

Ralph Bogart 1908–1992: A brief biography

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Ralph Bogart was one of a group of Mendelian and quantitative geneticists who advanced animal breeding systems and subsequently production efficiency in several species of farm animals in the middle years of this century. Ralph directed an active genetics research program at Oregon State University, but, beyond that, he influenced research on a regional and national basis.

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His colleagues in the Western Regional Coordinating Committee recognized this and wrote in 1974, “The performance of a scientist is determined by the respect and acknowledgement of his peers. . . . Using this as an index, Ralph Bogart has to rank at the top . . . [he] has been active not only in his own projects but in the design of all the breeding projects at the other Western stations.”

His colleagues in the Western Region Cooperative State Research Service programs remember Ralph’s participation in planning and reporting meetings with respect and affection. You always knew when Ralph was in the room. He presented his ideas vigorously and enjoyed getting into (sometimes heated) arguments with his co-workers. And, when things began to slow down a bit, he would interject a joke or two, at which he would laugh uproariously.

Ralph’s reputation resulted in his attracting a strong cadre of graduate students, many of whom went on to positions of importance in academics, government, or production areas. To name just a few, these included Graham Alexander, Minister of Agriculture for Queensland, Australia; Robert de Baca, Iowa beef cattle extension specialist, who later worked with Garst Farms in Iowa; Paul Humes, who headed the Department of Animal Science at Louisiana State University; and C. M. “Red” Williams, director of Extension at the University of Saskatchewan, Canada. He served as major professor over the years for 50 doctoral and 39 master of science candidates, and they assembled a list of over 275 technical papers—many published in the *Journal of Animal Science*.

In research, one of Ralph’s most important contributions was in charting the pattern of inheritance of lethal characteristics and a number of abnormalities that affected animal performance. In midcareer, he began working on the biochemical rationale for animal performance traits, especially the relationship between certain blood enzyme concentrations and productivity. He recognized the basic contribution of ruminants as roughage converters and insisted that performance testing be done on high-roughage diets. As an incidental, though eminently useful project, he developed a histological technique for determining the age of cattle brands that was successfully applied in legal cases involving brand alteration.

Bogart recognized the need for continuing professional education. He was a 56-year member of the American Society of Animal Science (ASAS) and also

held active memberships in the Genetics Society of America, American Society of Zoologists, American Association of Anatomists, and a major scientific group—the American Association for the Advancement of Science. He was a member and local chapter officer of the honorary societies of Sigma Xi and Phi Kappa Phi. The ASAS recognized the contributions of Bogart as one of the first winners of its Rockefeller Prentice Award in Animal Breeding and Genetics in 1963 and its Animal Industry Service Award in 1975 and conferred on him the title of Fellow in 1972. He also earned the Distinguished Service Award of the Society's Western Section, which he headed as President. In 1963 he was sponsored by the Genetics Society of America to attend the International Congress of Genetics in The Hague, Netherlands. Bogart served his university in many capacities: he was an active member of the faculty senate and director of the OSU's Genetics Institute for a number of years.

For one who could, at times, work so single-mindedly on his genetics research, Ralph could be surprisingly diverse in his interests, perhaps feeling that diversity would give him relief from the stress of intense studies. Among these was his long-time interest in gardening, and he served at one time or another in all the offices of the Corvallis Men's Garden Club, which in 1975 gave him an award for beautification of his home garden. He took pleasure in competition and received numerous ribbons for exhibits of flowers, fruits, and vegetables at the Benton County Fair. And he took a strong interest in pygmy goats—first as research subjects but later simply because he liked them. He was recognized nationally as a judge of pygmy goats.

No chronicle of Ralph's life would be complete without mention of his interest in, and kindness to, graduate students, particularly those from foreign countries. These young people, strangers in a strange land, were warmly welcomed by Ralph and his wife, Frances, on their arrival in Corvallis and more often than not found themselves as guests in the Bogart home until they could find other lodging. The friendships that developed were lasting ones, and many of his former students came back to visit Corvallis and the Bogarts. These associations meant a great deal to Ralph.

Ralph Bogart was born on November 30, 1908, in Lawson, Missouri, where he attended grade and high school. He proceeded to the University of Missouri, where he graduated with the B.S. degree in 1934. From this beginning, he went on to an M.S. degree at Kansas State in 1936 and a Ph.D. from Cornell University in 1940.

In his career, Bogart began as an assistant professor at Cornell, leaving in 1944 to take a position with the Indian Services of the U.S. Department of Interior, at

San Carlos, AZ, where he directed a breeding program for over 1,000 Herefords owned by the Apache tribe. Here he had an incidental experience that almost cost his life. One evening, hearing a noise in the chicken house, Ralph went to investigate and was bitten severely by what proved to be a rabid coyote. Ralph could not shake the maddened animal off; he yelled for his wife and Frances came and shot the animal with a 0.22 rifle. From San Carlos, Ralph returned (gratefully, one suspects) to the University of Missouri, as assistant professor of animal husbandry, until 1947 when he was hired by Fred McKenzie to join him on the faculty at then Oregon State College. This was to be his base of operations for the rest of his career.

While at Missouri, Bogart met and married Frances Warbritton in the summer of 1938, an action that he described as "the most intelligent thing I ever did." It was certainly an enduring partnership. Ralph and Frances had a daughter, Betty Ann (Juergensmeyer), now of Elgin, IL, and they have a foster daughter, Linda Boyce, of Philomath, OR, and an adopted son, Bardia Razzaghi, of Portland.

On retirement, Ralph joined the Corvallis Kiwanis Club and threw himself into their activities with his usual vigor, resulting in his being named Kiwanian of the Year in 1982.

With his death at home in Corvallis, in 1992, Ralph Bogart left a significant legacy of methods of livestock improvement through his writings (both technical papers and books) and the teachings of his former students. A brief sampling of some of his many publications is appended.

Selected Publications of Ralph Bogart

Technical Papers

- McKenzie, F. F. and R. Bogart. 1934. The afterbirth as an index to the thrift of the lamb. *Proc. Am. Soc. Anim. Prod.* 221–224.
- Smith, S. E., and R. Bogart. 1939. The genetics and physiology of lethal anemia in the rat. *Genetics* 24:474–493.
- Bogart, R. 1952. Dwarfism, a real problem facing beef cattle producers. *Oreg. Cattleman* 1:5.
- Alexander, G. L., and R. Bogart. 1961. Effect of inbreeding and selection on performance characteristics of beef cattle. *J. Anim. Sci.* 20:363.
- Hunt, W. L., D. Addleman, and R. Bogart. 1971. Induction of multi-ovulation in the ewe, following synchronization of estrus. *J. Anim. Sci.* 32:491–495.

Texts

- Bogart, R. 1959. *The Improvement of Livestock*. Macmillan, New York (translated into French and Spanish).
- Jones, W. E., and R. Bogart. 1971. *Genetics of the Horse*. Edwards Bros., Ann Arbor, MI.
- Bogart, R. 1977. *Scientific Farm Animal Production* (2nd and 3rd Ed. 1983 and 1987), Burgess Pub. Co., Minneapolis, MN.