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AN OBITUARY NOTICE

Ing. Václav Šíp, CSc.



Ing. VÁCLAV ŠÍP, CSc., Editor in Chief of the Czech Journal of Genetics and Plant Breeding, passed away on March 8, 2016, succumbing to a severe disease, a few months after having celebrated his 72nd birthday. We will miss him as an outstanding research scientist and our friendly colleague with high personal integrity.

VÁCLAV ŠÍP was born on October 29, 1943 at Havlíčkův Brod. After finishing his studies at the University of Agriculture in Prague in 1965 he began his career as a potato breeder and phytopathologist at the potato breeding stations at Keřkov and Česká Bělá. In 1973–1975 he enrolled also in a postgraduate course of statistics and biometrics at the Jan Evangelista Purkyně University in Brno. In 1974 he reached the academic degree of “Candidate of Sciences” (at that time corresponding to Ph.D.) with the Thesis entitled: Diagnostics, spread and eradication of potato viruses.

In 1972 he moved to the Crop Research Institute (former Research Institute of Crop Production) in Prague-Ruzyně, where he devoted his time to research activities focused on genetics and plant breeding. In 1985 he became Head of the Department of Plant Breeding Methods and maintained this position till 2007. In 1988 he became also Deputy Director of the Division of Genetics and Plant Breeding, and worked at this position until 2009. He coordinated a number of successful projects. His scientific interests were focused on cereals, especially wheat and barley, but covered also a wide range of topics, such as biometrics, studies of effects of environmental variability on important traits, marker-assisted selection, study of genes controlling adaptation to climatic conditions (*Rht* and *Ppd* genes), and, especially, breeding for resistance to biotic stresses (BYDV, Fusarium head blight, Tan spot diseases). He was also interested in statistical methods of analysis of the experimental data obtained (statistical methods). He published a large number of scientific and technical papers in both international and national journals.

Another area of his activity involved the introduction of scientific findings into practical cereal breeding. The cooperation with breeders started with the development of the so-called gibberellic programme, the objective of which was the incorporation of dwarfing genes into wheat cultivars, to improve the lodging resistance and harvest index. Later he developed improved methods of disease resistance evaluation, which were then used successfully in breeding. He closely cooperated with Czech wheat breeders and became co-author of the winter wheat varieties Šárka, Vlasta, Rheia and Raduza. The outstanding cooperation with the Experimental Institute for Cereal Research at Fiorenzuola d’Arda, Italy, in breeding for BYDV resistance resulted in the release of the BYDV-resistant barley cultivar Doria with the *Ryd2* gene, in 2006 in Italy. This cultivar was derived from a series of crosses between *Ryd2*-carrying lines, tested for BYDV resistance at the CRI in Prague-Ruzyně by VÁCLAV ŠÍP, and the frost-tolerant winter barley Nure, within the framework of a programme aimed at pyramiding resistance genes.

VÁCLAV ŠÍP, being an internationally recognised expert for plant breeding, was member of scientific organizations at both international and national levels: Country Representative and Board member of EUCARPIA, member of the European Society of Agronomy (ESA), head of the Commission of Genetics and Plant Breeding and member of the Commission of Biometrics in Plant Breeding of the Czech Academy of Agricultural Sciences.

Although very busy in his research work, he spent with great enthusiasm and care much of his time to editorial work. Since 1991 VÁCLAV ŠÍP was a very active member of the Editorial Board of the Czech Journal of Genetics and Plant Breeding (formerly “Genetika a šlechtění”). In 1995 he became the Editor in Chief of our journal, which under his leadership became internationally respected, followed in a number of scientific journal databases and reached an impressive impact factor.

We are very thankful for his work and life. Long live his memory!

Ing. Jana Chrpová, CSc.