

## Hugo P. Cecchini

**The institute is named in memory of Hugo Cecchini, a former student and long-time staff member of HAFL who was committed to sustainable agriculture throughout his career, from farm practice to applied research, and who, as a political refugee from Argentina, personified interculturality and some of the major global issues of our time.**

Hugo Pablo Cecchini was born on 3 February 1958 in Argentina, where he grew up and attended the Universidad Nacional de La Plata. In 1979, he had to flee his country under the military dictatorship, arriving finally in Switzerland in 1980. He was able to return to Argentina in 1988, where he worked in rural areas, with young people and then on an organic farm. He came back to Switzerland in 1991 and worked on a large organic farm in Canton Jura with self-processing and direct sales. He enrolled at the Swiss College of Agriculture in Zollikofen at the age of 38, graduating with distinction in International Agriculture (BSc) in 2000.



During his studies in agriculture, he completed a six-month field assignment in Ecuador, undertaking remarkable research on potatoes with the Ecuadorian research centre Fortipapa, which included on-farm and on-station trials dealing with potato quality and environmentally-friendly pest management. He became a teaching and research associate at HAFL in 2000 and took over responsibility for the International Agriculture students' field assignments abroad, with a network of partners in Asia, Africa, Eastern Europe and Latin America. Active networking with partners is key for the successful field practice of HAFL students. Hugo also worked as a researcher in various projects and visited many students during their field assignments, travelling mostly to West Africa (Mali, Burkina Faso) and Latin America (Guatemala, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Brazil and Argentina).

Between 2005 and 2007, alongside his employment, he completed a Master of Advanced Studies in Intercultural Communication at the University of Lugano, Switzerland. This critical and self-critical thinker worked at HAFL for almost ten years, becoming a pillar of the International Agriculture Group, as organiser of the students' field assignments, lecturer, researcher and reliable team player. In early 2010, he decided to return to his country of birth to apply the principles of sustainable organic agriculture and tourism. There, he and his wife set up a successful "Chacra" (farm) in the Cordoba region.

Hugo Pablo Cecchini died in Argentina in January 2019 at the age of 60 after a long illness. As a scientist, a farmer, a family man and a world citizen, he considered human beings to be part of nature. Throughout his life, he committed himself to treating nature with respect.