

Professor dr hab. Edward Arseniuk (1949-2023)

Director of the Plant Breeding and Acclimatization Institute – National Research Institute in Radzików in the years 1998-2017



It is with regret that we announce the passing of the late on November 23th, 2023, Prof. Dr. hab. Edward Arseniuk. He was a passionate scientist, dedicated teacher, advisor, and visionary.

Professor Edward Arseniuk was born on January 6th, 1949, in Lebieziew, region of Biała Podlaska. After graduating from high school, in 1968-1970 he completed his military service and in 1970 he began studies at the Faculty of Horticulture of the Warsaw University of Life Sciences. After graduating in 1975 and obtaining a master's degree in horticultural engineering, he worked as an assistant at the Department of Phytopathology of the Warsaw University of Life Sciences. In addition to teaching, he researched the resistance of fungi to benzimidazole fungicides. In 1978-1980 he completed a research internship in the USA at the Department of Phytopathology of the University of California at Davis (UC Davis).

He started working at the Plant Breeding and Acclimatization Institute in Radzików (PBAI), in the Department of Phytopathology, on March 16th, 1981, where he worked until December 31st, 2021 in the following positions: senior assistant, assistant professor, associate professor, professor, in the period from March 1st, 1992 to July 31st, 2021, holding the position of the head of the Phytopathology Department. From September 17th, 1998, to July 31st, 2017, he served as the Director of the Institute, managing six Experimental Plants and five Plant Breeding Companies.

In 1986, by resolution of the PBAI Scientific Council, he obtained the degree of Doctor of Agricultural Sciences based on his doctoral thesis entitled "Systematics of fungi of the genus *Sclerotinia* and their pathogenicity towards *Trifolium pratense* L." made under the supervision of Doc. Dr. hab. Stanisław Góral. The Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Food awarded the dissertation in 1987. The degree of habilitated doctor in agricultural sciences in the field of agrotechnics – plant breeding, phytopathology was awarded to the Professor by the PBAI Scientific Council in 1990, based on the monograph entitled "The influence of polyploidization of red clover (*Trifolium pratense* L.) on winter hardiness and resistance to some diseases" he received the title of professor by decision of the President of the Republic of Poland in 1996.

The scope of the Professor's research was extensive, especially in phytopathology. The most important scientific achievements include: • examining the impact of polyploidization of red clover on the

yield of green matter, seed yield, resistance to fungal pathogens, frost and winter hardiness; • significant contribution to research in the field of mycology of necrotrophic fungi species; • numerous works on the theory of plant resistance to pathogens; • identification of the harmfulness of the complex of fungal pathogens from the genera *Stagonospora* spp. and *Septoria* spp. to triticale. During his term as Director of the Institute from 1998 to 2017, he developed new research directions and initiated molecular research in phytopathology and resistance breeding. He contributed to creating an Accredited Laboratory for the Control of Genetically Modified Organisms in Radzików. He promoted new trends in research, thanks to which the Institute developed work in molecular genetics and biotechnology.

Professor Edward Arseniuk led many domestic and international research projects, including cooperating with the US Department of Agriculture (USDA), the State Universities of Montana and Georgia, and with European Union countries. The professor's scientific achievements include over 200 scientific and popular science works published in domestic and foreign journals. He edited monographs on the Institute on its 50th anniversary in 2001 and 60th anniversary in 2011 and a monograph devoted to the history of Polish breeding: Arseniuk E., Krzymuski J., Martyniak J., Oleksiak T. 2003. History of breeding and seed production in Polish lands. Ed. ProDruk, Poznań. Four doctoral theses were written under his supervision. The professor performed many reviews of doctoral and habilitation theses and applications for the title of professor.

He organized scientific conferences. In 1994 he organized the 4th International Workshop on *Septoria* of Cereals, July 4-7. It should be recalled that this was the first international event in Radzików, after the end of martial law and the political transformation in Europe. The scientists not only from the so-called Eastern Europe but also from Western Europe and the United States took part in that Workshop. As the chairman of the ITA Association (International Triticale Association), in 2002, in cooperation with the Cereal Breeding Section of the EUCARPIA Association, he organized the 5th International Triticale Symposium in Radzików. In 2022, he was an Honorary Member of the Organizing Committee of the 11th edition of this conference, which took place in Warsaw. The Professor's activity was accompanied by the idea of combining basic research with breeding practice. He was a co-initiator and later, as the Director of PBAI, he patronized winter conferences, first in Krakow, later, due to great interest, moved to Zakopane, entitled "Science for crop breeding and seed production", which aimed to integrate scientists with plant breeders. The conferences were held periodically, every two years from 1993 to 2019. The 15th conference in this series, planned for 2021, was not held due to the pandemic; a return to this form of results presentation and ideas exchange is planned.

The Professor was active and well-known in the scientific community in Poland and abroad, as is evidenced by invitations for oral presentations at international scientific conferences (9 invitations) and invitations to the position of visiting professor (5 invitations). He held numerous positions at universities and research institutions, scientific councils, scientific committees, scientific societies, and editorial committees of scientific journals, among others. He was: • since 1996 an expert of the International Atomic Energy Agency, IAEA, Vienna, Austria; • since 1997, expert of the International Science Foundation, Stockholm, Sweden; • member of the International Triticale Breeders' Association, and in 1998-2002, president of the Association (International Triticale Association - ITA); • since 1994, chairman and organizer of the International Network for Triticale Pathogens and Pests Evaluation, operating within ITA; member of EUCARPIA (European Association for Research on Plant Breeding); • member of the international airborne pathogens research group COST 817 and COST 860; • member of the European Fusarium Network; • member of the Committee of Physiology, Genetics and Plant Breeding of the Polish Academy of Sciences for four terms, in the years 1996-2010; • member of the Polish Phytopathological Society; • deputy chairman of the PBAI Scientific Council in the term 1997-2001; • chairman of the Council of Experts of the Polish Association of Cereal Producers; • chairman of the Agricultural Advisory Social Council at the Agricultural Advisory Center in Brwinów; • since 1996, the leading editor of the journal *Plant Breeding and Seed Science*, and since 1999, the editor-in-chief.

For his contributions to the development of agricultural research, Professor Edward Arseniuk was awarded, among others, the Knight's Cross of the Order of Polonia Restituta (2011), the Gold Cross of Merit (2002), and the Badge of Honor for Merit in Agriculture (2005).

We are losing a good colleague, mentor and director who devoted his best years to phytopathology and agricultural science, as well as expansion of the PBAI Institute, dear to his heart.

Radzików, 2023 r.

Michał Rokicki

Director

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