



## **OBITUARI**

### **Prof. Alexandru Viorel Vranceanu**

Prof. Alexandru Viorel Vranceanu, one of the greatest initiator and promoter of hybrid sunflower and a well-known and appreciated Romanian scientist on agronomy, died on February 27, 2014, at age 87.

Alexandru Viorel Vranceanu was born in February 22, 1927 in Romania, in town Buzau. Primary and high schools were finished in town Braila. MS degree was obtained in 1950, and PhD in 1961 at the University of Agriculture Sciences - Bucharest. Docent PhD title was received in 1974.

Started his agronomy research activity in 1958 with the Academy of Agriculture and Forestry Sciences of Bucharest (actual name), and it was continued at NARDI (National Agricultural Research and Development Institute) – Fundulea, up to 1997, where built up a strong research group (widely recognized), and was filling top positions, as: Leader of Oil Crops Research Laboratory, Scientific Director, and General Director. Managed to increase his sunflower research capability during specialization visits at: VNIIMK-Krasnodar–Russia (1959), Agricultural Research Station of Morden-Canada (1970), and Davis University-USA (1970).

Between 1997 and 2001, acted as President of the Academy of Agriculture and Forestry Sciences of Bucharest, as well as Associated Professor at University of Agriculture Sciences - Bucharest.

Was three times recipient of the prize “Doctor Honoris Causa” (1994, 1995, and 2000). Was a titular member of: Academy of Agriculture and Forestry Sciences of Bucharest, Academy of Romanian People of Science, Academy of Science of New-York, Academy of Science of Moldavia Republic, Academy of Science of Kiev (Ukraine), honor member of the Main Academy of Romania, and correspondent member of Academy of Girgofili – Florence (Italy).

For a while was also the President of the International Sunflower Association (ISA), as well as Member of its Executive Committee. Due to his exceptional

contribution to sunflower research and development he received from ISA, in 1980, the prestigious V. S. Pustovoit Award.

During his 45 year activity as an oil crops breeder and geneticist, especially on sunflower, contributed greatly to the development of new improved cultivars (hybrids and varieties) and to their quick extension in large production. Decisively, conducted the development and launching commercially the first sunflower hybrids based on different types of male sterility, event which represents a new progressive chapter of the whole sunflower industry. Conducted or collaborated for carrying out important research on sunflower male sterility, pollination, and efficient hybrid seed production process.

Prof. Alexandru Viorel Vranceanu's name is also related to the identification and utilization in breeding process of the first resistance sources and genes to the main sunflower diseases, as *Plasmopara halstedii*, *Orobanche cumana* and *Phomopsis helianthi*. Participated in a multiple genetic studies of oil content and other sunflower important traits. Was the first author of the breeders group who registered numerous highly performing commercial sunflower, castor-bean, and oil rapeseed lines, hybrids and varieties, as well as coauthor of 30 patents related to this research domain. Was author or co-author of 198 scientific papers submitted to the main publications in Romania and abroad. Was author of 14 books. Founder and editor of the prestigious magazines "Helia" and "Romanian Agricultural Research". Founder and coordinator of the FAO Sunflower Research Network.

Beside his grieving family, he left a large number of colleagues, friends and admirers, who are missing him and have sent their warm and sincere condolences.