

# John I. Miller

*October 16, 1911 — December 8, 1980*

John I. Miller, professor emeritus of animal science and member of the faculty at Cornell for forty years, made major contributions to education and research and to the development of the livestock industry in the Northeast.

Born in Prescott, Kansas, on October 16, 1911, Professor Miller grew up on a general crops and livestock farm. In 1933 he earned the Bachelor of Science degree in agriculture at Kansas State University, where his leadership qualities were recognized by his election as president of the Block and Bridle Club and of the agricultural student body. As an undergraduate he received the Alpha Zeta Scholarship Award and the Danforth Fellowship Award and was a member of intercollegiate judging teams in livestock, meats, and poultry. He graduated with honors and was recognized as the outstanding graduating senior in agriculture.

Professor Miller entered the graduate school at Cornell University and received the Master of Science degree in 1934 and the Doctor of Philosophy degree in 1936, with major work in animal science under the direction of F. B. Morrison. He was appointed instructor in animal husbandry at Cornell the year he graduated and was promoted to assistant professor in 1938. His interest in teaching, research, and service to livestock producers resulted in promotion to associate professor in 1942 and full professor in 1944. Professor Miller was in charge of teaching and research involving beef cattle until his retirement in 1976, and was also in charge of the meats division from 1943 to 1956.

Professor Miller was best known for his contributions as a teacher and adviser of undergraduates. Throughout most of his career, he carried the heaviest teaching load of any staff member in the department; at various times he taught five different courses. Over six thousand students were taught by Professor Miller. He also had an active research program and directed the graduate programs for about fifty American and foreign Ph.D. students and about half this number of M.S. candidates. Professor Miller was successful as a teacher because he always had an excellent grasp of subject matter, was fair and objective in his appraisal of his students, and could pass on his own genuine interest to those around him. His standards were high and the students respected him. His courses in beef cattle production, livestock selection, and management always attracted unusual numbers of students year after year despite the fact that New York is primarily a dairy cattle state. The livestock judging teams under Professor Miller's leadership and teaching made distinguished records in national competition from 1936 to 1963, when he retired from coaching. He coached a total of eleven winning teams and sixteen high men in national contests,

with one or more wins in every category. The overall records at the international contest in Chicago during the years when his teams competed ranked Cornell ninth among all universities, with the next highest eastern team ranking about twentieth.

Throughout his career, Professor Miller served each year as faculty adviser for thirty to fifty undergraduates. He served also as adviser to the Round-Up Club and to Ho-Nun-De-Kah (student honorary club in the College of Agriculture). A list of Professor Miller's former students resembles a who's who in New York State and in American agriculture. Included are dozens of current leaders in livestock production; in agriculture business and banking; in university animal science teaching, research, and extension in the United States and abroad; in governmental agencies; and in agricultural industries.

Professor Miller conducted research on practical problems related to beef cattle production, with special emphasis on needs of the livestock industry in New York State and the Northeast. His first priority in publishing data was to put the information in a form that associates, students, county agents, and livestock producers could use. Most of his research data were therefore published in mimeograph, although he also published results of a number of his studies in scientific journals. Professor Miller conducted research that was used by F. B. Morrison for recommendations on the protein requirements of beef cattle and sheep in his widely read textbook *Feeds and Feeding*. His research was also useful in developing the first National Research Council standards for sheep in 1945. Extensive trials were conducted to determine how to best utilize New York's permanent pastures in the growing and fattening of steers. Results of these investigations helped in developing guidelines for including pasture and forage crops in the feeding programs of beef cattlemen in the Northeast. A publication based on these experiments to determine the feeding value of common roughages placed first in national competition. His experiments with using propionic acid to preserve high-moisture corn were the first on this subject at a United States experiment station.

Professor Miller provided leadership in initiating a number of extension-related activities. He helped establish the New York Beef Cattlemen's Association, the Empire Livestock Marketing Cooperative, and the first Herdsman Training School in cooperation with a state breed association. He started the first official herd classification program for beef cattle (1945); in 1957 the American Angus Association adopted a national type-classification program based on the New York plan.

Professor Miller made outstanding contributions to the American Society of Animal Science (ASAS). Four years following his appointment to the Cornell staff, he was elected president of the North Atlantic section and member

of the Executive Board of the ASAS. He then held a number of positions in the society, including member of the editorial board, business manager of the *Journal of Animal Science*, treasurer, vice president, and then president in 1955. After his term as president, he served as a director. In addition, he sat on many committees of the society, including Feed Evaluation, American Feed Manufacturers Award and Morrison Award Committees, Revision of Awards Procedures, Distinguished Service Award Committee, and Nominations Committee. He served as a member of a University committee on feed requirements for livestock.

In recognition of his outstanding contributions to agriculture, Professor Miller received a number of honors and recognitions. He received the New York Farmers Award for outstanding achievements in agriculture in 1951, the Distinguished Service Award, North Atlantic section, ASAS, in 1961, and the honorary Fellow Award of the ASAS in 1980. He was a member in a number of honorary and scientific societies, including Alpha Zeta, Phi Kappa Phi, Gamma Sigma Delta, Sigma Phi, American Society of Animal Production, and American Association for the Advancement of Science. He has been listed in *Who's Who in America* since 1954, in *American Men of Science*, and in *The Blue Book: Leaders of the English-Speaking World—England*. A scholarship fund honoring Professor Miller and Professor Emeritus Myron D. Lacy was established in 1974 by friends and associates among livestock breeders and organizations in New York State.

Professor Miller is survived by Mrs. Miller, the former Viola Henry; a daughter, Carol; and two sons, Robert and James.

*Kenneth L. Turk, George H. Wellington, Danny G. Fox*