

**MEMORIAL RESOLUTION OF THE FACULTY OF THE  
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON**

**ON THE DEATH OF PROFESSOR EMERITUS ORRIN I. BERGE**

Orrin I. Berge, professor emeritus, of the Department of Agricultural Engineering, now the Department of Biological Systems Engineering, died August 11, 2003 in Middleton, Wisconsin. Professor Berge was born on January 4, 1914 near Valders, Wisconsin and graduated from the Valders High School at age 15. He attended Oshkosh State Teachers College, now UW-Oshkosh and completed a BS degree in Agricultural Education summa cum laude in 1933 at the age of 19 at UW-Madison. In 1950, Professor Berge completed his MS in Agricultural Engineering at UW-Madison.

Professor Berge was a project assistant in the Agronomy Department, UW-Madison, 1933-35. He taught agriculture at Oconto Falls High School, 1933-38 and Pulaski High School, 1938-43. From 1943-46, Professor Berge operated the family dairy farm near Valders. During this time he served as a part time Agricultural County Extension Agent in Manitowoc County.

Professor Floyd Duffee, chair of the Agricultural Engineering Department, UW-Madison learned of Professor Berge's ability to design and fabricate low-cost agricultural equipment while Berge farmed near the end of World War II. Of particular interest was the "buck rake" which was designed to gather hay rapidly in the field. In 1946, Professor Berge joined the department as an instructor. Professor Berge was appointed assistant professor in 1948, associate professor in 1952, and professor in 1957. He retired in 1978 after nearly 32 years of service to the university as a statewide extension specialist in agricultural machinery.

Professor Berge was exceptionally well-qualified as a statewide extension specialist in agricultural machinery. He combined a background of farming, teaching vocational agriculture and part-time county agent work with his graduate work in agricultural engineering to understand the needs of agriculture and the farmer and provide effective solutions. He developed keen leadership skills recognized by everyone with whom he associated.

He was instrumental in introducing new mechanization practices to Wisconsin agriculture through countless meetings and numerous publications at both scientific and applied levels. Examples of mechanization practices include forage harvesting, chemical weed control and corn planting. His work also included agricultural safety and youth. He was responsible for the field demonstrations at the largest annual agricultural show in Wisconsin with attendance exceeding 100,000 in many years.

The outstanding aspect of his accomplishments was that he was regularly able to initiate new developments to meet the changing needs of farmers. When additional research was necessary, he was instrumental in seeing that the projects were setup with the appropriate researchers to obtain the necessary answers. He was often sought by machinery designers and planners for his opinions on new machines and modifications to current models.

His stature within the university and the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences was such that he served in many key faculty committee and council positions. He was chair of the All University Faculty Council that consisted of faculty representatives from University of Wisconsin before the system merger. He also served as chair of the University Extension Committee. He received the University Extension Distinguished Service Award in 1970.

Professor Berge was a charter member of the National Institute of Farm Safety, founded in 1960 and served as its president in 1970. He was an active member of the American Society of Agricultural Engineers. He received an ASAE Paper Award for a paper titled 'Performance Characteristics of the Flywheel Type Forage Harvester'. In 1969, he received the Engineer of the Year Award from the Wisconsin Section of ASAE.

Professor Berge is survived by three sons, John of Madison, Bill of Bamberg, Germany, and Lorin of Valders, and a daughter, Sara Ehlert of Green Bay. Lorin and Matthew Berge, Professor Berge's son and grandson, completed degrees in Agricultural Engineering at UW-Madison and operate the family farm as the fourth and fifth generations.

The dedication of Professor Berge and his family to the university was demonstrated in the establishment of the Orrin I. Berge Scholarship Fund at the UW-Foundation.

MEMORIAL COMMITTEE

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