

*In memoriam*

Professor Dr. Mile R. Ivanović  
1950-2020

*THE BRILLIANT SCIENTIST OF THE SERBIAN MAIZE BREEDING AND SELECTION*



Seventy years ago, the universe let the Serbian people have Mile R. Ivanović, a descendant of Serbs from Kušiljevo near Svilajnac located in the beautiful and rich Morava region. In 1973, he graduated from the Faculty of Agriculture, Department of Field Crops, majoring in maize breeding and selection under the scientific guidance of mentors Professor Dr. Borivoje Jovanović and Dr. Krsto Rosić. After graduating, he volunteered at the Maize Research Institute, Zemun Polje for eight months. Mile Ivanović was greatly liked by the staff at the Maize Research Institute, Zemun Polje, especially by scientists, as he acted as a cheerful young man with a good upbringing and traditions of the Serbian patriotism. He also showed comprehension of a collective participation in solving scientific tasks. In a word, all scientists were enthusiastic about his attitude towards work, manner of his behaviour, presence of his jovial spirit, readiness for joint research and his sense to create great works.

On February 1, 1974, Mile Ivanović officially started working at the Maize Research Institute, Zemun Polje, where he was scientifically and professionally trained under the watchful eye of the leading maize breeders: Professor Dr. Krsto Rosić, academician Dr. Vladimir Trifunović, Professor Dr. Janko Dumanović and over 20 experienced maize breeders. He completed postgraduate studies and defended his MSc thesis in 1979 in the field of genetics and plant breeding at the Faculty of Agriculture in Novi Sad. At the same faculty and within the same field, he defended his PhD thesis in 1982. His advanced training and later his progress in gaining a career as a professor at the University, as well as his engagement in the scientific work in the field of maize breeding and selection, were constantly guided by academician Dr. Slavko Borojević and Professor Dr. Marija Kraljević-Balalić.

In the time of intensive learning and scientific and professional training, Dr. Mile Ivanović simultaneously acquired all scientific and university titles: research associate in 1983, the assistant professor at the postgraduate studies at the Faculty of Agriculture in Novi Sad, Department of Genetics and Plant Breeding in 1986, senior research associate in 1988, the title of a visiting professor at the Faculty of Biology in Belgrade for the courses in population and quantitative genetics and genetics of organism breeding in 1990, principal research fellow in 1995, and the associate professor in 1998. As a Professor of these two courses, Dr. Mile Ivanović worked until his retirement in 2014.

Dr. Mile Ivanović completed one-year course in genetic and maize breeding at the Perdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana, USA in the 1982-1983 period, which was an actual opportunity to get acquainted with programmes on population and quantitative genetics and biometric genetics, which "ignited" his curiosity. In 1986, he attended the course on biometric genetics at the University of Birmingham in the UK. He often tested his knowledge gained during advanced trainings in the USA and the UK in discussions with maize breeders in over 20 scientific centres that he visited during his short study visits: Sofia and Kneja in Bulgaria, Bucharest and Fundulea in Romania, Martonvásár in Hungary, Moscow, Saint Petersburg, Krasnodar and the Kuban region in Russia, Kiev, Odessa, Dnipropetrovsk and Kharkiv in Ukraine, Chişinău and Balti in Moldova, then in Kazakhstan, Belarus, France, Germany and the Mediterranean countries (especially Greece, Turkey and Spain).

In 2001, Prof. Dr. Mile Ivanović joined the Institute of Field and Vegetable Crops, Department of Maize, in Novi Sad. The transfer came at the request of the then director Prof. Dr. Milutin Ćirović, who believed that Dr. Mile

Ivanović, a visionary and the expert with theoretical and experimental experience at the international level, could significantly contribute to the improvement and modernisation of the maize breeding programme of the Institute of Field and Vegetable Crops.

Anyone dare to rank the total activities of Prof. Dr. Mile Ivanović, would have firstly to make a list of developed and released maize hybrids. During his work at the Maize Research Institute, Zemun Polje, he developed 81 hybrids, of which the excellent hybrid ZP 677 has been produced for both grain and silage for over 30 years. Hybrids ZP 360, ZP 580, ZP 680 and many more have also been widely produced. Besides hybrids, he was also an author or a co-author of three maize inbred lines: ZP PE-25-10-1, ZP L 175 and ZP L 217. Furthermore, working at the Institute of Field and Vegetable Crops in Novi Sad, Dr. Mile Ivanović was an author or a co-author of 74 NS maize hybrids among which the following ones stand out and are required by producers NS 6030, NS 6140, NS 7020, NS 5051, NS 4024, NS 4015 and NS 3014. Overall, Prof. dr Mile Ivanović, was an author or a co-author of 155 maize hybrids, which ranks him first among maize breeders in Serbia, and possibly in other European countries.

Prof. Dr. Mile Ivanović has published over 150 scientific papers in national and international journals. He actively participated in the activities of scientific conferences of national and international importance and published about a hundred proceedings.

As a mentor, or a member of commissions for the evaluation and defence of over 50 PhD and MSc theses within the field of genetics and breeding of organisms, Prof. Dr. Mile Ivanović made an extraordinarily great contribution to the education of young scientists in Serbia. Quite often, he was a mentor to candidates within other scientific fields of agricultural and biological sciences. It should be mentioned that he was a favourite lecturer of students at the Faculty of Agriculture and the Faculty of Biology in Belgrade, as well as of national and international experts who were trained in maize breeding.

Prof. dr Mile Ivanović made a significant contribution to both scientific institutes with his scientific and professional knowledge and concrete results in maize breeding and selection. He was also a successful director of the Maize Research Institute, Zemun Polje in Belgrade in the period from 1995 to 1998, whereas he was a successful advisor to the Director General of the Institute of Field and Vegetable Crops in Novi Sad from 2010 to 2013.

His contribution to the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development was in the participation in various commissions dealing with scientific projects, financing of scientific equipment and participation of scientists in international conferences. However, his contribution to the Ministry of Agriculture can be assessed through his position of the Chairman of the Maize Commission at the Federal Institute for Plant and Genetic Resources in the duration of several years. Prof. Dr. Mile Ivanović was a member of many national and international scientific societies and associations, especially within the field of breeding of plants and other organisms. Thus, in the 2002-2004 period he was a President of the Serbian Association of Breeders and Seed Producers, the member of the editorial board of the journal Genetika and an honorary member of the Serbian Genetic Society. Furthermore, his inventions in the economy of Belgrade were awarded by the Award of the Chamber of Commerce of the City of Belgrade.

Quietly and without any pomp, Prof. Dr. Mile Ivanović, retired at his own request as soon as he completed 40 years of scientific and pedagogical activity and 64 years of age.

All who knew Prof. Dr. Mile Ivanović starting with his colleagues, employees of scientific institutes in Belgrade and Novi Sad and students, all the way to numerous successful maize producers, saw in him a warm man, broad-hearted, smiling, ready to understand incomprehensible, everyone loved his musical talent - he amazingly played the Serbian kolo on the flute.

We, his contemporaries, admirers and followers, know that fulfilling his earthly mission, he continued to live with us, who follow his way towards the cosmos, the energy of cognition and the mission of the Serbian people in enlightenment and philanthropy, which is the common good of all people on the planet.

Prof. Dr. Čedomir Radenović  
Dr. Nenad Delić