

# Benjamin F. Creech



Benjamin F. Creech was one of the agricultural leaders of West Virginia for forty years. In addition to his leadership in developing an outstanding livestock program, and the recognition he received nationally for what he did, Mr. Creech was a leader of both youth and adults in many different disciplines.

Born and reared on a Kentucky farm, Mr. Creech attended Berea College and graduated from the University of Kentucky in 1917 with a bachelor's degree in agriculture. He began his Extension career as County Agricultural Agent in Roane County, August 18, 1917.

Recognizing the importance of breeding to improve the quality of meat animals, he campaigned to make Roane County a 100 percent purebred sire county. The campaign made great strides in Roane County and the use of quality purebred sires continues to be a part of his program throughout the 37 years he served as Extension Animal Husbandman at West Virginia University (September 1919- December 1955.)

Through his foresight, the cow/calf program of beef cattle production was initiated and has remained the system of beef cattle farming on which the state's production and marketing economy is based. His program combined soil conservation with utilization of the state's natural grass resources.

With cow/calf program, it was necessary to market feeder calves. Mr. Creech organized the first West Virginia feeder calf sale in 1929, and in 1931 launched a program of feeder calf sales that continues in operation throughout the state today. These first sales were demonstration projects and served as an educational guide for producers and marketing agencies. Representatives from other states came to West Virginia to observe the procedure and techniques of these sales. As a result, practically every livestock-producing state east of the Mississippi River has set up and organized feeder calf sales patterned after those developed by Mr. Creech.

It is impossible to estimate the increased value of the beef cattle industry resulting from the up-grading of herds through the cow/calf program. Mr. Creech was also instrumental in serving up West Virginia's first special purebred beef bull sales and purebred heifer sales where producers could purchase selected breeding stock to improve their herds.

Mr. Creech was also aware of the importance of sheep to the agricultural economy of West Virginia. He undertook a demonstration program of better flock management, including breeding, feedubg, and marketing. He was instrumental in organizing wool pools in 1919 in which farmers joined together to sell their wool. The first state wide wool pool was held in the early 1920's. He organized cooperative purebred ram sales as early as 1926. The Master Shepherd Program started in the early 1920's proved to be an effective device to demonstrate improved practices in the care and production of lambs and wool. The first direct shipments of lambs from producers to packers started in 1935 as a result of his efforts ti increase the income of farmers.

He was interested in and active in all phases of youth livestock production activities. He helped develop area and state 4-H and F.F.A. livestock shows and ham and bacon shows and sales. Mr. Creech was recognized as a leader in the field of livestock production and contributed to an enriched farm life for many persons. In recognition of his outstanding educational programs, Mr. Creech was awarded the Superior Service Award by the U.S. Department of Agriculture in 1955, and was named an Honorary Fellow of the American Society of Animal Science in 1965.