

# National 4-H Hall of Fame 2011

## Oklahoma



**Benjamin Albert "B. A." Pratt**  
State 4-H Club Agent

**Hometown:** Stillwater, OK

**Nominated by:** Oklahoma 4-H

### Major 4-H Accomplishments:

Oklahoma State 4-H Club Agent, 1921-1940. Chaperoned Oklahoma delegations to the first National 4-H Congress in 1922 and the first National 4-H Camp in 1927. State 4-H membership more than doubled from 30,000 during his tenure.

**Honors:** Under Pratt's leadership, an Oklahoma 4-H member won the first Moses Leadership Award in 1924, and another won the first Presidential Tray in 1934. The Oklahoma 4-H Dairy Judging Teams of 1928 and 1931 won both the national and international contests. Over the years several members won the Outstanding 4-H Club Boy or Outstanding 4-H Club Girl award at National 4-H Club Congress.

### Biography:

B. A. Pratt was a 4-H pioneer who served for almost 20 years during the most formative part of our history. B. A. received his BS from Kansas State Agricultural College and MS in agriculture from Peabody Institute at Vanderbilt. After working as an agricultural instructor and researcher, he was hired in 1921 as the Oklahoma State 4-H Club Agent. Pratt was called the "Ringmaster of the 4-H Circus" at the annual State 4-H Roundup in Stillwater. Roundup was held in a very large circus tent as no Oklahoma A & M building could hold the 3,000 4-H members and leaders in attendance. Pratt engaged with University President Henry Bennett to get the legislature to appropriate funds for a "4-H Club & Student Activity Building."

Pratt chaperoned Oklahoma delegations to the first National 4-H Congress in 1922, and the first National 4-H Camp in 1927. A 1936 news clipping shows that Oklahoma sent 20 youth to the National 4-H Dairy Congress, 200 to the American Royal and 50 to the National 4-H Congress. In 1928, his dairy judging team won the national and international contests. State 4-H participation increased from 30,000 in 1921 to over 64,000 in 1939. In 1940 the Farmers Union created the position of State Education Director just for him. After several years he returned to the classroom as an instructor for the Veteran's Agriculture Education program where he remained until his death in 1949.

### Quote:

At the time of his retirement, the editor of the Daily Oklahoman said of B. A. Pratt: "You have built a monument in the hearts of the farm youth and their parents in the State of Oklahoma. Your record of accomplishments is the best in the United States."



B. A. Pratt (right) with a tractor he designed from used auto parts to help farmers survive the depression.



B.A. Pratt (right) with the 1929 national and international champion dairy judging team on tour in Europe.



B. A. Pratt (center) receiving a Tribute to 4-H Citation upon his retirement.