

OIE GOLD MEDAL AWARDED TO DR GIDEON BRÜCKNER

The OIE Council has awarded the 2020 Gold Medal to Dr Gideon Brückner. This award is granted annually by the OIE to personalities as a way to recognise, internationally, their outstanding technical, scientific and administrative contributions to the field of veterinary science and/or animal disease control.

Dr Gideon Brückner qualified as a veterinarian at the University of Pretoria (Onderstepoort) in 1972 and also obtained post-graduate degrees in Public and International Administration in 1981 and 1986. He started his career as a state veterinarian in Vryheid, KwaZulu-Natal in 1972. He was transferred to Louis Trichardt in the Northern Province in 1973 where he was state veterinarian for 12 years before he moved to the head office of the Department of Agriculture in Pretoria in 1981. He successively progressed upwards in the ranks as Director Veterinary Public Health, Director Animal Health and Director of Veterinary Services of the National Department of Agriculture in 1999. In 2001 he was promoted to Chief Director Veterinary Services of the Western Cape.

In 2006 he accepted an offer from the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) to become Deputy Director General and Head of the Scientific and Technical Department of the OIE in Paris, France.

Dr Brückner has spent his entire career of 47 years as a veterinarian within provincial, national and international veterinary services. He was responsible for the management of several major animal disease outbreaks in South Africa such as foot and mouth disease, rabies, avian influenza, tuberculosis, brucellosis, swine fever and Corridor disease. He has represented South Africa on numerous missions abroad and was the leader of several delegations to negotiate the allocation or the re-instatement of freedom from animal diseases for South Africa such as foot and mouth disease, Newcastle disease and Crimean Congo Fever. He has been very active in an expert advisory capacity to international organisations such as the OIE, FAO, World Health Organisation (WHO) and the World Trade Organisation (WTO). He is a certified OIE PVS expert and has conducted several PVS, PVS follow-up and Gap analysis missions and peer reviewed PVS mission reports. He was also the first South African veterinarian to serve as a nominated expert on legal dispute panels for animal health of the WTO. He has chaired numerous *ad hoc* expert Groups of the OIE and was elected as a member of the Scientific Commission for Animal Diseases of the OIE in 2002. He retired as Deputy Director General of the OIE in 2009 and was subsequently elected by the OIE World Assembly as President of the OIE Scientific Commission for Animal Diseases – a position he held for 9 years until his final retirement in 2018. He has been an invited speaker on major national and international conferences and has published 58 scientific articles of which 45 as senior author. In 2005 he was the recipient of the Presidents' award of the South African Veterinary Association. He was also invited to deliver the Theiler Memorial lecture at the Faculty of Veterinary Science of the University of Pretoria in 2008. He still serves as an accredited mission expert of the OIE to assess animal disease control in member countries of the OIE (primarily on FMD (foot and mouth disease but also other diseases) and has in

this capacity, visited more than 70 countries on consulting missions on behalf and on request of the OIE.

Our heartiest congratulations to Dr Brückner!