

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE

RNDr. ERIK SCHWARZBACH, Dr. agr. habil., Seventieth Birthday Anniversary



Erik, as friends and colleagues simply call him, has been a member of the editorial board of our journal for many years. He was born on the 6th April 1936 in Prague in a bilingual Czech-German family, grew up in eastern Moravia, studied biology at the Faculty of Natural Sciences of J.E. Purkyně University in Brno, where he graduated from in 1959. His career started with practical barley breeding, search for useful induced mutations and development of selection methods at the plant breeding station Branišovice in southern Moravia and later at Stupice near Prague. In 1967 he received the title Doctor of Natural Sciences (RNDr) in plant physiology at his Alma Mater and visited a number of scientific institutions in Western Germany at the invitation of the German Academic Exchange Service. In 1968 he moved to Freising-Weihenstephan, where he worked as a scientist under

Prof. G. Fischbeck at the Faculty of Agronomy of the Technical University of Munich. His publications from this period covered genetics of frost hardiness, Monte Carlo simulations of different breeding strategies, plant disease epidemiology, development of sources for disease resistance and methods of reduction of soil heterogeneity effects in field trial evaluation. He also spent a number of months in CIMMYT in Mexico as a visiting scientist and travelled to Israel several times searching for mildew resistance sources in *Hordeum spontaneum* populations. After habilitation at Weihenstephan in 1979 he received the degree Dr.agr.habil. and obtained a two years Heisenberg research fellowship, which he partly used to study natural powdery mildew populations in Israel in cooperation with Prof. A. Dinor. He habilitated also at the Agricultural University in Vienna and became the scientific director of the Probstdorfer Saatzeit GmbH for several years. In 1990, after the fall of the communist rule, he returned to Czechoslovakia to become the head of the Czech Plant Variety Office until his retirement.

Among his accomplishments are the invention of the Jet spore trap for collecting living airborne pathogen spores. Together with M. Wolfe he introduced the “virulence analysis” to describe pathogen populations in terms of virulence frequencies. He induced and localised the *mlo9* mutation in barley cv. Diamant, which causes durable resistance to powdery mildew and is now present in the cultivars Alexis, Auriga, Bereta, Escada, Rasbet and others. In extensive prebreeding work at Weihenstephan he crossed the most resistant wild barley accessions from Israel with advanced European cultivars. His selections from these crosses were then used by European breeders as efficient resistance sources in cultivars such as Baccara, Denise, Havanna, Marnie, Peggy. His computer programs for breeding work and trial evaluation based on Nearest Neighbour Analysis, FTAB and ANOFT, are still used by a number of breeders and several variety offices.

Though retired, he continues his own mildew laboratory monitoring of partial *mlo* virulence in the mildew population and maintains the website www.crpmb.org/mlo/, on which current knowledge and literature on the *Mlo* gene, the use of *mlo* alleles in European cultivars and the *mlo*-area under cultivation are reviewed. At his home at Miroslav in southern Moravia he lives with his wife Emilie and the family of one of his daughters and three grandchildren. We wish him good health, pleasure with his family and enough energy to continue his scientific work.

Ing. Jiří HARTMANN, CSc.