

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE

A Birthday Tribute in Honour of Prof. Ing. Jiří Petr, DrSc., Dr.h.c.

Professor Jiří Petr is an agricultural scientist who has become widely known in the agronomical scientific circles of the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and beyond.

Professor Jiří Petr was born in Hradec Králové on 13th May 1931, as the son of a maltster. Having completed his grammar school education, he studied plant production at the University of Agriculture in Prague and graduated in 1953. Then he continued with post-graduate doctoral studies at the Department of Plant Production of his Alma Mater. He became an Assistant Professor in 1956.

Ten years of extremely productive research and pedagogical work won him an Associate Professorship in 1966. However, owing to his disapproval of the ruling regime in that period, he was prevented from continuing his career. Consequently, it was not until 1988, in the fullness of time, that his Doctorate of Science was conferred upon him. He was appointed as Professor in the following year.

Due to his rich experience and management capabilities, Professor Petr served as Rector of the University of Agriculture in Prague from 1990 till 1994. Under his leadership, the university significantly expanded its cooperation with many other universities and research institutions, not only in Europe, but throughout the world.

Owing to numerous research projects and publishing activities, he was recognized as one of the most distinguished scientists of agronomical science in Europe. Based on his intensive continuous research into cereal production, he was awarded the degree of Doctor Honoris Causa by the Swedish University of Agriculture in Uppsala in 1999.

Professor Petr has contributed significantly to the study and understanding of field crop yield formation.

All the findings achieved by his research team were published in *Yield Formation of Main Field Crops* (1980) which was translated into English and published by Elsevier.

Moreover, his research focused on the climate and its significant influence upon crop yield. His research team's findings were summarized in *Weather and Yield* (1987), which was also published in English by Elsevier. Furthermore, he wrote numerous other useful books and textbooks such as *Pea and Broad Bean* (1973), *Intensive Cereal Production* (1983), *Ecological Agriculture* (1992), *Rye and Triticale* (2008), and many more.

Throughout his career, the professor emphasized the close relationship between agricultural research and large-scale production. He always underlined the importance of introducing the research findings into modern, intensive crop production. He, together with his team, wrote the very popular and innovative manual entitled *Agronomist Handbook* (1989), which was designed to help agronomists introduce new approaches to modern crop production.

Not only was he an eminent research scientist, but he was also a dedicated educator. During his career, he supervised approximately 100 MSc. and 20 PhD. students. Then, at last, in 2010, after having made such a significant and enduring contribution to the development and modernization of Czechoslovak and Czech agriculture, he decided the time was ripe for his retirement.

Professor Petr's lifelong vocation is symbolized by the bond he forged between science and the educative process, the fruits of which will richly endow his legacy.

Ing. Peter Fecák, PhD.