

Daniel Sauvant, *in memoriam*

May 2022

Our dear colleague, friend and Vice-President, Professor Daniel Sauvant passed away on 19 May 2022 at the age of 76.

Pr. Daniel Sauvant taught animal nutrition and animal feeding from 1970 to 2011 at Institut National Agronomique Paris-Grignon (INA-PG), which became AgroParisTech in 2007. When he retired, he stayed on as Emeritus Professor for more than 10 years, until his death.



He held many responsibilities throughout his career:

- Director of INRA Laboratory of Nutrition Physiology and Feeding systems, which became AgroParisTech-INRAE MoSAR research unit (“Modélisation Systémique Appliquée aux Ruminants”, “Systemic modeling applied to ruminants”), from 1985 to 2010;
- President of Department of Animal Science at INA P-G from 1995 to 2006;
- President of the French Association of Animal Productions (“Association Française de Zootechnie”, AFZ) from 2000 to 2014;
- Member of the French Academy of Agriculture since 1995 and of the French Veterinary Academy since 2015;
- Member of several French and international expert committees.

Daniel Sauvant was an extremely brilliant pedagogue, with a passion for knowledge transmission. Gifted with a great ability to synthesize, he always combined a solid corpus of biological facts, rigorous concepts of quantification and modeling of phenomena, and a practical approach applied to animal feeding and livestock management. During his life long career, he trained more than 1000 students in animal science and inspired many vocations in animal nutrition. He also invested a lot of time in continuing education and in advising professionals in this sector. His interventions and his very approachable manner were very much appreciated.

Daniel Sauvant's research work, carried out at INRA, has had a profound impact on the field of animal nutrition and is internationally recognized. This extremely abundant and consistent activity has resulted in nearly 1000 publications – written with more than 180 collaborators and cited about 5.000 times – including 400 in peer-reviewed journals, i.e., an average of 8 articles per year over his 50-year career!

Among these works, two major contributions stand out. On the one hand, he played a leading role in the conception of animal feed unit systems, especially for ruminants, with their concrete application into the famous “INRA Tables”, from their first edition in 1978 to their last one in 2018 at the end of the famous “Systali” project. On the other hand, he was a precursor in the field of animal science modeling and he knew, in a resolute and visionary way, how to give his INRAE research unit (MoSAR) a “modeling” orientation that is now widely recognized.

As President of the French Association of Animal Production (AFZ), Daniel SAUVANT promoted several projects for which our association is so well-known today. He was the instigator of the famous “Green Tables” published in 2002, which were so successful they were translated into English, Spanish and... Chinese! A decade later, always concerned with the evolution of concepts and tools, he enthusiastically welcomed the idea of transforming the paper book into a website (www.feedtables.com) accessible to all. In 2006, he contributed to the emergence of the “Tables des Régions Chaudes” project, which resulted in the world-famous website www.feedipedia.org, an encyclopedia of world animal feedstuff resources. In 2008, the “AFZ PhD award” was launched: a fine way to encourage exceptional research careers.

Always keen to pass on cutting-edge scientific knowledge to professionals, Daniel SAUVANT made sure AFZ seminars were held regularly. Not only did he propose topics to be discussed and design the programs, he also frequently prepared one or several communications or chaired and moderated these seminars.

Daniel Sauvant largely contributed to the activities of EAAP as a member of its Council and as the French representative at the General Assembly. He was also a member of the Animal Nutrition Commission for several years. He received the prestigious "Leroy Award" in 1996 and the "Distinguished Services Award" in 2013.

Another less well-known aspect of Daniel Sauvant's activity is related to his roots in the Ardèche region, in Southern France, which he was very proud of. He was much involved in the local life and regularly wrote articles for a cultural and historical magazine. He is notably the author of an article devoted to the work of Olivier de Serres (1539-1619), often considered the "father of French agronomy".

Daniel Sauvant was very fond of genealogy and traced the history of his family over nearly 5 centuries.

He was also passionate about patronymics, and excelled in applying his modeling and data analysis skills to this field. At the beginning of every school year, he enjoyed guessing the geographical origins associated with the names of his students, before their amazed and admiring gaze.

A great scientist is gone. Our thoughts are with his family, his close collaborators and everyone he worked with.

On behalf of all his colleagues,

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