

Rufus F. Cox, 1901–1982: A Brief Biography

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Rufus F. Cox was born June 13, 1901, near Altus in southwest Oklahoma. At the age of six he moved with his parents to a ranch in the Texas panhandle near Wheeler. He attended the local grade school and high schools at Clinton, OK and Waco, TX. He attended Oklahoma A & M College from 1919 to 1923, earning a B. S. degree in agriculture with a major in Animal Husbandry.

As an undergraduate, Rufus was a member of the livestock judging teams coached by the famous W. L. Blizzard, who became Dean of Agriculture at Oklahoma State. Oliver S. Wilham, one of his teammates, later became the University's president.

After teaching vocational agriculture for a time in Oklahoma, Rufus attended Iowa State College from 1924 to 1925, where he was awarded the Master's Degree with a major in Animal Breeding and a minor in Veterinary Physiology. He received his Ph.D. in Agricultural Economics and Farm Management from Cornell University in 1941.

He served the New Mexico Agriculture Experiment Station as assistant animal husbandman from 1926 to 1930. He then joined the Animal Husbandry staff at Kansas State College, where he advanced to full professor in 1941, and became Head of the Department of Animal Husbandry in 1950. He served in that capacity until 1966 and retired June 30, 1971.

Dr. Cox took leave during the summers of 1936, 1937, 1938, and 1943 to serve on the Extension staff at the University of Kentucky. He also attended the summer session at the University of Wyoming in 1930, doing special wool research under Dean J. A. Hill and Dr. Robert Burns.

Rufus received a special appointment in 1943 with the War Food Administration, Office of Distribution, Washington, DC, and later served as special advisor and consultant to the American Feed Grains Council in overseas assignments in Japan and Korea. He also served as a consultant with U.S. AID in India. He established an international reputation as a sound authority on livestock.

Dr. Cox pioneered research work on the ratio of roughage to concentrate in ruminant diets and instigated the lamb feeding and wheat pasture grazing tests at the Garden City, KS Experiment Station. Data from these tests have been widely used and have proven profitable to the sheep industry throughout the world. He was in charge of the sheep research and managed the Department's flocks from 1930 to 1950. He authored many publications relating to breeding, feeding, and management of sheep.

He taught courses such as sheep production, animal breeding, livestock production and management, livestock judging, and principles of animal husbandry experimentation, as well as other courses relating to the livestock and meat industry. Students in the Kansas State College of Agriculture voted Dr. Cox the outstanding teacher in 1940 and 1948.

The student enrollment and staff about doubled in number from 1950 to 1966 under Dr. Cox's able leadership as department head. The legislature provided the funds and Dr. Cox and the staff planned new facilities for the Animal Husbandry program. The

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building was named Weber Hall in honor of Dr. Arthur D. Weber, who was a former Animal Science Department head, Kansas State Dean of Agriculture, and served as president of the American Society of Animal Science (1945–46).

Rufus made major contributions to the various purebred breed associations by planning programs, giving talks and demonstrations, and serving as consultant on research projects and other important industry affairs. He was chairman of the show committee of the Wichita Junior Livestock Show for many years. His progressive ideas were incorporated into that show, and later these changes were accepted in major shows and expositions throughout the United States.

Dr. Cox was a member and Honorary Fellow of the American Society of Animal Science. He was a member of the Board of Governors of the American Royal Livestock Show and held memberships in Phi Kappa Phi, Lambda Gamma Delta, Sigma Xi, Gamma Sigma Delta, and Alpha Zeta. He was also a lifetime Honorary Member of the Kansas Livestock Association, and the Kansas Hereford Association. He was

listed in *American Men of Science*, and the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

Rufus was honored in 1955 as a Distinguished Alumnus of Oklahoma State University, and in 1967, by the Federal Land Bank for contributions to American agriculture.

Rufus was married to Elsie Hayes of Hobart, OK on July 17, 1926. She lives at the Meadowlark Retirement Community in Manhattan, KS. They have two children and six grandchildren; Robert lives in Corrales, NM and Carolyn Otto in Manhattan, KS. Dr. Cox died June 15, 1982, at the age of 81.

Rufus Cox was a kind-hearted, generous person who was extremely helpful to students and staff at Kansas State University. He maintained his interest in students after their graduation. He was personable and had many friends throughout the industry. Rufus probably knew more people in Kansas by their first name than any other person in the University community.

We pay tribute to a stockman, teacher, scientist, and leader. He was a quiet, soft-spoken person with a genuine interest in people and in the advancement of animal agriculture.