In memory of Dr. med. vet. Dieter Düwel (*June 2, 1928, Rostock—[†]October 8, 2020, Kiel)

Johannes Eckert¹ · Kurt Pfister² · Susanne Hartmann³

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The scientific community, relatives, and friends mourn the loss of Dr. Dieter Düwel, a parasitologist who has gained great merits in veterinary parasitology—especially in the areas of antiparasitic drug development, control of parasitoses of domestic animals—and through his commitment in parasitological societies and international cooperation.

D. Düwel was born in Rostock, which from 1945 belonged to the former “Soviet Occupation Zone” of Germany. After the end of the war, he had aspired to a higher academic education but was initially denied access to University because his father—an academic—was assigned to the “Bourgeoisie,”

thus not belonging to the “Working and Peasantry Class” (WPC) that should shape a new communistic society. Therefore, D. Düwel undertook a training as an agricultural apprentice and finalized it with an examination. Due to the regrettable death of his father, he suddenly lost his “bourgeoisie” stigma and was then regarded as a member of the WPC. This brought to him the long-expected admission to study agriculture at the University of Rostock. However, the massive political repression at schools and universities during the stalinistic period increased to such an extent that many young people were forced to leave their homelands in eastern Germany and take the plunge into an uncertain future in the “West.” This is what happened to D. Düwel, who fled to Hannover, he studied there veterinary medicine at the University of Veterinary Medicine from 1950 to 1955, and graduated with the “state examination” and shortly afterwards with a doctorate (DVM). This was a successful but tough time for him as he had to earn most of the funds for studying and living on a part-time basis.

D. Düwel’s *parasitological career* began in 1957 at the Institute for Parasitology at the University of Veterinary Medicine Hannover, where he worked under the leadership of Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Karl Enigk as scientific assistant until 1963. In the same year, he joined the pharmaceutical company Hoechst AG in Frankfurt/Main. There he headed the Division of Helminthology until his retirement in 1991.

Comprehensive knowledge, enthusiasm for the subject, organizational talent, and a tireless work effort were characteristic of D. Düwel’s professional activities. During his work at the Institute for Parasitology in Hannover, the focus of his work was on epidemiology and control of fasciolosis and dictyocaulosis in cattle and other parasitoses of farm animals. In his activities, he proved himself to be a master of organizing large-scale field studies; he knew how to motivate people involved and to bring them together to form a team. At that time, important recommendations for parasite control in practice could be derived from the results of his work. In addition to his scientific activities, D. Düwel took on numerous

✉ Johannes Eckert
johannes.eckert@bluewin.ch

Kurt Pfister
kpfister@duc.ch

Susanne Hartmann
susanne.hartmann@fu-berlin.de

¹ University Zürich, Zürich, Switzerland

² Ludwig Maximilian University Munich, Munich, Germany

³ Institute of Immunology, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Free University, Berlin, Berlin, Germany

planning and administrative functions that Prof. Enigk had delegated to him. He devoted himself to these tasks with an enormous effort and thus made a significant contribution to the development of the Institute for Parasitology in Hannover.

As head of the Division of Helminthology at Hoechst, he was primarily and successfully involved in the development and testing of anthelmintics (e.g., fenbendazole, Panacur®) against parasitoses of farm animals and other animal groups. But he was also interested in other parasitological aspects. For instance, together with H. Mehlhorn and W. Raether, he was co-author of the book “*Diagnosis and Therapy of Parasitoses of Domestic, Farm and Pet Animals*,” published in a first edition 1986 and a second one in 1993. His scientific activities are reflected by more than 200 publications and contributions to 33 patents¹. It is particularly noteworthy that the majority of these publications were created in addition to his functions as a division head in the company. His activities were not only successful in terms of drug development but also in terms of establishing and expanding scientific relationships around the globe. With this, D. Düwel also built personal bridges at a time when this was difficult because of the Iron Curtain and other border obstacles. On the occasion of his retirement, a special symposium “*Perspektiven der immunologischen Parasitenbekämpfung*” (Perspectives of immunological parasite control) was dedicated to him.²

The characteristics of D. Düwel’s personality—in addition to those mentioned above—also included his positive approach to life, combined with humor, and his extraordinary willingness to help. One of the authors of this obituary (J. Eckert) and others luckily experienced this helpfulness of D. Düwel during their studies and their joint assistantship at the Institute for Parasitology in Hannover, when he was always ready to share and to help.

Looking back on D. Düwel’s life, his commitment in *scientific societies* deserves special mention and great thanks. During his assistantship in Hannover, D. Düwel acted as secretary of the foundation meeting of the German Society of Parasitology (GSP), held on September 26, 1960. Later—from 1967 until 1990—he was GSP’s secretary/treasurer. With his ideas, dynamism and activities he had a major

influence on the development of the society³. Based on a proposal submitted by D. Düwel in 1968, the GSP awarded since 1970 the title “Expert Parasitologist” to qualified parasitologists with the intention to promote their professional development.

With great sense of responsibility and dedication, he carried out the tasks assigned to him, including large projects such as the financing/organizing of the third International Congress of Parasitology (ICOPA III) in Munich in 1974. He has always pleaded for an adequate representation of veterinary parasitology within the GSP, but finally part of this topic was transferred to the section “Parasites and Parasitic Diseases” of the German Veterinary Association. In 1988, the GSP expressed its appreciation for D. Düwel’s extraordinary merits by awarding honorary membership to him.

In August 1963, the World Association for the Advancement of Veterinary Parasitology (WAAVP) was founded in Hannover. Since then, D. Düwel has been an active WAAVP member and headed one of the committees for the preparation of “Antiparasitic Guidelines.” The goal of these guidelines was to develop internationally “uniform testing standards and registration requirements to expedite the testing approval of effective products with a minimum of labor, money, and experimental animals without sacrificing scientific validity” (Powers et al., *Vet. Parasitol.* 10: 265–284, 1982). Many authorities around the world have based their legal regulations for approval of antiparasitic drugs in veterinary medicine on these guidelines.

Due to his professional skills and activities as well as his personal characteristics, D. Düwel has earned a high reputation and goodwill in the scientific community as well as in his personal environment. His wife Ingeborg (†05.03.2019) and his family were always at Dieter’s side. He died in Kiel and was buried in Dänischenhagen on October 20, 2020. Our deepest sympathy goes to his daughter Annette, his son Thomas, and all members of the family.

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¹ Raether, W. (1991): Laudatio auf Dieter Düwel. Parasitologie-Symposium, Hoechst AG am 29.11. 1991 (unpublished).

² Raether, W. (ed.): *Perspektiven der immunologischen Parasitenbekämpfung*. Parasitologie-Symposium Hoechst, Frankfurt am Main, 29.11.1991.

³ Eckert J. (2011): 50 years German Society of Parasitology (DGP) (1961–2010). In: Mehlhorn H. (ed.): *Progress in parasitology. Parasitology Research Monographs* 2, pp. 1–21. Springer-Verlag Berlin u. Heidelberg, ISBN: 978-3-642-21396-0-1-