

# Re-cultivating Agricultural Science What I've Learned in 40 Years of Professional Life

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Professor Lindsay Falvey FTSE writes on spiritual and agricultural themes. He is an international agriculturist, has variously been; Dean and Chair of Agriculture at the University of Melbourne, adviser to all major agricultural development agencies and several governments, and CEO of international consulting companies. He is a Fellow of the Academy of Technological Sciences & Engineering, a Life Member & Fellow of Clare Hall at the University of Cambridge, and a recipient of the Centenary Medal of Australia, among other honours. His Ph.D., as well as his higher and honorary doctorates all relate to international agriculture. This, Prof. Falvey's 11th book on an agricultural theme, summarizes his 40 years' work.

**Re-cultivating Agricultural Science: What I've Learned in 40 Years of Professional Life** - Beginning in 1971 with research conducted in the Northern Territory of Australia, the book presents an integrated story through research conducted in the northern highlands of Thailand and much of the developing world, with an emphasis on Asia. With the benefit of 40 years hindsight, a unifying theme in the work is elicited, which progressively integrates broader aspects of personal development, some of which are alluded to in the text.

The initial works tend to be routine technical experiments, which gradually give way to contextual works, development experiences and holistic appreciation of the

role of agricultural science. Half of the chapters include a personal reflective comment, which becomes integrated with the research itself as the thesis develops, until it culminates in an embracing final observation of the real outcomes of four decades in the service of agricultural science.

Forty years of research and development reveals how international aid can be more effective by integrating reductionist approaches into the multi-disciplinary context of international agricultural development. Thus integration of technical, social, environmental, policy and historical research in the poorer countries generates new knowledge as its product.

This reveals routine practices as self-defeating if they are based only on transplanting of research approaches from more-developed countries. Specific research in Thailand relates disciplines and finds a common base with traditional worldviews of integrated life.

The interaction between technological research and cultural worldviews introduces a polemic that highlights ineffectual and hypocritical approaches. The work shows that single-focus assumptions can consume excessive resources in international development for little benefit and oftentimes much harm.