

Milton L. Scott

February 21, 1915 — July 11, 2001

Milton Leonard Scott, Jacob Gould Schurman Professor of Nutrition, Emeritus, was born in Tempe, Arizona. He attended secondary schools in Tacoma, Washington; Glendale, Arizona; Colton, California; and graduated from Riverside Polytechnic High School in Riverside, California in 1932. After graduation from Riverside Junior College in 1934, he completed an additional year of postgraduate study and was admitted to the University of California at Berkeley where he received a B.A. degree in 1937. His first job was as a vitamin chemist with Cooperative Grange League Federation (GLF) Mills in Buffalo, New York where he met and married his wife, Dorothy Marie Jaeger. After five years at GLF, he was admitted to the graduate program at Cornell University where he earned a Ph.D. degree in Animal Nutrition in 1945. Dr. Scott became a Research Associate in the Department of Poultry Science at Cornell University in 1945. He was appointed Assistant Professor in 1946 and quickly rose through the ranks to full Professor in 1953. He served as Chairman of the Department of Poultry Science from 1976 until his retirement in 1979.

Milt Scott began his professional career during an exciting period of discovery of nutrients and their functions. It also was a time of rapid developments in the science and technology of poultry production. Much of his early research was directed to identifying constituents of natural ingredients that had growth promoting activity for poultry. He identified an antihemorrhagic factor in brewers yeast, investigated folic acid needs and folic acid availability for poultry. He developed a fluorometric assay for riboflavin, demonstrated the essentiality of niacin for prevention of enlarged hock in turkeys and bowed legs in ducks, demonstrated the importance of physical form of dietary calcium as a factor in the strength of the eggshell in laying hens. He investigated the need for vitamins A, D and K and a host of other nutrients for growth and reproduction of poultry. Milt was one of the investigators to discover the nutritional essentiality of selenium. Collaborating with Klaus Schwartz, J.G. Bieri, and G.M. Briggs at NIH, he demonstrated that selenium was the previously unidentified factor in brewer's yeast that prevented the pathology known as exudative diathesis in chick. This research followed within months the demonstration by Schwartz and C.M. Foltz that selenium prevented liver necrosis in rats. Milt and his students went on to identify important interrelationships between vitamin E and selenium in the prevention of exudative diathesis and muscular dystrophy in poultry, and to carry out research that eventually contributed to approval by the Food and Drug Administration for addition of selenium to poultry feeds. In 1980, Milt was awarded the Klaus Schwartz Memorial Medal in recognition of his research on the nutritional essentiality of selenium.

Milt Scott had a keen interest in solving practical problems of poultry and developing nutritional approaches to increasing the productivity of poultry. His interests included a broad spectrum of poultry, including chickens, turkeys, ducks, pheasants, partridge, and quail and extended to other species such as rats and pigs as well. Not surprisingly, his research publications and technical articles have touched in one way or another on the entire gamut of nutrients. Milt also was among the first to advise the feeds industry in the formulation of feeds for use in aquaculture. Indeed, he was involved in research and the training of graduate students in the nutrition of fishes and lobsters. Milt's extensive research experience, his application of the scientific principles to the solution of nutritional problems and his knowledge of the practical aspects of feed formulation and poultry production resulted in great demand for his nutritional expertise. He was, beyond doubt, the most well-known and respected poultry nutritionist in the world.

Milt Scott was an enthusiastic teacher. He taught several courses at Cornell, including "Use of the Chick as an Experimental Animal, Vitamins and Essential Inorganic Elements in Nutrition, and Advanced Nutrition: The Vitamins". Milt was author of four books on nutrition and contributed chapters for eleven other books. He was a prolific publisher in both the scientific literature and the trade press. His laboratory provided a stimulating atmosphere for graduate students due to his innovative ideas and enthusiasm for research. He was the committee chair of more than 50 Ph.D. and M.S. degree students.

Milt Scott was a member of several scientific and professional societies, including the American Institute of Nutrition, American Society of Animal Science, Poultry Science Association, American Society of Biological Chemists, American Chemical Society, Society for Experimental Biology and Medicine, American Association for the Advancement of Science, Phi Kappa Phi, and Sigma Xi.

During the period from 1952-81, Milt Scott received ten awards for his research. These included the American Feed Manufacturer's Award, National Turkey Federation Research Award, Distillers Feed Research Council Award, New York Farmer's Award for Scientific Contributions to Applied Animal Nutrition, Borden Award of the Poultry Science Association, the Klaus Schwartz Commemorative Medal, and the prestigious Borden Award of the American Institute of Nutrition. In recognition of his achievements, Milt was awarded a Jacob Gould Schurman Professorship in 1976.

Milt is survived by his wife, Dorothy of Ithaca, New York; two daughters and one son-in-law, Grace (Noni) and James Saroka of Greene, New York, and June Scott Kopald of Richmond, Virginia; seven grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren; and a sister and brother-in-law, Clara and Ben Bergstrom of Miami, Florida.