

## **Mike May**

Mike started his crop protection career in 1969 at the Weed Research Organisation (WRO). Initially he worked on control options for wild-oats, including a project to develop a roguing glove. In 1971 he took over running the organisation's Fenland Project in cooperation with the Arthur Rickwood EHF at Chatteris, Cambridgeshire. This involved close links with local growers and good communication of results to growers and agronomists. Mike recognised this as an important part of agricultural research that was often undervalued – consequently knowledge transfer became a strong feature during the rest of his career.

On closure of the WRO, Mike moved to the then Norfolk Agricultural Station to head the sugar beet, spray application and environmental work. The work – supported by member farmers and the wider agricultural industry – encouraged grower and agronomist training; each winter he presented at over 40 meetings. Through the sugar beet work strong ties were developed with researchers in other beet growing countries. Mike was Chairman of the Weed Study Group of the IIRB (International Institute for Sugar Beet Research), a member of the Institute's Scientific Committee between 2003 and 2007, and he is still an active member

In 1997 he joined Rothamsted's Broom's Barn Research Centre as head of knowledge transfer and later became Deputy Director. He worked to disseminate BBRO-funded research and presented results at between 50 and 70 meetings each year in the UK and overseas. He also led the agronomy aspects of the government's Farm Scale Evaluations and worked on the environmental impacts of GMHT crops, Mike also participated in debates and delivered talks to inform the public about the impacts of UK GMHT cropping.

Mike was a session organiser at many of the BCPC Brighton Weed Conferences, chaired the 1999 BCPC Weed Review and has organized a range of specialist conferences for the AAB and others. He was Chairman of the AAB Weed and Agronomy Group from 1991 to 1997, has authored over 250 popular reports, research papers and book chapters and has been quoted frequently in the agricultural press.

Since retiring from Broom's Barn in 2009 Mike has established his own consultancy advising on sugar beet and weed control issues in the UK and overseas. He is currently chairman of the joint BBRO/BSPB sugar beet recommended list board.