contribute to developing the frontiers of the science at a fundamental level, but he also applied that understanding to the practical care and protection of farm, companion, working and wild animals, both terrestrial and aquatic, on an impressively wide front. This experience has underpinned his sustained, insightful and influential contributions to UK national, European and wider international standard setting bodies and advisory agencies, often in recognised leadership positions as chairman or vice chairman of those groups, including as Chair of the E.U. Scientific Veterinary Committee, Animal Welfare Section for seven years and Vice-Chair of subsequent E.U. committees, including the EFSA Panel on Animal Health and Welfare, for twelve years.

Accordingly, he has greatly influenced the science-based development of UK and international animal welfare laws, regulations, directives and advisory documents. Professor Broom has also collaborated actively with many scientists and others who possess complementary expertise, who he simultaneously encouraged to refresh the science by developing their own areas of thinking in animal welfare science. Many of them, distributed widely on a global scale, are now well-recognised figures in their own right.

He has a wide network of contacts with opinion formers in other countries.

He still regularly lectures overseas and continues to be very supportive of young scientists.

Professor Christopher Wathes was a leading light in the field of animal welfare and his work is his legacy to animal welfare. As a scientist, manager and chairman his work has had a deep and lasting impact, leading to substantial pragmatic and sustainable improvements in animal welfare. Animal welfare is primarily about how animals feel, and Christopher was an early pioneer developing techniques to ask animals what they want.

Christopher has been described as a scientist of the highest calibre and throughout his career engaged with industry so that his research could be translated into practical solutions. Examples include improvements to the design of cages and housing for laying hens and broiler chickens, animal transporters and methods of stunning. He played an early and continuing role in the development of Precision Livestock Farming, believing that the use of real time monitoring of an animals' performance can be put to good use in early detection of any problems affecting their health and wellbeing.

Christopher helped to train many PhD and MSc students and junior scientists, a large proportion of whom have gone on to develop their own careers in promoting animal welfare through careers in universities, industry and welfare organisations. He also contributed to the education of the general public through lectures, advice and by seeking to engage school children in having an accurate understanding of the provenance of their food and the implications for welfare which this may have.

A major contribution came through Christopher's 8 years as Chairman of the Farm Animal Welfare Council (FAWC). He brought together people with different backgrounds and viewpoints and got them all working together towards pragmatic and sustainable solutions which would improve welfare. Through his work at FAWC he developed the concepts of the 'Good Life' and 'Life worth Living' which took the 'Five Freedoms' to the next stage. His widow, Claire, will accept the award on his behalf at the conference.