



John R. Stamer

May 19, 1925 – March 27, 2013

John Richard Stamer was born in Plankinton, South Dakota. He obtained his B.A. in Biological Science and Chemistry at Dakota Wesleyan University in 1950, M.S. in Bacteriology and Biochemistry at South Dakota State College in 1952 and Ph.D. in Bacteriology from Cornell University in 1962 with Professor Van Demark as his advisor.

He was appointed Research Specialist in Microbiology at the Department of Food Science & Technology at the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station, Geneva campus of Cornell in 1962, Assistant Professor 1963 – 1969, Associate Professor 1969 – 1977, Professor of Microbiology 1977 – 1986 and Emeritus Professor 1986 until his death.

He developed a reputation as the world authority in the field of basic physiology and nutrition of lactic acid producing microorganisms and was the featured speaker at the Symposium on Lactic Acid Bacteria in Beverages and Food conducted at the Long Ashton Research Station in the United Kingdom 1973. He wrote chapters in several books.

While his research focused on fundamental studies in microbiology, he was always interested in the practical application of his results and he worked closely with the food and beverage industries to develop safe, wholesome and nutritious foods, especially fermented vegetables. This work was appreciated by these industries.

The National Kraut Packers Association wrote to Cornell as follows:

“It was a feeling generally shared that we could never find anyone in the Nation that would not only interest himself in the peculiar fermentation problems of the kraut industry, but would have the talent to push even more of the mysteries aside.

“Much to our astonishment, Dr. John Stamer appeared on the scene. Almost immediately he attracted interest and gratitude on the part of our industry because we recognized that here was a man who was moving into new and most exciting directions. In a short span of time Dr.

Stamer has demonstrated to the members of this industry that he has the capabilities, the interest, for fundamental research approaches to the problems of this industry, but also what is to us very vital and important, the ability to see the problems from the viewpoint of the plant operator and to talk to him, to communicate and motivate him.

“In summary, we wish to send these words of appreciation to you folks in positions of research and administrative leadership who spotted this talent, and please accept our sincere thanks for allowing him to follow up his ideas on kraut. Dr. Stamer’s ideas are very valuable to this industry’s development and we are excitedly looking forward to his association with the operators. We only hope and pray that we will find that he is intending to stay with Cornell and that he keep up his work on kraut fermentations and related problems.”

Thanks in large part to John, and his predecessor, Professor Carl Pederson, New York State became the leading state for production of sauerkraut. In some years New York produced more sauerkraut than Germany. John served in the U.S. Navy from October 1943 through April 1946 and was assigned to a mine sweeper. During those years he became an expert in radio communication and he continued to be a ham radio enthusiast for the rest of his life making contact with ham radio aficionados around the world. He kept a map of the world on a wall of his home with a pin wherever he had contact with other ham radio operators. This map looked like a forest of pins.

He was a member of the American Society for Microbiology, Sigma Xi and the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

He is survived by son, Mark of East Rochester, N.Y.; daughter, Anne of Springfield, P.A.; daughter-in-law, Donna of Malvern, P.A.; grandchildren, Kelly, Kyle and Keith of Malvern, P.A.; brother-in-law, Joseph Andose (Jeannette) of Cranbury, N.J. John was predeceased by his son, Richard in 2010. His wife of almost 55 years, Amelia Andose Stamer died August 13, 2013, just twenty weeks after his passing.

Malcolm C. Bourne, Chairperson, Yong D. Hang, Gilbert S. Stoewsand