

2024 agInnovation Research Innovation Award of Excellence

Dr. Barbara Valent

*University Distinguished Professor
Department of Plant Pathology
Kansas State University*

Dr. Barbara Valent is a leader in plant pathology, a brilliant researcher in host-pathogen genetics, and a connector of young and mature scientists to achieve outcomes that benefit global society and enhance food security. Dr. Valent was elected in 2020 as a member of the National Academy of Sciences, arguably the highest level of scientific recognition in the US. Her H-Index of 70 and over 24,000 citations of her 162 publications supports this recognition through a career focused on one of the most yield limiting diseases of rice (*Oryza* spp.) in the world - '**blast**' - caused by the fungus *Magnaporthe oryzae*. An internationally-recognized expert in the molecular and cellular biology of fungal invasion and plant-microbe interactions, Dr. Valent became a Fellow of her professional society in 2007 for her remarkable scientific contributions developing the rice blast fungus model system. Dr. Valent's ability to build a team of experts is a testimony to her stature in science and collaborative nature. She incorporates both senior and junior scientists, mentoring them to become collaborative and respectful of the challenges of a global society. She has published with over 71 collaborators, from North and South America, Asia, Africa, Australia, and Europe. Throughout her career, Dr. Valent has shown respect and sensitivity to all. That trait is exhibited in the diversity of her team, collaborators, and co-authors. She has mentored graduate students, visiting scientists, and postdocs representing nine countries and five continents. She has also mentored diverse undergraduates through underrepresented-minority-serving research programs.

Dr. Valent earned her B.A. degree in Chemistry and Ph.D. degree in Biochemistry at the University of Colorado, Boulder.