

F. Waldo Craig



F. Waldo Craig was a pioneer. As the only practicing economic entomologist West Virginia for many years, and as one of the first state regulatory entomologists in the United States, Mr. Craig initiated pest regulatory activities that brought him awards and honors throughout the state, the northeast, and the nation.

His first important pest problem involved the Mexican bean beetle and, shortly thereafter, the Japanese beetle. Because the Japanese beetle is spread by larvae in balled and burlapped nursery stock, Mr. Craig began extensive work with plant nurseries and helped organize the West Virginia Nurserymen's Association as one way of keeping in touch with an industry whose products had to move under certification. He served as Secretary-Treasurer of this organization for more than 20 years.

An infestation of potato wart disease in one section of the state involved regulatory controls and he single-handedly regulated the planting of only wart resistant potatoes for nearly 30 years.

Mr. Craig secured funds from the Legislature to fight pine blister rust and stem rust of wheat during his early days of service. When Oak wilt was found in West Virginia in 1950 Mr. Craig was involved in efforts to control the problem. He helped organize the forest industry in a move which initiated the disease research programs of the 1950's and 1960's at West Virginia University.

The spread of insects and plant diseases coincided with the development of the transportation system, and Mr. Craig was one of the first to understand why and how insects and diseases were spreading rapidly. Mr. Craig was instrumental in the development of the Eastern Plant Board to develop interstate regulatory activities. He served as President of the Eastern Plant Board in 1954-54 and was a member of its executive committee for many years. He also served the National Plant Board and received citations from both groups for his work.

In the late 1950's he foresaw the need for pesticide safety measures and the West Virginia Legislature ultimately passed a new Plant Pest Control Law and set up the Interagency Pesticide Advisory Commission. He was also instrumental in getting member of the pest control industry to establish the Pest Control Operators' Association of West Virginia. He has been an honorary member of this Association from its inception.

Mr. Craig, in his quiet way, succeeded in establishing precedent after precedent in regulatory and economic entomology in West Virginia that were adapted by other states and federal agencies. He was quietly persuasive and persistent. His persistence was the trademark by which he was known by nearly all of the nation's entomologists during his 41 years of service.