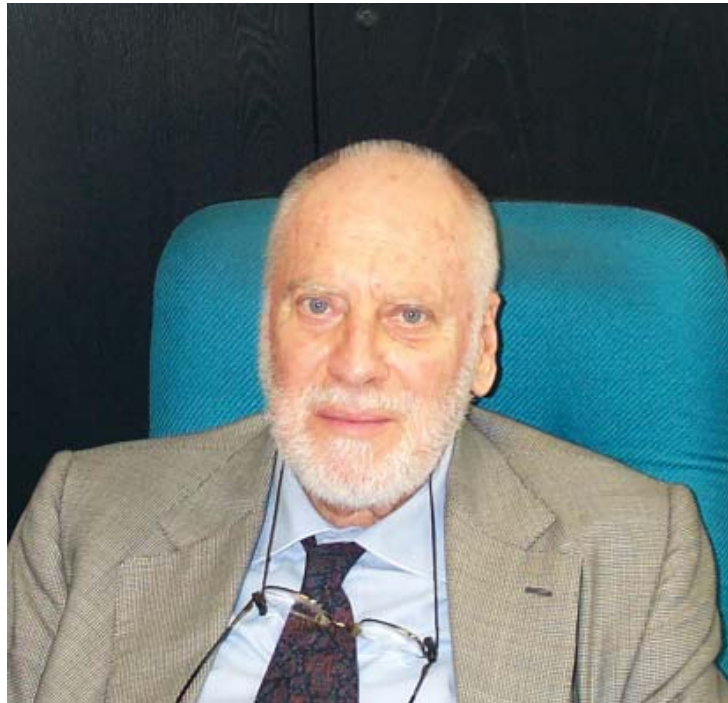


IN MEMORIAM



FRANCO LAMBERTI
1937–2004

Professor Franco Lamberti, former Head of the Institute of Agricultural Nematology, National Research Council (CNR), Bari, Italy, died suddenly from a heart attack at his home on August 16th, 2004, at the age of 67, just a few weeks after his retirement.

Lamberti was born in Merano (northern Italy) in 1937. After obtaining a degree (“Laurea”) in Ag-

ricultural Sciences at the University of Bari in 1961, he was appointed “Assistente” of Plant Pathology at the University under the direction of Professor Antonio Ciccarone. For the next three years he continued his studies and research on the virus and fungal diseases of grapevine and soon developed a particular interest in soil-borne transmission of the viruses, which continued throughout his career.

Following Professor Ciccarone's advice, and with the help of National Research Council fellowships, Lamberti took leave from August 1965 to September 1968 to study at the University of California, firstly for a year at Davis, and then at Riverside, where he obtained a Master of Science in Plant Pathology. He was supervised in his studies by Dr. D. J. Raski, an outstanding nematologist of his time, who encouraged him to carry out some investigations on a nematode-induced decline of the olive trees as part of his research training.

On his return to the University of Bari (1969), Lamberti resumed his research interests and was appointed "Libero Docente" (Lecturer) in 1971. He taught the course in Plant Nematology at the University as "Professore stabilizzato" until 1986.

In 1970 Lamberti was appointed Head of the newly established CNR Institute of Agricultural Nematology at Bari, where he remained until his retirement. He built up a staff complement whose research programmes ranged from basic to applied nematology and which related to most aspects of crop production. Also, students and young researchers were trained in plant nematology, some of whom were later to become research leaders themselves. Many nematologists from various parts of the world visited the Institute to participate in research programmes or just to discuss scientific progress in nematology, while many others from about 30 countries cooperated with Lamberti in projects in their own countries.

Lamberti had a wide knowledge of research in plant pathology and nematology relating to crop production in temperate, subtropical and tropical environments and this, combined with his qualities of leadership, admirably suited his appointment in 1970 as consultant for plant nematology and plant protection of the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) of the United Nations. As such, he undertook a number of missions in several parts of the world: South America, Africa, Asia, Oceania, including places almost unexplored from the nematological point of view, such as agricultural areas of Lebanon, Syria, Malta, Algeria, Egypt, Ethiopia, Liberia, Sierra Leone, São Tomé, Mauritius, Sri Lanka, Korea, Philippines, Venezuela, Uruguay, Peru and Chile. In some of these countries facilities for making investigations were often minimal and circumstances were sometimes uncomfortable, if not hazardous. Lamberti's ener-

gy and enthusiasm invariably produced a positive response from local participants with the prospect of crop improvement. Lamberti was also the leader of several research projects in Europe, Africa and South America; he contributed to the establishment of Nematology Research Institutes in Malta, Liberia, Mauritius and Sri Lanka; gave lectures on nematology at Universities in Egypt, Tunisia, Venezuela, Argentina and Sri Lanka; and took instructional courses in Agricultural Nematology at the American University of Beirut, Lebanon.

In 1973 Lamberti founded the scientific journal "Nematologia Mediterranea" with the aim of promoting the study and research of nematology in the Mediterranean ecological region, and served as Chief Editor for 30 years from its inception until his retirement.

Lamberti was the main organizer of four NATO Advanced Study Institutes and one International Conference, each of which had published proceedings: 1. Nematode Vectors of Plant Viruses, 1975, Plenum Press; 2. Root Knot Nematodes (*Meloidogyne* species), Systematics, Biology and Control, 1979, Academic Press; 3. Durable Resistance in Crops, 1983, Plenum Press; 4. Cyst Nematodes, 1986, Plenum Press; 5. Advances in Molecular Plant Nematology, 1994, Plenum Press.

Lamberti was author or co-author of more than 650 scientific or review papers on a wide range of topics relating to the biology of nematodes of economic importance. These included their control on crops such as grapevine, olive, citrus, date palm, coffee, rice, tomato and tobacco. On a general basis Lamberti investigated control by soil fumigation or by soil solarization, and relatively recently by the eco-compatible use of alternatives to methyl bromide. He had a long-standing interest in nematode vectors of soil-borne viruses, with particular reference to their taxonomy, geographical distribution and interspecific variability. He described about a hundred new species of nematodes from soil samples collected on his travels, most of them belonging to *Xiphinema* and *Longidorus*, genera of which Lamberti was a world authority.

In recognition of his outstanding contribution to the science of nematology, Lamberti received several honours and awards, mostly from abroad but also from Italy. He was elected: Member of the CNR Consulting Committee for Agricultural Sci-

ences, Rome (1981–1988) and of the National Committee of Agricultural Experimentation, Ministry of Agriculture, Rome; President of the European Society of Nematology (1978–1980) and of the Italian Society of Nematology (1981–1995). Lamberti was appointed: Honorary member of the Florida Society of Nematology, USA (1991), Fellow of the Society of Nematologists, USA (1993); Honorary member of the Academy of Sciences, Slovakia (1998); and was granted the special Award of the Organization of Nematologists of Tropical America (ONTA) in 1996, and the gold medal of the Mediterranean Phytopathological Union (MPU) in 1997.

For more than 20 years Lamberti served the MPU first as Secretary-Treasurer (1983–1994), then as Vice President (1998–2002) and finally as

President (from 2003 until his death). His untiring activity and youthful enthusiasm, together with his outstanding contribution to fulfil the aims of the Union, will be long remembered with appreciation and gratitude. This journal, of which he was an editor, owes him a great deal.

Lamberti was endowed with the qualities of tolerance, perseverance and patience; he was a free spirit, a man of unquestionable integrity and straightforward sincerity. In spite of heart problems he suffered in his later years, he maintained a relentless work schedule and continued to travel throughout the world, endeavouring to demonstrate - in the finest tradition of the “Bari School” - that science could be a means of helping people, even in the poorest of circumstances as Lamberti had experienced.

ANTONIO GRANITI and CHARLES E. TAYLOR