

John P. Nichols

Lifetime Achievement Award

John Nichols is Professor Emeritus, Agricultural Economics, and Senior Fellow in Agricultural Economics in the Norman E. Borlaug Institute for International Agriculture at Texas A&M University. He served on the faculty at Texas A&M for 44 years until his retirement in 2012. Dr. Nichols was born and raised on a farm in Niagara County, New York, and received his B.S. and Ph.D. degrees from Cornell University and his M.S. degree from Michigan State. Appointed as assistant professor of agricultural economics at Texas A&M in 1968, he progressed through the faculty ranks, served as the department's Leader of Research from 1981 through 2004, and as Head from 2005 through 2012. He was Director of the Center for Consumer and Food Marketing Issues in Texas A&M's Institute of Food Science and Engineering from 1999 to 2005 and as Adjunct Professor in the Department of Nutrition and Food Science from 2005 through 2012.

Dr. Nichols' professional interests in research and teaching focused on marketing and market development for agricultural commodities and food products. He was hired as part of the founding faculty of the Texas Agricultural Market Research and Development Center, a mission-oriented unit within the Department of Agricultural Economics emphasizing team research projects to assist producer organizations in their efforts to expand markets and respond to new consumer demand opportunities. In this work, Dr. Nichols designed and conducted in-store retail experiments to evaluate new packaging and grading systems for fruit, conducted survey research at the consumer level, and with value chain participants to identify problems and opportunities that producers could address in their effort to capture higher returns for their commodities. He was a member of NEC-63 Regional Research Committee on Commodity Promotion Programs contributing to its success in promoting



evaluation efforts and outreach to industry practitioners. Dr. Nichols, with his colleagues in the Center, conducted some of the early evaluations of generic advertising and promotion. His professional output consists of more than 140 papers, reports, and technical studies and numerous outreach presentations to industry organizations relating to market development strategy, tactics, and evaluation. He was the recipient of the 1998 Vice Chancellor's Award of Excellence for Team Research. Dr. Nichols' teaching career included courses in agricultural commodity marketing, policy, and agribusiness market development and management. He was an active member of the Intercollegiate Faculty of Agribusiness and the Graduate Faculty of Food Science. He also mentored and coached undergraduate clubs and competitive teams and served as advisor and chair of graduate student committees.

As his career developed, he found a demand for similar research efforts in the international sphere launching a series of projects that have spanned more than 30 years and 20 countries. His work with the U.S. Department of

Agriculture's Office of Agribusiness in the 1970s and 1980s focused on evaluation of social marketing programs for fortified food products and low-cost weaning foods. These projects included consumer acceptance surveys and market demand analysis in South Korea, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Guyana, and Sudan. While on sabbatical leave in Paris, France, in 1990, Dr. Nichols studied the effects of agricultural policy and the emergence of a single market for food products in the European Union. While in Europe, he was introduced to the post-Soviet world and the problems of transition economies while presenting lectures at the Agricultural University in Nitra, Slovakia.

With this introduction, and funding from private and public sources, Dr. Nichols led several agribusiness education projects in Russia during the 1990s. This work focused on development of applied economics and business curricula and faculty development exchanges in collaboration with agrarian university and extension education and training institutions in several regions from St. Petersburg to Siberia. Dr. Nichols was also instrumental in establishing the Agribusiness Teaching Center in 1999 with the Armenian National Agrarian University in Yerevan. Through this teaching, institution students study a curriculum following the upper division agribusiness model of many U.S. universities with all instruction in English. Dr. Nichols continues to serve as Chairman of the Board of the International Center for Agribusiness Research and Education, an Armenian nonprofit foundation created to support the continuing mission of teaching, research, and outreach in Armenia and the Caucasus region. Dr. Nichols' international professional interests include a long relationship with the International Food and Agribusiness Management Association (IFAMA). He was a founding member, organized several IFAMA annual conferences, and served on its executive committee from 1996 through 2013. He is a Fellow of IFAMA.

Beginning early in his career, Dr. Nichols was engaged in administrative roles. In addition to his departmental position as Leader of Research, he served as coordinator for

social sciences in managing internal competitive programs for the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station during the 1980s. He led search committees for department heads and resident directors and chaired the College and Experiment Strategic Planning Committee in 1988. Dr. Nichols' career interest in food marketing fostered a collaborative relationship with food scientists and led to his appointment to chair a committee charged with creating a new department combining the teaching, research, and Extension interests of faculty associated with several commodity-oriented departments. This led to the formation of the Department of Nutrition and Food Science in 2005. Dr. Nichols accepted the role of Head of the Department of Agricultural Economics in 2005. He also served as a member of the Executive Committee of the University Transportation Center for Mobility, a division of the Texas Transportation Institute, from 2007 to 2012. This provided an opportunity to assist the Institute in developing economic and social science research collaboration with engineering, urban design, and other disciplines. In 2009, Dr. Nichols was presented the Vice Chancellor's Award of Excellence for Administration.

Dr. Nichols continues to contribute professionally though his appointment in the Borlaug Institute for International Agriculture and as Chair of the Board of the International Center for Agribusiness Research and Education (ICARE) in Armenia. He is also Chair of the Advisory Board of the Texas Department of Agriculture's Go Texan Partnership Program, a grant program designed to award matching market development funds to small startup food producers in Texas. Dr. Nichols is completing his term as Associate Editor of the *Encyclopedia of Food and Agricultural Systems*, 2nd Ed. to be published by Elsevier. He also serves as a member the Business and Community Advisory Committee of the Dallas Federal Reserve Bank. In 2012 Dr. Nichols was elected and continues to serve as a member of the City Council of College Station, Texas. He is married and has three children and three grandchildren.