

Marvin H. Snyder



Marvin H. Snyder, a native of Roane County, has a direct effect on agriculture in West Virginia for more than forty years through his work with the State Department of Agriculture. While attending West Virginia University, from which he received a bachelor's degree in 1931 and master's degree in 1933, he worked part time analyzing seed in the Seed Laboratory, which was a function of the State Department of Agriculture, but was operated by WVU. This worked helped to determine the career he was to follow.

In 1934, the work of the State Department of Agriculture was moved to Charleston and Mr. Snyder was appointed State Seed Analyst to set up and operate the Seed Testing Laboratory. Two years later he was appointed temporary head of the Chemistry Laboratory and in 1937 he became Chief Chemist in Charge of Laboratories, which included all laboratory work carried out by the State Department of Agriculture. In addition, he was responsible for supervising the inspectors and the enforcement of the seed, feed, fertilizer, pesticide, lime, and other laws. This was a challenging period because of the changes that were occurring in the feed additives, pesticides, and fungicides. In addition, new tests, new instrumentation, new laws, new tolerances, and methodology undreamed a few years earlier were every-day challenges.

West Virginia had a Feed Law, a Fertilizer Law, a Pesticide Law, a Seed Law and many other laws that needed to be re-written and enacted by the Legislature. Mr. Snyder made a significant contribution in this field, serving as chairman or acting in an advisory capacity in getting these laws written and enacted. These laws touched the lives of every distributor in West Virginia, most producers and eventually the consumer. West Virginia was recognized as a leader in the adoption of model laws and the enactment and updating of laws already passed. Mr. Snyder's influence was nationwide in these areas.

Because Mr. Snyder wore many hats, he was a member of the Association of Seed Control Officials, the Association of American Fertilizer Control Officials, the Association of American Pesticide Control Officials and the Association of Official Agriculture Chemists. Serving as officer, director, or member of many committees, he influenced changes in methodology and the use of new instruments to make the tests required in the proper operation of the laboratories.

Mr. Snyder served on the legislative committees in most of these organizations and helped develop and recommend model laws to be used as a guide by states in writing or changing their laws.

Mr. Snyder saw the gas chromatograph, infrared, ultra violet, and other instruments introduced into the laboratory and collaborated with chemists from other states and the federal government in standardizing the many tests now published in the Official Publication of the Association of Official Agriculture Chemists.

After serving as President of the Association of American Feed Control Officials, Mr. Snyder served as its Treasurer and during his tenure (which was longer than any previous treasurer-10 years), he was able to sell its publication in countries on every continent. The Association's definitions were adopted in international trade and its model law was used by some countries as a guide in developing their laws.

In 1969, Mr. Snyder moved from State Chemist to accept a call to reorganize the Division of Rural Resources for the Department.