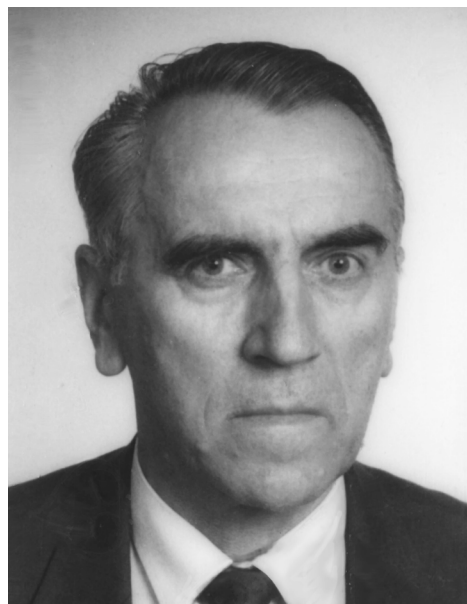


## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE

### Obituary of Professor Ing. Václav Kůdela, DrSc. (1936–2022)

On Wednesday, 23 February 2022, the great Czech plant pathologist, and my personal friend and esteemed colleague, prof. Václav Kůdela passed away. For over 15 years (1990–2006), he served as the Editor-in-Chief for our journal, Plant Protection Science. His whole adult life was connected with agriculture, plant pathology, plant protection and the science of phytotherapy. However, he was also man who accepted, maintained, applied and lived his life following specific, serious traditional rules. The trajectory of his life and its fundamental message arose primarily from his family origins and experiences in youth. Basic data regarding his life, professional and scientific achievements were described in detail when we commemorated his seventieth birthday within the pages of this journal (Lebeda & Veverka 2006). Personally, I met V. Kůdela for first time in 1977, and we kept very close professional and personal contacts till end of his life. Here I will focus on his most important contributions to plant pathology and plant protection science from various aspects, as well as briefly touch upon his life's broader message.



**Origin.** Václav Kůdela was born on May 29, 1936 in Těšov near Uherské Hradiště (in the former Czechoslovakia). He was son of farmer and, from an early age, was closely linked to nature and agriculture. In the years 1953–1956, he attended the Agricultural Technical School in Přerov. From 1956 to 1961, he studied at the Agricultural University in Brno (now called Mendel University in Brno). There he obtained his first comprehensive information and views on plant pathology and plant protection, and was also substantially inspired and influenced by one of the Czech founders and leaders in plant pathology, prof. Eduard Baudyš (1886–1968).

**Professional and research career.** After university studies, he took the position of agronomist and, later, head of an Agricultural Cooperative Farm (1961–1964). This period gave him invaluable experiences for his further professional, research, teaching and management activities and accomplishments in plant protection. His remaining career was mostly connected with the Research Institute of Crop Production (RICP) in Prague where he served in various positions till his full retirement (at the end of 2013). However, for the next few years, he continued working at RICP as an emeritus researcher.

At the beginning of his scientific career, he was focused on fungal diseases, especially verticillium wilt of alfalfa, including basic aspects of resistance breeding. Later, he aimed his activities toward a complex understanding of bacterial wilt of alfalfa (caused by *Clavibacter michiganense* subsp. *insidiosus*). For him, that was a great experience with plant bacterial diseases, and, step by step, he became more and more interested in the bacteria that infected other crops (including field crops, fruit trees, vegetables and ornamentals). In the 1980s, he developed a research program focused on bacterial diseases of fruit trees, especially of the Rosaceae, and the bacteria causing fire blight (*Erwinia amylovora*). He was the first who described the occurrence of *E. amylovora* in the Czech Republic. At that time, he established the RICP's plant bacteriology lab, later to become a distinct division. He is considered to be a founder of plant bacteriology in the Czech Republic. His work substantially contributed to the development of plant bacteriology research, eluci-

dating our understanding of plant bacterial diseases in the Czech Republic. Because of his previous practical farming experience, he was also strongly involved in disease diagnostics and advisory activities. After the political changes (November 1989) in the former Czechoslovakia, he became increasingly involved in various other activities and duties.

**Teaching activities.** After 1990, teaching at various Czech agricultural universities became a very important part of V. Kúdela's life. In 1991, he was appointed as an associate professor and, in 1996, promoted to full professor of plant protection at the South Bohemian University at České Budějovice. Beyond this university, he was also involved in teaching and in various examination commissions at agricultural universities in Brno and Prague. He generally emphasized instruction on plant bacteriology, which led to the preparation of the first study material (scriptum) for students, later transformed into the first Czech textbook on this topic: „Bacteria and Plant Health“ [Academia, Praha, 2002 (in Czech)]. During the course of his teaching, he also served as a supervisor or advisor for eight Ph.D. students.

**Management and administration activities.** His management activities were very broad. Before the political changes in Czechoslovakia, he was frequently involved in the organization of Czechoslovak Plant Protection Conferences, including editing of their proceedings. After the political changes, he received more space and opportunities to help with democratic developments in agricultural research, and in the area of plant protection: publishing activities and practice. In 1990–1992, he served as a director of the Department of Plant Protection and vice-director for research and scientific education at RICP in Prague. In the years 1993–1996, he served as a director of RICP. During this period, he was also active in various commissions and scientific boards, as well as a member of the governing board and vice-president of the Czech Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CAAS) and chief of the CAAS's publishing board. In 1996, he served as an advisor to the Ministry of Agriculture for the establishment of the State Phytosanitary Administration (SPA), which was the culmination of his longstanding idea and activity. In this period, he was also very active in our national legislative process, preparing drafts of some laws related to plant protection, especially Law No. 326/2004 Sb. on „Plant Health Care“, and related documents.

**Editorial activities.** In the years 1990–2006, V. Kúdela served as the editor-in-chief of the scientific Czech journal „Ochrana rostlin“ (Plant Protection), beginning in 1997, an international scientific journal now known as „Plant Protection Science“ (PPS). During above-mentioned period, he substantially contributed to the development of this journal in cooperation with RNDr. Marcela Braunová, technical editor of PPS (Lebeda & Kúdela 2019). Recently, the PPS has become recognized as a widely respected scientific journal, since 2012 indexed in the Core Collection of Web of Science (WOS) (Lebeda et al. 2014).

**Scientific societies and organizations.** V. Kúdela was an active member of many scientific organizations. He was a member (and an official representative (1999–2003) of the Czech Republic) on the European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organization's Plant Pathogenic Bacteria Panel. He served also as a member (1979–2002) of the International Society for Horticultural Science Plant Protection Commission's Working Group on Fire Blight Research. He was honorable member of the Czech Society for Plant Pathology and member of the Czech Society for Plant Medicine.

**Publications and books.** V. Kúdela was an extraordinarily hard working and productive man. During his professional life, he published over 150 original research and review papers, mostly in the Czech language. His report from the WOS All Databases shows 34 records and 68 citations (without self-citations), with an H-index of 4 (as of March 10, 2022). Furthermore, he published over 70 papers in the proceedings of scientific conferences and over 230 reports in professional journals (unfortunately, his full bibliography is currently unavailable). He also authored seven methodological brochures and three patents. In the new millennium, he focused more and more on writing books (mostly in Czech, in two cases, Czech and English), and his output reached very impressive dimensions. The survey below lists eleven book titles, where V. Kúdela served as the first author or lead editor. Some of these books can be considered fundamental titles in the literature of Czech plant pathology and plant protection science.

- Kúdela V. et al.: *Obecná fytopatologie* (General Phytopathology). Academia, Praha, 1989, 387 p.
- Kúdela V.: *Spála růžovitých rostlin* (Fire Blight of Rosaceous Plants). MZV ČSR, Praha, 1990, 163 p.
- Kúdela V.: *Rostlinolékařské právní normy v českých zemích a jejich historický vývoj* (Phytosanitary Rules in the Czech Lands and Their Historical Development). ÚZPI, Praha, 1997, 82 p.

- Kůdela V.: Nástin dějin institucionalizace rostlinolékařství v českých zemích 1899–1999 (Contribution to the Institutionalisation of Plant Medicine in Czech Countries 1899–1999). ÚZPI, Praha, 2000, 72 p.
- Kůdela V., Nováček A., Fucík L.: Rostlinolékařská bakteriologie (Bacteria and Plant Health). Academia, Praha, 2002, 347 p.
- Kůdela V., Kocourek F. (Eds): Seznam škodlivých organismů rostlin (List of Pests Injurious to Plants). Agropoj, Praha, 2002, 342 p.
- Kůdela V., Braunová M. (Eds): Česko-anglická rostlinolékařská terminologie. Czech-English Plant Health Terminology. Academia, Praha, 2007, 876 p.
- Kůdela V., Kocourek F., Bárnet M. et al.: České a anglické názvy chorob a škůdců rostlin. Czech and English Names of Plant Diseases and Pests. Vydavatelství Profi Press s.r.o., Praha, 2012, 269 p.
- Kůdela V., Ackermann P., Prášil I.T., Rod J., Veverka K.: Abiotikózy rostlin: poruchy, poškození a poranění (Abioticism of Plants: Disorders, Damage, Injury). Academia, Praha, 2013, 568 p.
- Kůdela V.: Profese rostlinolékaře. Uvedení do studia rostlinolékařství (Plant Health Science and Management Profession. Introduction in Plant Health Science and Management). Česká společnost rostlinolékařská, Praha, 2016, 269 p.
- Kůdela V. et al.: Péče o zdraví kulturních rostlin v průběhu staletí. Historie rostlinolékařství v českých zemích do roku 2019 (Improving the Health of Cultivated Plants in the Course of Centuries. History of Plant Health Science and Plant Health Management in the Czech Lands To 2019). Česká společnost rostlinolékařská, Praha, 2020, 272 p.

From this survey, one can see (especially over the last twenty years) how V. Kůdela strove to synthesize research findings in plant pathology and plant medicine, especially on topics related to the revision of Czech names of plant diseases and pests, including the general rules of their terminology, compiling surveys of injurious organisms of plants and problems related to abiotic disorders of plants. In recent years, he was quite enthusiastic about the contemporary development of the plant health profession, and how it should be considered an equal to human and veterinary medicine. His final book was a comprehensive history of plant health science in the Czech Lands. With this book, he brought his own scientific, professional and life mission to a fitting close.

**Life message of Václav Kůdela.** In my view, prof. Václav Kůdela was, without hesitation, an extraordinary personality with a clear, positive message. His life mission was primarily built upon a foundation of deep humility and honesty, fulfilling his goals through very hard work and devotion to his scientific discipline. He was very enthusiastic, with strong motivation and a drive to move forward, ready to overcome diverse obstacles with an open and creative mind. He displayed great hospitality, collegiality and friendship, ready to help everybody. He was highly educated with strong and clear opinions on various personal and scientific topics, but on the other hand, he was open to discussion and ready to accept the opinions of others. His high moral standards and intellectual qualities were often verified during the time of communism in Czechoslovakia. During that difficult period, he was able to provide me with moral, human and professional support, without which it would have been difficult for me to realize my doctoral studies and related research. His life has now come to a close, but his achievements, spirit and strong life message will continue with all of us who have known and respected him.

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