



October 02, 2018

Dr. Benny “Ben” Norman, a long-time UC Davis Extension Veterinarian and mentor to many at the School of Veterinary Medicine over the years, died on August 17 at the age of 82. He was born in Shawnee, OK, on January 16, 1936. Norman was a 1960 Oklahoma State University DVM graduate and also had an M.S. degree in veterinary pathology (1966), a Ph.D. degree in Animal Nutrition (1970), both from OSU, and an MPVM degree from UC Davis (1996). Norman was a diplomate of both the American College of Veterinary Nutrition and the American College of Animal Nutrition, and was also a former Associate Professor of Animal Science at New Mexico State University at Las Cruces, NM.

Remembrance from Dr. Charles A. Hjerpe, Emeritus Professor, UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine:

Ben Norman was an extraordinarily gentle, humble and self-effacing individual. Among his personal achievements were 1: his special recognition by the American Association of Bovine Practitioners (AABP), at their 2007 Vancouver Meeting, and 2: his Oklahoma State University College of Veterinary Medicine Distinguished Alumni Award in 2000. He was both a Registered Professional Animal Scientist and a Licensed and Accredited Veterinarian.

At various times in his life, Ben worked in private livestock veterinary practices in New Mexico, West Texas, Kansas and Oklahoma.

Ben's principal scientific contributions to the UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine and to UC Davis Agricultural Extension, and to the California Livestock Industry involved a mapping system he worked on showing the degree of micronutrient deficiency/adequacy in unsupplemented beef cattle grazing pastures and/or ranges within each of the 58 California Counties (in which significant numbers of beef cattle were grazed). He also did a lot of work on developing the most practical, economical and effective methods for providing supplemental selenium: how much to provide, when to do it, how often to do it, and in what form (feed supplements, injectables, boluses). He also did some of these same kinds of studies on copper nutrition in grazing cattle.

Dr. Norman was also a "small, personal computer Guru", and he worked extensively with the VMTH Food Animal Residents for many years, to improve their computer literacy and help them with building their 1st generation Radio-Shack models. When the first personal micro-computers came on the market in the early 1980's, you could only buy them from Radio-Shack, the parts were shipped to you, and you had to assemble them. They were really ugly things, nothing like the glitzy, small, compact personal computers of today. They looked like a rectangular "black box" (they were black in color) and were about 12 x 12 inches across and 24 inches high. This was occurring soon after I became Hospital Director, in 1980. I am sure Ben was also doing this kind of teaching with the County Livestock Farm Advisors around the State, as well as with at least a few individual ranch and feedlot owners and managers.

For more than 25 years, Ben was in charge of an extremely popular summer exhibit at the annual California State Fair in Sacramento, where the public could observe calves, lambs, kids and piglets being born, under the supervision of Dr. Norman and more than 30 students from the school, who had been trained by and were supervised and paid by Dr. Norman.

Dr. Norman was fluent in the Spanish language (he always called me Carlos, bless his heart) and at various times, he worked in varying capacities with Latin American vet schools in Columbia, Guatemala, and Paraguay, and after retirement, with the Mexican Government in northern Mexico. He met and married his wife, Kathy, who still lives in Davis, during one of the years when he was working in South America. Ben is also survived by a son, Eric, a daughter, Diana, and a grandson, Alejandro.