

Kermit R. Zinn



Kermit R. Zinn was born at Reedsville, West Virginia, in Preston County, on February 11, 1919.

Mr. Zinn is an enthusiastic, industrious leader, thoroughly dedicated to the promotion of agriculture and agribusiness enterprises in West Virginia and throughout the nation.

As state Executive Director of the U.S. Agriculture Stabilization and Conservation Service, he exercised great skill in interpreting the carrying out national policy for the betterment of West Virginia agriculture. In this role, he initiated soil testing as a basis for ASCS cost-sharing programs, and he procured funding so that West Virginia University could provide free soil testing; he procured federal funding for a multiflora rose eradication program on West Virginia farms; he initiated animal waste handling pilot programs and he obtained extra funding for timber stand improvement practices.

After seven years here, Mr. Zinn moved to ASCS in Washington, D.C., where he for four years was responsible for the Emergency Conservation Program that provides cost-sharing for recovery operations after natural disasters befall farmland. While here, he rewrote the "Emergency Conservation Program Handbook" that is used as the policy manual for the program.

Mr. Zinn played a major role in the organization of the West Virginia Agricultural and Forestry Hall of Fame, serving as president from 1974-1976. As a member of the Preston County Board of Education for 19 years, he was a guiding figure in education; and as president (1968-1970), he was instrumental in developing a model vocational-technical school on a 300-acre farm. He also served on the state Advisory Council on Vocational and Technical Education (1968-1970), on the West Virginia School Board Association (1960-1970) and on the Seneca Trail Highway Association (1972-1987).

During his distinguished career as a public servant in agriculture, he was the moving force behind dozens of programs and actions that contributed much to agricultural improvement in West Virginia and the nation. His personal farming operation has served as a demonstration for modern and practical agricultural practices.

In 1965, Mr. Zinn received the state Soil Conservation Committee's Water Conservation Award; in 1973, the USDA state Emergency Board Certificate of Appreciation; in 1974, the U.S. Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service Superior Service Award and in 1978, the Soil Conservation Society of America's Certificate for Distinguished Service.