

Improvement of Scientific Qualification in Latvia University of Agriculture during 70 years

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In compliance with the Constitution (Satversme) of Jelgava Agricultural Academy (JAA) it was possible to obtain two kinds of doctoral degrees in the Academy – degrees in agronomy sciences (Dr.agr.) and forestry sciences (Dr.rer.for.). The Faculty Board awarded a scientific degree after a successful public defence of the doctoral thesis and then the Academy Council approved the degree. The degree paper was signed by the Rector, Dean of the faculty and Academy Secretary. During the existence of JAA a doctoral degree was awarded to nine people – eight in agronomy sciences (Dr.agr.) and one in forestry sciences (Dr.rer.for., Ernests Roze). Dagmāra Talce was the first to obtain a doctor's degree on April 3, 1940. The last doctor's degree in JAA was awarded on July 5, 1944. In the beginning of 1943 a positive reference on the thesis of Jānis Amtmanis was given by a commission of three people of the Faculty of Agriculture, but due to unknown reasons the thesis was not defended.

In 1944 after the Soviet occupation a two stage system of awarding scientific degrees existing in the USSR, was introduced also in Latvia – Candidate of Sciences and Doctor of Sciences. On March 6, 1945 the order of awarding scientific degrees was not yet specified in the statutes of Latvia Agricultural Academy (LAA) approved by the All Union Higher School Affair Committee of the USSR Council of People Commissars. It was only mentioned that the thesis should be publicly defended for obtain a Candidate Degree. By the Decision of the LSSR Council of People Commissars of April 19, 1945 postgraduate studies for 20 people were established within LAA for training of the new scientists. In 1946, the LAA Council obtained the rights to award the Candidate and Doctoral Degrees in agricultural, veterinary, and technical sciences. The first two theses were defended on May 8, 1947. Andrejs Rozēns, an assistant professor, obtained a Candidate Degree in agricultural sciences and Nikolajs Jansons, an assistant professor – a Candidate Degree in technical sciences. The first doctoral thesis in agricultural sciences was defended on June 20, 1952. Amālija Cekuliņa (November 27, 1959), the Head of the Department of Electrotechnics, the former Rector of LAA was the first teacher of LAA to defend a doctoral thesis in agriculture. The Decisions of the LAA Council took effect only after the approval of the Higher Attestation Commission (HAC) of the USSR Ministry of Higher Education (MHE) in Moscow. Besides, the Candidate Degrees of Sciences awarded by the Council were approved by MHE (or sometimes not approved, or approved in accordance with an additional examination involving the so-called "black" opponents), while the Degrees of Doctor of Sciences were awarded by HAC in accordance with the proposal of the Council. Degree papers were prepared in Moscow, the degree papers of the Candidate of Sciences were signed by the Head of the Council and Scientific Secretary, while the degree papers of doctors – by the Head of HAC and Scientific Secretary. In 1963, the LAA Council was supplemented by qualified scientists from other higher education and scientific institutions of the republic, thus improving the scientific qualification of the Council. It was renamed the Scientific Council, and consequently it obtained enlarged powers. The Scientific Council of LAA obtained the rights to award a Degree of Doctor of Sciences in agricultural sciences and technical sciences in the fields of mechanisation of agricultural processes and electrification as well as a Degree of Candidate of Sciences in the fields of agriculture, techniques, biology, veterinary, and economics. The Scientific Council consisted of more than 50 people who participated in all kinds of evaluations of the theses. The Scientific Council of LAA existed until 1975. During that period of time the Council awarded 545 Degrees of Candidate of Sciences and 29 Degrees of Doctor of Sciences. In agricultural sciences 294 people have been awarded the Degree of Candidate of Sciences, and 20 – the Degree of Doctor of Sciences, in technical sciences – 176 and 7 respectively, and veterinary sciences – 17 and 2 people respectively. In economic sciences a Degree of Candidate of Sciences was awarded to 34 people, biology sciences – 24, and pedagogical sciences – one. The Council awarded the Degree of Candidate of Sciences to 212 teachers and employees of LAA, and the Degree of Doctor of Sciences to

15 teachers and employees. Other degrees were awarded to people working outside the Academy, including scientists from all neighbour republics of Latvia as well as Ukraine and Poland. During that period of time 15 teachers and employees of LAA obtained the Degree of Doctor of Sciences and 75 the Degree of Candidate of Sciences outside the Academy.

In 1976, no theses were defended in LAA, because the reform of approval of theses took place in the Soviet Union. In 1977, specialised field councils were established, which operated together with faculties until 1991. At that moment 23 doctoral theses were defended in the science of economics and 157 Scientific Candidate theses (55 agricultural science, 53 technical science, 47 economical science and 2 veterinary medicine science) were defended in the LAA councils. Eight teachers of LAA obtained the Degree of Doctor of Sciences outside the Academy (4 – engineering sciences, 2 – agricultural sciences and 2 – philosophy sciences), and 51 – the Degree of Candidate of Sciences.

In 1992, promotion and habilitation councils approved by the new Latvian Scientific Council started to operate in the University. Until 2008, 17 Doctor habil. theses (12 – engineering sciences, 4 – agricultural sciences, 1 – forestry) and 124 doctoral theses (50 – engineering sciences, 36 – economic sciences, 21 – agricultural sciences, 9 – veterinary medicine, 8 – forestry) were defended. Twenty-seven teachers of LLU obtained doctoral degrees outside LLU (10 – pedagogy, 6 – philosophy, 4 – biology, 2 – engineering, and one in architecture, philology, psychology, physics).

Key words: academy, doctoral theses, Candidate Degree, Doctoral Degree, council.