

Professor Dr. Vasile Tomescu

Professor Vasile Tomescu was a prominent personality of Romanian veterinary science and teaching. He is to be remembered as a landmark of professional dedication and an active service in the field of veterinary medicine, with contributions as diverse as microbiology and infectious animal diseases, animal hygiene and environmental protection. He was the initiator and founder of the Animal Hygiene Department of Veterinary Medicine Faculty in Timisoara.

He was born in the village of Mindresti, Vrancea county (in central Romania) on April 11, 1909. He attended the courses of two Romanian faculties in Bucharest – the Veterinary Medical Faculty (in 1927-1933) and, afterwards, the Biology Faculty in Bucharest. After graduation, he enrolled in a doctoral programme and prepared his doctoral thesis under the coordination of Prof. Dr. Paul Riegler (an eminent Romanian veterinarian scientist, director of the Pasteur Institute of Bucharest), working at the Pasteur Institute as a doctoral student and researcher. In 1933 Vasile Tomescu successfully completed (with honours – „*cum laude*”) the doctoral programme, being awarded the title of “Doctor in Veterinary Medicine” (the *Ph. D.* equivalent).



During the Second World War he was drafted into the Romanian Army as a veterinary medical officer, advancing from lieutenant to captain, working in the Veterinary Military Hospital in Bucharest, heading the Departments of Microbiology and Pathology Laboratory and, subsequently of the Infectious Diseases Department.

After the war, his work as a researcher was doubled by a didactic capacity, supplying different teaching functions at the Veterinary Faculty in Bucharest, while still working at the Pasteur Institute, becoming its Scientific Director in 1957. In 1955 he attended a professional training at the Friedrich Loeffler Institute, in the Democratic Republic of Germany (on the island of Riems), on the subject of foot-and-mouth disease vaccine preparation. As a result of this training, the vaccine against foot-and-mouth disease was mass-produced at the Pasteur Institute in Romania, under his supervision, beginning with 1960.

Beginning with the year 1964, he occupied a permanent teaching position as a professor of animal hygiene (heading the animal hygiene department) at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine in Timisoara (in western Romania), where he was PhD advisor and Veterinary Medicine Faculty’s Scientific Vice-Dean.



Scientific activity of Prof. Tomescu was vast, with achievements in the fields of microbiology, infectious diseases, animal

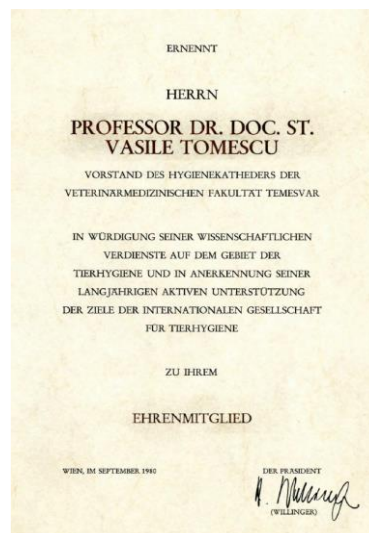
hygiene and environmental protection. For more than twenty years, he has conducted and coordinated many important researches regarding the polluting potential of waste waters resulted from the activity of large-scale, intensive swine units, characteristic of industrial farming specific to the western part of Romania.

These researches included studies regarding the infectious potential of waste waters for animals, humans and the environment, especially with the pathogenic types of *Escherichia coli*, *Salmonella*, *Leptospira* and various intestinal parasitic organisms. Other researches had the objective of assessing the quality of drinking water in animal farms, with special reference to presence of nitrates, nitrites, ammonia, and microorganisms, while other studies focused on the sources of milk contaminants, especially by the pathogenic types of *Escherichia coli*. Over 200 scientific papers were presented at many symposia and congresses, and then published in national and European scientific journals.

Professor Tomescu authored many books (alone or in collaboration), including textbooks, monographs and manuals, some of them published by very prestigious publishing houses (both Romanian and foreign). He is the main author of a monograph on the foot-and-mouth disease (“Febra aftoasa”, Ed. Academiei, Bucharest, 1960), of an important textbook on zoonoses (“Zoonoze”, Ed. Agrosilvică, 1968, București), whose second edition (1979) was translated and published in Moscow. In 1975 he published an important manual of animal hygiene (“Igiena animalelor domestice”, Ed. Didactica si Pedagogica, București). A referential treatise of animal viral infections (“*Handbuch der Virusinfektionen bei Tieren*”, by Prof. Heinz Röhrer – editor –, Veb Gustav Fischer Verlag Jena, 1969) has an entire chapter (on Aujeszky’s Disease – “*Aujeszkysche Krankheit*”) authored by Prof. Tomescu.

Prof. Dr. Vasile Tomescu deserves to be credited for having carefully mentored and guided his Ph.D. students, many of them assuming teaching positions soon after completing their doctoral theses and are today important names of Romanian veterinary science.

All throughout his life, Prof. Tomescu enjoyed keeping close contacts with great number of European veterinary hygiene specialists (Prof. Dr. F. Kovács, Prof. Dr.h.c. J. Kalich, Prof. Dr.h.c. H. Willinger, Prof. Dr. J. Rosocha, Prof. Dr. H. G. Hilliger, Prof. Dr. D.W.B. Sainsbury, as well as many others). It comes as no surprise, therefore, that he was invited to join the collective effort initiated by Prof. Dr. F. Kovács in founding the Inter-



national Society for Animal Hygiene (1970). Since then, he has been active participant and contributor to all efforts leading to further development of ISAH. He participated with a scientific paper to ISAH’s first congress, in Budapest (1973), as a founding member, and afterwards at the third congress of ISAH (Vienna, 1980) he was awarded a diploma of honorary member-


ship. His contributions to the development of science was also recognized by his membership to the New York Academy of Sciences and to the Royal Society of Medicine in London.

The last decade of his life was dedicated to the retrieval and affirmation of the most important facts pertaining to the history of veterinary medicine in Romania and Europe. He is the author of a number of books and informative brochures about the history and role of veterinary medicine and veterinary public health.

Prof. Dr. Vasile Tomescu died at October 18th 1991, aged 82.

NOTE

(Timisoara faculty's department of hygiene dedication on photo - translated): "To the

 Department of hygiene, nicest wishes of success in the didactical and scientific activity in order to raise this speciality on the highest rung." – 1988.)