

## **The significance of scientific development at the Latvia University of Agriculture**

The proceedings devoted to the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Latvia University of Agriculture (LLU) have now been made available in English from the plenary session and thematic sessions of the scientific conference. Many more people will now have a chance to get acquainted with our scientists' research work over the years, especially emphasizing the achievements of the last years' fundamental and applied researches for the whole of society, ensuring the participation of academically educated specialists in the national economy, science and culture, and joining the European and global academic processes.

The proceedings present the newest research results in agriculture, biology, engineering and the social sciences. The scientific history and current research results of the neighboring Lithuanian University of Agriculture and the Estonian University of Life Sciences are also included.

Starting from its beginning, the Latvia University of Agriculture has been the only university in Latvia which is oriented toward rural development. The university research activities are focused mainly on the fields of food, veterinary medicine, agriculture and forestry. At the same time we are aware that the LLU is the only university in the Zemgale region, and that fact gives us the responsibility to develop our intellectual potential in other fields of science also. The development of the technology and science park and the business incubator is proceeding in cooperation with employers' professional organizations and local governments. The Technology and Science Transfer Center has been established. The research and training farm "Vecauce" is becoming one of the most progressive education and science centers in the Baltic countries. The establishment of the biogas reactor, cogeneration station, modern dairy farm and the creation of the biogas and milking technologies' research groups are the latest achievements of the "Vecauce" training farm. The Center of Renewable Resources is initiated in the city of Jelgava. The Forest and Wood-pulp Products' Research and Development Institute in Jelgava, established in cooperation with the Latvian Wood Industry Federation and the joint stock company "Latvijas Valsts Meži", has had a significant input in the research development of LLU.

LLU has implemented the European Regional Development Fund (ERAF) and European Social Fund (ESF) projects for more than 1.3 million lats during the last two years. Modern equipment for laboratories, training places for students and support grants for doctoral students have been developed within these projects. The number of doctoral theses, especially in the engineering sciences, forestry science and economics, have increased significantly. The LLU projects "Establishment of joint universities' research group in system biology" and "Attraction of human resources for research in renewable energy resources" have gained ESF support. Being the BOVA (Baltic universities of agriculture, forestry and veterinary medicine) network coordinator, the LLU has concluded a cooperation agreement with a similar network in the Nordic countries whose goal is to improve master and doctoral studies and to promote the research work.

All these and many other activities have contributed to the effectiveness of the research work in all the faculties and scientific institutes of LLU. We hope that our current and future research results will allow our university to become recognized not only in the Zemgale region and Latvia, but also internationally.

Finally, I want to express my thanks to the editorial board for preparing the proceedings of the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary conference.