



THE UNIVERSITY OF
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

MEDIA STATEMENT

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PULSE PIONEER BECOMES NEW UWA PROFESSOR

The University of Western Australia – with its strong tradition and track record of teaching and research in agriculture and natural resource management – has appointed an internationally acknowledged leader in agricultural sciences to its Chair of Agriculture.

Professor Kadambot Siddique, whose pioneering UWA research was the launch pad for a major Australian chickpea export industry, has been appointed Professor of Agriculture and Director of the UWA Institute of Agriculture.

The Vice Chancellor of The University of Western Australia, Professor Alan Robson, said “The University is delighted to have attracted such an international expert as Professor Siddique. His recruitment will take agricultural research and teaching at UWA to a new level”.

The distinguished agricultural scientist’s career began when, as a PhD student, he explored the potential of chickpea adaptation. This was the starting point for an industry currently valued at more than \$200 million annually in Australia. Professor Siddique went on to introduce, evaluate, breed and select superior lines of pulses and to release elite genetic material as commercial varieties in Australia. Following his PhD at UWA Professor Siddique went on to a career at the Department of Agriculture and Food WA in cereal and pulse breeding, research and industry development.

Born in Kerala, Professor Siddique began his agricultural studies in India, coming to UWA as a PhD student in late 1981. During a career that has seen him win many awards and fellowships – including recently being made a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering – the UWA researcher has established a diverse range of international and national collaborations and research centres, including the Consultative Group of International Agriculture Research and the widely respected Syrian-based International Centre for Agricultural Research in Dry Areas (ICARDA). His research links today extend from Turkey, Bangladesh, China and India to major US research centres at Washington State University and the University of Saskatchewan.

Professor Robson says “Professor Siddique combines the highly refined skills of researcher and scientist with a commercial savvy that enables him to identify and develop paths to market. He was appointed Director of UWA’s Centre for Legumes in Mediterranean Agriculture (CLIMA) in 2001 – a challenging time for CLIMA which had just lost its federal funding as a Cooperative Research Centre.

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However, under Professor Siddique's leadership CLIMA built new research partnerships with CSIRO, the Department of Agriculture and Food WA and Murdoch University. These have ensured that this research hub is internationally recognised for its contribution to basic and applied research in legume science. In 2001, Professor Siddique received the prestigious Urrbrae Memorial Award for his contribution to Australian agricultural science and the industry".

In assuming the Chair of Agriculture, Professor Siddique also becomes Director of the Institute of Agriculture at UWA, which is being rejuvenated to create a critical mass of research excellence in UWA's agricultural science groups.

Professor Siddique says that "Such an integration will, he believes, send a strong signal to funding bodies and industry while increasing UWA's competitiveness for national, international and industry funding.

Given WA's relatively small research community and geographical isolation, it is imperative we maximise the benefits of our research and development. The future of agricultural research and training at UWA will depend to a large degree on combining resources and building collaborations that make the best use of our considerable expertise, and by forging new links with industry and with national and overseas partners.

Having created extensive effective networks in agricultural research and teaching in WA, I aim to extend the trust already built to forge a 'single' vision for agriculture at UWA."

MEDIA REFERENCE:

Professor Kadambot Siddique
Trea Wiltshire

61 8 6488 7012
61 8 6488 1914