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University of Florida Professor Honored with SAF's 2009 Alex Laurie Award

ALEXANDRIA, Va. – Sept. 16, 2009 – The Society of American Florists (SAF) will present the 2009 Alex Laurie Award for Research and Education to Lance Osborne, Ph.D., Professor of Entomology/Nematology at the University of Florida, on Sept. 24 during SAF's 125th Annual Convention in Phoenix, Arizona.

An internationally recognized scientist, Osborne is active both in teaching and in research on managing insects in ornamental and vegetable crops. In addition to important work on avoiding chemical resistance development in target pests, Osborne has worked tirelessly to advance new biological control methods in greenhouses and nurseries — and in working with growers to help them adopt those new methods. He is known for his pioneer work in using banker plants as a source for insect predators, which are becoming an important tool in growers' efforts to control insects in an environmentally friendly way.

"Lance is a seeker of the truth rather than a seeker of the limelight," says Margery Daughtrey, senior extension associate with Cornell University's Department of Plant Pathology. "He is a source of reliable research, extensive knowledge and sound judgment that you would want on any team of scientists aiming to stop the advance of a new pest threat.... Other entomologists and plant pathologists invariably speak of Lance with respect, and sometimes with awe."

As agricultural globalization has accentuated the movement of pests and diseases into new environments, Osborne has been a leader in conducting research on effective control of new invasive insects.

"Lance has a unique ability to interpret technical findings in context of the challenges that we often face in addressing invasive pests of regulatory significance," says David T. Kaplan, Ph.D., Assistant Deputy Administrator of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). "He has routinely made himself available to assist us and consistently demonstrates a strong commitment to providing reliable, clear answers. Further, he is revered for his work ethic and dedication to biological control."

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Osborne has co-chaired the technical committees for two national task forces established by USDA to organize a unified industry, scientific community and government response to two new invasive insects: Bemisia Q-Biotype whiteflies and the Chilli Thrips. His leadership and expertise have been invaluable in preventing those new pests from becoming emergencies for U.S. agriculture. He served as scientific advisor to the United States trade team in 2007 negotiations with the European Union on its Bemisia regulatory approach, and he continues to work with USDA as those negotiations proceed.

In the last three years, Osborne's research has been presented at the International Organization for Biological and Integrated Control of Noxious Animals and Plants, Dijon, France; the International Society of Horticultural Science, Leuven, Belgium; and the International Symposium on Biological Control of Arthropods, Christchurch, New Zealand. He holds patents on biological control of whiteflies and other pests with a fungal pathogen, in the U.S., Belgium, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, the Netherlands, and Japan.

Osborne has contributed five chapters on biological control of pests to texts on pest management, and authored 44 articles published in international refereed journals, and over 100 journal articles, bulletins, circulars and fact sheets. His other contributions include bulletins, publications and websites dedicated to cultural recommendations and identification, education and management of pests, and an email mailing list to update growers, allied trades, researchers and other interested parties about new and emerging pest problems.

The Alex Laurie Award, established in 1948, is presented annually to an individual who has made significant contributions to research and education in the floriculture industry. The award is named for the eminent Professor Alex Laurie, of The Ohio State University, who, throughout a career that spanned more than 60 years, laid the groundwork for research that revolutionized the floriculture industry and who left a lineage of students, teachers and researchers continuing to provide the information necessary to ensure the industry's future.

For more information or to nominate an industry member for the Alex Laurie Award for Research and Education, visit www.safnow.org/awards, or contact Karen Eppard at (800) 336-4743, keppard@safnow.org. Contact Shelley Estersohn at (800) 336-4743, or sestersohn@safnow.org, for photographs from the SAF 2009 Industry Awards Dinner.

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The Society of American Florists is the association leader for all segments of the floral industry including wholesalers, growers and retailers. SAF is proud to provide marketing, business and government services for more than 10,000 participants in the U.S. floral industry.