

Luther S. (Pete) Hartley



Luther S. (Pete) Hartley for fifty years gave unselfishly of himself and his time speaking for agriculture as an industry and working with rural and farm people everywhere to find efficient and profitable ways to market farm products.

Born in Jackson County, Mr. Hartley graduated from Ravenswood High School in 1921 and from West Virginia University in 1925. As an undergraduate, he was active in campus activities and was a member of the WVU Intercollegiate Livestock Judging Team. Active in 4-H activities since 1914, Mr. Hartley directed county 4-H camps during the summers of 1922-23-24 and represented West Virginia at the Camp Vail Leadership Training School in Springfield, Massachusetts in 1924.

Named Agricultural Agent for the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad in 1926 (West Virginia territory), Mr. Hartley initiated the agricultural demonstration which turned the state, Assisted by Extension Specialists, County Agents, and others, the trains proved to be an incentive for farmers to improve their farming operations. There was the West Virginia Soil Improvement Special; the West Virginia Purebred Ram Special, the West Virginia Purebred Dairy Special; and the West Virginia Poultry Special. At a time when traveling in the Mountain State was difficult at best, the special trains provided a way for agriculture officials and specialists to reach many farmers.

Although Mr. Hartley spent two years as a County Extension Agent in Marshall County most of his career was spent with the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. In 1949, he was named Manager of Agricultural Development for a 13-state territory. 1967, he was named Manager, Agricultural, Livestock, and perishable Sales with the entire United States as his territory. He held this position until his retirement. It was during this period that he served as Chairman of an International Conference on Handling Perishable Agricultural Products.

A major accomplishment in agricultural marketing was construction of railroad livestock shipping facilities in the 1930's and 1940's at Weston, Lambertson, Petersburg, and Spencer to facilitate the cooperative handling of livestock shipments.

Mr. Hartley contributed much time to the work and activities of agricultural organizations. He was Secretary-Treasurer of the West Virginia Dairymen's Association for many years; he was active in the West Virginia Farm Bureau and the Farming for Better Living Program; and he served as Secretary-Treasurer of the West Virginia Chapter of Friends of the Land.

Mr. Hartley received many awards for his work on behalf of agricultural and rural people. He was made an honorary life member of the West Virginia Soil Conservation District Supervisors and of the West Virginia Industrial Development Association. He received a 4-H Alumni Award in 1970 and was named a Friend of 4-H in 1972. He received a national 4-H Alumni Award in 1971. He also received the 4-H All Star Distinguished Service Award in 1975. He was made an Honorary State Farmer by the West Virginia Future Farmers of America, and was honored by Gamma Sigma Delta, the Honor Society of Agriculture.

Following his retirement from his position with the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, he began his "second career" as Manager, Agribusiness Development for the West Virginia Department of Commerce. He held this position for five years until his "second retirement." He is still active with the West Virginia 4-H All Stars as editor of the