

# Lee Gritt



Lee Gritt, the seventh child of Italian immigrants, was born June 30, 1918, in the small coal mining town of Cannelton. After a stint in the Navy, he earned a bachelor's degree in Horticulture from West Virginia University in 1951.

Mr. Gritt's career in agriculture was one of many firsts. He developed what was perhaps the first large direct-type family-oriented agricultural operation in West Virginia, selling eggs from more than 15,000 layers to customers in the Kanawha Valley in the 1950s and 1960s.

He was a pioneer in West Virginia of the development of no-till technology and methods of producing grain crops. At one time, his operation consisted of 550 acres of corn and 200 acres of soybeans. He quickly became a learned and respected resource person in no-till technology and advised researchers, industry personnel and individual farms in improving it.

In the tobacco industry, Mr. Gritt implemented such technological advances as plant production in a greenhouse, rack drying in the field and automated stripping and baling for market. He founded both the Putnam County and West Virginia Tobacco Producers' Association.

Mr. Gritt used his knowledge of direct-marketing techniques to promote such enhancements as early spring and late fall production of greenhouse tomatoes, lettuce and cucumbers, greenhouse germination and direct transplanting of various crops to the field and the use of automated mulch laying and transplanting equipment.

Lee Gritt was a man ahead of his time, whose outstanding service is best measured not by his many personal achievements and accomplishments, but by the impact he had on others. Sharing his knowledge and experience on his unending search for the better way, this confident, consummate innovator was a leader of men.

1980 Outstanding Contribution to U.S. Agriculture Citation  
U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Bob Bergland

1981 West Virginia Outstanding Grain Producer

1983 West Virginia Outstanding Horticultural Crop Producer

1983 West Virginia Outstanding Farm Family, First Runner-Up