

**Adj. Professor Nicholas F. DERERA**, AM, FAIAST, (BD: 05/01/1919) arrived with his wife and son in Australia as refugees after the Hungarian uprising, on 19th September 1957. He was process worker, then laboratory assistant in 1957/58. From the end of 1958 till 1961 he was Research Agronomist with the NSW Department of Agriculture. During this period **N F Derera had a crucial role in the establishment of the cotton growing industry by proving the suitability of the land, selecting the varieties and inviting American cotton growers to lay the foundations of the cotton industry. In 1957/58 Australia was importing £52,000,000 worth of cotton while recently cotton export is well over one billion dollars.** He also discovered and described a hitherto undescribed wild cotton species in the Nandewar ranges, which was named *Gossypium nandewarense* Derera.

- In 1961 N F Derera, or Nick Derera as he was known by the farmers, joined The University of Sydney as a Plant Breeder at The North West Wheat Research Institute, Narrabri, later was renamed Plant Breeding Institute. Here he was Plant Breeder, Senior Plant Breeder and Officer-in-Charge of the Institute. In 1973 he was appointed Director of Wheat Breeding of the University's Plant Breeding Institute and retired in mid 1981. His research results over 1961-1981 included: **Breeder and co-breeder of 11 new prime hard wheat cultivars namely Mendos, Gamut, Gamset, Timgalen, Gatcher, Songlen, Shortim, Timson, Sunkota, Suneca and Sunstar.** Developed breeding methodologies such as **Mechanical Mass Selection system**, verification of the advantage of the **"Limited Selection" system. Invented screening techniques for drought resistance, flag smut resistance, micro quality tests and sprouting damage resistance.** Studied the role of awns and roots, particularly their importance regarding drought tolerance of the wheat plant. Conducted **intensive research into the problem of preharvest sprouting damage**, consequently it became possible to breed white wheat tolerant to preharvest sprouting damage. Nick Derera established an **international cooperation concerning preharvest sprouting research** and because of this a series of International Symposia on Preharvest Sprouting in Cereals are in progress. He is a life member of the International Organising Committee of these symposia. **Nick Derera is also author/editor of a book published in the USA titled "Preharvest Field Sprouting in Cereals" (1989). He is author and co-author of 97 scientific, semi-popular and major conference papers.**

- Since retirement established "ASAS" Agricultural Science Advisory Service and in his consultant capacity has a major involvement in the Australian **Native Ornamental Plant Improvement program.** Resulting from this work, five new Geraldton Wax cultivars are either granted or in progress for Plant Variety Right registration, namely **Niribri, Cascade Mist, Cascade Jewel, Cascade Brook and Crystal.** In 1998 released three dwarf chilli cultivars, **Bantam, Orange Bantam and Thimble.** In 2005 further three dwarf capsicums were released **"Ebony Fire, Salsa and Seville..** Two of the Cascades were granted USA patents. He is still involved in this program. In 1994 Nick Derera was **invited by The University of Sydney to cooperate with the Department of Crop Science and the University's Plant Breeding Institute to partake in the supervision of postgraduate students and to help in the establishment of horticultural plant breeding programs, particularly paprika breeding in relation to the introduction of the Hungarian condiment paprika production to Australia.** In October 1998 he was **appointed Adjunct Professor as recognition of his present research and teaching work.**

Nick Derera received the following peer recognition's and awards: **Fellow of the Australian Institute of Agricultural Science (1977)** for outstanding contribution to the Agr. Science; **Certificate of Appreciation for Services to the Community from the RSL (1979), NSW Branch; Farrer Memorial Medal (1981)** for achievements in plant breeding; **bronze plaque and citation from colleagues in Canada (1982)** in recognition of research on preharvest sprouting damage in cereals; **Rotary Award for Vocational Excellence (1983)** for contribution to the wheat and cotton industries. He was appointed as a **Member of the Order of Australia (1994)** in the Queen's Birthday List.

**Some of his outstanding students were:**

Emeritus Professor D.R. Marshal, formerly Director of PBI  
Dr S. Rajaram, Director of Wheat program of CYMMIT (Retired),  
Dr. Graham McMaster, CEO. BRI Australia  
Dr Ian Gordon, Senior Lecturer, Massey University, New Zealand  
Dr, Frank Ellison, Principal Wheat Breeder, PBI Narrabri (deceased)  
Dr. A. Bernuetz, Plant Breeder/Director, Bonza-Santory Botanical  
Recent PhD-s: Dr. Mark Walker, Sturt's Desert Pea (Sen. Position with AQUIS)  
Dr. Natalia Nagy, Capsicum: Hybrid seed production (Plant Breeder DeRuiters Seed at Netherland)

**Major references:**

Siobhan McHugh (1996) Cottoning On (First and last chapters)  
Eric Rolls, (1984) A Million Wild Acres. Pgs.220-221  
Who is Who in the Commonwealth (1994)  
International Book of Honor (1985) The American Biographical Inst.  
Who's Who in the World 1996-2006.(Marquis publ. USA)

-