

Opening & General Session Speakers

Speakers are listed in alphabetical order

Ghassem Asrar, Ph.D. is currently the Deputy Administrator for Natural Resources and Agricultural Systems with Agricultural Research Service (ARS), of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. He was appointed to this position in January 2006 after 20 years of service with the U.S. National Aeronautics and Space Administration. Dr. Asrar is responsible for ARS research programs focused on developing scientific knowledge and technology that ensure safe and affordable food, feed, fiber, and renewable energy supplies while enhancing the environment and quality of life for producers and consumers.

Topic: "Managing Agricultural Ecosystems for Multiple Services in Changing Climates"

This presentation will provide an overview and research priorities of the U.S. Department of Agriculture intramural research programs that are focused on the natural resources and sustainable agricultural systems. It will provide some examples of research strategies and results designed to maintain and improve soil and water quality; provide agricultural and industrial byproducts designed to displace petroleum-based products; and highlights of some management practices that are used to restore degraded grasslands and rangelands.

Theo Dillaha, Ph.D., a Professor of Biological Systems Engineering at Virginia Tech, is an educator and researcher with more than 25 years of university, international, and consulting experience in systems-based approaches to sustainable agriculture and natural resources management. He currently serves as the Program Director for the USAID funded Sustainable Agriculture and Natural Resource Management Collaborative Research Support Program, a \$2.4 million dollar per year research program supporting sustainable solutions to agricultural and natural resource management problems in developing countries. Most of his U.S. teaching and research has been in the areas of nonpoint source pollution control and water quality modeling and monitoring. His international work focuses on appropriate technology solutions that are sustainable given locally available resources. He has been involved in the design, implementation and evaluation of sustainable agriculture and water resources related projects in Morocco, Micronesia, Japan, Russia, Ukraine, Albania, Mauritius, Kazakhstan, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Haiti, and the United States. Dr. Dillaha has been a PI or Co-PI on over 100 projects worth more than \$18.2 million, he has supervised 19 graduate student theses and dissertations, and he has published over 30 refereed journal articles and hundreds of other publications. Dr. Dillaha is a registered professional civil engineer and obtained his BE and MS degrees from Vanderbilt University in Environmental and Water Resources Engineering. He obtained his Ph.D. in Agricultural Engineering from Purdue University.



Topic: "Water for Food, Water for Life: A Comprehensive Assessment of Water Management in Agriculture"



Alvaro Rojas Marin, Ph.D. is an Alum of the University of Concepcion. He received his Doctorate in Agricultural Sciences from the Technische Universität of Munchen, Germany. He worked as a consultant of CEPAL, FAO and other national and international organizations. He has authored more than 50 scientific publications published in national and international journals. He has been professor of Rural Development and Agricultural Economy at the University of Chile and Talca where he was Dean of the Natural Resources Faculty and Rector of the university for 15 years. He also was President of the Regional University Consortium, President of the Council for Agricultural Innovation and National Coordinator of the Scientific Cooperation Program Chile-Germany, from the Ministry of External Relationship.

Dennis P. McCabe, Ph.D. was named the 14th President of Tarleton State University by the Board of Regents of The Texas A&M University System on July 26, 1991. He originally joined Tarleton on August 17, 1988 as the Vice President for University Operations. As Chief Executive Officer, he supervises over 1,200 employees, manages an annual budget over \$102 million, and provides vision for a comprehensive curriculum of 90 undergraduate, masters and doctoral degree programs. He is also responsible for a facilities inventory, which includes over 96 buildings, with a replacement value of more than \$270 million.



Dr. McCabe has over 41 years of experience in education as a teacher and an administrator. Prior to his experience at Tarleton, Dr. McCabe served as Dean of the College of Education at Lamar University in Beaumont, TX, from 1984 to 1988. From 1978 to 1981, Dr. McCabe was Assistant to the Vice President for Academic Affairs, and from 1981 to 1984, he was Head of the Department of Secondary and Higher Education at East Texas State University (now Texas A&M - Commerce). Dr. McCabe was at Pan American University at Edinburg, Texas, from 1972 to 1976 employed as an assistant professor.



Sergio Lavanchy Merino, Ph.D. is the Rector of the University of Concepcion in Chile. He was elected as Rector of the university in 1998 and is currently serving his third term, which will finish in 2010. Prior to this he served as the Dean of the Faculty of Engineering, Director of the Engineering and Mechanics Department and Chief of the Laboratory of Resistance of Materials and the Area of Mechanics of Solid. He received his Undergraduate Degree in Civil Mechanical Engineering from the Universidad Tecnica del Estado in Chile and Masters in Applied Sciences from the University of Toronto in Canada.

Oscar Parra, Ph.D. is biologist and professor at the Natural Resources and Oceanographic Sciences Faculty and founder director of the Environmental Sciences Centre of the University of Concepcion (Concepcion, Chile). He is a very experienced researcher in the use of standard physical, chemical and biological methods of water ecosystems, specialized on taxonomy and ecology of freshwater phytoplankton and phytobenthos. His research covers interdisciplinary studies of freshwater systems (lakes and rivers) on a watershed scale. He is the author of about 150 scientific papers, book articles and books and he has edited a number of books dealing with aquatic biota and management of water resources in Chile. He has participated as a leader of a number of national and international collaborative scientific projects and as a consultant of national and international institutions and organizations, e.g. UNESCO (Albania, Libya, Costa Rica), Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina. Funding agencies for his research include: PNUD UNESCO, European Commission, Italian Government, Germany Government, Chilean National Science Commission.



Topic: "The Bio Bio River Water Quality Monitoring Program"



Omar Ulloa, Ph.D. obtained his Ph.D. in agricultural engineering technology and Masters of Science in agricultural mechanization from Michigan State University and an agronomist engineering degree from the University of Concepcion, Chile. He is a professor of Earth University in Costa Rica (1990 to present), the university of the humid tropical region (Escuela de Agricultura de la Región Tropical Húmeda).

As a professor of the University of Chapingo, Mexico (1974-1989), he contributed to the creation of the current Department of Agricultural Mechanical Engineering (DIMA). Research agronomist engineer at the National Agricultural Research Institute, Chile (1964-1973).