

2018 ASABE Fellow



Thomas Trout, PE, retired agricultural engineer, Agricultural Research Service, United States Department of Agriculture, Fort Collins, Colorado, is being honored for outstanding contributions to ASABE and to the science and practice of irrigation water management.

Trout's career has had significant international impact in the fields of water management, innovative surface and drip irrigation systems, soil infiltration and management, irrigation-induced soil erosion, alternatives to methyl bromide soil fumigation, and plant response to water stress. His research contributions have improved crop production with less water and with less impact to the natural environment. While his research interests have had wide-ranging topics, they are all linked by the common devotion to increased efficiency and productivity of irrigated agriculture.

Trout conducted research that demonstrated that soil fumigants can be effectively applied through drip irrigation systems. This technology has been adopted by much of the California strawberry industry as an alternative to methyl bromide soil fumigation, reducing the environmental and health hazards.

Earlier in his career, Trout became involved in a research group that designed a water control structure for irrigation channels in Pakistan, which has led to more than two million of these structures being installed across that country, significantly improving efficiency irrigation techniques.

A 39-year member of ASABE, Trout is a longtime member of the ASABE Natural Resources and Environmental Systems technical community Irrigation Management and Microirrigation committees. Trout maintains membership with the American Society of Civil Engineers, the American Society of Agronomy, the Soil Science Society of America, the Irrigation Association, and the US Commission on Irrigation and Drainage.

Trout has authored or coauthored more than 100 refereed journal articles, book chapters, other publications. He is also a coinventor on a United States patent. Trout has received many awards throughout his career, including the 2016 American Society of Civil Engineers Tipton award, a Federal Laboratory Consortium for Technology Transfer Outstanding Partnership award, and a US Commission on Irrigation and Drainage Service to the Profession award. He was on a research team that was selected for an Irrigation Association Water and Energy Conservation award and he was also part of a team that received an Agricultural Research Service Technology Transfer Superior Effort award. In 2003, his research team was selected for the USDA Secretary's Honor Award for Superior Service. Trout was the 2015 recipient of the ASABE John Deere Gold Medal.