

Edward Gardner Misner

January 23, 1891 — September 20, 1958

With the retirement to emeritus rank on September 30, 1957, and death on September 20, 1958, of Professor Edward Gardner Misner, Cornell University and the field of agricultural economics lost one of their most accurate, thorough, and careful research workers.

Professor Misner was born and grew up on a dairy farm in the community of Dairyland in the Township of Wawarsing, Ulster County, New York. After graduating from Ellenville High School, he entered the College of Agriculture at Cornell in the fall of 1909 and received the degree of Bachelor of Science in agriculture in June, 1913.

Following the completion of his undergraduate work he entered the Graduate School at Cornell where he received his degree of Doctor of Philosophy in May, 1918. His major field of work for his doctorate was in the area of farm management, and his doctoral thesis was published as Cornell Experiment Station Bulletin 409, "An Economic Study of Dairying on 149 farms in Broome County, New York."

While taking his graduate work, Professor Misner was appointed an instructor in farm management and on receiving his Ph.D. degree was appointed to an assistant professorship in the College of Agriculture. In 1920 he was advanced to the rank of full professor.

Early in his life, he developed a keen interest in two aspects of dairy farming. He liked to work with dairy cattle; he was seldom happier than when he was in a dairy barn with a herd of good dairy cows. The other aspect of dairy farming in which he was always greatly interested was scientific research aimed at increasing the net financial returns from a dairy farm business by improved methods of organization and management.

Soon after completing his graduate work, Professor Misner purchased a dairy farm near Homer, New York, and from then to the time of his death he owned and managed a herd of high-producing dairy cows. From the start of his graduate work until his retirement, he was always engaged on one or more research projects in the field of dairy farm management.

Professor Misner was widely known in both farm and experiment station fields for his research work in the area of management of dairy farm businesses. He cooperated with the late Professor G. F. Warren in developing the Warren-Misner formula for calculating the cost of milk production. This was one of the first formulas of its kind and was widely accepted as the most accurate and practical of its time.

In addition to his work in the field of dairy farm management, Professor Misner also did research work dealing with management problems of poultry and vegetable farms.

He was considered an expert on the pedigrees and production records of dairy cattle. He did several valuable and outstanding pieces of research work dealing with the relation of size of dairy cattle to annual production of milk and butter fat.

Although Professor Misner was greatly interested in all breeds of dairy cattle, his personal choice of breeds was the Holstein-Friesian. He served as a milk marketing and pedigree consultant for both the Holstein-Friesian Association of America and the New York Holstein-Friesian Association. The secretary of the latter association, W. D. Brown, praised Professor Misner as a "powerhouse as an adviser and counselor to our organization."

Professor Misner held many honorary positions and rendered valuable services on many special assignments. For three-month periods in 1945 and 1946, he was a special consultant for the Holstein-Friesian Association of America. In 1942, he was on a special assignment to Tuskegee Institute for the General Education Board. For six months, in 1934-1935, he was an Advanced Fellow to Belgium with the C. R. B. Educational Foundation, Inc. In 1934 he served as an agricultural economics expert for the Federal Farm Credit Administration. During 1930 he served as director of a dairy industry economics survey in Saskatchewan, Canada.

One of the outstanding characteristics of Professor Misner as a research worker was the demand he made on himself and those working with him for high standards of accuracy, completeness, and reliability of data. He was the author of many publications giving the findings of his research projects, but none of them carried a footnote to a table or statement of text saying "Based on Fragmentary Data," or "Original Data Possibly Questionable." The results of his research work had to be such that they would stand up under the careful scrutiny of the most critical student, or else they were not published.

At the time of his death Professor and Mrs. Misner were living on their dairy farm at Homer, New York, where he had spent many enjoyable vacations and weekends caring for his own individual herd of Holstein cattle and planning research studies in the field of dairy farm management.

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