Memorial Resolution of the Faculty of the University of Wisconsin-Madison

On the Death of Professor Emeritus Allan Bringe

Professor Emeritus Allan Neal Bringe passed away on November 13, 2018 at age 83. Born on October 28, 1935, Allan grew up on his family’s dairy farm near Holmen, LaCrosse County, Wisconsin. His outstanding record of work in 4-H and FFA led to his selection as state delegate to the National 4-H Dairy Conference in Washington, D.C. He graduated from UW-Madison in 1957 with a major in Dairy Science and minor in agricultural extension education. He worked as a summer 4-H agent in Monroe County after his junior year in college. Upon receiving his BS, Allan served in the US Army Reserves as a medical laboratory specialist at Brooks Medical Center in San Antonio, TX then returned to Madison for his MS in dairy science.

Allan began his service to the University of Wisconsin on February 1, 1959 and retired on July 5, 1994. Except for a two-year leave to complete his Ph. D., he served continuously as a member of the Dairy Science faculty. From 1959 to 1966 Allan conducted an effective dairy youth program through 4-H, FFA, and the dairy breed organizations. He developed the District 4-H Dairy Days program that continues to flourish today. Allan broadened these events to include communication skills, such as demonstrations, speaking, and interviews, in addition to the judging skills that had been the sole focus of these programs. Allan also led organization of the annual National 4-H Dairy Conference from 1965 to 1973 and led it through the transition from a Chicago-based meeting to one centered around World Dairy Expo in Madison. This, too, continues to the present. Bringe’s youth development work was honored by the Wisconsin Junior Dairymen's Association, Wisconsin Brown Swiss Breeders Association, and Wisconsin FFA.

After completing his Ph.D. in 1968, Allan worked in the areas of calf and heifer management, milk quality, herd health, and milking management. Allan’s program was a classic example of the Wisconsin Idea, bringing the results of research to application in the field. Drs. L. H. Schultz and R. D. Bremel in the Dairy Science Department developed a low cost method for determination of somatic cell concentration in milk, a measure of milk quality and mammary health of individual cows. Bringe and Schultz together implemented the procedure in Dairy Herd Improvement (DHI) laboratories during the late '70s and early '80s. Within 10 years, the program had been adopted by 85% of herds in the Wisconsin DHI program. At the same time, Allan was instrumental in working with dairy processing cooperatives to pay premiums to producers based on milk quality and milk protein content. Under Allan’s leadership, Wisconsin led the way for other states to follow.

Using a team building approach, Allan developed innovative and highly effective educational programs around the issues of milk quality, mammary health, and milking procedures. His programs were designed for dairy producers and involved local veterinarians, milk plant field representatives, milking equipment dealers, and county agents as co-instructors. He organized milking management seminars from 1975 to 1987 in all the major dairy counties in Wisconsin. He held 20 to 25 of these two-day seminars each year. Beginning in 1987, another innovation was the development of county-level milk quality councils to promote and provide education on the production of high quality milk. By involving local specialists in these programs, he made producers aware of local expertise and established linkages among professionals in the community.

Allan was a strong proponent and facilitator of professional development for county extension agents. Over many years, he secured opportunities for key dairy agents to attend the annual meeting and education symposium of the National Mastitis Council. A few of them went on to membership on the Council's board of directors or service on committees of the Council.

Allan was one of three key players who developed the Milking Research and Instruction Laboratory that opened in 1990. This visionary collaboration between the Departments of Dairy Science and Agricultural Engineering (now Biological Systems Engineering) is the only one of its kind in the nation and is a leading center for research, instruction, and outreach on the principles of milking system function,
sanitation, and operation.

Allan's impact extended nationwide and worldwide. He served the National Mastitis Council as President, Vice-President, and member of the board of directors and on several major committees. He was the founding President of the National Mastitis Research Foundation. Allan was active at the national level in two antibiotic residue avoidance teams: a) developed and delivered six two-day regional training sessions for veterinarians and other professionals across the country; and b) a national five-day technology transfer session organized by the American Veterinary Medical Association. During 1991-93, Dr. Bringe was U. S. Chair of the International Dairy Federation's group that planned and presented a symposium on factors affecting yield of cheese from milk.

Allan had an excellent record of citizenship in University of Wisconsin-Extension. These activities included the UWEX University Committee, several search and screen committees, Ag/Ag Business Advisory Council, and UWEX Water Quality Issue Team among others. In addition, his resume' includes a long list of service to government agencies and industry groups. He performed these services competently and with dedication.

Allan was a strong team player and an individual of great integrity, dedication, selflessness, and commitment. His work was honored by prestigious awards: Distinguished Service Award, National Mastitis Council (1984); Second Mile Award, Wisconsin Association of County Agricultural Agents (1987); Excellence in Dairy Extension, American Dairy Science Association (1988); Career Extension Award, University of Wisconsin–Extension (1992).

Allan's community service is highlighted by president and board member of Bethel Lutheran Church and where he co-chaired a major remodeling of the church. Allan was proud of his Norwegian heritage that he shared with others in the Torske Klubb and Ygdrasil Literary Society. Favorite pastimes were family camping, fishing, hunting, and golfing.

Allan is survived by Joyce (Clay) Bringe, his wife of 60 years, and two children: Dr. Neal (Lida) Bringe, PhD (Food Science, Cornell University); and Dr. Ann (Richard) Schmidt, MD (UW-Madison). Also surviving are eight grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Memorial Committee
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