

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE

Ing. Josef Pešek, DrSc., Seventieth Birthday Anniversary

Joe, as colleagues used to call him, was born in a farmers family at Radim in Eastern Bohemia on 5th September 1934. He studied statistics and geodesy at the Czech Technical University in Prague. After graduation in 1957 he became employee and later head of section of the state enterprise Agropojekt with responsibilities for agricultural constructions. During his employment he enrolled in numerical mathematics at the J. E. Purkyně University of Brno and lectured statistics at the Agricultural University of Brno. In 1966 he became scientist at the Agriculture Research Institute at Hrušovany near Brno. There, under Prof. Rod's guidance, he reached the degree "Candidate of Science" in biometrics and field experimentation. Together with Prof. ROD they founded the Commission of Biometrics of the former Czechoslovak, now Czech, Academy of Agricultural Sciences. For many years he was secretary and chairman of the commission.

During his post-doctorate fellowship from 1968 to 1970 at the Agricultural University of Winnipeg in Canada he became a close cooperator of Prof. R.J. BAKER and investigated the effectiveness of selection methods in plant populations, using Monte Carlo simulations. The non-weighted selection index, proposed by him together with Prof. BAKER, became since a widely used tool in plant breeding. Other fellowships enabled him to work temporarily as a visiting scientist at the Agricultural University of Wageningen and at the Institute of Genetics and Cytology at Novosibirsk. J. PEŠEK'S scientific achievements in selection theory became exploitable by breeders with the software "Selection of Optimum Parental Combinations", which he wrote as part of his dissertation for the degree "Doctor of Sciences", received in 1984. The program was especially valued by breeders of allogamic species in different countries.

JOE PEŠEK was always engaged in spreading biometric knowledge and promoting advanced techniques in agronomy, cultivar testing and breeding by organising conferences and seminars, post-graduate courses, lecturing and guiding selection projects. In 1976 he established the Centre of Biometrics and Computer Technology at Brno, which provided biometric service for breeders and agricultural research institutes, where he coordinated a number of successful projects in agronomy, plant breeding and animal nutrition. The tradition of "Summer School of Biometrics", which he established together with Prof. ROD and Prof. HONČARIV, attracts every year many young scientists and statistical novices from Central Europe. He was member of an international team of scientists from eastern countries, aimed at "Biometric Analysis and Computer Technology in Plant Breeding". In 1991 he became Deputy Director of the Research Institute of Ecologic Agrotechnology at Hrušovany near Brno. He was member of scientific boards in several research institutions and is still member of the Editorial Board of our journal. He also became chairperson of the EUCARPIA section Biometrics in plant breeding and was the main organiser of its plenary conference at Brno in 1992. He published 107 scientific papers and was co-author of three monographs, published as books in German, Russian and English.

A heart attack in 1996 limited his manifold activities. After a heart surgery he lives in retirement with his wife Hana, surrounded by three families of his children with seven granddaughters. We wish him good health and much pleasure with his family.

Ing. Jiří Hartmann, CSc.