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Life and Creative Development of the Corresponding Member of the National Academy of Agrarian Sciences of Ukraine Vitaly P. Kovalenko (1940-2011)

The study of activities and scientific heritage of the famous scientists and public figures is one of the important tendencies of current research in Ukraine.

Studying V.P. Kovalenko's historic heritage is aimed at enriching our knowledge of the development of historical science and education. The topicality of the work is also determined by insufficient development of this issue in the scientific literature, the lack of holistic, thorough and objective study dedicated to V.P. Kovalenko as a scientist, educator and public figure, who has made a significant contribution to the development of the national agricultural and livestock breeding science.

The research object is the personality of V.P. Kovalenko, his life, scientific and organizational activities, the complex of historic and historiographical sources associated with the study of the scientist's life and work.

The research subject is the process of V.P. Kovalenko's forming and molding as a scientist, the evolution of his scientific views in the context of general trends of development of the national livestock breeding science.

The chronological limits of the study are mainly defined by the framework of V.P. Kovalenko's life and activities (1940-2011).

The objective of this work is to make a comprehensive analysis of the scientist's life, activities and scientific work.

Studying the heritage of this geneticist, we can also enrich our knowledge of the branch scientific thought.

The article focuses on the intellectual biography of the scientist. Under this concept we should understand the promotion of scientific work of the geneticist and stock-breeder in close connection with the intellectual and social environment.

The personalization of Ukrainian history of science makes it possible to determine the stages of further development of scientific areas and provides history of the national science and education with portrait specifics. These are the issues to determine the problem's topicality.

Vitaly Kovalenko was born on September 6, 1940 in a family of teachers in New Bug, Nykolaev region. His father, Pyotr Kovalenko, was a teacher of history, he died at the front during the first days of the Great Patriotic War in 1941. Mother, Tatiana Yefremovna (Fig. 1.), worked in a high school as a teacher of the Ukrainian language and literature and was a school headmistress. Getting a low pay, she had to keep the whole family. The family lived in the village of Baratovka, Nykolaev region.



*Fig .1. Father-Pyotr Nikolayevich Kovalenko, Vitaly Kovalenko ,
mother -Tatiana Yefremovna Kovalenko*

A barefoot, severe childhood could not extinguish in the soul of the future scientist a fire of frankness, education, diligence and aspiration for learning the best things in the world. He left school being awarded with a gold medal. After school he entered Kherson Agricultural Institute. Ironically, during his studies at the Institute, Vitaly's friends nicknamed him as " a professor".

He was a man with a God-given talent, and Vitaly Petrovich mastered and perfected everything he was interested in, enjoying his study and later his work as well.

At the Institute, he met his future wife, who always supported, respected and trusted him, Inna Konstantinovna Kudimova. They got married on February 10, 1962 , when Vitaly was a five-year student. The celebration dedicated to their nuptials took place at the Institute.(Fig. 2 .)



Fig .2 .-Marriage ceremony

Their son Sergei Kovalenko was born on November 1, 1962 and bore a striking resemblance to his father (many scholars and friends mention it now). When a post-graduate student, Vitaly's family lived in the village of Zhuky, Poltava region. After finishing a post-graduate course, a young scientist worked as a senior researcher for some time at the Institute of Hog Breeding.

In 1967-1980 Vitaly Kovalenko lived in the village of Borky, Kharkov region, where he worked at the Institute of Poultry. In 1981 the family moved to Kherson, where Vitaly headed the Department of Genetics and Farm Animals Breeding, Kherson Agricultural Institute, and since 1997 he occupied the position of Vice-Rector for Research.

V.P. Kovalenko dedicated his career to breeding and genetic improvement of livestock and poultry, starting immediately after graduation from the Institute, while working as a junior researcher at the Institute of Animal Husbandry "Askania Nova" named after M.F Ivanov. At the Research Institute of Hog Breeding in the city of Poltava, a young post-graduate student met and later became friends with outstanding people, the Academician V.P. Rybalko and Professor M.D. Berezovsky.

Vitaly Petrovich's first scientific supervisor, a famous scientist and livestock specialist, Associate Professor Vasily Trofimovich Morozov played a significant role in the development of a scientific outlook of the young scientist. Sincere and constant liking for genetics was combined with his interest in livestock breeding science.

In 1966 Kovalenko defended his thesis "The study of blood groups of pigs and immune and genetic control while crossing."

Applying the results of research he was one of the first in Ukraine to develop and implement the methods of selection process control using the genetic markers. In 1978 he defended his doctoral thesis "Theoretical substantiation and practical use of the genetic analysis methods in the egg poultry." In 1986 V.P. Kovalenko was awarded the title of professor of the Department of Farm Animals Breeding.

During the last thirty years Vitaly Petrovich headed the Department of Farm Animals Breeding and Genetics and was a vice-rector for scientific and research work at Kherson State Agricultural University.

Vitaly Kovalenko became a leading scientist in the branch of farm animals breeding and selection in Ukraine. There was an interesting detail, as a child he dreamed of being an aircraft designer, but his poor eyesight had become an obstacle in the realization of his dreams. So, he devoted himself to a different sphere. He was endowed with both talent and brain, enthusiasm and intuition, so any business he was engaged in, as we say "took in his own hands", acquired its completeness, and in any other industry he would be successful.

"Balzac wrote fifteen pages a day, and Vitaly Petrovich wrote seventeen ones", his colleagues and students joked. How great this man was, and simple at the same time, he seemed not to realize the magnitude of his talent. Vitaly Petrovich was one of those men who couldn't but offer an advice and assistance whether to a colleague, a post-graduate student or just a student. There should be noted a unique feature of this scientist: while engaging in science or research, he could talk, give advice, generate new ideas and seek the ways to implement them.

We can tell a lot about the crystal soul of this brilliant scientist and his ready to help heart, and we cannot but mention that Vitaly Petrovich was a man of great intellect, tolerant, sociable, responsible and very tactful. Vitaly was a very interesting personality, he was perfect in science and wise in life as well. He was often very busy but always had time, even in passing, to say the main, important thing which would help people in their life. Therefore, his brilliant ideas and recommendations were like "the air to breath" for people. Many people were often surprised – how could this man manage to do everything : to be the first in science, to create and work for the sake of science, to discover something new, to help people and to perfectly understand our life.

We can say that Vitaly Petrovich lived a life of dignity, he was engaged in his favourite occupation, helped other people, but it was not difficult for him. He loved science, his job, and, of course, was an outstanding teacher.

V.P. Kovalenko's students, colleagues and followers loved him for his selfless heart and brilliant intellect. It was impossible to miss his interesting stories at the lectures. His granddaughter recalled, he always talked fast and was nervous before an audience, but the students enjoyed his classes and bright life examples which help to memorize the facts. Even now, when meeting, his former students say, "Do you remember, Vitaly Petrovich Kovalenko said at a lecture that....".

He has always been devoted a lot of poetry and even songs to. We remember the words of Doctor of Agricultural Sciences, Professor , Honored Worker of Agriculture Vera Sergeyevna Topikha at the celebration of Vitaly Petrovich's anniversary, the last anniversary in his life , when she loudly and repeatedly said "Vitaly Petrovich , you are a LEGEND."

He always understood everyone and gave a lot of his efforts and attention to other people forgetting about himself. Perhaps the years of exhausting work caused a terrible disease that took his life. It is painful to recall how this intelligent man, who knew everything about his wasting disease before it became known to others, would love to live and even on the last day he wished many of his ideas would come true and wanted to do much for his beloved science.

Nowadays the research activities started by Vitaly Petrovich are followed by his family. His son Sergei works as a livestock specialist, his granddaughter Tatiana teaches at the Department of Farm Animals Breeding and Genetics named after V.P. Kovalenko, Kherson State Agricultural University. In July 2011, she defended her thesis, which was one of the latest innovative ideas of her grandfather, Vitaly Petrovich.

Presenting this complex work, she finished with the words: " I want to express the greatest gratitude and respect to my dear man, without whose assistance and support there would never be this research, this work and there would never be my steps in both the profession and sphere of farm animals breeding – Vitaly Petrovich Kovalenko!".

Vitaly Kovalenko will forever remain in our hearts, and as the Doctor of Agricultural Sciences, Professor, Honored Scientist of Ukraine, the Corresponding Member of NAASU Victor G. Pelykh has noted: " ...the emptiness in the hearts after Vitaly Petrovich's loss will never be filled."

There is an interesting fact in the scientific biography of the Ukrainian scientist which draws attention, the fact that he was always one of the founders of a new research project or an initiator of renewing the certain directions of scientific work at a new level in the agricultural sector, as it was in Kherson State Agricultural University. And we should recognize that in selecting the areas and methods of research V.P. Kovalenko was guided primarily by personal considerations of the nature of livestock breeding science and genetic improvement of livestock and poultry.

We can say a lot about the great world-renowned scientist, the man with a bright soul, which was boundless in its warmth and love for people and science.



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scientist...