

**THE BRIEF HISTORY
OF THE HOUSE
OF AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION
AND THE LIBRARY
OF ANTONÍN ŠVEHLA**



CONTENTS

THE HOUSE OF AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION	1
The founder of the House of Agricultural Education and its architect	1
The House of Agricultural Education – A house hosting many institutions	2
THE LIBRARY OF ANTONÍN ŠVEHLA	3
Where did the library belong to.....	3
Names of the Library	4
Important moments in the library history	5
Historical statistics.....	7
Taking over library collections	8
Exhibitions.....	9
The concept of an agricultural library.....	10
Great Agricultural Librarians.....	11
Towards the library of the 21 st century.....	12
Library directors/Acting directors	13
REFERENCES	14

THE HOUSE OF AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION

The House of Agricultural Education (Dům zemědělské osvěty) – a building built of Dutch bricks located in Slezská Street in Vinohrady in Prague, next to Náměstí Míru (Peace Square). Many people know this red brick building by sight without realising who was its “Spiritual Father”, who designed it, and what is hidden behind its walls.

On October 28th 1926, on the occasion of the Independent Czechoslovak State Day, on the first anniversary of the Czechoslovak Academy of Agriculture General Assembly and at the time of opening the House of Agricultural Education for public use, the then Minister of Education, future Minister of Agriculture and long-time chairman of the Czechoslovak Academy of Agriculture (Československá akademie zemědělská) Dr. Milan Hodža gave a memorable speech: *“There won’t be any opulent parties taking place in this house nor anything pompous. This house is dedicated to work. It will serve public education and will be fully used. In addition to study rooms for researchers in the field of agricultural science you will find here an agricultural cooperative college, a library and a reading room available for intellectuals from Prague and other places to study, and also the Academy of Agriculture. You will find a beautiful synthesis of theory, experience and everything vital for modern agriculture.”*

The founder of the House of Agricultural Education and its architect

There are two names connected with the House of Agricultural Education. Although the first one is well-known to the public, usually only agricultural historians are familiar with the other. But in fact, it was **Ing. Dr. Edvard Reich** who was a co-founder and a driving force of the Czechoslovak Academy of Agriculture, an organizer of agricultural consultancy, a “Spiritual Father” and a founder of the House of Agricultural Education. It was he who entrusted its design and construction to the hands of the renowned architect **Josef Gočár**. Josef Gočár gave the House of Agricultural Education its really unique character as he drew inspiration for the building in Vinohrady¹ from Dutch and German architecture and at the same time assimilated the style of Italian Mediterranean architecture.

¹ *The Czechoslovak Academy of Agriculture, or more precisely Edvard Reich himself managed to obtain a plot of land in Vinohrady where he also lived. This place next to Peace Square was only a 20 minute walk from Reich’s villa located in the street which is now called Benešovská Street. And it’s interesting that the villa belonging to the initiator of agricultural progress was only five minutes away from the residence of two Czech greats who were engaged in popularization of one area of agriculture – horticulture, and who were also occupied with practical activities connected with gardening. We are talking about brothers Karel and Josef Čapek. And it was especially Karel Čapek who contributed significantly to horticulture promotion by publishing his marvellous book *The Gardener’s Year*. But Karel Čapek probably never visited the Central Slavonic Agricultural Library (Ústřední slovanská zemědělská knihovna) in Slezská Street when writing his pieces on gardening, despite the fact the library is near the City Theatre in Royal Vinohrady where he was working as a director and dramatist between 1921 and 1923. He used to walk from his residence in*

A plan to build a House of Agricultural Education, the boldest move of Edvard Reich, began to take shape in 1923. It had been already part of Reich's program in the constitutive General Assembly of the Czechoslovak Academy of Agriculture held on 28th of December 1924. When Edvard Reich began to think about building the House of Agricultural Education, he already had a clear idea what kind of events should take place in this institute in order to improve the overall state of Czech agriculture. The foundation of the centre of agricultural education and progress was supported by the then Minister of Agriculture **Dr. Milan Hodža** and also by the Prime Minister **Antonín Švehla**. On the 3rd of July 1926, just before the House of Agricultural Education was opened to the public, it was visited by the president T. G. Masaryk who showed a detailed interest in its mission.

The House of Agricultural Education – A house hosting many institutions

The Agricultural Centre of Films and Transparencies (Zemědělská ústředna filmů a diapositivů) which was established by the Ministry of Agriculture in 1923 was transferred into the House of Agricultural Education, the residence of Agricultural Library. In 1927 a **permanent exhibition of teaching aids** was opened there, with a contribution of the State Institution for Supplying Agricultural Schools with Teaching Aids in Tábor (Státní ústav pro opatřování pomůcek pro zemědělské školy v Táboře). In 1934 the building accommodated **Agricultural Education** (Zemědělská osvěta), a centre for cooperation between all organisations and institutions focused on agricultural education operating within the country. It became a residence of the association called **Free Rustic Teaching** (Svobodné učení selské), publishing educational books for people living in rural areas and the **Agricultural Engineers Association** (Spolek zemědělských inženýrů). In 1936 a journal called **Agricultural School** (Zemědělská škola) began to be published there. It became a home of **inspectors for agricultural schooling**, there was a **teacher's institute** for agricultural teachers to-be, from 1933 the **Agricultural Cooperative College** (Vyšší zemědělská škola družstevní) was based there. It also housed the **Czechoslovak Branch of the International Committee for Agricultural Education** (Československá odbočka Mezinárodní komise pro zemědělské vyučování), in 1935 it transformed into the Association for Agricultural Education (Pedagogická společnost zemědělská). Research activities had been represented by the **Science Institution for Agrarian and Political Science** (Vědecký ústav pro studium agrárně-politických věd). And needless to say it was a residence of the **Czechoslovak Academy of Agriculture** and a **library**.

Úzká Street (it was named "Čapek Brothers Street" in 1947) near Flora to the city centre, so he couldn't miss the House of Agricultural Education which was completed in 1926 (public library was opened in 1928). Unfortunately these events happened at different time – even though The Gardener's Year was published in 1929, individual columns were published in a newspaper called Lidové noviny between 1925 and 1928.

THE LIBRARY OF ANTONÍN ŠVEHLA

The plans for the newly established Central Slavonic Agricultural Library and the Reading Room of the Czechoslovak Academy of Agriculture were quite grandiose. After all preparing a list of the entire agricultural publications found in Czech and Slovak libraries which were used as a basis for a central catalogue of agricultural literature, or launching a regularly published Czechoslovak agricultural bibliography which had been debated at the first meeting of the Committee for Bibliography and Central Agricultural Library (Komise pro bibliografii a ústřední zemědělskou knihovnu) in May 1925, would be undoubtedly an arduous task even today when we are equipped with modern technology.

The first documented evidence of the agricultural library dates back to November 1924 and can be found in the statutes of the Czechoslovak Academy of Agriculture. 11th of July 1926 is considered to be the day the library was officially established, because its status had been approved as well as six library codes. Another important turning point in the library's history was March 18th 1928 when the Central Slavonic Agricultural Library was opened to the public.

The foundation of the Central Slavonic Agricultural Library and the Reading Room of the Czechoslovak Academy of Agriculture in 1926 was an act benefiting from a relatively long tradition of building agriculturally orientated library collections starting as early as the 2nd half of the 18th century². In the 19th century there was a rapid growth of these collections and it didn't stop either after the establishment of Czechoslovakia. The building of agricultural collections was mainly a result of social life at that time, i.e. establishing agricultural and forestry clubs and associations and also the opening of agriculture schools.

Where did the library belong to

Until 1951 the library was part of the Czechoslovak Academy of Agriculture. In 1956 the library within the Czechoslovak Academy of Agricultural Sciences (Československá akademie zemědělských věd) became a part of the Centre for Science Information in Agriculture (Ústředí vědeckých informací v zemědělství).

In 1959 according to the new regulations of the Czechoslovak Academy of Agricultural Sciences, the Central Agricultural and Forestry Library (Ústřední zemědělská a lesnická

² *Increasing agricultural productivity was the main interest of the Terežian state, that's why between 1769-1770 the state supported establishing of the associations of aristocratic landowners. The role of these associations was to publish books and to organise lectures on technological progress in agronomy. In 1769 the Society of Ploughing and Free Arts in the Kingdom of Bohemia (Společnost orby a svobodného umění v Království českém) was founded, renamed the Imperial Royal Patriotic-Economic Society (C. k. vlastenecko-hospodářská společnost) in 1789 which ceased to exist in 1872. The main goal of this Society was to establish a school for agricultural officers, to improve livestock (sheep) farming, field cultivating, and also hop-growing and beekeeping development. There were 13 340 books in the library established by this Society.*

knihovna) was integrated into a separate unit called Studies, Laboratories and Other Facilities (Kabinety, laboratoře a jiná zařízení).

In 1961 the library definitely parted from the Czechoslovak Academy of Agriculture and incorporated into the Institute of Scientific and Technical Information (Ústav vědeckotechnických informací). The name of the Institute was changed in 1976 when it was called the Institute of Scientific and Technical Information for Agriculture (Ústav vědeckotechnických informací v zemědělství).

In 1993 the Institute of Scientific and Technical Information for Agriculture and the Centre of Technical Information in Food Industry (Středisko technických informací potravinářského průmyslu) located in the Research Centre of Food Industry were unified and the new institution called the Institute of Agriculture and Food Information (Ústav zemědělských a potravinářských informací) emerged. The library was part of it.

Since July 1st 2008 the Agricultural and Food Library has been part of the Institute of Agricultural Economics and Information (Ústav zemědělské ekonomiky a informací) which was established when the Research Institution of Agriculture Economics and the Institute of Agriculture and Food Information merged.

Names of the Library

Originally the library was called the Central Slavonic Agricultural Library and the Reading Room of CAZ (Czechoslovak Academy of Agriculture), in 1928 it was renamed the Central Slavonic Agricultural Library. Ten years later, on the eve of war, a term "Slavonic" was removed from its name, so it was called the Central Agricultural Library of CAZ. However in 1957 there was one extra term added, so it wasn't only "the Central Agricultural Library", but "the Central Agricultural and Forestry Library".

With regard to the field of food industry there was a food library established in the 1950's in the Ministry of Food Processing Industry. The basis of the library collection consisted of books from the Ministry of Food Processing Industry itself and also several private collections, for example the book collection of one of the most famous Czech food chemist, Dr. Kobic. There were Czech and Slovak scientific publications centralized in this library. Among the oldest publications in the library collection there were especially books on the sugar industry published in the 19th century, for example the Journal of Sugar-Making (1872, Časopis cukrovarnický) or Neuman's Sugar-Making Calendar (1888, Neumanův kalendář cukrovarnický). The library provided services to the main administration for individual food processing branches, for example sugar-making, fat industry, dairy, canning and bakery industry, that were part of the Ministry and mostly based in Prague.

In 1958 the Ministry of Food Processing Industry decided to establish the Centre of Technical Information for Food Processing Industry (Středisko technických informací

potravinářského průmyslu) in the Research Institute of the Food Processing Industry where the library had been incorporated.

The Centre of Technical Information strongly influenced changes in the structure of food industry library collections. Compared to the early days the acquisition of foreign books and especially journals had been reinforced. The library was buying leading journals on the food processing industry from the United States, Germany, Britain, France. And it was same with books and anthologies. Some branches of the food processing industry, e.g. sugar-making, fat, canning or distillery industry had their own research institutions including libraries which since 1959 started their transformation into specialized information centres. The Centre of Technical Information was in charge of obtaining scientific literature for these institutions and centres and was using a system of foreign exchange limits.

When the Institute of Agriculture and Food Information was established there were two libraries existing until the year 2000: the former Central Agricultural and Forestry Library and the Centre of Technical Information. They were united and later in 2002 registered by the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic as the Library of the Institute of Agriculture and Food Information. Within the Institute of Agriculture and Food Information the library was designated as an Information Fund (identification number ABA009). Unofficially the library was called the Agricultural and Food Library.

In 2008 the Institute of Agricultural and Food Information and the Research Institution on Agricultural Economics were united and the Institute of Agricultural Economics and Information was established. Until 2013 the Agricultural and Food Library was one of its departments. But as completion of the transformation process of the Institute of Agricultural Economics and Information on the 1st of August 2013 the Agricultural consulting and Educational Centre was created as well as the Library of Antonín Švehla. The library was named after one of the most important agrarian politicians of the Czechoslovak Republic, Antonín Švehla.

Important moments in the library history

When the debate on the classification of agricultural sciences (which was essential for publishing a systematic Czechoslovak bibliography) started in 1925 nobody expected it to be one of the most difficult tasks the library or more specifically the 16 member committee for bibliography had to deal with.

In 1933 the classification system wasn't so highly-developed yet although there were great experts working on it, such as Prof. Freis, Dr. Chmelař, Dr. Krejčí, Dr. Kříženecký, Dr. Reich and many others. That's why it was deemed as "urgent". It had been delayed also because of an effort to work out its own classification method and not to use the Universal Decimal Classification. Debate on the definition of the terms "agriculture" and "farming" also came to a deadlock. Finally in 1940 the Frauendorfer's Systematic Classification Scheme of

agriculture sciences was created and in 1941 regular publishing of the Czech Agriculture Bibliography was launched. But systematic work on the Czech Agricultural Bibliography started in 1939, when 160 journal volumes were excerpted and 22 000 bibliography records were created.

The Bibliography was published until 1949 but the classification system used had been abandoned soon after and replaced by the Universal Decimal Classification.

In 1954 the Czechoslovak Agricultural Bibliography was published as a supplement to the journal The Agricultural and Forestry Documentation (Dokumentace zemědělská a lesnická), then it was called The Selection of Czechoslovak Agricultural Documentation (Výběr československé zemědělské dokumentace) and finally in 1966 the yearbook called the Czechoslovak Agricultural Bibliography (ročenka Československé zemědělská bibliografie). Since 1993 the Czech agricultural bibliography has been built as an automated database.

One of the important moments in the library history, though a bit controversial from today's prospective, happened in 1983 when the Institute of Scientific and Technical Information for Agriculture was authorized as a sectoral information centre for the entire agriculture area. Authorization to operate centrally, to manage and supervise an information service had an important information place in different branches and departments since the 1959 government resolution. An elaborated system was controlled by directive methods. This negative experience is still hard to forget for many librarians who had to live through attempts to unify systems, optimize an acquisition and library collections preservation.

The fact is that only cooperation based on advantages and benefits for both or for more than two organisations can be successful.

After 1989 when a national system of sectoral and trade information centres were abolished, the status of agriculture libraries changed. The sectoral information centre of the Institute of Scientific and Technical Information for Agriculture which had been coordinating and regulating methodically activities of trade information centres (of libraries in research institutes) lost its role.

In 1995 according to the Law No. 37/1995 Coll. on Non-periodical Publications the Institute of Agricultural and Food Information or more specifically the library lost its right to receive legal deposits. Thus the library was unable to continue fulfilling its preservation role and its ability to conserve the entire production of Czech books on agriculture and the food processing industry, although according to paragraph 13 of the Public Libraries Act this library has been the only specialized library in this field in the Czech Republic.

Regarding its size and the value of its collection the library has always been among four of the most important agricultural libraries in the world. Since 1976 (with the exception of the years 1981-1993) the library has been a deposit library of FAO documents for the Czech

Republic. At the beginning of the 1980's the library was struck out off FAO list by accident and it regained its status of deposit library in 1993.

In 2013 there was extensive reconstruction of the library depository building in Kojetice near Prague. Thus the fundamental base for a future modern place of work and research in the Library of Antonín Švehla was created.

Historical statistics

Books and journals for the agricultural library were temporarily placed in the National Agrarian Archive and in Strahov Monastery. The Reading Room in the House of Agricultural Education was temporarily operated in the big lecture hall, new study room and the circulation desk were put into operation in 1933.

In 1926 the library was receiving 99 Czech and Slovak journals and 61 foreign ones. In 1927 there were 642 journals available in the library, 389 of them were foreign: 14 from England, 18 from Italy, 30 from Germany, 27 from Poland, 17 from Austria, 12 from Romania, 31 from Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, 5 from Switzerland, 66 from USA, 28 from Canada. Journals were purchased, but also obtained under the agreement on the international publication exchange from the constantly increasing number of states and institutions the Czechoslovak Academy of Agriculture made contacts with.

In 1932 the library came to an agreement on receiving review copies. In 1933 there were 100 000 specialized publications registered in the library, around 3000 readers used its services during the year (experts working for the Czechoslovak Academy of Agriculture, employees of research institutes, students and teachers from agricultural schools and the general public) and 11 000 books were borrowed. The library employed 13 people who sent about half of the total number of books borrowed to the people in rural areas by post.

In 1949 there were more than 200 000 books in the library. In 1977 a study had been worked out regarding the planned building of depository in Kojetice but it took more than 30 years before the library collections moved around on a constant basis could be brought together in one depository. Part of the library collection had been stored in depositories outside of Prague: in Dobřichovice, Encovany, Soutice, Mstětice, Zdiby, Chudenice. In 1996 the library used five depositories outside of Prague. In October 2000 the storage in Kojetice was finally handed over to the library for its own use.

Today the Agricultural and Food Library owns about 1,1 mil publications.

The food industry collection in the Central Food Library numbered about 60 000 volumes, including 27 000 journals. At that time the library subscribed to more than 500 titles of national and foreign journals, the annual increment was about 1200 volumes, 400 of it were books.

[Taking over library collections](#)

Apart from regular purchases, gifts and exchange the collections were expanding due to accepting publications from the clubs, schools and libraries that had been closed down. But incorporating these collections into the library collection was causing some difficulties considering limited staffing capacity. In 1929 it was necessary to adopt measures to reduce book purchases and to focus on unprocessed collections. But even this arrangement didn't help as taking over other library collections continued.

Among the most important library collections that were absorbed were the library collections of the Library of the Czech Agriculture Council, Horticulture Library, the Library of research agriculture institutes in Prague-Dejvice³, the Central Library of the United Federation of Czech Farmers and the Food Library. The library also took over the library collections of the Museum of Gardening (1926-1928), the Central Association of Agricultural Cooperatives (1928-1936), the Agricultural Cooperative College (1928-1936), the State Teacher's Institute (1930-1940), the Agricultural Radio Station (1937-1940), the Czech and Moravian Printing and Publishing Companies in Prague (1927-1944) and the Silk Industry Library (1928-1940).

Taking over library collections hadn't stopped. In later years, the library incorporated the collections of the Library of the Russian Institute of Agricultural Cooperatives (1932-1950), the Inspectorial Library of the Ministry of Agriculture – State Inspectors of Agriculture Schools (1926-1951), the Library of Czechoslovak Forestry Association (1927-1950) and the Hunter's Association (1957), the library of the Czech Association for Improvement of Horticulture and the Association of Agriculture Engineers. Integration of the Central Food Library which had been established in the 1950's at the Ministry of Food Processing Industry was also a very important moment. In 2001 the library took over the collection of the closed Institute of Education and Training of the Ministry of Agriculture of the Czech Republic and in 2009 the library of the Research Institute of Agricultural Economics. In September 2013 the takeover and processing of the library collection of the Ministry of Agriculture Library was completed. Thus the Library of Antonín Švehla fully took on the role of the ministerial library and provides a full library service for employees of the Ministry.

³ *In 1929 state research agriculture institutes moved into the new building in Prague-Dejvice (there is a residence of the Institute of Organic Chemistry and Biochemistry of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic today). Research institutes, e.g. biological, agropedological, bioclimatic, wine and fruit growing, crop research, forest protection, dairy or biochemical institute could use a central library in the building, a library collection numbering around 5000 volumes. Particular institutes also had their own libraries, the largest one was the library of the Crop Research Institute. The total number of all books in the institutes and the central library was 15 000. Institutes subscribed to 252 foreign and 190 Czechoslovak journals.*

The most important historical collection which numbers 25 000 volumes is the Library of the Agricultural Council of the Czech Kingdom which was a successor to the closed Imperial and Royal National Agricultural Association.

The Library of Antonín Švehla owns five volumes from the 16th century, 17 volumes from the 17th century and about 1100 volumes from the 18th century. The oldest printed item in the library collection is a German publication by Hieronymus Bock – **Kreütterbuch : darin unterscheidt, Namen vnnd Würckung der Krütter, Stauden, Hecken vnnd Beumen** (The Herbarium: Distinguishing, Names and Effects of Herbs, Perennial Plants, Shrubs and Trees) published in 1555 in Strasbourg. **Herbarium** by Mattioli translated into Old Czech and published by Daniel Adam of Veleslavín possibly originated in 1562 or 1596, **Georgica Curiosa** was published in 1682 and the book called **Oeconomus prudens et legalis continuatus** by Francisco Philippe Florini in 1719. But the real visual pleasure and great treasure for those who love antiquarian pictures of plants and animals represent the book **Bilderbuch zum Nutzen und Vergnügen der Jugend** published around 1805 in Vienna or 80 colorized woodcuts of animals in the publication **Naturgeschichte des Tierreichs – Grosser Bilderatlas mit Text für Schule und Haus**.

[Exhibitions](#)

The first exhibition of agricultural journals was organized by the library in 1926. These journals together with other publications were available for public to borrow two years later.

There was a book exhibition called AgroPublikace (Agro Publications) from 18th to 20th March 2008 to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the day when the Central Slavonic Agricultural Library and the Reading Room of the Czechoslovak Academy of Agriculture was opened to the general public. The rector of the Czech Agriculture University Prof. Jan Hron was present at the opening ceremony and together with the chairman of the Czech Republic Library Association Doc. Jaromír Kubíček and the director of the Institute of Agriculture and Food Information Ing. Josef Vozka cut the ribbon for the exhibition. The exhibition was also attended by Vice-Chairman of the Agricultural Committee of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic Ing. Ladislav Skopal. On March 18th the general meeting of The Czech Republic Library Association took place in the House of Agricultural Education, and colleagues from other libraries both in Prague and outside of Prague visited a preview of the exhibition. The exhibition “AgroPublikace” was part of the 11th year of the national project “March – month of the internet”.

14 publishing houses presented publications from various branches of agriculture and the food processing industry, e.g. pedology and soil protection, forestry, game hunting, livestock farming, agricultural engineering, agricultural economics, ecological farming, plant protection, brewing, malting industry, nutrition and food safety. Five of these publishers were public research institutes, another five were organizations established by the Ministry

of Agriculture, one exhibitor represented a private research institute. There were also two agricultural universities present and a professional publishing house “Profi Press” who was also a media partner.

Unique antique prints dating back to the 16th and 17th century and unique agricultural and economic text books published in the second half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century which are part of the Library of Antonín Švehla collection were presented. And visitors could admire some old publications, e.g. **Herbarium** by Mattioli, **Kreütterbuch** by Hieronymus Bock and many other beautiful pictorial publications on plants and animals.

In 2013 the reading room interior was renovated and the library started to organize regular thematic events, exhibitions, seminars, and lectures for both the general public and experts in the field of library science or agriculture several times a year.

In cooperation with the Study and Information Centre of Czech Agricultural University, scanning of the first historical publications (Mattioli’s **Herbarium**, 1562) has already started.

In 2013 the library bought a scanner and started its own library collections digitalization programme. By the end of the year 2013, 20 000 pages had been scanned.

The concept of an agricultural library

During the first six months in 2008 in connection with the establishment of the Institute of Agricultural Economics and Information there was a discussion whether the agricultural library should be kept in its original state, to merge with another departmental library or to be transferred to a different department.

In 2007 the library prepared a conception of development of librarian and information services for the entire agricultural field. The most important task in the process of conceiving the library conception was a statistical inquiry. Specific and complex questionnaires were created for this purpose, no other questionnaires available were suitable. These questionnaires were inspired by forms different public libraries were using at the time. The extent and implications of this inquiry were determined by the fact that the area of agricultural libraries hadn’t been covered by statistical research before and it was perhaps the first time statistical data on agricultural information centres were gathered. That’s why inquiry forms had to cover all librarian activities and other connected areas. The proposition for the library concept was passed to the Ministry of Agriculture to assess. It was a very important moment, because it was the first document of its kind that had been created on agricultural libraries in this country. In 2013 work on the new concept of agricultural libraries continued, but no significant progress was made. That’s why the Ministry of Agriculture intensified this work in 2014 and formed a new conception for the years 2015-2020 which should be passed by the end of 2014.

Great Agricultural Librarians

Important figures connected to the House of Agricultural Education and the Czechoslovak Academy of Agriculture contributed to the establishment of the agricultural library. The main initiator was **Edvard Reich**. His intentions were later realized by librarians and other great figures.

PhDr. Adolf Ludvík Krejčík (1877–1958) worked as an officer in the Schwarzenberg Archive in Třeboň and organized the Schwarzenberg manor archive. From 1909 to 1919 he worked as an officer in the Provincial Archive (Zemský Archív) in Brno. Later in the Ministry of Agriculture he organised state care of the agricultural archives. He became a director of the State Agricultural Archive and a member of the Czechoslovak Academy of Agriculture. He started to build the Central Slavonic Agricultural Library and the Reading Room of the Czechoslovak Academy of Agriculture and was the library director till 1931. He wrote mainly analyses of historical sources and works on agricultural archives.

Ing. Dr. Jan Boštík (1895–1942) started to work in Central Slavonic Agricultural Library and the Reading Room of the Czechoslovak Academy of Agriculture in 1931 and became its director on January 1st 1932. During the ten years he was working there the library turned into the biggest specialized agricultural library in the Czechoslovakia. Jan Boštík focused mainly on the Czech agricultural bibliography. He translated into Czech a Classification Scheme of Agricultural Science (Třídění věd zemědělských; Prague: Czech Agricultural Academy, 1941) which was used by the International Agricultural Institute in Rome. Publishing of the Czech Bibliography started in 1941 due to his contribution. He was one of the editors of the journal Agricultural Engineer (Zemědělský inženýr), editor of the Agricultural Library (Zemědělská knižnice), an author of numerous articles in the Bulletin of the Czechoslovak Academy of Agriculture. In 1941 he made a contribution to the organizing of a public survey on the most popular agricultural book.

Ing. František Lazecký (1905–1984) was appointed as the library director in 1946, but he had been in charge of organization and technical management since 1942. He started his career in the library in 1926 as a student assistant. He devoted himself mainly to the agricultural and forestry bibliography, developed a detailed subject catalogue and lectured at the Charles University, Department of Library and Information Sciences. Apart from being an author of many specialized and popularizing texts, he was also engaged in belles-lettres and translations from Russian and German. He was a member of the cultural organization Umělecká beseda in Prague and literary association The Circle of Moravian Writers (Moravské kolo spisovatelů).

Ing. František Čvančara (1889–1967) was a Czech agricultural economist. From 1920 to 1927 he was working as an agriculture schools officer at the Ministry of Agriculture and from 1928 he was an inspector of agricultural schools and colleges. In 1934 he founded The Agricultural Centre of Films and Transparencies. He also organized state pedagogical

seminars for agricultural school teachers. Since 1943 he had been chairman of the librarian curatorium of the Central Agricultural Library of the Czechoslovak Academy of Agriculture. The most valued is his work "Agricultural Production in Numbers", first published in 1948.

Ferdinand Němec (1880–1931) left his job as a high school teacher because of serious illness. He worked on the bibliography of Czech history (supplement to the Czech Historical Journal) which was edited by Josef Kazimour. In the early 1920's he worked in the Czechoslovak Agricultural Museum, in the Institute for Research and Uplifting of Czech Rural Areas (Československé zemědělské muzeum, ústav pro studium a povznesení venkova). In the beginning of 1926 he started to work in the Central Slavonic Agricultural Library and the Reading Room of the Czechoslovak Academy of Agriculture. Ferdinand Němec was dedicated to his work on bibliography all his life. Due to his contribution a list of current acquisitions began to be published in the Bulletin of the Czechoslovak Academy of Agriculture.

Ing. Dr. Techn. Jan Bohumil Tauber, DrSc. (1906–1976) worked in the library of the state agriculture research institutes initially as an officer, later as a librarian. He studied sociology, comparative literature and library science in the Faculty of Arts at Charles University and Agricultural and Forestry Engineering. He created a Bibliography of Czech Agricultural Literature from the second half of the previous century to the 1930's (Bibliografie čs. zemědělské literatury od poloviny minulého století do třicátých let tohoto století) and Bibliography of Czech Agricultural Research Work and Education (Bibliografie zemědělského výzkumnictví a školství). He studied sociology and economics in the USA before the Second World War. In 1947 he was appointed director of the Institute for International Cooperation in Agriculture and Forestry. At the same time he was general secretary of the Czechoslovak Committee for International Cooperation in Agriculture and Forestry of FAO. From 1945-1947 he was secretary of the Association of Agricultural Engineering Students. He was also a corresponding member of the Czechoslovak Academy of Agricultural Sciences, a head of Department of Rural Sociology at Agricultural University in Prague. He published scientific texts on agricultural economics and rural sociology under the pseudonym "Ivan Holub".

[Towards the library of the 21st century](#)

In 2012, after 85 years of its existence, the Agricultural and Food Library was ready for major structural change. The top priority was preservation and development of the cultural heritage the library represented. While reviewing the economic condition of the Institute of Agricultural Economics and Information the internal survey was carried out to find out the specialized library operations and possible ways to connect the library with consultancy and education areas. The Ministry of Agriculture, a founder of the Institute of Agricultural Economics and Information, fully supported the idea of further development of librarian and information services.

In 2013 the management continued restructuring of the Agricultural and Food Industry Library, the analysis of its activities was processed, based on procedural and personnel audits and comparison of acquired information with the standards and studies available. As a result the project for the library transformation has been created. This project defines the library's top priority as creating a modern 21st century library, central and specialized.

A further goal is to transform the library into a modern information centre in the area of agriculture – a subject information gateway. This project requires cooperation among organizations and institutions involved. Improving the effectiveness of librarians and information services provided, requires establishing efficient cooperation systems in the process of obtaining and using information sources. Essential value added is the access to on-line information and documents anytime and from any place. It demands the acquisition of electronic information sources (e-books, e-journals, databases) and cataloguing the library collection still unprocessed. To reach this goal the digitalization of the library collection and using modern technologies is mandatory.

The ambitious project of a specialized information gateway required the merging of educational and the consulting part of the Institute with the library. Connecting the library which is an important facility and information source with the educational and consulting systems can be very efficient when transferring experiences, research results and know-how to clients. Uniting these two sectors contributed to interconnection of inner processes and activities within the Institute, so human resources and expert knowledge could be used to its full potential.

The transformation process was completed on the 1st of August 2013 when the Agricultural Consulting-Training Center and the Library of Antonín Švehla were established.

Library directors/Acting directors

1925–1931	dr. Adolf Ludvík Krejčík
1932–1942	dr. Ing. Jan Boštík
1942–1943	dr. Edvard Reich (supervision) a Ing. František Lazecký (library administration)
1943–1946	Ing. František Lazecký (library administration)
1946–1954	Ing. František Lazecký
1954–1957	dr. Miroslav Pařava
1957–1959	Ing. František Lazecký
1959–1963	Oldřich Kapsa
1963–1965	Miroslav Příhoda
1966–1976	Ing. Jiří Doktor
1976–1989	Ing. Jaroslava Staňková, CSc.
1989–1990	Ing. Marie Filipová (acting director)
1990–2002	PhDr. Ivo Hoch

2002–2003 Ing. Sylva Nováková (acting director)
2003–2013 Mgr. Martin Kvítek
2013–2013 Ing. Jaroslav Vítek, MBA
2013 Mgr. Jan Doboš (Ing. Jaroslav Vítek, MBA)

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