

Dr. Fran Walley

2024 Honorary Life Member

Fran Walley recently retired (2023), from the University of Saskatchewan where she was Associate Dean (Academic) in the College of Agriculture and Bioresources, and Professor Emerita in the Department of Soil Science. Fran obtained her BSc and MSc from the University of Manitoba, then earned her PhD in soil microbiology from the U of S. She began her career as an Assistant Professor & Extension Specialist at a time when pulse crops were becoming widely adopted on the prairies.

Her extension experience with farmers sparked an active research program of soil nitrogen dynamics and pulse crop agronomy. Her work in soil nutrient management was essential in informing agriculture management practices and improving our understanding of the benefits of crop rotation. Her ability to communicate this information garnered her invitations to present to regional farmer groups, and to national and international conferences.

An acknowledged outstanding professor, Dr. Walley introduced thousands of students to plant and soil science through her involvement in teaching one of the core first-year AgBio classes. Her goal was for students to not only have basic knowledge but also to share in the excitement of agriculture, regardless of whether they would go on to major in soil science, agronomy, ag business, or food science. Fran authored/co-authored more than 65 peer reviewed journal articles and book chapters and supervised/co-supervised more than 30 graduate and post doc students.

For the last third of her career, Dr. Walley moved into an administrative leadership role. As Associate Dean (Academic), Fran strengthened her rapport with students and faculty, as well as with other key stakeholders in the agriculture industry, including the Saskatchewan Institute of Agrologists (SIA). An advocate of Indigenous learning, Fran and her team promoted a highly innovative course for Indigenous students, improving a certificate class to a 2-year Diploma Land Managers program.

Fran has been a national leader. During her term as President of the Canadian Society of Soil Science, she championed development of the first-ever Canadian based soil science e-textbook. Recently, she co-led a three-year project to create an online Prairie Nutrient Removal calculator for commonly grown Prairie crops.

Fran Walley's leadership has contributed to the agriculture industry, helping to ensure it remains relevant and beneficial to students, farmers, and academics.