



Prof. Avtar Singh Atwal

Former Dean, College of Agriculture, Dean, Post Graduate Studies
and Director of Plant Protection, Forestry, Ecology and Agrometeorology,
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Prof. Avtar Singh Atwal was born on June 25, 1927 at village Khanewal, District Multan, India (now part of West Punjab, Pakistan). He did his B.Sc. (Agriculture) from Punjab Agricultural College and Research Institute, Lyallpur in 1947, where he obtained first position in the University and was awarded the Gold Medal. He completed his Ph.D. from the Waite Agricultural Research Institute, University of Adelaide, South Australia in 1954 under the Colombo Plan. He remained Post Doctorate Research Fellow of the National Research Council of Canada during 1955-57). Prof. Atwal started his professional career as Lecturer in Entomology in 1947 and worked as Assistant Professor/Associate Professor till 1960. He was Entomologist to the Government of Punjab and State Locust Control Officer (1961-63), when he introduced successfully the aerial spraying for locust control. He was the first Professor and Head, Department of Zoology-Entomology of the newly formed Punjab Agricultural University (PAU), Ludhiana (1963-66). He worked as Dean, College of Agriculture, Dean, Post Graduate Studies and Director of Plant Protection, Forestry, Ecology and Agrometeorology at PAU, Ludhiana. In between, he was Advisor to Jammu & Kashmir Government and Vice-Chancellor (Designate), J & K Agricultural University (1973-75) and prepared the project for establishing the University. After superannuation, he worked as full time Member, Punjab State Planning Board (1986-89). He authored 16 books, 150 research papers and 100 reviews and strategy papers on agricultural education, research and development. His monumental book "Agricultural Pests of South Asia and Their Management" is one of the most popular text books ever written on this subject. Prof. Atwal was an outstanding teacher, researcher and administrator. Among his most significant achievements was the successful introduction of the Italian honeybee, *Apis mellifera* Linnaeus in India in early sixties through a unique experiment, using the technique of interspecific queen introduction. Prof. Atwal will be remembered as the 'Father of Modern Beekeeping in India' as he opened new vistas of commercial beekeeping in the country. Prof. Atwal established the Indian Ecological Society in 1974 when ecology was considered inconsequential in developing countries and was its founder President (1974-1997). He nurtured this society with complete devotion for nearly 25 years and organized several symposia and conferences including National Symposium on Land and Water Management in the Indus Basin, Status of Wildlife in Punjab, Status of Environmental Pollution in Punjab, etc. It was at the Land and Water Management Symposium (1978) that the diversification possibilities of Punjab Agriculture were thoroughly debated for the first time. His sad demise, on September 26, 2014 after a brief illness, has left a deep void in the fields of apiculture, entomology and sustainable agriculture.

