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Plant health – a key to building sustainable agriculture

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The team of the Department of Phytopathology, part of the Faculty of Plant Protection and Agroecology at the Agricultural University in Plovdiv, solemnly celebrated its anniversary – 55 years since its establishment in 1963.

The celebration on this occasion was honored by many representatives of the agrarian academic community from across the country – fellow phytopathologists from the institutes of the Agricultural Academy and the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. Also present were the heads of the operational administration in the Plant Protection sector – Nikolay Rosnev, Deputy Executive Director of the Bulgarian Food Safety Agency (BFSA), and Mariyana Laginova, Director of the Central Laboratory for Chemical Testing and Control (CLCTC). Special guests at the celebration were former lecturers of the department, now retired, the manager of the company

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Summit Agro Assoc. Prof. Dr. Miroslav Tityanov, specialists from Syngenta, BASF and Pioneer, Dr. Elena Mancheva and Temenuja Ivanova from Viola AE – Sliven, Anton Velichkov, Head of the “Crop Production” Directorate at the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests.

On the occasion of the anniversary of the Department of Phytopathology, greetings were delivered by Prof. Hristina Yancheva, Rector of the Agricultural University in Plovdiv, and Prof. Vili Harizanova, Dean of the Faculty of Plant Protection and Agroecology.

In her ceremonial address, Prof. Mariyana Nakova, Head of the Department of Phytopathology, presented a retrospective overview of the development of this key part of education and scientific achievements in plant protection. The current high authority of the department is the result of the work of three generations of lecturers and scientists, Prof. Nakova noted. The foundation of the Bulgarian school of phytopathology, unique in many respects, was laid by the creative genius of Prof. Dimitar Atanasov and his disciples – Corresponding Member Ivan Kovachevski and Prof. Aleksandar Hristov. All three have made contributions to the development of global phytopathology and virology.

Their large-scale work has been continued by Professors Krastyo Krastev, the first head of the department for 13 years (from 1963 to 1967), Ignat Tafradzhiyski, Nikola Mitov, Vasil Bogdanov, Stoycho Karov, Boris Nakov, and Georgi Neshev. Today the baton is in the hands of Prof. Mariyana Nakova and her team: Prof. Svetoslav Bobev, Associate Professors Dimitriyka Sakalieva and Milena Dimova, Senior Assistants Zvezdomir Zhelev, Neshka Piperkova, Maria Vitanova and Krasimir Dimitrov, Assistants Kamelia Sakakusheva and Georgi Georgiev.

At the celebration marking 55 years since the establishment of the Department of Phytopathology at the Faculty of Plant Protection and Agroecology, Prof. Mariyana Nakova initiated a new conceptual project – with the active participation of the department, a National Phytopathological Society will be established.