

Richard Felix Fricke

June 28, 1896 — September 21, 1976

Richard F. Fricke was a pioneer in agricultural extension work in New York State and, before his retirement, had worked thirty-nine years in agriculture. On December 31, 1956, he became professor emeritus, Extension Service.

Born in Buffalo, New York, Professor Fricke attended high school in Gardenville and was graduated from the College of Agriculture, Cornell University, in 1917. He started his extension career as an assistant agent in Chautauqua County under the World War I Food Supply Commission. He was an agricultural agent in Niagara, Clinton, and Erie Counties, successively. In the fall of 1934, he enrolled at Cornell University for graduate study in agricultural economics and vegetable crops.

During his seventeen years of service as a county extension agent, he accomplished outstanding and pioneering achievements. It was his leadership that established the Niagara Frontier Farmers' Market in Buffalo. He was responsible for organizing the first cooperative potato spraying in New York State and for developing and launching the state's most effective potato seed program. His organizational skill made possible the early eradication of tuberculosis from the dairy herds of Erie County. As further testimony of his resourcefulness, he developed one of the first county agricultural agent radio programs.

Richard Fricke's twenty-one years as assistant state leader and associate state leader of county agricultural agents began at Cornell in September 1935. Over those years he was involved in a variety of programs and projects.

He served as supervisor of county agricultural agents in most of the counties of the state and was a counselor to agents and farmer extension committees. During World War II, he carried the important responsibility of clarifying for county agents and farm families the government regulations pertaining to priorities, price supports and ceilings, and rationing procedures.

He developed a system of filing adopted by many county extension offices in the state. He was a charter member and organizer of the New York Association of County Agricultural Agents. On leave in 1946 and 1947 he studied extension administration in twenty-six states. In 1950 he served as a consultant in the development of extension work in Germany.

He was a charter member of Epsilon Sigma Phi, the national extension honorary fraternity, and served as its chief, secretary, and annalist of the New York State chapter. He was a president of the alumni association of the College of Agriculture. After his retirement, he served for ten years as treasurer of the Cornell Credit Union.

Professor Fricke will be remembered for his skill in dealing with fiscal matters in county and state extension, for his keenness in discerning farm and organization needs and priorities, and for his personal service to farmers, county agents, and specialists. He was a highly motivated extension worker, and his contributions were effective and noteworthy.

Richard Fricke is survived by his widow, Mrs. Julia Cooper Fricke of Ithaca, by one son, Richard I. Fricke of Burlington, Vermont, and by four grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

Fred B. Morris, S. Reuben Shapley, Clifford R. Harrington