

Obituary

EVAN WILLIAM EVANS

Evan William Evans, Deputy Director and head of the Food Structure Department of the AFRC Institute of Food Research, Reading Laboratory, UK, died on 21 March 1986. Dr Evans was born in Dolgellau in 1926, educated at Dolgellau Boys' Grammar School and at the University of Wales where he was trained as a physicist obtaining a first class degree in physics, followed by a PhD. He started his career in the metals industry, first with the British Iron and Steel Research Association, Sheffield, UK, and then with Imperial Metal Industries Limited, Birmingham, UK. At that time he was concerned with solid state physics involving thermal and magnetic properties of metals and alloys, and with research into new metals technology. He was also involved in technical sales and gained valuable experience in industrial project evaluation.

In 1967 Dr Evans was appointed Head of the Physics Department of the National Institute for Research in Dairying at Shinfield and a member of the academic staff of the University of Reading, UK. Thus his career moved from an environment of industrial manufacturing to one of biological research.

To this new challenge in a very different field Dr Evans' response was characteristic; he brought innovative ideas and new vision in the application of physics to the problems of dairy science. He gave inspired leadership to his department and initiated many new research areas, developing ideas and concepts that others with a more traditional background in dairy science may have been reluctant to pursue. He



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recognised early in its development the considerable potential of membrane processes for application in the dairy field, and was an enthusiastic advocate for their use including the on-farm concentration of milk. Dr Evans made a significant contribution to the understanding of flavours in milk products, in particular by the use of instrumental and analytical methods to unravel the chemistry of flavour development. He also pioneered physical techniques in the study of food particles in digestion and in the study by microscopy of the fat globule membrane and cheese structures.

Dr Evans was always ready to give freely of his advice and experience to the dairy industry, and his helpful manner did much to strengthen links between the Institute and the industry it served. The work that he and his colleagues carried out on the freezing point of milk—involving a wide collaborative survey within the UK—will be remembered not only for its usefulness to the industry but also for Dr Evans' patient and painstaking organisation and coordination of the exercise.

His willingness to take part in the activities of learned societies in his area of science, often extending to membership of committees in which

he could be relied upon to make a positive contribution, was always appreciated, as were his activities in supporting scientific journals through membership of editorial boards and in refereeing papers.

Organisational changes at the NIRD in 1980 and also in 1984 brought increased administrative responsibility to Dr Evans, first as the head of the Physical Sciences Department (formed from the amalgamation of the Physics and Chemistry Departments) and then as head of the Food Science Division which comprised all the departments engaged in research into milk products. When on 1 April 1985 the new Food Research Institute, Reading, was formed, he became Deputy Director and head of the Food Structure Department. Having played a major role in setting up the new Institute and in developing its new research programme, which now encompassed not only dairy foods but also oils and fats, confectionery and general food process engineering, he was beginning to consider his retirement in the summer of 1986 and looking forward to moving back to his homeland—Wales.

All who knew Dr Evans will miss his stimulating approach to science, his humanity, his friendly nature and his loyalty and support.

Gordon Cheeseman