

Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Collaborative Research on Grain Legumes

The Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Collaborative Research on Grain Legumes (formerly the Pulse CRSP) contributes to economic growth and food and nutrition security through knowledge and technology generation that strengthens grain legume (e.g., bean, cowpea, pigeon pea, etc.) value chains and enhances the capacity and sustainability of agriculture research institutions that serve grain legume sectors in developing countries of Africa and Latin America.

Irvin Widders with Honored 2015 Ralph Smuckler Award

The Legume Innovation Lab is pleased to announce that **Irvin Widders** has been named the recipient of the 2015 **Ralph Smuckler Award for Advancing International Studies and Programs at MSU**.



Widders's commitment to helping smallholder farmers (many of whom are women) improve their crop yields in grain legumes and the nutritional status of their families and communities has shaped his 30-plus year career at MSU.

As director of the USAID-funded Legume Innovation Lab since 2002, Widders has continued MSU's incredible legacy of engaging science and scientific leadership to address the seemingly insurmountable worldwide problems of hunger and poverty. He has overseen the management of dozens of long-term projects focused on advancing sustainable and secure agricultural developments through science research, technology, and capacity building programs in Sub-Saharan Africa, Central America, and the United States.

Recognizing that grain legumes are critical crops in developing countries because they are nutrient-dense staple foods, generate household income, increase the sustainability of cropping systems because of their ability to fix nitrogen in the soil, enhance the livelihoods of women, and improve child growth, nutrition, and overall health, Widders has brought together scholars in such diverse areas as entomology and pest management, plant breeding, soil science, genetics, nutrition, gender equity, marketing, and economics to improve the lives of smallholder bean and cowpea farmers throughout the world.

Under his leadership, smallholder farmers' bean and cowpea crop yields have improved significantly and sustainably due to environmentally friendly and affordable advances in pest

management to reduce crop loss, improved seed varieties able to thrive in changing climates, improved soil management practices, and widespread education on agricultural and nutrition. As a result, household food security and income has improved in these regions, improving the health and lives of families and communities throughout the world.

In Irvin Widders, Ralph Smuckler's vision and legacy of global engagement at MSU has been perpetuated and applied to the benefit of smallholder farmers in more than 20 countries. As is core to MSU's mission, Widders's leadership and work have advanced innovative, research-driven outreach, engagement, and economic development activities that have improve—and continue to improve—the quality of life for the world's most vulnerable people.

The award ceremony will be held on Wednesday, March 25, at 3:00 p.m. at MSU's Huntington Club, 4th floor of Spartan Stadium, 535 Chestnut Road, East Lansing, Michigan.

The Ralph H. Smuckler Award for Advancing International Studies and Programs recognizes a deserving faculty member for his or her significant and lasting impact on the advancement of international scholarship, teaching, and public service at MSU. Award recipients must be widely recognized for major international contributions to Michigan State University which enhance its education and public service functions nationally and internationally.

The Ralph H. Smuckler Award was named for Ralph H. Smuckler, former Dean of International Studies and Programs and an acclaimed international scholar, led Michigan State University to worldwide recognition in the field of international education and public service. Award winners are expected to represent the character and qualities of excellence which Ralph H. Smuckler personified.

