

Arthur W. Henry, 1896–1988

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Arthur Wellesley Henry, professor emeritus of plant pathology at the University of Alberta, died on December 27, 1988. He had retired as professor in 1962 after distinguished service to the University in teaching, research, and extension. Dr. Henry was born in Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada, on July 20, 1896. He earned his B.Sc. degree in 1917 and an M.Sc. degree in agriculture in 1920 at the University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Canada, and also was awarded a travel scholarship in agriculture.

After serving as an instructor in field husbandry at the University of Saskatchewan from 1917 to 1920, he obtained a Ph.D. degree from the University of Minnesota in 1923. He worked as an assistant plant pathologist in the Agricultural Experiment Station, an assistant professor at the University of Minnesota, and an agent in the Office of Cereal Investigations of the USDA. In 1926, Dr. Henry was awarded an International Education Board fellowship by the Rockefeller Foundation, which enabled him to visit Europe and spend a winter in England at Cambridge University and the rest of the year on the continent to establish valuable contacts with European colleagues in plant pathology.

In 1927, Dr. Henry accepted a position as assistant professor in the Department of Field Crops at the University of Alberta, which marked the beginning of plant pathology at the University. As the first professor of plant pathology, in 1928 he initiated undergraduate teaching in this discipline. He developed two additional undergraduate courses by 1940. Under his supervision, in the graduate program in plant pathology, 29 students graduated with M.Sc. degrees and one with a Ph.D. degree. During this period, Dr. Henry not only established the University of Alberta as one of the centers in Canada for the training of plant pathologists but he was also active in both applied and basic research, which centered mainly on plant pathological problems associated with seeds and soils.

A major part of his applied research was concerned with seed and seed treatment for the control of seed- and soilborne pathogens of cereals. His research resulted in the early replacement of formaldehyde by other less injurious and more effective chemicals for seed treatment. His recommendation for general seed treatment was widely adopted, especially in Alberta. Dr. Henry was not only involved in the early demonstration of the greater value of mixtures of fungicides over single fungicides for seed treatment but also showed the value of antibiotics as seed fungicides. Much of Dr. Henry's research results had immediate application to farmers and, over the years, undoubtedly resulted in increased farm incomes totaling many millions of dollars. With regard to the basic aspects of his research, more efforts were directed toward the solution of soil infestation problems with special emphasis on saprophytism in natural substrata such as soil and plant residues. A significant feature of Dr. Henry's research contribution relates to ecological studies on microflora, especially those of cereal root-rot fungi. The suppression of soilborne pathogens by natural soil saprophytes constituted pioneer work in the field of biological control, where it had wide appli-

cation in crop rotation planning. During Dr. Henry's investigations in Saskatchewan, Minnesota, Europe, and Alberta, the possible control of plant diseases by resistant hosts received much attention. He also provided information of value to farmers by showing that wheat should not immediately follow certain grasses, such as slender wheatgrass or brome grass, in the rotation and that the control of certain grass weeds, such as couch grass, is important for the control of the root-rot disease known as take-all. In his studies on flax diseases, he demonstrated complete control by disease resistance against rust in both cultivated and wild collections, thus reducing serious losses for many years. Moreover, through his work this resistance was found to be transferable to certain varieties with other valuable characteristics. In addition to rust immunity, Dr. Henry thought that a resistance factor to other disease organisms is present in the wild species, *Linum angustifolium*, and can be utilized to advantage.

A major part of Dr. Henry's extension activities consisted of supplying information to the public, both rural and urban, on plant diseases. In addition to popular bulletins, circulars, and leaflets, Dr. Henry published two comprehensive bulletins entitled "Diseases of small grain crops" and "The potato crop in Alberta." Lectures over the radio for the benefit of the general public, and short courses at meetings for farmers and at gatherings of plant fanciers in towns and cities constituted another type of his extension work and Dr. Henry was always in high demand. After his formal 'retirement', Dr. Henry took an active role as a diagnostic plant pathologist in the Crop Clinic Laboratory of the Alberta Department of Agriculture where he expanded his extension activities. While with the Alberta Department of Agriculture, Dr. Henry described several new diseases of oil-seed crops, forage crops, and ornamentals.

Dr. Henry was an active member of numerous federal and provincial committees and professional societies during his tenure of office and was president or chairman of the Science Association of the University of Alberta, the Edmonton Branch of the Agricultural Institute of Canada, and the Canadian Phytopathological Society.

His outstanding abilities as a teacher and researcher and his knowledge of plant pathology were widely recognized and highly valued among his peers. In 1976, Dr. Henry received an Achievement Award, presented by the premier of the Province of Alberta, for his excellence in Agricultural Education and Research. He was honored as a recipient of the Canadian Phytopathological Society Award for Outstanding Research in 1980. Dr. Henry was a member of the following professional societies: the Agricultural Institute of Canada (fellow), the American Association for the Advancement of Science (fellow), the Canadian Phytopathological Society, the American Phytopathological Society, the Alberta Institute of Agrologists, the Plant Pathology Society of Alberta, Sigma Xi, Gamma Sigma Delta, and Alpha Zeta.

Dr. Henry was one of the most dedicated, most disciplined, and kindest people one could ever wish to meet. He was concerned for the quality and breadth of plant pathology education. To honor his outstanding contributions to plant pathology, in 1989 the Plant Pathology Society of Alberta established the A.W. Henry Lectureship. Dr. Henry will be remembered not only for his professional accomplishments, but also for his concern for his fellow man, his counsel, and his friendship. He is survived by his son Donald who lives in Osoyoos, B.C., Canada.