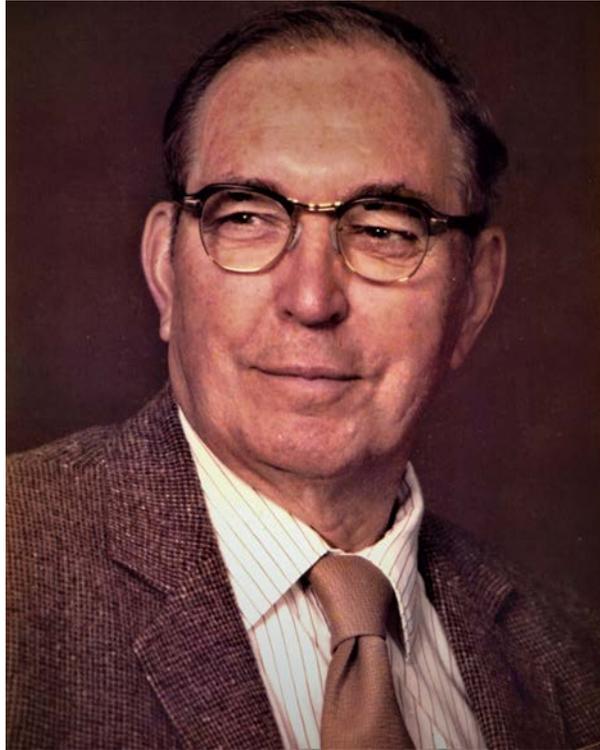


2017 – Donald J. MacFarlane



Donald J. MacFarlane was born on July 3rd, 1903 in Janesville, Wisconsin and died January 31, 1985. Donald and his wife, Genevieve, had five children--- Marion, Janet, Marjorie, Kenneth, and Bill. Donald attended high school in Janesville and earned a degree in chemical engineering at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Donald worked as a chemical engineer for Standard Oil in New Jersey before returning to Janesville in 1935 to pursue his passion to start his own business. Donald wanted to do something that combined his love of the great outdoors with a means of making a living. With encouragement from his brother, Kenneth, he did just that by starting his own pheasant business. Kenneth had started a pheasant farm of his own in 1928. In an unfortunate hunting accident, Kenneth was killed in 1940. Donald made the decision then to merge his farm with his brother's pheasant farm and is recognized as the founder of MacFarlane Pheasant Farm.

Donald was an amazing individual not only with what he was able to accomplish with his business but also associated with his community involvement. He successfully worked on establishing his pheasant business despite being paraplegic as a result of polio. He was one of the founders of the NAACP in Janesville, served on the Rock County Board of Supervisors for 20 years, helped start the local chapter of habitat for humanity, and was active in the Janesville Baptist church.

During the 1960's with the increased ability to ship day-old poultry nationwide, Donald expanded the breeding aspect of MacFarlane Pheasant Farm and began large-scale production of day-old pheasant chicks. Over 200,000 day-old pheasant chicks were produced annually during the 1960's.

During this same time frame dressed bird production although limited (perhaps 3,000 birds annually) set the stage for future growth. During the 60's mature pheasants continued to be produced for sale to hunting preserves. But Donald's vision of dressed birds would eventually contribute significantly to the company's offerings. As Donald's health was declining in the 70's he persuaded his son Bill MacFarlane to return to Janesville in 1979 and form MacFarlane Pheasants Incorporated. Nevertheless he still stayed involved with the business.

As a result of what Donald had initiated and mentoring his son Bill, this led to expanded hatching capacity with a new hatchery built in 1987 and annual additions of pheasant pens and new brooder barns. In the late 1980's the decision was made to substantially enter into the dressed pheasant business. A commitment was made to produce fresh dressed pheasants every week of the year. In 1994, a state of the art genetic facility was constructed to enable the farm to focus on producing pheasants for meat more economically and efficiently.

Donald was a pioneer and visionary in developing a cross breed white pheasant. This vision was initiated in the mid 70's. Small-framed white pheasants were cross bred with jumbo ringnecks and through selective breeding that resulted in a large meaty bird that today is used to supply essentially all of their meat production. Impressively, the growth rate to produce a market weight bird went from 22 weeks to now only 8 weeks. Don's vision for producing a white meaty pheasant was key in that white-feathered pheasants solved a problem associated with darker ringneck plumage and the pigmentation that left behind darker spots on the meat.

In 2000 MacFarlane Pheasants Incorporated forged an even greater commitment to quality and service to their food products customers when a new facility was added to the Food Products division. This new facility allows custom cuts and fresh product packaging at a moment's notice, thereby assuring freshness to their customers. Current products include ready-to-cook pheasant, fully cooked pheasant, and further processed game meat products. Products include ground pheasant, pheasant brat cordon bleu, pheasant pie, and smoked whole pheasant.

MacFarlane Pheasants Incorporated is the largest pheasant farm in North America and produces approximately 1.6 million chicks per year. Approximately 500,000 chicks are raised to maturity and over 220,000 premium meat-type dressed pheasants are produced each year. The company has 60 employees, 10 of which are full-time associated with the food products center that process the meat-type pheasants.

Donald's vision, leadership, and impact were unquestionably significant to the growth of the game bird business as well the development of a nationally prominent pheasant meat products business founded in Wisconsin.