

George William Trimberger

December 8, 1909 — October 9, 2004

George Trimberger was teacher, mentor and friend to hundreds of Cornell students from dairy farms in New York state and elsewhere. He held a special place in the hearts of purebred dairy cattle breeders, many of who meticulously adhered to his methods and advice on matters of breeding and management. His success over the years in developing and coaching Cornell dairy cattle judging teams that competed in national intercollegiate contests is legendary and almost unparalleled.

George was born in Neilsville and attended school in Chilton, Wisconsin. Raised on the family farm, he graduated magna cum laude from the College of Agriculture of the University of Wisconsin in 1933. For several years, he served as chief dairy herdsman at the University of Nebraska before undertaking graduate studies in dairy science and zoology at that institution. He earned the M.S. degree in 1942, but interrupted his graduate studies in 1944 to take a position as Instructor at Cornell, completing requirements for the Ph.D. degree from Nebraska in 1948, while on leave from Cornell. His career in teaching and research at Cornell extended over a period of 31 years, as he rose through the ranks to Professor in the Department of Animal Husbandry (now Animal Science), retiring in 1975 with Emeritus status. In 1997, he moved to Charlotte, North Carolina, where he died at age 94.

Early in his career, Trimberger conducted pioneering studies on the duration of estrus, time of ovulation and optimal time of insemination of dairy cattle. Some of the resulting publications are now considered classics in the field. Later he was involved as a team member in studying the effects of stage of growth and methods of harvesting and preserving forages on their feeding value; and in research concerned with the effects of various levels of concentrate feeding on the yield and chemical composition of milk, the economy of production and the reproductive efficiency and health of dairy cows.

For many years, George taught courses in production and management of dairy cattle to students who ultimately became dairy farmers and agricultural leaders in the northeast. In this way, he had a large impact on the dairy industry, especially in New York State. He had a particular interest and expertise in dairy cattle conformation (or type), which gained him national and international stature as an official judge and allowed him to train very successful Cornell dairy cattle judging teams. He was author (and in later editions co-author) of a textbook, *Dairy Cattle Judging Techniques*. His record as a coach in regional and national intercollegiate competitions involving some 24 teams was, until recently, unequalled. He also developed a descriptive type classification system that was

adopted by the Holstein and other breed organizations and is still widely used nationally and internationally as a means of evaluating body conformation. This system de-emphasized the significance of some of the traditional fine points of body conformation and stressed physical traits that he felt would have greater impact on lifetime productivity and profitability.

Trimberger served in 1955-57 as Visiting Professor and leader of the Cornell-Los Baños project, an effort to rebuild and enhance the quality and level of teaching and research competence of the College of Agriculture of the University of the Philippines following World War II. He was involved there once more as Professor and project leader in 1966-67 in a joint UP-Cornell graduate education program. Other foreign assignments took him to Israel, Europe, Cuba and, following his retirement, Nigeria.

George was an active member of the American Dairy Science Association, at various times having served as secretary, vice-chairman and chairman of the production section, chairman of the program committee and secretary, vice-president and president of the eastern division. He was also active in several other professional organizations, including particularly the Dairy Shrine Club, where he was a founding member and served as director and president. He was the recipient of many honors and in 2001, 26 years after his retirement, was recognized by the alumni of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences with an "Outstanding Faculty" award.

Those colleagues who knew George best will long remember his demanding work ethic, stubborn determination, amiable disposition, hearty laugh, lengthy written communications, eternal optimism and heavy foot on the accelerator. He was a charming host and loyal friend to many. He enjoyed a good argument, held strong positions on some issues, and was always a formidable and persistent exponent of his point of view.

His wife, Eleanor, whom he had married in 1938, died in 1998. He is survived by three children: Dr. Ellen Kay Trimberger of Berkeley, California; George M. (Mickey) Trimberger of Charlotte, North Carolina; and Pamela Trimberger Castro of Westtown, New York; and by six grandchildren. George is also survived by four of his six siblings.

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