

## Vernon A. Tacy

Vernon A. Tacy was born on December 26, 1929, on a productive cash-crop farm in Randolph County, W.Va. The family was best known for potatoes under the name of C. A. Tacy and Sons Potatoes. He graduated Tygart Valley High School in 1947, and served as chapter president of the Future Farmers of America. He received his Bachelor of Science degree in Agriculture from West Virginia University (WVU) College of Agriculture and Forestry in 1953. He then served two years in the U.S. Army Medical Corps. In 1969, Mr. Tacy also received his Master's degree in Agriculture from WVU.

The 30-year WVU Extension Agent spent nearly his entire career in Harrison County, W.Va. He also maintained an appointment with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. He began with the WVU Extension Service in 1955 and from the start worked to develop Harrison County's dairy industry. He organized the first State Dairy Princess Contest, which was held in conjunction with the State Dairy Show. He coached successful county and state dairy judging teams. He was actively involved in milk marketing – from the days when dairymen met all night long with plant managers to negotiate the price of milk, up to the present milk marketing system.

Mr. Tacy was instrumental in the construction of a youth livestock complex in Harrison County. In 1959, the County Commissioner reserved six acres of the old county poor farm and built a \$76,000 4-H barn, which quickly became a learning center for youth and adults. It eventually was replaced with a \$3-million complex. He was also a driving force in replacing livestock barns at Jackson's Mill that were destroyed by fire. He saw the need for more youth to raise dairy animals and complete dairy projects, so he organized and conducted the first Dairy Heifer Replacement Sale in 1965.

In 1957, on his way to Waterloo, Iowa, with the State 4-H Dairy Judging Team, Mr. Tacy stopped at Northern Pump Homed Hereford Farm in Richmond, Illinois. During the visit, Vernon was given a good price on mature bulls. Thus, the Herd Sire Replacement Program was initiated. The first year began with six bulls, and after 25 years the numbers grew to approximately 50 head a year.

Mr. Tacy was the secretary of the Harrison County Planning Commission Sub-division Committee from 1964-1985 and helped to develop a sub-division ordinance for Harrison County.

In 1972, he was instrumental in organizing the Harrison County Rural Community Development Program, which encouraged individual areas to make their community a better place to live. After losing statewide sponsorship, he convinced nine local banks to judge the best-improved communities and to contribute cash awards.

Mr. Tacy will be long remembered for his work during the 1977 drought, during which he helped locate and deliver 6,500 bales of hay to drought-stricken West Virginia farmers.

In 1999 he was hired to construct a 55-acre farm near Shinnston, W.Va., which was expecting the imminent delivery of 97 alpaca. In a three-month span, Mr. Tacy oversaw the construction of a large barn, workshop, miles of fence, an extensive drainage system, water well, electricity and phone service. For 10 years afterward, he oversaw the operation of the farm.

He received the Distinguished Service Award from the National Association of County Agricultural Agents (NACAA) in 1977. He also received the Outstanding Performance Award from the Center for Extension and Continuing Education at West Virginia University in 1980, and the Outstanding Teacher Award from WVU in the same year. He was the Trainer-Agent for 20 or more new county agents throughout his career.

Mr. Tacy belongs to – and has held leadership positions in – numerous civic, agricultural and community organizations. He was featured as the Catalog Honoree at the 44th West Virginia Dairy Cattle Show and Festival at Jackson's Mill in 1985.

