

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

**ON THE DEATH OF PROFESSOR EMERITUS DALE W. SMITH**

Dale W. Smith, professor emeritus of agronomy, died in Peoria, Arizona, on January 9, 2010. He was born on April 13, 1915 on the family farm near Fairmont, Nebraska. Dale attended a rural school through the eighth grade and graduated from Fairmont High School in 1933 as valedictorian of his class.

Dale received his BS degree with distinction in agronomy-tech science from the College of Agriculture, University of Nebraska-Lincoln in January 1938. Upon graduation, he received his second lieutenant commission in the US Army infantry. Dale received his MS degree in agronomy from the University of Wisconsin in 1940. However, before he could complete his studies for his PhD, the US Army called him to serve with the 86th Infantry Division during World War II in both Europe and the Philippine Islands (1942-1946). He was awarded two Bronze Star medals and the Combat Infantryman's Badge and attained the rank of lieutenant colonel. Upon return from his WWII tour of duty, he completed his PhD degree in agronomy and botany, with a minor in plant pathology from the University of Wisconsin in 1947.

Dale spent his entire professional career at the agronomy department of the University of Wisconsin-Madison. His research interests ranged from basic plant physiology and ecology to practical management studies on forage legumes and grasses. Several of his studies were interdisciplinary involving livestock and soil scientists. He taught a course in forage crop management and physiology for more than 30 years and authored a widely accepted textbook on forage management. Dale is widely regarded for his research on 2-cut vs. 3-cut alfalfa harvest systems based on plant maturity, which led to greater alfalfa yield and improved forage quality. His studies on the effect of mineral nutrient and carbohydrate accumulation on the winter hardiness of forage legumes and grasses stands as an agronomic landmark.

The results of his research continue to be used by scientists around the globe. Forage management recommendations based on his research made it possible to improve profitability of ruminant animal enterprises. Dale was a prolific writer with more than 300 scientific publications — books, technical articles, bulletins, abstracts, and experimental station publications. Dale mentored 29 PhD students, 11 MS students and five post-doctorates. His graduates are located across the country and around the world, each contributing in his/her own way to the advancement of plant and forage physiology. His classroom teaching, his mentoring of the research programs of his graduate students, and his professional example provided his students with the solid foundation that contributed to their success as professional agronomists. Upon his retirement in 1977, he moved to Arizona and continued his alfalfa studies for an additional four years at the University of Arizona in Tucson. During his career, he traveled and lectured widely in the US, Canada, Mexico, Central and South America, Europe and East Asia. In 1979, he taught as an academic guest at the Swiss Institute of Technology in Zurich, Switzerland.

He was named a fellow in the American Society of Agronomy, Crop Science Society of America, and American Society for Advancement of Science, and he belonged to several honorary societies. He received the ASA Crop Science Award in 1963, a NATO fellowship to England in 1964, and in 1970 the University of Wisconsin Haight Travel Award to Asia, Australia and New Zealand. He was awarded the American Forage and Grassland Council Merit Certificate in 1965, its Medallion Award in 1975, and its Distinguished Grasslander Award in 1982.

Dale Smith has passed on, but his scientific contributions to agronomic science will long be remembered. Survivors include son Warren (Olga) Brainard-Smith of Mexico City; daughter Sharon (Paul) Janovsky of Cave Creek, Arizona; six grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren. Dale was preceded in death by his wife Marion (Brainard) Smith, his parents, and his sister and brother-in-law Margaret and Francis Nichols.

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