

Hop growing in the Czech Republic has over a thousand year long tradition. First rare written reports of hops date back to the 8th and 9th century. There is an increasing number of these reports at the turn of the millennium and it is obvious that hops were a crop with an important economic use. Hops were exported on the Elbe river from Bohemia to the neighbouring countries. A list of goods exported from Bohemia in 1101 also contains hops which were transported to the famous "Forum humuli" in Hamburg, where they were assessed by experts. The deed of endowment issued by Wratislav II in 1088 imposes a duty on princely estates to deliver a tenth of the crop to the Vyšehrad church.

Hop growing was substantially expanded and improved under the reign of the Emperor Charles IV, who knew of the advantages of hops grown in the Czech Lands. Some of his measures suggest protection of certain type aimed at preventing exports of planting stock and controlling its growing. Hops were grown in many locations in Bohemia. But hop fields were gradually concentrated into the regions in the environs of Rakovník, Louny, Ústek a Klatovy. Burghers' associations were established which issued the codes for hop growers, and at the same time new professions appeared which secured the hops protection - supervisors, gauners, measurers, etc.

Hop growing was seriously endangered during the Thirty-Year War period (1618-1648). This gave a chance of hop growing expansion to other countries. At that time, the planting stock of Czech hops was used to lay down hop gardens in Brandenburg, Silesia, Bavaria, Styria, Baden, Russia and other places.

A boom in the hop growing industry occurred in the Czech Lands under the reign of Joseph II. Many expertise dating from the second half of the 18th century confirm the excellent quality of Czech hops at that time. Let us cite the statement of the university professor Mr. Neumann from 1759 literally saying " The consensus of opinion is that the Czech Lands have the best hops".

Development of the brewing industry and trade in the 18th century, and mainly in the 19th century, was accompanied by some negative features such as selling the lower-quality commodity as Czech hops. The formerly taken measures aimed at protection of Czech hops were not sufficient any more, and this was the reason for establishing a Hop Grading Barn in Zatec in 1884. Numerous legal regulations were passed since then. Let us mention laws passed at the beginning of the 20th century, in the twenties, legal regulations approved after World War II and the latest Act No. 97/1996.

Visit web site of hop museum in Saaz <http://www.chmelarskemuzeum.cz/>