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The tenth, anniversary plant protection celebration passed under the sign of rational behavior and the inconvenient truths

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January 16 – Plant Protection Specialist Day

The official part of the celebration took place in the representative hall of the Agricultural University in Plovdiv, the very place where the idea for this event was launched in 2006, coinciding with the 110th anniversary of the issuance of Prince Ferdinand's Decree on measures against phylloxera in vineyards. This document is considered the beginning of organized plant protection in Bulgaria.

The event was hosted by the Bulgarian Association for Plant Protection (BAPP). Among the participants were Prof. Plamen Mollov, Executive Director of the Bulgarian Food Safety Agency

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(BFSA), Prof. Hristo Bozukov, Chairman of the Agricultural Academy, Prof. Dimitar Grekov, Rector of the Agricultural University in Plovdiv, Prof. Yanko Dimitrov, Dean of the Faculty of Plant Protection and Agroecology at the Agricultural University in Plovdiv, Anton Velichkov, Deputy Executive Director of the BFSA, Head of the "Plant Protection" Sector, and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Petar Nikolov, Chairman of BAPP.

The organizers' expectations for a flash mob (a large gathering of people in a public place) were not fully met. The event was honored by charismatic veterans of plant protection, employees from the regional "Plant Protection" departments of the Regional Directorates of Food Safety (RDFS), lecturers and students from the Agricultural University in Plovdiv, managers from Summit Agro, Heminova, Kemtura and Belchim, and representatives of Bulgarian trading companies, including the leading market players Baleya Group-Sevlievo, Bulagro-Stara Zagora, and Tedi-Montana.

The vision for this celebration included a serious challenge: to activate a discussion on the current state of the national plant protection system. This system, by common consensus, is not functioning fully. The issue is that after the integration of the National Service for Plant Protection (NSPP) into the mega-structure of the BFSA, the plant protection administration was completely torpedoed and dismantled. The processes of assimilation and degradation continue at full speed, at high intensity. The capacity of the "Plant Protection" sector has reached incredibly low levels. Despite this bleak situational environment in which the castrated management structure flickers and smolders, its current head, Anton Velichkov, reported positive results from its activity over the past year in several key areas. For instance, the business got a "breath of air" after the noose was loosened around the notoriously problematic procedure for authorizing plant protection products. In 2014, the new Plant Protection Law was adopted, thanks to which sanctions from the European Commission were avoided at the last possible moment. Phytosanitary control, for its part, continued to be an island of stability and security in its role as an outpost on the external borders of the European Union. The team of Mariana Laginova developed, in record time, the criteria and systemic measures to guarantee the health status of domestic agricultural produce for export to new markets in non-EU countries – China, New Zealand, Australia, Vietnam, Malaysia.

Read about what happened at the celebration in issue 1/2015 of the "Plant Protection" magazine

In the photo: Prof. Dimitar Grekov, Rector of the Agricultural University in Plovdiv, Prof. Plamen Mollov, Chairman of the BFSA, Assoc. Prof. Petar Nikolov, Chairman of BAPP, Anton Velichkov, Deputy Executive Director of the BFSA, Head of the "Plant Protection" Sector, Prof. Hristo Bozukov, Chairman of the Agricultural Academy (from left to right)