

# NEWS

## *Randy Weber Retires*

**B**ruce (Randy) Weber is the high school kid from the Midwest who made it big. Our good friend and Associate Administrator retired on July 3.

His agricultural career started out early as he grew up working alongside his family on their dairy and farming operation in Kansas. Fast forward to the spring of 1960, a whirlwind time for 17-year-old Randy. He graduated high school in May and married his high school sweetheart in June. A week later, he started working for the old ASCS in Decatur County as a GS-1 county clerk with a salary of \$2,798 a year. During these first few years, he also picked up part-time work, including lane sweeping at a bowling alley, slinging hamburgers at a local diner, pumping gas, and bagging groceries.

Back then, Randy admits, he wasn't always the level-headed leader we know now. "I was quite the hothead program assistant." He calmed down pretty quickly though when he became Grant County's CED at age 21, the youngest at that time in Kansas. He supervised four women who were his mom's age, which, as Randy says, "humbled my young whippersnapper ways in a big hurry."

Randy worked for 14 years in various Kansas county office positions. In 1974, he accepted a program analyst position in Washington, D.C. "It was quite a culture shock moving here," Randy says. "The agriculture buildings house as many people as lived in my county of 8,000." In D.C., Randy started as a grain number cruncher and policy adviser, honing his legend-

ary knack for analysis. "I enjoyed being the principal wheat analyst and working with numbers," he says.

In his 24 years in D.C., Randy worked his way up to Associate Administrator, his position since 1993. Randy was the "buck stops here" guy regarding FSA programs. He took these responsibilities in stride, though. "I considered working here as my hobby," he says.

Randy was a confessed workaholic, often in his office from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. His work ethic impressed Dallas Smith, Deputy Under Secretary for FFAS. "His car, most days, was in the parking lot when I arrived in the mornings and there when I departed. I had no trouble recognizing it because his license tags read 'AGSWAG.'" Randy

*See **RANDY**, continued on page 3*



*Randy and Bonnie marry,  
June 1960*



*Bonnie and Randy,  
December 1976*



*Randy, June 1998*

## ADMINISTRATOR'S COLUMN

# Farmers Markets and Food Gleaning — Something for Everyone

All of us at FSA are committed to supporting America's small farmers. That's why I am excited about our Agency's growing participation in farmers markets across the country — two of them are featured in this issue.

Farmers markets provide a unique experience for all involved — growers climb a rung or two on the vertical integration ladder by cutting out the middleman. They sell directly to consumers, increasing their farms' profitability and their products' exposure to the public. Consumers can buy farm-fresh products and actually meet the people who grow the food. And, these markets contribute to Americans' health by providing people with high-quality fruits and vegetables direct from the farm.

As an added bonus, FSA is linking our involvement in farmers markets with USDA's initiative to help distribute wholesome food to the needy. Instead of collecting entrance fees from vendors, market organizers aid in the

gleaning effort by encouraging farmers to donate unsold food to state projects, homeless shelters, or food banks. Many customers also donate food items — helping to make a difference in the lives of the less fortunate.

Secretary Glickman's Food Recovery to Help the Hungry Program aims to increase food recovery 33 percent by the year 2000, enough additional food to feed 450,000 people a day. FSA is taking a big part in this cause — we won first place in the 1998 USDA Food Drive, collecting 277,628 pounds of food, more than twice as much as our goal of 100,000 pounds. The food was donated to food banks, churches, homeless shelters, and soup kitchens. And our efforts continue daily across the country.

Sometimes it's hard for us to realize that, despite the abundance of food in America, hunger is a reality for some people. USDA spent \$38 billion providing food assistance to about 45 million people during 1996 — that's about one in every six Americans. That brings it a little closer to home, doesn't it? Take a look around you. Can you spare some canned goods, or a couple of hours volunteering at a food bank? Does your church or grocery store collect food for the needy? The next farmers market you go to, ask if the surplus is donated, or buy some extra food to donate — there are many organizations which need it AND your help.



Since this newsletter is for and about you, the FSA employee, we want your input. We're looking for articles featuring FSA programs, events, people, or anything else you think other FSA employees would find interesting. Or, if you have a suggestion for something you would like to see in the newsletter, please let us know.

A few guidelines:

- Submit articles or ideas promptly while news is still fresh.
- You have a better chance of publication if you contact the editor, Jillene Johnson, at (202) 720-9733 well in advance of a planned event and before you begin to write any article.
- If at all possible, e-mail the article to the editor or mail it in on a disk to avoid retyping. But call first, so she can know to look for it. Her e-mail address is [Jillene\\_Johnson@wdc.fsa.usda.gov](mailto:Jillene_Johnson@wdc.fsa.usda.gov)
- Get permission from anyone whose name is included in an article.
- Include photos when possible.

Suggestions for articles:

- FSA program/borrower success story — emergency, conservation, rural youth or beginning farmer loans, farm ownership and operating loans, etc.
- Event that affects state/county offices — COC election, natural disaster, crop planting/harvesting, etc.
- FSA employee, former employee, or program participant accomplishment. Doesn't have to be work related — could be an award, special talent, etc.
- FSA community-related event — farmers market, food gleaning, outreach efforts, etc.

The editorial board reviews, prioritizes, and makes appropriate edits to articles. We cannot guarantee to use your article or to include it in a particular issue. We will, however, make every effort to use it. Thanks for your help!!

### FSA News

is published monthly in the interest of all FSA employees.

Editor: Jillene Johnson  
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Readers are encouraged to contribute stories, photos, and suggestions. Send materials to the Editorial Board at:

FSA Public Affairs Staff  
1400 Independence Ave., SW  
Stop 0506  
Washington, DC 20250-0506

## RANDY

*continued from front page*

says he decided on that plate because agricultural forecasting sometimes seems like making “agricultural scientific wild ass guesses.”

Over the years, Randy earned an impressive array of accomplishments. He has five farm bills under his belt, and with the most recent 1996 bill, he effected some major policy changes. He received numerous awards from private and government organizations. He was often the “star” speaker at commodity conventions and was known as the “wheat brain” at the National Association of Wheat Growers meetings. Randy says his most surprising honor was a June 1997 National Journal article naming him as one of “The Washington 100” decisionmakers. And, as fitting icing on the cake, Randy was recognized in the 1998 Secretary’s Honor Awards in a group award for efforts on the Civil Rights Action Team.

Randy and his wife Bonnie plan to move to Arizona. About that, Bonnie says, “I told him the first 38 years were his, the next are mine. I so look forward to leaving my wool clothes behind.” Will Randy have more time for his hobbies — bowling, golf, fishing, and, according to Phil Sronce, a director in EPAS, watching all-star wrestling? Perhaps, but Randy plans to work full time for a few more years in an agricultural-related job, possibly for USDA or a cooperative.

What will Randy miss the most? “Definitely the people,” he says. “Working with such a high caliber of people was my greatest satisfaction. It will be tough not to see them every day.” Well, we feel the same. Randy’s 38 years of unwavering commitment to the interests of American agriculture and its producers will be sorely missed.

## HERE’S WHAT A FEW OF RANDY’S FRIENDS HAVE TO SAY ABOUT HIM:

*That youngster? Well, he easily has the broadest knowledge of farm programs and is so easy to talk with. — Willie Cooper, LA SED*

*I kid Randy about his computer illiteracy. To him, it’s a very large paperweight. — Randy’s wife, Bonnie*

*Tom Foley, ex-Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, once said you never, never embarrass a friend. Randy practices that quality as well as anybody I have known. — Larry Albin, WA SED*

*He is “Randy on the spot,” always there to lend a hand. — Bruno Magnum, CC in NC*

*I could always depend on Randy to go into his desk drawer and find a cereal bar to keep me going. — Terri Facini, former secretary for Randy*

*Randy has a wonderful sense of humor. Once, he and I were playing golf with a colleague, Orville Overboe. After hitting each shot, Orville would complain about being tired and sit down to rest. After we finished, Orville went to a hospital and was diagnosed as having had a mild heart attack. Later, when we knew he was okay, Randy was asked how he did in the golf tournament. Randy replied, “Well, it was kind of slow. It was hit and drag Orville, hit again and drag Orville!” Randy will certainly be missed. — Dave Hall, Budget Division Director*

## Fun with Randygrams

**Randy’s “hieroglyphics” handwriting is well-known around FSA. Trying to read his Randygrams takes a keen eye and some practice.**

*The first time I was given something he’d written, I had no idea what I was reading. — Juanita Daniels, former secretary for Randy*

*The best way to read his writing is to hold it out from your body at arm’s length. — Carolyn Cooksie, Deputy Administrator for Farm Loan Programs*

*Those were some indiscernible yellow sticky notes. — Larry Howard (retiree)*

*Hey, my Randygrams are nice looking, with squiggles and turns, but too bad no one can read them. — Randy*

**CAN YOU DECIPHER THIS?**

Farm Service Agency

From: ASSOCIATE ADMINISTRATOR      Date: 7/3/98

To: FSA Family

Prepare reply by my signature.       Reply directly.       Reply directly. COPY TO ME.

For your recommendations.       For your action.       Please call me.

For your comments.       For your information.       None.

Remarks:

Thank you for 38 years of invaluable friendship and great memories. You have made my work enjoyable. Don't worry, I know of no other group that is more dedicated to serving the farmer. You are second to none. Keep up the good work. Thank!

Signature Date: \_\_\_\_\_ R

## From Farm to Market and Beyond

**S**ummer is finally here, and once again farmers markets are popping up all across the country. FSA employees play a large part in many of them, helping plan and organize, and getting the producers and public involved through advertising and outreach.

The Farmers Tailgate Market in Summersville, W.Va. is a great example of a long-successful market. Since 1980, it has been highly regarded around the area for its squash, melons, eggplants, berries, broccoli, and other produce. Fred Williams, the CED there, is a member of Mountaineers for Rural Progress, which organized a committee that built a wooden shelter for the market on a vacant lot. He says, "We started the market to help farmers supplement their income and to fill a local demand for garden-fresh produce."

When the business began, it was open only once a week. But with publicity, including advertising from FSA, the word spread fast. Participants soon found themselves with more customers than they could accommodate. Not folks to miss an opportunity, they built two additional shelters and now run the market six days a week, June through September. Says Williams, "We hope to expand it even more."

Meanwhile, the Kansas City, Mo. FSA office has 10 markets scheduled through October. Farmers feature such varied produce as cherries, asparagus, hydroponic tomatoes, strawberries, fresh herbs, and honey. FSA held the first one June 1 in a parking garage, publicizing it with flyers and a news release submitted to local newspapers. The market is so popular that a local retirement community even ran a shuttle service to and from the site.



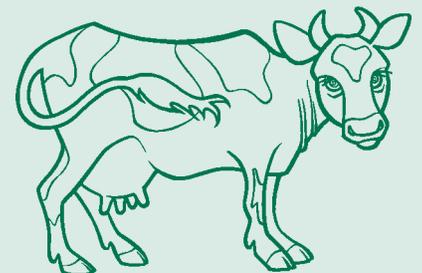
Sellers at the first market included seven small and limited-resource farmers and an Asian Pacific Islander who donated 160 pounds of organically grown leaf lettuce to a community food network. Sue Rourk King, Assistant to the Executive Director for State Operations, was pleased to report that two producers sold out of all their products in less than half an hour. The Kansas City office has received a number of applications and inquiries from producers interested in participating. And the office is working on outreach to involve more minority producers and other producers who are not FSA customers.

The Kansas City market showed how such efforts benefit farmers, customers, and the community. Customers and vendors donated 200 pounds of perishable produce to food shelters, setting an example for other farmers markets and food gleaning projects around the country. FSA hopes to have at least one field-gleaning project in 19 states by the end of summer 1998, and one in every state by the year 2000.

There are 2,500 farmers markets across America doing \$1 billion in annual sales. The USDA web page has a site to help you locate one in your area. The address is: <http://www.ams.usda.gov/farmersmarkets/>

### **COW FACT:**

Each day a dairy cow can produce up to 64 quarts of milk (256 glasses), or 14 pounds of cheese, or 5 gallons of ice cream, or 6 pounds of butter.



## Good Riddance to Summertime Food Illnesses

It's not just those pesky ants that can cause trouble during our summer barbeques and picnics. Unfortunately, there are many more insidious foes lurking around our food — warm temperatures provide ideal conditions for bacteria and other pathogens to multiply and cause food borne illnesses. But with careful food preparation techniques, we can avoid danger. Here are some tips for a safe cookout:

### Selecting Food

- When shopping for raw and cooked foods, be sure the store maintains food at the proper temperatures — the fridge should be 40°F or slightly lower and the freezer should be 0°.
- Never choose packages which are torn or leaking.
- Put packages of raw meat into plastic bags to avoid contaminating other foods.

### Transporting and Storing

- Head straight home from the store and keep perishable items inside the air-conditioned car, not in the trunk. When carrying food to a picnic site, keep it in an insulated cooler with sufficient ice.
- Refrigerate promptly. Be sure your fridge is 40°F or slightly lower and the freezer is 0° — they may need to be put on a colder setting during the summer.
- Leave meat in its original packaging to avoid introducing bacteria.
- Cook raw poultry and ground meat within 1 or 2 days; other meat within 4 or 5 days.

### Preparation

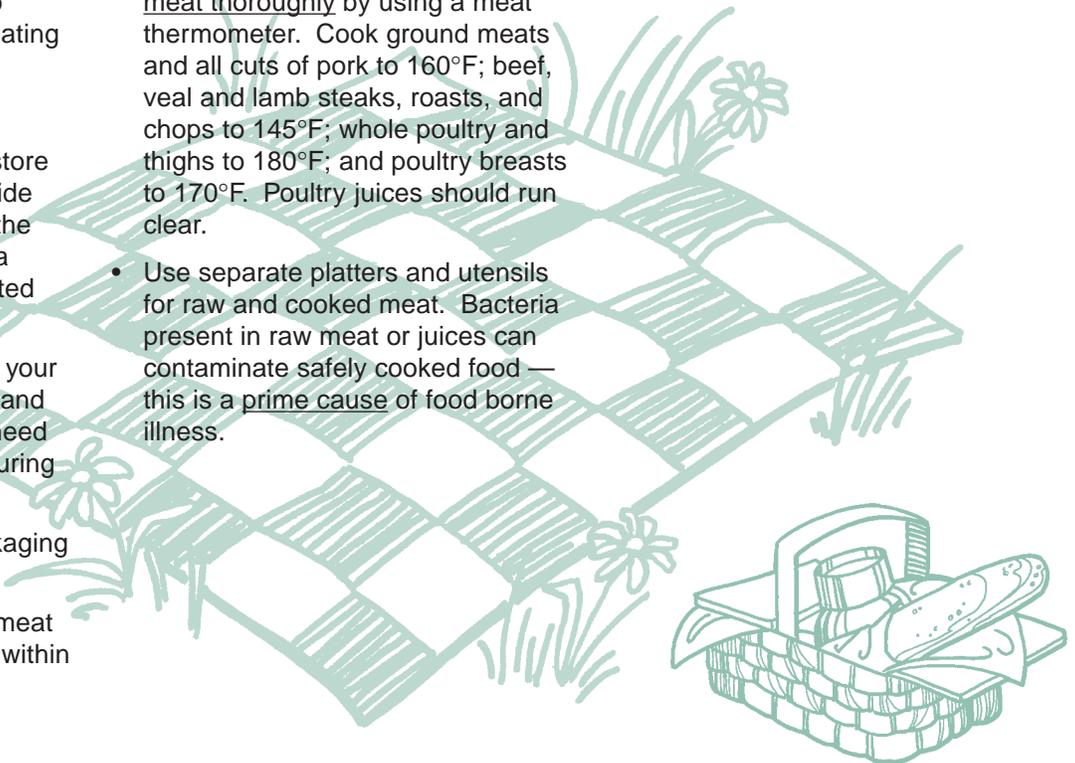
- Completely thaw meat before grilling so it cooks more evenly. Thaw in the fridge, in a sealed package in cold water, or in a microwave if grilling immediately after.
- Wash hands, work surfaces, and utensils before and after handling food.
- Always marinate food in the fridge, not on the counter. Don't reuse marinade used on raw meat unless it is boiled first.
- If precooking food partially in microwave, oven, or stove to reduce grilling time, do it immediately before grilling. Never partially cook meat and finish grilling later.
- Meat cooked on a grill browns fast on the outside. Be sure to cook meat thoroughly by using a meat thermometer. Cook ground meats and all cuts of pork to 160°F; beef, veal and lamb steaks, roasts, and chops to 145°F; whole poultry and thighs to 180°F; and poultry breasts to 170°F. Poultry juices should run clear.
- Use separate platters and utensils for raw and cooked meat. Bacteria present in raw meat or juices can contaminate safely cooked food — this is a prime cause of food borne illness.

### Serving

- Keep hot food hot and cold food cold. Keep cooked meats hot by setting them to the side of the grill rack, not directly over the coals. Avoid opening the cooler's lid, letting cold air out. Keep beverages in one cooler and perishables in another.
- In hot weather (90°F and above), food should never sit out for more than 1 hour.

### Leftovers

- Store leftovers in the fridge or freezer within 2 hours (1 hour in hot weather) of taking food off the grill.
- Divide foods into small, shallow containers to help them cool quicker. Never refrigerate one large pot of food or a whole turkey.



## Helping Land Reclaim Its Roots

**A**s Nancy Schaller gazes out across her 50-acre expanse of healthy woodland, she wonders what her late husband's ancestors would think. They spent so much effort clearing trees on this 91-acre property in Licking County, Ohio for farmland. Many years later, her husband John used the Conservation Reserve Program to replant. The white pine and black oaks have restored their property, overcoming soil and water quality problems that once plagued the land and its pond and creeks.

Once a dairy farmer, John Schaller enrolled in CRP in 1986, the year the program started. Nancy Schaller, a retired teacher, was so pleased with the program's rejuvenating effects that in 1996 she renewed the land in CRP for another 10 years.

The FSA Licking County staff's heavy media promotion of CRP has helped make it a popular program here — 120 landowners have enrolled more than 2,000 acres, at about \$65 an acre.

Steven Berk, the CED, credits the county committee with much of CRP's success, especially with "helping us make sure applicants' bids are fair."

Berk really values CRP. "This program isn't a windfall for anyone," he says. "No one's getting rich off the government. It's just a great program that actually accomplishes what it sets out to do."

Berk says Schaller has improved her land with CRP because she "loves nature and is environmentally conscious." Schaller says her trees help stop erosion and "are beautiful." Plus, with the shelter the trees provide, she enjoys the benefit of many new neighbors — deer, pheasant, ground hogs, rabbits, and birds now call the area home.



Photo Source: The Newark Advocate

Farm owner Nancy Schaller stands with (from left) Steven Berk, Licking County, Ohio's CED, farm forester Richard Cappell, and district conservation consultant Jim McCluskey.

## USDA's 52<sup>nd</sup> Annual Honor Awards

On June 10, USDA held its honor awards ceremony in Washington, D.C. Secretary Glickman presented awards to employees for their outstanding achievements. Congratulations to all FSA award recipients!

FSA recipients included:

- **Chris Niedermayer** for superior managerial performance resulting in significant improvements in disaster assistance program delivery.
- **Sally Nunn** for excellence in financial and debt management of USDA's and CCC's foreign export programs.
- **Danny Crawford** from Athens, Ala., for establishing a Minority Producer Steering Committee to increase minority producer awareness and participation in FSA programs.

- **Richard Douglas Block** of Eugene, Ore., for exceptional achievements in the management and delivery of farm programs in Lane County and throughout Oregon.

Also, the following FSA individuals were part of groups that received awards:

- **Dann Stuart**, part of the World Food Summit Preparatory Group, for development of the U.S. Government's world food security policy, preparation for the World Food Summit, and negotiation of the World Food Summit Plan of Action.
- **Donald Jones and Gregory McDiffett** (nominated by OIG) for exceptional resourcefulness, creativity, and tenacity in the investigation of improper grain-handling

practices resulting in criminal prosecutions and statutory and regulatory improvements.

- **Debra Borrie-Holtz, Norma Cannady, Marcos Garza, Gary Hilding, Lana Park, Lenoir Simmons, Morris Tate, and Verdell Zeigler** (nominated by NRCS) for bold leadership, creativity, and a cooperative Team USDA spirit in reengineering streamlined administrative processes.
- **Sharon Cooney-Smith, Randy Weber, and Kimberly Pritchett** (nominated by the Office of the Secretary) for their historic effort to ensure every USDA customer and employee is treated fairly and equitably, with dignity and respect.

## ON YOUR MARKS, GET SET...

FSA's Pacesetters have done it again. They've won their second annual fun walk in a row.

The walk, on Washington, D.C.'s Mall, was part of May 20th's USDA fitness day festivities celebrating National Physical Fitness Sports Month. Pacesetters teammates Greg Tonkinson, Mary Brown, Rebecca Davis, and David Nix (pictured left to right) completed the 2.5 mile hike in 28 minutes, 13 seconds. Many other FSA teams also completed the walk's two full circles around the Mall.



Photo by Eric Parsons

Greg, the team captain, explains, "During last year's walk, we had a great time and discovered a competitive spirit with our win. So we felt challenged to try it again this year." He adds, "It makes for a nice change to go out and exercise — do something for a while other than pushing a pencil or working on a computer." Least enjoyable, he says, was enduring the 92° heat.

For their triumphant first-place victory, the Pacesetters received the USDA/ESRA Fitness Achiever Plaque.

## Top Ginner Award Goes to NAFEC President

**K**enneth Hood, President of the National Association of Farmer Elected Committees (NAFEC), has won an honor that "stunned" him. He was named the 1997 Horace Hayden cotton ginner of the year at the National Cotton Council's 1998 convention.

Hood, a Mississippi cotton producer/ginner, received the award for his outstanding industry leadership, superior customer service, and civic contributions. His innovations in the industry include a computer system to give growers instant access to information on their land, shipping, and market activity. His gins offer customers module building and hauling services and educational seminars on harvesting techniques. And, he has equipped his gins with the latest technology to improve efficiency and the environment.

Hood, a third-generation farmer, has received much recognition over the years for his work as a cotton industry spokesman and production agriculture proponent. He has been president of the National Cotton Ginners Association

and the Southern Cotton Ginners Association, and the state treasurer of the Future Farmers of America. He is the current president of the Mississippi Boll Weevil Management Corporation.



Kenneth Hood (left) receives award from National Cotton Ginners Association board chairman Charles R. Earnest.

### FOOD FACT:

According to the Texas Peanut Producers Board, Americans eat enough peanut butter each year to cover the floor of the Grand Canyon.

## FSA Employee Becomes Road Warrior



Brad Murray's doing something a little different for his vacation. He's taking a trip from one end of America to the other. On a bicycle.

Murray, an agricultural program specialist at the FSA state office in Des Moines, Iowa, will be a part of the GTE Big Ride to help raise funds for the American Lung Association. The ride began June 12 in Seattle, Wash., and will end in the Nation's capital 45 days later, having averaged about 80 miles a day. In between, there will be mountains, deserts, rain, heat, and saddle sores.

FSA News hopes to report on Brad's progress in the next issue. He plans to try to post updates on the Big Ride's web site, at [www.bigride.com](http://www.bigride.com)

In the meantime, we wish him luck. He's going to need it.

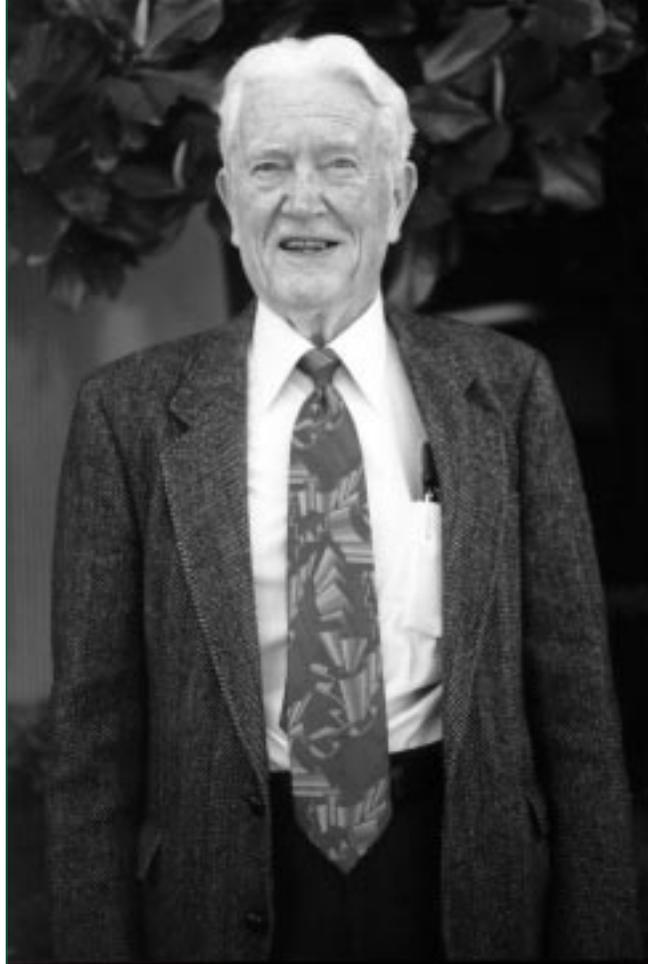
## Hereeeeeeeee's Bruno!!!

by Karen Davis, Administrative Officer, North Carolina state office

**A**s of June 9, Harold (Bruno) Mangum, Communications Coordinator in North Carolina, completed a record 62 years of service with FSA! His amazing achievement puts him in the ranks with only three other USDA employees who currently have over 60 years of service. During his career, he has accumulated a whopping 5,500 hours of sick leave.

Bruno's dedication is unparalleled in North Carolina. During disasters, he is always there — a phone call to the state office will usually be answered, "Bruno Mangum speaking." Even when the snow is 14 inches deep in Raleigh and many employees can't get out of their drive-ways, Bruno is on the job.

Bruno started as a supply clerk in 1936. "Jobs were at such a premium back then," he says, "that if someone was absent from work they would check the morgue." Those able were always on the job because they were paid by the day, and sick and annual



Bruno Mangum

leave were not available. "Absentees often found themselves out of work," Bruno says.

Bruno became chief of the Agricultural Conservation Program Division in 1948 and worked in that position for 43 years. Over the years, he has played an active role in conservation, working closely with many groups to enhance North Carolina's soil, water, and forestry resources. Presently, as CC, he always "gets the news out," keeping everyone informed on all issues and policies.

An avid sports fan partial to Wake Forest University, Bruno is a walking history book on FSA programs and on many other subjects. So, if you are in need of an answer on anything, just ask Bruno.

Any plans to retire soon? Bruno says to check with him at his 65<sup>th</sup> year anniversary. Meanwhile, he says he's busy and has to get back to work.

Our hats are off to a super person, friend to everyone, and dedicated employee.

## CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

Date	Location	Event
July 17–19	Tulsa, Okla.	Administrator Kelly to attend OKASCOE/OASE/OACS all association and union meeting
July 26–28	Kansas City, Mo.	Administrator Kelly to attend Warehouse Examiners meeting
August 6–8	Dallas, Texas	Administrator Kelly to attend NASCOE/NADD annual convention

*Note: The above is subject to change.*