

DR. ENG. HERMAN - KLAUS NIEDERMAIER (1931 - 1997)
the first director of the Central Research Station for Grasslands Culture,
Măgurele - Brașov

The eminent pratologist and pratotechnician Klaus Niedermaier was born in Sibiu on 30.03.1931, where he attended the Pempflinger School (1937-1941), the Bruckenthal Gymnasium and High School (1941-1948) and the Gheorghe Lazăr High School (1948-1949).

He then pursued higher studies at the Faculty of Animal Science of the "Nicolae Bălcescu" Agronomic Institute (IANB) in Bucharest, which he graduated as an engineer in 1953. Being a great nature and mountain tourism lover from his early childhood, in 1950 when he was not even 20 years old, as a student on vacation he participated in the metal poles marker teams of the Făgăraș Mountains ridge.

After graduating from the faculty, he worked at the Agricultural Experimental Station "ICAR Măgurele" Brașov, the Laboratory of Pastures and Hayfields carrying out numerous studies and researches in the Cibin Mountains in Crinț and Păltiniș (1953-1972), in Poiana Brașov (1963-1972), the Târnavă Plateau, The Hârțibaci Hills, the Făgăraș Depression, the Brașov Depression and many other areas in southern Transylvania.

As a result of the remarkable activity in the research of the mountain pastoral heritage of the country, by the State Council Decree no. 739 of 26.09.1966 he was decorated with the "Scientific Merit class III".

On the occasion of my employment on 13.12.1967 at the Agricultural Experimental Station Brașov at the Pasture and Hayfields Laboratory, I first met its head, Klaus Niedermaier, who was then preparing his doctoral thesis.

In 1968, at IANB Bucharest, he defended his doctoral thesis entitled "*Productivity of grasslands between Râul Mare and Valea Sadului*", a first model of a complex approach from vegetation to means of improving the grassy carpet, fodder quality with the establishment of "in vivo" digestibility, the evolution of qualitative parameters by altitude in the Cibin Mountains and many other researches for the first time in our country.

Experiments on the improvement of permanent grasslands by amendment, organic and mineral fertilization in the Cibin Mountains were carried out in 21 stations located from 470 m submountain grasslands to 2230 m altitude in alpine grasslands. This kind of experimentation at different altitudinal levels in the mountain area is unique in Romanian research and to our knowledge unique in the Carpathians.

Personally, I was guided and helped by the head of the laboratory Dr. Eng. Klaus Niedermaier to set up the first experiments in the year 1968 on the *Nardus stricta* degraded grasslands from Vlădeni - Brașov, for which I keep a deep gratitude. In the same year I was proposed to carry out a specialization internship in

Switzerland to which my boss had the main contribution, together with the Minister of Agriculture Prof. Nicolae Giosan and the head of the Grasslands Section of the Central Institute of Agricultural Research (ICCA) Bucharest Prof. Gheorghe Anghel, my future PhD supervisor.

By Order of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry no. 163 of 13.11.1969, the Central Research Station for Grasslands Culture (SCCP) Brașov was established, where Dr. Eng. Klaus Niedermaier was appointed director for his special merits.

In this capacity, he fully contributed to the preparation and realization of the first unique and complex research plan in the grassland culture field, to the development of projects and constructions of new research laboratories and the zootechnical sector, employment and guidance of research staff and many other beginning actions for the new research institution. In parallel, he continued with even greater intensity the scientific research activity on various topics requested by the Ministry of Agriculture, participated in the year 1970 in the formation and guidance of the management and execution staff of Enterprises for the improvement and exploitation of existing grasslands in all the counties of the country, intensified collaboration with all institutes of higher agricultural education in Bucharest, Iași, Cluj, Timișoara and Craiova, as well as institutes and research stations in the ICCA network.

The particularly intense and laborious activity carried to the point of sacrifice of the director Dr. Eng. Klaus Niedermaier was suddenly interrupted by illness in October 1972, when he underwent heart surgery in FR Germany, for which reason on February 1, 1973 at the age of 42 he was prematurely retired with the first degree of disability, in full creative energy. He died on 30.10.1997 in Erlangen-Germany.

In the 20 years of scientific activity, he published almost 100 scientific works in the field of vegetation and ecology of grasslands improvement by amendment, fertilization, reseeding, weed control, rational use with animals, fodder quality and many others. He was part of the groups of authors that developed the first important treatises of our country grasslands, namely "*Pastures and hayfields from the Republic of Romania, A geobotanic and agro-productive study*" in the Romanian Academy Publishing House (1963) and "*Grasslands culture*" in the State Agroforestry Publishing House (1967).

He was the first author of the popularization work "*Plants harmful to grasslands and their control*" The Agronomist's House - Brașov (1970).

The outstanding personality of Dr. Eng. Herman - Klaus Niedermaier and his pioneering scientific work achieved in his short life a significant contribution to the knowledge and development of the Romanian pastoral heritage.

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