
Obituary

Dr A. Wade Brant

March 28, 1919 - August 6, 2011



Wade Brant spent his formative years in America's heartland. When not in school, his childhood days were spent on the family farm in Kansas and in 4-H Poultry Club work. He entered Kansas State University as a poultry husbandry major. His selection of major was a foreshadowing of his career in co-operative extension work. The choice of major was based on seizing an opportunity, the prospect to learn, and the potential to make money. When he arrived in Manhattan, a high school friend told him that if he declared a poultry major, he would have free lodging - at The Roost, get paid, and as a bonus, have all the eggs he could eat. Wade Brant seized the opportunity.

After completing his baccalaureate degree, he moved to Michigan State University for his masters in poultry nutrition. Iowa State was his home for doctoral studies in poultry products technology. It was during his student days that Dr Brant became a member of the World's Poultry Science Association (WPSA) and attended his first World's Poultry Congress in 1939 in Cleveland.

Dr Brant's first post-doctoral position was at USDA. He spent 10 years in Beltsville, Maryland and rose to the level of Chief of the Poultry Research Branch. It was during the Beltsville period that Dr Brant became a member of the Animal Products Advisory Committee for the US Army. He served in that capacity for 14 years. His work had a huge impact on the shell egg industry. It was during the 1950s that his research, as part of the Egg IQ Program (of the North-eastern Poultry Producers Council), revealed that the wide variability in internal egg quality of newly laid eggs could only be reduced by breeding.

Egg quality evaluation was a major part of Dr Brant's work. The Haugh Method for determining interior egg quality was developed in 1937, but there was little implementation of it until Dr Brant resurrected it as part of the Egg IQ Program. It was during that same time that Drs Brant and Otto created the USDA's pictorial egg quality chart.

In 1959 Dr Brant headed west and became the Extension Food Technologist at the University of California, Davis. His work with poultry and egg quality continued, but he also became involved in the red meat industry and became an expert scientific advisor for the Western States Meat Association Sausage Committee and the California Meat Inspection Advisory Committee. At Davis, even though he was housed in Food Science, the Department of Avian Sciences considered him a member of their 'flock' as well. Once in California, he became very active in the west coast trade association, Pacific Egg and Poultry Association or PePa. He was a long-time member of their Scientific Advisory

Committee and served as Chair from 1967-80. PePa recognized him with two of their most prestigious awards: Scientist of the Year and Industry Person of the Year.

His activities with WPSA grew exponentially over the years. In 1965 he was a founding member of the USA Branch of World's Poultry Science and co-authored the Branch constitution. He was the first Secretary-Treasurer of the Branch and held that position for four years before moving into other officer positions, including Branch President. As a member of the branch organizing committee, he helped host the World Poultry Congress held in New Orleans in 1974.

In 1978, at the World Poultry Congress in Rio de Janeiro, Dr Brant was elected Treasurer of the international association. He made friends around the globe and worked closely with Association officials in some 60 countries. Dr Brant contributed significantly in so many different ways to the international poultry world and for that reason he was inducted into the International Poultry Hall of Fame on the occasion of the XVIIIth World Poultry Congress held in Nagoya.

He continued to serve as the international Treasurer until 1996. He gave great attention to the finances of the Association and to its financial documents. The extent and quality of WPSA's financial history archived at the National Agricultural Library and in the Office of the Treasurer is due in no small part to the work of Dr Brant. In 1998 at the European Poultry Conference in Jerusalem he was presented the Macdougall Award, WPSA's gold medal given in recognition of long and meritorious service to the Association.

While his official service to WPSA ended a decade and half before his death, Dr Brant remained a living encyclopaedia of WPSA history. In addition, he continued to add to his famous collection of almost every poultry-related item imaginable. A young friend and colleague dubbed him the 'Super Chicken Fan. Along with that, he was devoted to WPSA and to the bonds he forged with members throughout the world. The WPSA flock has indeed lost a rare bird, but Dr A. Wade Brant will always remain in WPSA's special collection of its most memorable and dedicated members.