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# **NORTHEASTERN AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS COUNCIL DISTINGUISHED MEMBER AWARD—JUNE 1980**

**Alan R. Bird**

Dr. Alan R. Bird was born in Australia and received his undergraduate training at the University of Queensland. He was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship in 1956 and completed studies for a Master's Degree at the University of Nottingham, England. Subsequently, Alan enrolled in the doctorate program at Michigan State University. The Ph.D. was completed in 1960 but during his graduate studies he authored an AFEA award winning paper in 1957.

After completing the Ph.D., Dr. Bird was employed by the University of Massachusetts for two years. In 1963 he joined the USDA and served as senior regional economist until 1967. From 1967 until 1973, Alan was Deputy Administrator of EDD, ERS, USDA. Currently he is senior economist in EDD, ESCS, USDA.

Dr. Bird is a broad gauged economist whose interests and capabilities extend across a wide spectrum of the field of agricultural economics. Those who prefer neat and orderly categories with little overlap would find it difficult to classify Alan. He has plowed the field as a regional economist, a planner, a development expert, a theorist and policy adviser. His publication record is extensive and the quality of his writing attests to the excellence of his professional skills.

As notable as his achievements may be in service to the USDA or his profession, this council is bestowing its highest honor on Dr. Bird primarily for his service to the NAEC. He has been a faithful and dedicated member of the Council for many years, beginning way back with the New England Council. He has attended most meetings of the Executive Committee and has represented USDA in an exemplary manner. Over the years he has provided much information about the research programs of USDA, its missions

and organizational changes. Considering the continuous organizational changes in USDA there were no times when Alan had nothing to report and most times he resorted to abstracts of changes.

In addition to his excellent performance as a representative of USDA, Alan has exerted much effort to increase membership in NAEC among personnel in industry and USDA. Over the years the membership from USDA has increased and we suspect that Alan was the primary reason.

Dr. Bird has presented papers at annual meetings, reviewed manuscripts and been an active participant in NAEC affairs. All of these activities pale when compared to his efforts on the Awards Committee and the By-Laws Committee. The Awards Committee labored long, diligently and with tremendous perception in deriving the criteria and procedures that are employed in the selection of candidates for the primary awards that this Council bestows upon its members.

A few years later Dr. Bird was asked to serve on the By-Laws Committee. He agreed without reservation to one of the most thankless tasks of any organization. Yet, it is changes in formal rules and procedures that often provide for renewed strength and vitality of a group. After time for systematic review and consideration, proposed modifications in our by-laws were brought before the NAEC membership at our 1979 meeting. Today, we are operating under the new changes.

For all of these enumerated activities that extend beyond the normal participating roles of members, the NAEC does hereby accord its Distinguished Member Award to Dr. Alan R. Bird.