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**PRESS RELEASE**

**Ceremony Granting of an Honorary Doctorate of the Agricultural University of Athens to the Professor Emeritus of the Colorado State University, Dr. Ioannis Sofos.**

On Monday, April 22 2024 at 10.30 am, the Granting Ceremony of an Honorary Doctorate of the Department of Food Science and Human Nutrition of the School of Food and Nutritional Sciences to the Professor Emeritus of the Colorado State University, Dr. Ioannis Sofos, was held at the Ceremony Hall of the Agricultural University of Athens. The Rector of the Agricultural University of Athens, Mr. Spyridon Kintzios, in the short greeting speech addressed, has highlighted the valuable research work of the conferee, as well as his extensive offer towards the Food Science.

Subsequently, the Head of the Department of Food Science and Human Nutrition, Ms. Ioanna Mantala, has described at greater length the career experience of Dr. Sofos, both as a scientist and in respect of his studies. Specifically, Dr. Ioannis Sofos, graduated from the Agricultural University of Thessaloniki in 1971, having completed his postgraduate studies in the Meat Science at the University of Minnesota in 1975. Afterwards, he elaborated on his Doctoral Thesis into the Food Science, indulging, in particular, in the Food Microbiology at the same University in 1979. Then, he has worked as a Researcher until 1980 at the University of Minnesota, after that he has been elected to the rank of Assistant Professor at the Colorado State University (CSU), at which he has held the rank of Professor until the year 2015, when he was retired, following 35 years of academic career.

It is worth mentioning that Dr. Ioannis Sofos has been awarded a number of honorary distinctions. Examples include the Lifetime Honour of being a Member, a Prize awarded by the International Association on Food Protection in 2017, besides the honorary recognition of numerous achievements made, as a President of the same Global Association in 2014. Also, he was honoured with the Distinguished Career Prize by the Colorado State University in 2013, inasmuch with Esteemed Professor Awards by the same University in 2007, the Highly Cited Scientist Award in the bibliography in 2006, in addition to the Research Award received by the American Meat Science Association in 1994. It is equally noticeable that, from 1995 until 2014, Dr. Ioannis Sofos has been a Scientific Editor of the International Journal, entitled “Journal of Food Protection”, as well as being a Member and Chairman of the Biological Hazards Panel of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA).

With regard to his research interests, these pertain to the food contamination from pathogenic microorganisms, mainly the development of sampling and detection methods in food, including also the exploration of prevention ways of their outgrowth and multiplication. Food Safety and Quality has been a target of the research interests of Professor, Mr. Ioannis Sofos, from the very beginning of his research study. Due to the concern caused, as a result of the use of Nitrosamine throughout the decade of 1970, Dr. Ioannis Sofos has examined alternative ways of controlling *Clostridium botulinum* by using preservatives, like sorbates as alternatives to nitrite in meat preparations, revealing for the first time that sorbic acid inhibits germination of spores. Such a state of the art has aroused the interest, not only of the academic community, but also of the Industry Sector and the Managing Authorities. Furthermore, he has carried out a research that specializes in the percentage of sodium in its naturally occurring and common compound, namely, salt, besides the processed foods, being a procedure, which has been related to low fat products, belonging to the category of meat products. A part of his research is associated with the development of low cost products in developing areas and the evaluation of microorganisms and enzymes for their ability to degrade cholesterol in meat. Finally, during the last 15-20 years, he has got involved with the coliform bacterium, named *Escherichia coli*, the food poisoning bacterium, *Salmonella* and the poisonous bacterium, *Listeria* in fresh and processed meat products.

As far as his academic career is concerned, he has participated and supervised a large number of postgraduate studies and doctoral theses, while approximately 40 Researchers have worked at his Lab, along with a diversity of Post – doctoral Researchers and visiting Professors. On top of that, it is remarkable that 57 from his plentiful students, Post – doctoral Researchers and Visiting Professors come from 29 different countries outside USA, amongst which, their origins extend over the Ivory Coast, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Greece, India, Kenya, China Belize, South Africa, Thailand, Finland and Zimbabwe. They are all employed in the Industry Sector, Academia, State Services, such as Ministries in USA and other countries, too. Needless to say that, Professor I. Sofos is highly prolific, with a total of publications, reaching about 300 articles, whereas he has been invited as a speaker to more than 200 presentations.

Upon the completion of the speech of the Head of the Department of Food Science and Human Nutrition, Ms. Ioanna Mantala, the ceremonial process of putting the particular robe - academic garment on the honoree took place. At the end of the procedure, Dr. Ioannis Sofos has expressed his thanks towards the Rectorate Authorities of the Agricultural University of Athens for the special honour felt by his Ceremony Granting as an Honorary Doctorate. The ceremony event has been concluded by some light finger food dishes.