

## A. Houston Booth

**A**. Houston Booth attended Laurel Hill, a one-room school, near where he now lives and graduated from Belington High School in 1936. From 1946-1948, he taught Institutional Farm Training in Barbour County and attended West Virginia University, where he received agriculture training. From 1948-1951, he managed an International Farm Dealership.



In 1951, he accepted a job as a Store Manager Trainee with Southern States Cooperative, Inc., and successfully served as Store Manager, District Manager and Regional Manager before retiring in 1983, with 33 years of service.

His farming operation grew from small acreage in 1944 to its present 800 acres. He made major contributions to three main areas of agriculture — beef cattle farming, grassland farming and helping agricultural organizations in West Virginia.

West Virginia was a pioneer in supplying quality feeder calves to the Midwest at weaning time, regardless of size. The program at the Booth farm was to send only the heaviest calves off the farm at weaning time. He preached adding value by wintering light calves and

grazing them the next summer from his own herd and calves from the area. He was a pioneer in backgrounding as a way to add value and profit for West Virginia producers.

Contract grazing came to West Virginia in the 1980s and Mr. Booth became a pioneer and converted his grassland farm to a stocker operation. He developed an excellent grassland farm and preached that the grassland program must be ahead of the cattle program. His inquiring mind generated ideas and lead him to seek knowledge from many sources.

Mr. Booth had an abundance of enthusiasm for the projects with which he was involved. FFA and 4-H organizations counted on his support in local chapters and on a State basis for both time and funds. When the West Virginia Agriculture and Forestry Hall of Fame was the dream of a few people, Mr. Booth helped raise some of the seed money needed to bring this organization into existence.

In 1966, Mr. Booth was awarded *Honorary State Farmer* by the Future Farmers of America. He is a member of the State Farm Bureau and is a past president of the Barbour County Farm Bureau, West Virginia Farm Supply Association and West Virginia Association of Agriculture Industries. He was a member of the West Virginia Poultry Association and West Virginia Petroleum Council boards of directors and currently serves on the board of Belington Bank. He has been a member of several other agricultural associations, including the West Virginia Congress of Agriculture, Clarksburg and Belington Kiwanis Clubs' Agriculture Committee, Wes-Mon-Ty and West Virginia Cattlemen's Association.

Mr. Booth was a man of vision. In his farming activities and professional agriculture career, his goal was to improve farm and rural life in West Virginia.