



Richard P. March

May 1, 1922 – July 25, 2015

Richard P. March, Professor Emeritus, Food Science, died at the age of 93 at the Riverwoods Retirement Community in Exeter, New Hampshire. He was born in Medford, Massachusetts on May 1, 1922. In his early years, he developed an interest in dairy manufacturing, prompting him to enroll in the University of Massachusetts, with a major in Dairy Industry. There he met his wife Barbara, an English major, who even then began to help him with his work by taste testing the ice cream he was manufacturing in one of his courses.

After receiving his Bachelor of Science degree in 1944, he served in World War II with the Marines. He participated in the invasion of Okinawa on April 1, 1945. When the war ended, he was transferred with the First Marine Division to North China until August 1946.

Richard's Cornell connection began in the fall of 1946, when he began graduate work in what was then the Department of Dairy Industry (now Food Science). Starting as a teaching assistant in October 1947, he earned the M.S. degree in 1948 joining the faculty as an instructor. A series of promotions led to his becoming a full professor in July 1965. At his retirement in 1977, he was named Professor Emeritus.

Professor March's first assignment at Cornell was to teach the one-year program in dairy manufacturing. This was designed as an entry-level course to train dairy plant workers. He later taught courses in Market Milk, Fluid Milk Processing and Quality Control. In 1965, he was appointed Department Extension Leader, serving until 1977. This became his major effort at Cornell, where through his work with Cooperative Extension he assisted in developing procedures for the modern system of bulk milk cooling and collection. He produced films and bulletins that were used throughout the Northeast.

His interest in milk sanitation led to an appointment by Governor Rockefeller in 1962 to study the possible impact of the National Sanitation Act on New York dairy farmers and milk production. His work resulted in closer collaboration between Cornell and the Department of Agriculture and Markets. That early connection continues today.

Professor March's direct involvement with the dairy and food industry began in 1956 when he became Executive Secretary/Treasurer of the 600+ member New York State Association of Milk Sanitarians (now NYS Association for Food Protection). He served in that capacity for 24 years. During that time he became involved on the national level through his membership on the board of the International Association of Milk, Food and Environmental Sanitarians. He was honored by that organization with the 1974 Educator/Industry award. During his service with the New York association, he received that group's two highest awards: The Dr. Paul B. Brooks Memorial Award in 1963 and the Emmet R. Gauhn in 1972. He was awarded Honorary Life Membership at his retirement.

Upon his retirement from Cornell, Richard embarked on a second, but similar career. He became Executive Secretary and later Executive Vice-president of the Northeast Dairy Council. The mission of this organization was to provide uniform laws and regulations for milk and dairy foods throughout the Northeast states. The program was so successful under his leadership that the name was changed to Dairy Products Council to serve the whole country.

In 1967, Richard spent a sabbatical six months in Ireland at the Agricultural Institute in Fermoy, helping with their milk collection systems. His second sabbatical came with a grant from Milk Plant Specialties Corporation to conduct a national survey of dairy regulations, which ultimately resulted in establishing greater uniformity throughout the industry.

For 50 years, the Marchs were active members of the Ellis Hollow community. He actually built his family home on Ellis Hollow Road from a Sears Roebuck "kit" that arrived at the rail siding in downtown Ithaca. It had many innovations, including heating the pool by circulating the water through pipes on the roof – well before that became a common practice.

Professor March is survived by his wife Barbara, two sons and their wives, Steven and Donna, and Thomas and Priscilla, one daughter Betsey and Randy, eight grandchildren and 12 great grandchildren.

David K. Bandler and James C. White