

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE

Obituary of Assoc. Prof. RNDr. Jaroslava Ovesná, CSc. (1959–2025)



It is with great sadness that we announce our respected colleague and prominent scientist, Assoc. Prof. RNDr. Jaroslava Ovesná, CSc., passed away on June 17, 2025, following a lengthy battle with an illness at the age of 65 years. She served as a member of the editorial board of the Czech Journal of Genetics and Plant Breeding from 2000 to 2017. From 1984, immediately after graduating in biochemistry from the Faculty of Science of Charles University, until her passing, she worked at the Czech Agrifood Research Centre (CARC), formerly the Crop Research Institute (CRI).

For decades, she was a cornerstone of the CRI. After returning from a research stay in France, she re-established the Molecular Biology Department and became its long-time head. Thanks to the projects she gained, her team grew significantly within a few years. She played a key role in implementing modern mo-

lecular biology methods into practice. She dedicated her professional life to research and education, not only in the areas of molecular biology but also became a leading scientist in the fields of food quality and GMOs. She founded the National Reference Laboratory for GMO Identification and DNA Fingerprinting, which she also headed. For nearly twenty years, she also chaired the Scientific Committee for Genetically Modified Food and Feed, which brings together numerous scientists involved in this field. She also worked as an expert advisor to the Ministry of Agriculture of the Czech Republic. She completed her career as head of the Division of Genetics and Plant Breeding. Her intrinsic interest in science and research was evident when she held the position of Deputy Director for Core Activities.

Although she remained professionally loyal to a single employer, she was a member of many international organisations, committees, boards and working groups (including JRC, EUVRIN, FAO and EFSA), where her attention to detail and ability to find connections between seemingly distant areas could stand out. She published more than 160 scientific articles, and her work was often cited and highly regarded within the scientific community (H-index 27, over 2 200 citations). She led many research projects focused on vegetable breeding, the authenticity of garlic and poppy varieties, as well as the use of smart technologies in field crop cultivation.

She was a person of exceptional expertise and precision. She left behind not only several scientific results but also inspired many colleagues and collaborators with her diligence, perseverance and will.

She will be dearly missed by her colleagues and friends.

Ing. Dagmar Janovská, Ph.D. and Ing. Dagmar Cvrčková, CARC, Czech Republic