

COTTENIE, André

Born: September 15, 1919 (Evergem)

Died: February 21, 1997 (Mariakerke, Ghent)

Biography

As son of a gendarme (member of the national Belgian police force), André is admitted at the Royal Cadet School and the Royal Military Academy. In 1940 he is taken prisoner, remains as a POW in Germany and obtains the degree of agricultural engineer at the Institute for Agriculture in Ghent. After a short period as a teacher he becomes research assistant at this Institute. Following the advice of Professor R. Van den Hende he rounds out his knowledge at Wageningen (NL), Aberdeen, the Pasteur Institute (Paris) and Stockholm. His first lectures go back to 1950 and after having passed through the necessary academic appointments (meanwhile obtaining a doctorate of agricultural sciences) he becomes professor of analytical chemistry at the institute in 1964.

As head of the Laboratory of Applied Analytical Chemistry he lectures general analytical chemistry, fertilization, agro chemistry and the environment. After a three-year stint as vice-rector of the University of Ghent, he becomes the dean of the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences in 1981 and till his retirement as emeritus professor in 1985 he is rector of the University of Ghent. Cottenie becomes successively corresponding member and working member of the Royal Flemish Academy for Sciences and Arts (1973 till 1980) and promotes in 1984 as head of the Class of Sciences.

He is among fulfilling a number of functions, the founder of the Belgian National Committee of Problems of the Environment (SCOPE), head of the KVCV (1966-1970) and coordinator of the European Research Network on Trace Elements (a subdivision of FAO).

In addition to his academic responsibilities, he is a member of a number of institutions related to hygiene, epidemiology and soil pollution. Due to his merits he is awarded the medal of Officer of the Légion d'Honneur and in 1990, elected as a member of the French Academy of Agriculture. He is also holder of the highest Belgian medals of Honor.

Scientific Accomplishments

André Cottenie's specialty remains the analytical chemistry. For the application of spectrochemistry in agricultural research he is appointed member of the French Institute for Diagnostic Analysis of the Soil. His research also concerns the fertilization, the evolution of their take-up, the soil pollution by heavy metals and purification of water.

He lectures at the universities of Louisiana and Colorado and advisor for the OESO, UNESCO, and the European Union. He contributes to a large number of scientific missions in Europe and India, Korea, Canada, Poland and Morocco.