

László Beczner  
1938–1988



László Beczner (Fig. 1), Head of the Virology Group, at the Plant Protection Institute, Budapest passed away of cancer on 10th of November 1988. He was born in 14 August, 1938 in Debrecen, Hungary. After finishing the Agricultural University at Gödöllő he served for one year in the agricultural practice in a plant protection laboratory. He joined to the Plant Protection Institute in 1963 as research assistant and earned the University doctoral degree at the Agricultural University, Gödöllő in 1966.

During his Ph. D. thesis research on virus diseases of lucerne with Dr János Szirmai, Dr Beczner obtained experimental data on virus disease of lucerne with special respect to the alfalfa mosaic virus. The several papers resulting from his doctoral thesis were among the first detailed study of alfalfa mosaic virus in Hungary. After obtaining the candidate degree (equivalent to Ph. D.) he started to work on virus identification and virus serology. In 1971 he spent six months at the Institute for Plant Pathology in Aschersleben, GDR, and later four months in Wageningen in the Institute for Phytopathological Research. In 1974 he was promoted as a principal plant virologist and became the head of the Virology Group. He visited the Genetic Institute of the Polish Academy of Sciences at Poznań and organized the research work there on the serology of bean yellow mosaic virus group. He was a member of the Hungarian Society of Agricultural Sciences, and the International Working Group on Legume Viruses. For a period

he was elected as a member of the steering committee of the IWGLV and took over the task of the executive secretary. He was the driving force on the coordination of the Hungarian plant virus research behind the "virus-free propagation material program". He did excellent work on the introduction of modern technology in the plant virus identification. In 1985 he spent ten months at the Agricultural Research Station Canada, Vancouver working on serology of plant viruses using monoclonal antibodies. One of his last effort was to set up a monoclonal laboratory in our Institute. His results has been published in more than 100 papers mostly written in English or German. His untimely death is an immesurable loss for the future development of our plant virology group.

His memory will remain in all of us as an enthusiastic scientist, an experienced plant virologist and a distinguished colleague.

*Ervin Balázs*