

Howard J. Gramlich, 1889–1985: A Brief Biography

Charles H. Adams¹

University of Nebraska, Lincoln 68583-0908



Howard John Gramlich was born January 26, 1889, in Omaha, Nebraska and died November 30, 1985, in Mississauga, Ontario, Canada. His funeral services were conducted December 2, 1985, in Ontario, Canada. He graduated from the Nebraska School of Agriculture in Lincoln, Nebraska, in 1908 and in 1911 he received his Bachelor of Science degree in Agriculture from the University of Nebraska. In 1911 he began his career in agricultural extension work at the University of Nebraska and was also in charge of the Farmers Institutes in the School of Agriculture. He was later appointed an Assistant Professor of Animal Husbandry and Associate in the Experiment Station at the University of Nebraska and continued those duties from 1913 to 1916. In 1915, he married Mabel

Daniels, who had graduated in 1914 from the University of Nebraska and who became an Associate Professor in the Department of Home Economics. In 1917 he was promoted to Head of the Animal Husbandry Department. The title of that position was changed to Chairman of the Department in 1919 and he retained that title until he took a leave of absence in 1938 when on November 1, 1938, he became the Secretary for the American Shorthorn Breeders Association. On January 1, 1940, he resigned from his position in the Department of Animal Husbandry. It should be noted here that Professor Gramlich was one of the few heads of a major department in any higher educational institution with only a bachelor of science degree.

While in the College of Agriculture at the University of Nebraska, he had many interesting experiences, activities, and pursuits. In the fall of 1908, as a sophomore, he was on the first University of Nebraska Dairy Judging Team at the National Dairy Show in Chicago, where he was the second-highest man in the contest and the team placed second. One of his teammates was Karlis August Ulmanis, who later became Premier of the Republic of Latvia. That same year he was on the first University of Nebraska Livestock Judging Team and was the third-highest man in the contest, and the team placed second at that International Contest in Chicago. A newspaper clipping gave this report about Gramlich: "He is a South Omaha boy who graduated from the Nebraska School of Agriculture last year and is now in the University of Nebraska on an Armour Scholarship and is specializing in Animal Husbandry." It should be noted here that also in that same International Livestock Judging Contest were H. H. Kildee, who later became Dean of the Iowa State Agricultural College and President of the American Society of Animal Production in 1935, and also C. W. McCampbell, who became Head of the Animal Husbandry Department at Kansas State Agricultural College and President of the American Society of Animal Production in 1931. Professor Gramlich also served as Vice President of the American Society of Animal Production in 1928 and as President of the Society in 1929. At this point, we should note that Gramlich was the coach of the livestock judging teams at the University of Nebraska from 1912 to 1919 with the following results of the team placings at the International in Chicago: 1912, 5th; 1913, 12th; 1916, 9th; 1917, 1st; 1918, 3rd; and 1919, 2nd. We should also report that while he was a

¹Professor Emeritus of Animal Science and former Assistant Dean, College of Agriculture.

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student in the University that in March, 1911, he was the first editor and business manager of a new student magazine, *Agriculture*, in the College of Agriculture. *Agriculture* ceased publication in May 1921.

Gramlich worked his way to Europe in 1911 on a cattle boat by helping care for the cattle. While in Europe, he visited England, Scotland, Holland, Jersey, and Guernsey Islands. On the return trip he worked on a draft horse boat and helped deliver the horses to the Wood's Brothers horse lots just south of the University of Nebraska College of Agriculture campus in Lincoln. Later on in 1918, he started the first high school vocational agriculture livestock judging contests on campus, which still continue as an annual event.

During the drought years of 1934-35, Professor Gramlich served as the Government Advisor on Feeds for the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, Washington, D.C. He also headed the Federal Emergency Drought Cattle Buying Program in Nebraska in 1934. It was reported that he was instrumental in getting an excise tax put through Congress on coconut oil. Also during the 1930s he became an advocate for a change from big cattle to baby beeves, for the use of substitutes for corn in fattening rations for cattle, and for the utilization of sorghums and silage, and he predicted the production of these "camel crops" would increase in Nebraska in the future. Gramlich was a strong booster of Shorthorn cattle, and the University of Nebraska College of Agriculture gained national prominence when Ashbourne Orange, a Shorthorn steer bred at the University, was named grand champion at the 1937 International Livestock Show in Chicago. The University had discontinued showing in Chicago; the steer had been sold to Dean Blizzard at

Oklahoma A&M, who showed the steer at the International. During his career, Gramlich judged cattle at the International Livestock Exposition at Chicago, the American Royal at Kansas City, and the Interstate Baby Beef Show at San Francisco.

Professor Gramlich served as Secretary of the American Shorthorn Breeders Association from 1938 until 1942, when he became the General Agricultural Agent for the Chicago and Northwestern Railway System. Later his title was changed to Director of Agricultural Development. While in this position he returned to the University and to Nebraska to be the guest speaker on the annual Feeders Day programs, for Pasture-Forage-Livestock meetings, at Nebraska Livestock Feeders Association meetings, for the Nebraska State Bankers Association, and for many other livestock and business meetings throughout the northwest.

On December 31, 1954, he retired from the Chicago and Northwestern Railway System after having lived in Oak Park, Illinois, during those years with the railroad. He had become widely known as a speaker on agricultural problems. He acquired a reputation for the accuracy of his national crop forecasts, predicting the final crop yield within a few bushels of the final Department of Agriculture figures.

He worked closely with 4-H club groups and was made an honorary member of the Nebraska 4-H club. His memberships included Chicago Farmers Club, National Safety Council, Chicago Association of Commerce, and the Illinois State Chamber of Commerce. After retirement, he joined a lecture bureau in Chicago and continued for several years giving talks to teacher's association meetings in Illinois, Wisconsin, and Indiana.