

100 YEARS AGO WAS BORN
LÁSZLÓ TELEGDY KOVÁTS
OUTSTANDING PERSONALITY
OF HUNGARIAN FOOD SCIENCE



László Telegdy Kováts was born in Galgóc in 1902. After completing secondary school in Nitra, he immatriculated at the Faculty of Engineering, Technical University of Budapest. He graduated in 1925 and was appointed assistant at the Department of Agricultural Chemical Technology. There, by the side of world-famous soil scientist Professor Elek 'Sigmond, he was engaged in soil and biological research. As a result of his successful research work on soil bacteria and protozoa he obtained the Ph.D. degree in 1927.

In 1930 he received a State scholarship to England where he worked at the Agricultural Research Institute in Rothamsted under the guidance of J. E. Russel. He studied the application of mathematical statistics in experimental work under Professor Fisher.

After being engaged for shorter or longer periods in various Hungarian and foreign research institutes and industrial managing organizations, he was nominated Head of Department of Food Chemistry. Since this time till his death in

1987, he never stopped being active for the several decades in teaching and educating the young generations of food scientists and food specialists and in the development of food science and technology. Under his guidance, the teaching activity of Department substantially expanded, the teaching staff was increased and the equipment modernized. Several new subjects were introduced at that time for students specialized in biological and food industries. The two volume textbook edited together with professor J. Holló (Food Industries Vol.I-II.) served long time as basic manual not only to students, but also for engineers working in food industry and research.

László Telegdy Kováts has always been deeply attached to teaching. He proudly claimed that all members of the younger engineer generations in Hungarian food industry and research are his pupils.

Modern concepts as well as tradition characterized the objectives and direction of his scientific work. One of his leading ideas has been a clear definition of food quality. Many of his theoretical papers dealing with food quality retained actuality till present time.

Application of modern analytical techniques and development of new ones has been always in the center of research activity of Department. This contributed to a more detailed knowledge concerning the chemical composition of Hungarian cereals, edible oils, wines, fruits etc. For almost 20 years, research has been continued at the Department under guidance of Professor Telegdy Kováts aiming at the elucidation of mechanism of non-enzymatic browning (Maillard reaction) in foods caused by heat treatment.

This list – though far from being complete – gives a clear idea on the manifold research activities of Professor Telegdy Kováts. In acknowledgement of his scientific results, he has been elected to functions in numerous Hungarian and international scientific societies and organizations. He was president of ISO TC/34 (Technical Commission for Food of the International Standardization Organization, member of the Executive Committee of ICC (International Association for Cereal Science and Technology), vice president of GIANA (International Association of Food Analysis), Honorary President of the Hungarian Society of the Agricultural and Food Industry and member of the editorial boards of several scientific journals. In 1961 he was awarded the Gold Medal of the International Commission of Agricultural Industries.

László Telegdy Kováts was also active in the cultural life of the country and in the dissemination of scientific and technological knowledges. This work was highly appreciated and is reflected in the numerous decorations and honours that were conferred on him in the course of his more than sixty years carrier.

The wide circle of his former coworkers, students, domestic and foreign friends will save his memory.

Dr. Radomir Lászity
Professor Emeritus