

Newsletter of the Russian Society of Nematologists

In memoriam

Oleg Zusievich Metlitskiy (1938-2007)

On January 14, 2007, an outstanding biologist and nematologist, a famous specialist in the area of plant protection, doctor of agricultural sciences, a honoured scientist of the Russian Federation, Chief Researcher of All-Russian Selective Technology Institute for Horticulture and Nursery Gardening of the Russian Academy of Agricultural Sciences, Professor Oleg Zusievich Metlitskiy died suddenly at the age of 68.

Although not always in good health, Oleg Zusievich Metlitskiy dedicated his life to science and the preparation of scientific personnel in the field of nematology and plant protection. Being among the first pupils of the outstanding biologist A.A. Paramonov, he established his own school in the area of agricultural nematology. The school focused on the science of the nematode diseases of fruit and small fruit crops and their relations with other disease complexes, and examined different methods of protection of plants against nematodes and other diseases. Professor Metlitskiy trained more than 150 well-qualified specialists in nematology and plant protection, including 23 PhD and 2 DSc (biology and agriculture). Under his guidance more than 50 students prepared their degree theses and more than 100 trainees from almost all republics of the former USSR undertook his study courses. During 45 years of scientific and teaching work, Professor Metlitskiy published 15 monographs and about 400 articles in both Russian and foreign journals, as well as preparing more than 20 handbooks on methodology and manuals on techniques that became essential reference books, not only to practitioners but also to researchers in all republics of the former USSR.



As a highly educated specialist in nematology and related sciences – phytopathology, entomology and toxicology – Professor Metlitskiy encouraged not only young researchers, but also mature individuals, scientists and practitioners, horticulturists and other agriculture specialists. The creative desire was an inalienable part of all his life. Being a polyglot, Professor Metlitskiy was extremely interested in world science news and thoughts, and he fluently translated scientific literature from many European languages – English, German, Spanish and French. He had a deep knowledge of scientific literature and was able to answer, advise and consult in all fields of Russian and foreign nematology and plant protection. Professor Metlitskiy's personality reflected a combination of profound and broad understanding of problems of nematology and agrobiology, a lasting adherence to his principles, a strong desire to pass his knowledge to young researchers who constantly surrounded him, and also a continuing search for new ways to enrich Russian and world science.

One was immediately struck by the volume and geographical spread of the scientific contacts of Professor Metlitskiy, with colleagues in Russia and all continents and the most outstanding figures of the world nematological science in constant contact with him up to the last days of his life. Due to his tireless activity, O.Z. Metlitskiy himself and many other Russian scientists became recognized leaders in the field of world nematological science, and members of the European Society of Nematologists and other nematological societies throughout the world, and frequently participated in ESN conferences and other world symposia. These attributes and his ability to collaborate with scientists from all over the world won him wide fame.

Professor Oleg Zusievich Metlitskiy possessed great human properties – honesty, sincerity, benevolence, an attentive attitude to people around him, an adherence to principles and an intolerance of all unsubstantial things. He was a true incarnation of honesty in science!

The blessed memory of Oleg Zusievich Metlitskiy, a tireless researcher, will forever be in the hearts of all his pupils, colleagues and everybody who knew him, lived and worked with him.

All-Russian Selective Technology Institute for Horticulture and Nursery Gardening of the Russian Academy of Agricultural Sciences, Institute of Parasitology of RAS. Nematode commission of RAAS, All-Russian Society of Helminthologists of RAS, Russian society of nematologists.

The teenage years of the Russian Journal of Nematology

This issue marks the publication of the fifteenth volume of the *Russian Journal of Nematology*. After a decade and a half of publishing, some minor changes have been made in the editorial process, such as formatting of references, and we have taken the opportunity to modify the cover, whilst keeping the overall blue-and-white tone that has become identified with RJN. The journal will retain its independent status and is not connected formally to any official body of the Russian science, although the journal has informal links with people working in Nematology in Russia, especially members of the Russian Society of Nematologists.

The teenage years often reflect the turmoils of life and the opportunities for the future! What were the targets when the journal was launched 15 years ago and how successful have been in achieving the objectives? At least one goal has been achieved. The journal was envisaged as a forum of communication between scientists not only within Russia but also within the Nematology community worldwide. The spectrum of papers published and the countries of origin of the authors demonstrate the success of the journal as a truly international publication; the effectiveness as a forum for communication is reflected in the number of productive collaborations facilitated, in part, by the presence of the journal. One goal has not been achieved as completely as initially hoped. It was expected that RJN would assist in the process of encouraging and developing young Russian nematologists, who would be a visible and important part of the development of our science. Unfortunately, the decrease in numbers of Russian nematologists (a situation mirrored in other parts of the world) coupled with the pressure to publish in western titles has meant that this ambitious dream has not been fully realised. However, unexpectedly, RJN is popular with Central and Eastern European nematologists. It seems that one cannot predict or shape the future of the journal, even in such a narrow publication domain as Nematology.

RJN is still trying to establish the correct balance for its content. It is not ideal to publish numerous papers on one topic, such as agricultural nematology. Obviously we do not wish to exclude or regulate this topic, so a balance needs to be made. Similarly, we do not want to be overburdened with taxonomic papers but have no wish to exclude such a core part of the content of RJN. It would assist the balance of the journal if more papers on molecular, behavioural and physiological aspects, for example, were received. Part of the reason for the slight imbalance is the pervasive influence of 'impact factors', resulting in RJN not being the first choice for such papers. Even the official structures of the Russian science now recognise impact factors as a measure of the importance of a publication. Despite the inflexible influence of impact factors, it is a useful tool to evaluate the status of the journal and the editors and editorial board members will be trying to ensure that the impact factor of RJN will increase over the coming years. By so doing, the journal will become more attractive as a publication forum.

What is the future for RJN as an enterprise based on the unpredictable and sometimes shaky foundations of Russian scientific life? It is still a 'Russian' journal, so all the inconsistencies of infrastructure do not look too worrying, at least for Russians! Very often long-lasting projects derive from the efforts of a few grass-root activists. This is the case with RJN. Clearly, there are numerous factors, such as economic constraints, that might influence the future of RJN but the independence of the journal protects its future. However, this future is dependent to a great extent on the financial support of subscribers. We wish to acknowledge the vital role of subscribers and will do our best to continue to provide an important and viable contribution to the science of Nematology. Finally, we would like to express our appreciation to Derek Brown, the colleague who invited a group of Russian nematologists to start RJN publication 15 years ago. To that extent, RJN is Derek's child. We remember that and are grateful for his decisive efforts.

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