

# A tribute

"We are part of all whom we have met"

--unknown

There are some people who are not satisfied with making the most of their own life, but enjoy enriching the lives of the people around them.

Dr. Anton M. Sorensen, professor and research scientist in the animal science department, was one of those men who influenced everyone who came in contact with him, because of his sincere interest in students, faculty and people in this community.

Sorensen died February 20 in his home of a massive heart attack at the age of 55.

He was on the staff of the animal science department and the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station for 25 years. Sorensen was a leading authority on animal physiology and reproduction.

In 1979, Sorensen published a 512-page book, "Animal Reproduction: Principles and Practices," which has already been called one of the most authoritative texts in the field of animal science.

A native of Granger, Texas, Sorensen earned a bachelor's degree from Texas A&M in 1949, and his master's and doctoral degrees from Cornell University in New York. He taught for a while at Mississippi State University before returning to teach at Texas A&M as an assistant professor of animal science in 1955.

The students of A&M were fortunate to learn from this man, and his impressions will live on with many students, past and present.

## Professor plays role of student

By Martha A. Hollida

Animal Science students at Texas A&M University may have noticed a professor at the back of classrooms instead of the front in some of their upper level courses this semester.

Dr. Phil Shumway, professor of animal science at Brigham Young University (BYU) in Provo, Utah, is here attending nutrition, feeds and beef cattle production classes to improve himself as an instructor.

"The program is called Professional Development and it is designed to help faculty members improve their professional ability through methods used by other universities and professors," Shumway remarked.

Shumway has been on the staff at BYU for 32 years. He teaches feeds, nutrition and is in charge of the beef cattle teaching program. He received his bachelor of science degree and doctorate from Utah State and his master's degree at the University of Minnesota.

"Some universities encourage this type of program more than others, but I think that most have this type of program. Our university has a fund for this. You apply for what is called six months sabbatical leave for the university you want to attend," he said.

The BYU professor spent from early January until April 1 at TAMU observing classes taught by Howard Hesby, Lowell Schake and Frank Litterst. He traveled to Extension research centers across the state to review projects and beef livestock operations.

Shumway accompanied the 92 students and advisers on the agribusiness 400A trip over spring break to Kentucky, Indiana, Missouri, Arkansas and Oklahoma.

"Dr. James Wiltbank from TAMU and I are working with the University of Florida, evaluating nutrition and its effects on reproduction and physiology. This is a joint effort between the three universities. It is coordinated by the Ezra Taft Benson Institute of Agriculture located at BYU. The foundation was named for Benson, who was the Secretary of Agriculture under the Eisenhower administration," explained Shumway.

"Texas A&M is an excellent example of teaching methods and quality ag programs. A person can really improve his ability by studying at such a place. The tradition seems to be very important here in motivating students."

"I chose to study at A&M because I was acquainted with Dr. Hesby and Dr. Wiltbank and recognized them as experts in my fields — teaching and research. Texas has a reputation in animal science schools as being one of the top and Texas itself is the top beef state in the nation and that's my field. So it helps to visit the livestock operations here," he said.

"I would recommend it to anyone who can do it. The only disadvantage is that I have to be away from my family," remarked the experienced instructor.

"I've always been partial to BYU students but I see those same qualities in students here. I have enjoyed the student body," he said and added that on the spring break trip he learned all the Aggie yells.



Chemicals are sprayed on an orchard by helicopter at Superior Farming Co., Bakersfield, Ca., which was a stop on the agriculture economics field trip in mid-March.

Agriculturist staff photo.

## Ag economic students learn by seeing theories at work

By Jane Lyon

Classrooms in California?

It might sound a bit strange, but this past spring break a group of 42 Aggies spent 10 days observing the business theories in practice in California that they had studied at school.

The agribusiness field study trip is sponsored each year by the Agriculture Economics Club.

"This trip offers the student an opportunity to observe in the real world the operations of today's agriculture businesses and hear firsthand the thinking of agribusiness leaders," said Dr. Kerry Litzenberg, assistant professor, department of agriculture economics and one of the advisers on the trip.

The students, most of whom were agriculture economics majors, began the trip with a bus ride to Dallas and a plane trip from there to Las Vegas, Nevada. From Las Vegas they boarded another bus and began their

tour of Southern California.

The first stop made in California was at Ralph's Grocery Co. in Compton, CA.

Mark Troutz, chairman of the trip, said students observed the operations of a huge centralized warehouse for approximately 100 Ralph grocery stores in California. Here all the main raw products (dairy, meat, etc.) were brought, after which all processing and pricing took place before the finished item was shipped off to surrounding stores.

"This was a time-saving operation and eliminated butchers in the individual stores and the unions. The number one problem throughout California is unions and union related activities," said Troutz.

Because of such centralized, thorough operations, Troutz said food prices were lower than in Texas, especially in restaurants.

During the visit with Elmore Farms in Brawley, CA, Troutz said they observed a large family-owned farm doing good business in spite of California's number two problem.

"The biggest problem after unions is the 160 acre limitation of farms," said Troutz. "A farmer can normally obtain water rights for only 160 acres. This has forced the farmers to incorporate their farms to handle the situation and still make a decent living."

The students spent some time in the celery fields where celery was harvested by hand. Because of the unions, Troutz said most harvesting is done by hand.

Troutz explained that Elmore Farms was located adjacent to Salinas Lake, a salt water lake in California. The Elmores had bought the worthless salty land around the lake and made it productive by burying a system of perforated tiles six feet

underground. The tiles were connected by pipes so all the salt would filter down into the tiles where it was carried away. This constituted a man-made leaching system.

At the Superior Farming Co. in Bakersfield, CA, the students saw computerized drip irrigation along with almond, citrus and grape production.

"This company used both biological and chemical methods of fertilization," said Troutz.

He explained that they used bees to fertilize the almond trees and wasps to fertilize fig trees. Chemicals were put on the crops by helicopter.

In Fresno, CA, the group observed the economics and production methods employed at B-Cribari & Sons, Winery.

Troutz said the winery estimates its storage costs ahead of time. If storage is too costly for a certain year, they sell more of their younger vintage wines (wines that have been in the barrel for one year). The students also learned that barrels are good for a certain number of years and that wine is better the longer it stays in the barrel.

While in Fresno, the students also learned all about the lending and financial programs at Bank of America, Regional Administrations-Agriculture. Troutz said the bank was the biggest agriculture lender in the state.

At Nulaid Foods, Inc., Ripon, CA, the students saw a totally automated and integrated poultry operation. "The only thing a man had to do was walk through the buildings and look for dead birds," said Troutz.

Food and water was carried to the birds on conveyor belts while eggs were carried away on conveyor belts. Troutz added that they had a low death loss percentage.

## The Agriculturist

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Cover design by Susan Edens

## Cattle marketing sees age of computers

By Martha A. Hollida

It's 1 p.m. at a sale barn in Central Texas and first lot of feeder steers to sell are still on pasture in South Texas. When the bidding stops, the buyer with the highest bid is sitting at a computer terminal in Amarillo, Texas.

Sound impossible and confusing? Researchers at Texas A&M University are experimenting with a computer marketing system for feeder cattle which could work like this.

"Computers could bring more buyers and sellers together to improve the market, lower the costs and provide better market reporting," said Thomas L. Sporeleder, professor of agricultural economics and a co-leader of the project with Ernest E. Davis, agricultural livestock marketing specialist.

The experimental system is based on 18 television-like screen terminals with typewriter keys below the screen called cathode ray tubes (CRT), 12 for selling feeder calves and the other six for buying. The CRTs will be hooked to one central computer at Texas A&M. An advisory council of persons in the cattle marketing industry will determine which existing auction barns will have the terminals.

"We hope to begin the project in June of 1980 and conduct the demonstration for nine or ten months. The primary purpose is to test the feasibility for private industry," explained Sporeleder.

The computer system is designed to work on the following procedures:

Two trading procedures would provide flexibility to traders. One procedure would be for sellers with less than truck load lots of livestock. A second procedure would be for producers with truckload lot of 42,000 pounds for feeder cattle or more of livestock marketings.

Small-lot marketings would use the "auction system" and the large, truckload marketings would use either the "offer system" or the "auction system."

Computers could bring more buyers and sellers together.

Sellers using the auction system would be sellers of small lots or of large lots desiring immediate sale. The livestock would be listed and graded by the third party and entered onto the system at a predetermined time for specific period for bidding. At the end of the prescribed bidding period, the seller could accept the auction price, or if the bid price was lower than the "no-sale" price, the seller could reject the bid. The seller would have the option of setting a no-sale price when listing the cattle.

A slightly different pricing system would be possible for livestock in lots of truckload size or larger and for lots where immediate sale would not be critical. The offer system would allow larger lots of livestock to be listed and cataloged on the system.

For this alternative, a third grader would go to the farm or ranch to list and describe the livestock and enter the data on the computer system.

Description would be the same as utilized for the auction system. This information would be stored in an active for sale category for assessment by buyers at any time.

It would be possible for producers marketing small lots to use the offer system if they are willing to group their livestock with other small lots at some collection point. In either system, the description of livestock would be transmitted from the base computer at Texas A&M over a network of designated telephone lines and displayed to traders on the CRT unit.

According to Sporeleder, the display information could be composed of both "hard" and "soft" data. The hard data the CRT would display to potential buyers would consist of information about sex, weight, age, breed, skeletal size and thriftiness in a USDA grade, the common terminology and the new feeder stands, would be used to describe each lot.

A buyer interested in a particular lot could call for more detailed information.

Livestock should be described by third-party graders. The hard data supplied by the third party grader and the seller would be displayed at the top portion of the CRT or above a dashed line. The soft data which may be any information the seller thinks would merchandise the livestock would be displayed below the dashed line. The soft data or information would not be checked or verified by the third-party grader.

A buyer interested in a particular

lot could call for a more detailed description. Various owners of lots of livestock of similar description grouped at the auction yard, designated assembly area or an individual's ranch would be identified separately.

There are two bidding procedures used with the auction system. One procedure called "one bid" allows a single bid per lot, per buyer during the prescribed bidding period. The second procedure, called "progressive bidding," allows multiple bids per lot, per buyer during the bidding period.

In both procedures, buyers would be able to see other bids displayed on CRT units, but would not know the identity of other bidders. Livestock would go to the highest bidder in either procedure, if these bids equalled or exceeded the no-sale price entered by the seller.

If no bids were made during the prescribed time or if the bids did not equal or exceed the no-sale price, a "no-sale" would be posted for that lot.

Through the "offer system" a buyer making a bid on particular lot would enter the lot number, bid price and desired delivery point on the CRT terminal. The terminal nearest the livestock producer would automatically produce a copy of "notice of bid." The operator of the terminal near the livestock owner would contact the owner by telephone to notify him of the bid. The owner would have a specified time to accept or reject any bid.

When a sale is made in either sys-

tem, a printout at both the buying and selling CRT terminals would verify the sale with a "certificate of sale."

Purchases would be verified with a certificate of sale.

In addition, the buyer also would be furnished a copy of the individual description of the lot. Title transfer would be made at the time of official weighing. Before making a bid, the buyer would know where the livestock would be delivered and weighed. Buyers would be responsible for shipment of cattle from the official sale point to the final destination, unless other agreement is made.

"During the demonstration we assure the producer of at least six bidders on his lot of cattle, but there is no maximum numbers of bidders per computer, so actually there could be hundreds of bidders.

"There are many advantages including reduced transportation costs, and shrink, a reliable indication of supply and demand, buyers provided with cattle from different areas and an alternative marketing method for producers," claims Sporeleder.

The main disadvantages are the system requires livestock descriptions by a reliable third party and it is expensive to put in operation.

Sporeleder said that this system may be before it's time in the cattle industry.

## Cavalry dismantles Houston barn for CS move

By Todd Woodard

"There ain't quite no place like home," bawls a country singer of recent fame. For members of Parson's Mounted Cavalry (PMC), his cry couldn't be truer.

Started in 1972, PMC roamed for years trying to find a place to water its horses. First at the Research Annex, then at what they call "Hernia Hill" south of campus, PMC finally circled the wagons at Fiddler's Green, a 57-acre pasture located where Turkey Creek Road and Farm to Market Road 2818 cross.

The unit finally had a place to pull off its boots, sit back and enjoy the finer pursuits of spitting tobacco and riding. Not quite.

After donating the land, Texas A&M University started building a tackroom, a place to store saddles, stirrups and other riding gear. Funds ran out before the building was finished, so the members furnished the inside. PMC has fenced land, a tackroom, and feed and water for horses. Now it wants a horse barn.

"It's amazing how much was donated to us," said Andy Reese, commanding officer of PMC.

One of those donations is a barn valued at \$35,000. PMC is dismantling the barn and moving it from Houston for construction on Fiddler's Green.

Seventy-two feet by 250 feet, the barn had 100 stalls. Reese said building one like it from scratch would cost three or four times as much.

The structure housed horses for the Pin Oak charity horse show years ago. J.S. Abercrombie, a Houston businessman, ran the show until his death. Now his company runs the event.

Jack Hooper, vice president for

Abercrombie's land development, said donating the barn to PMC was no loss for his company.

"We're going to develop that property. There's no use for the barn," he said.

Reese said it took two full weekends this semester and six days of work before school to strip the barn.

"We're thinking about changing our name to Parson's Mounted Construction. We would carry hammers instead of sabers," he said.

Stacks of lumber piled at least 10 feet high sit next to corrugated tin at Fiddler's Green. The tin is weathered and some of the boards are twisted and broken.

Standing among the dismantled barn facing west, the tackroom is to the right about 100 feet. Beyond that are stalls and loading chutes and pasture.

"I think the unit's overworked. We haven't had a free weekend this semester," he said.

PMC is in for more work. The agreement with Abercrombie says that the barn must be gone by June 1. The steel structure is still up.

"Everything has been done by hand," Reese said. But the steel requires more than wrenches and muscle.

Reese said he hopes that Bryan's army reserve will be able to help take down the steel.

Dale Wacasey, unit administrative supply technician, 449th engineer detachment, said the reserve hopes to "send a crew to dismantle the steel."

"We will probably send four or five people down," he said. "Our (PMC) furnish the fuel for our vehicles and materials. It's a training mission."

"We help out organizations that are non-profit and connected with the university. But they have to understand that this is a training project for us. They can't put a limit on us."

Wacasey explained that other jobs in the community must be done. Bob Evans, detachment commander, said that dismantling the steel might take place in May.

"When we talked with PMC, we said we have to have some lee time," he said. "We have talked about putting it back together, but we have to take it down first."

PMC has done the work with outside aid. Reese said that the Forest Service loaned them a semi-truck trailer for a weekend, and that they "made four trips with Zachry's flatbed."

A local construction company loaned them a forklift to help load tin. Reese counts on the reserve now.

He said that with all the work the PMC has done, he is frustrated. "Before, it was voluntary. Some of us were there all the time. About five or six people have done a lot of work," he said.

This construction job has had few injuries for the 23 members. Two injuries have been serious, the worst one being a cut requiring stitches.

"This tin can get dangerous," he said.

Off to the right a long, rusted edge jutted from a stack. He said that 11,000 sheets came off the barn. In those sheets, there were nine pins holding each sheet on. To remove the pins and tin, a member would use a bolt cutter to clip the pins while standing on a ladder.

The roof peaked. Reese said that it

was about 24 feet at the top. Some would take the tin and toss it down. Others would load it.

That's where they stand. The structure remains, waiting on the reserve. "One of the specific hold-ups in this project is a crane---something

to stabilize the beams when they come loose. Parson's hasn't been able to locate one," Wacasey said.

If the PMC can maintain the work intensity, maybe it can do it. Reese seems determined the barn will come down---and go up at Fiddler's Green.

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