

## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE

### Seventieth Birthday of Professor Ing. VÁCLAV KŮDELA, DrSc.



Recently, Prof. V. KŮDELA, long-lasting head (1990–2006) of the editorial board of Plant Protection Science, reached the age of 70. Let us recall several important data from his life.

He was born in 1936. In the years 1951–1953 he attended the Vine Vocational School at Bzenec and 1953–1956 the Agricultural Technical School at Přerov. From 1956–1961 he studied at the Agricultural University (today the Mendel University of Agriculture and Forestry) in Brno. Here he met one of the founders and at that time leaders of Czech plant pathology, Prof. Eduard Baudyš. His charismatic personality strongly influenced the young student KŮDELA and inspired him for life in his scientific activities in plant pathology.

The next period, 1961–1964, influenced him for life: he became agronomist and later head of an Agricultural Cooperative Farm. This experience with practical agriculture gave him a broad knowledge and insight into management of agriculture. The opportunity and duty of a young man just out of university to rule the farm also meant that he had to get along well with the former farmers that were as old as his father and grandfathers. Such an experience was invaluable for his further life and professional activities.

In 1964 he began his scientific career at the Research Institute for Plant Production, Department for Plant Protection, in Prague-Ruzyně. His PhD thesis, finished in 1968, dealt with *Verticillium* and bacterial wilt of alfalfa. Its results substantially influenced the breeding of alfalfa in Czechoslovakia; all breeders incorporated screening for wilt resistance into their breeding programs. Prof. KŮDELA kept in close contact and collaborated with breeders also in future. All Czech alfalfa varieties registered since that time contain part of this effort. Alfalfa wilt is now no longer a disease of practical importance in the Czech Republic.

All of his life's work in plant pathology can be regarded as the continuation of the activities of his predecessors, the founders of plant pathology in the Czech Republic. It covered the main fields, i.e. extension of science and knowledge, teaching and organisation of plant protection.

His scientific work was focused on fungal, and later especially on bacterial plant diseases caused by gram-negative and gram-positive phytopathogenic procaryota. He founded the first laboratory and later department of phytobacteriology in the Czech Republic. Of the numerous problems, the department was dealing with the most important ones such as *Erwinia amylovora*, *Clavibacter michiganense* subsp. *sepedonicus*, *Pseudomonas syringae* pathovars and a survey of the incidence of bacterial diseases in the Czech Republic.

Among practical farmers he has been known to excel in disease diagnostics. With this reputation in the agricultural community, and as a man giving altruistic help to anybody, countless numbers of samples and queries were sent to him to which he kindly gave answer or advice. Many of the samples inspired him to pursue more detailed studies of particular plant disease problems.

After the political changes in the former Czechoslovakia, he was appointed as associate professor in 1991 and full professor of plant pathology in 1996. He gave numerous lectures to students of the agricultural universities in Prague, České Budějovice and Brno. Since 1996 he serves also as the chairman of the Commission for State Examinations at the South Bohemian University at České Budějovice.

He was the supervisor of eight PhD students, chairman or member of committees for PhD thesis defence and awards at several Czech universities. He has been also the chairman or member of the committees awarding associate and full professors in plant pathology.

His organisational activities substantially influenced the development of plant protection in the Czechoslovakia and later in the Czech Republic. During 1966–1976 he organised and edited the Proceedings of the I.–VI. Czechoslovak Plant Protection Conferences. In 1991–1992 he served as a vice-president of the Czech Agricultural Academy. He has been member of eight scientific committees of different research institutes. Development and progress in the area of plant protection was furthered by his membership in several committees of the Ministry of Agriculture (e.g. Committee for Fodder Plants – 1976–1979), head of the Committee for Pesticide Registration (1993–1996), adviser of the Minister of Agriculture for the establishment of the State Phytosanitary Administration (1996). In 2005 he was appointed by Ministry of Agriculture as a chairman of the national Expert Council for Plant Health.

In 1990 he became director of the Plant Protection Division of the Research Institute for Plant Production, and during 1993–1996 he was the director of this Institute.

He was also involved in various international activities, e.g. as a member of the European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organisation (Plant Pathogenic Bacteria Panel) as a representative of the Czech Republic (1999–2003), and as a member of the International Society for Horticulture Science (Plant Protection Commission, Working Group on Fire Blight Research) as a representative of the Czech Republic (1979–2002).

In this short summary we are able to give only a brief account of his immense wealth of publications. Until 2006 he published 139 original scientific papers, 70 papers in the proceedings of scientific conferences, 17 abstracts from scientific meetings, 193 professional papers, 12 books, 5 booklets, and 4 brochures on plant protection methods for practical farmers. Very influential were basic materials prepared by him for the Ministry of Agriculture regarding the concepts of agriculture development and agricultural research (altogether 16 titles). He also took part in the development of laws and regulations in the Czech Republic.

From his most important books, prepared in cooperation with numerous co-workers and that are invaluable sources of information for students, teachers, scientists and specialists in plant pathology and the plant protection service, we can list the following:

Kůdela V. (ed.): *Obecná fytopatologie* (General Phytopathology). Academia, Praha, 1989, 387 pp. (in Czech with English summary)

Kůdela V., Nováček A., Fucík L.: *Rostlinolékařská bakteriologie* (Bacteria and Plant Health). Academia, Praha, 2002, 347 pp. (in Czech with English summary)

Kůdela V., Kocourek F. (eds): *Seznam škodlivých organismů rostlin* (List of Pests Injurious to Plants). Agrospoj, Praha, 2002, 342 pp. (in Czech)

Kůdela V., Braunová M. (eds): *Czech-English Plant Health Terminology*. In the publishing scheme of Academia Publishing House, Prague, for 2007.

In addition, he arranged for a revision of the Czech names of diseases and pests. He prepared and published general rules of their terminology. Lists of them occurring on individual crops, prepared with other specialists, are published continuously in technical journals. Once the whole has been finished, these papers will be compiled and published as a book.

His special and life hobby is the history of agricultural research in the Czech Republic, especially plant protection. He published several papers and brochures on this topic. Probably the most important and comprehensive study is: *Nástin dějin institucionalizace rostlinolékařství v českých zemích 1899–1999* (Contribution to the Institutionalization of Plant Medicine in Czech Countries 1899–1999). ÚZPI, Praha, 2000, 72 pp.

Prof. V. KŮDELA is a man of broad interests, with everlasting enthusiasm, a colleague who is ready to lend help to his co-workers, be it by advice, hints or stimulating thoughts. This nature of his per-

sonality resulted in an excellent milieu around him, inspiring younger colleagues. He has thus become a real doyen of Czech plant pathology.

All his colleagues and friends, who enjoyed his hospitality, generosity and friendship, wish to Professor VÁCLAV KŮDELA good health, personal well-being and strength for his never ending activities and enthusiasm.

Members of the Editorial Board of the journal Plant Protection Science are most grateful to Prof. KŮDELA for his work as chairman of the journal in the years 1990–2006. We appreciate the actions that changed the journal to its present appearance and level that correspond to international standards. We are looking forward to having him as a member of the Board, where he will be most helpful with his broad knowledge, long experience and sharp criticism.

It is a great pleasure for us to congratulate Professor KŮDELA and, on behalf of all Czech plant pathologists and others involved in plant medicine, we wish him good health and enthusiasm for a long time to come.

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