

Panos D. Caldis, 1896-1974

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Panos Demetrius Caldis, Director of Agricultural Research for Del Monte Corporation from 1935 to 1961, died at the Alta Bates Hospital in Berkeley, California, November 26, 1974. He was an international authority on all the problems inherent in the economic production of high-quality fruits and vegetables for processing and served for a time

in this capacity with the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization.

A son of Greek parents, he was born in Smyrna, Asia Minor, July 21, 1896. He attended preparatory schools in that city, receiving his Bachelor of Commerce degree from International College in Smyrna in 1914 and a B.A. degree the following year. He taught in the Preparatory Department of International College until 1919, at which time he moved to the United States to study agriculture on a scholarship from the Greek Government. In the United States, he attended Michigan State University where he received a B.S. degree in Genetics and Soils in 1922, and an M.S. degree in Plant Pathology in 1923. He then enrolled in the University of California at Berkeley, and received the Ph.D. degree in Plant Pathology and Plant Nutrition in 1926. While at California, he held the James Rosenberg Memorial Scholarship for two years, and subsequently worked as an Assistant Plant Pathologist at the University Experiment Station at Davis, California. During 1925-26 he held the position of Junior Plant Pathologist at the Experiment station.

Dr. Caldis joined the California Packing Corporation (now the Del Monte Corporation) in 1926. For five years he worked on pineapple production and pineapple disease problems for the Haytian Pineapple Company, a subsidiary of California Packing Corporation in Haiti. In 1931, he was transferred to the Philippine Packing Corporation in Mindanao, The Philippine Islands, to continue his work on pineapples.

Upon his return to the United States in 1933, Dr. Caldis worked in Scientific Research for Calpak until 1935, at which time he was placed in charge of agricultural experimental work for the California Division Land Department. In 1944, he was appointed to the newly created post of Director of Western Agricultural Research for the Corporation, a position he held until 1954 when he was named Director of Agricultural Research for Del Monte's expanding world wide operations.

His work for the University of California resulted in the publication of two articles on endosepsis (internal rot) and souring of the fruit of the fig, one published in *Hilgardia* in 1927 and the other in *Journal of Agricultural*

Research in 1930. Although dealing with two different causal organisms, a *Fusarium* species in one case and yeasts in the other, both publications disclosed the role of an insect in the transmission and development of these economically important diseases.

His early work for Del Monte Corporation included the nutritional problems influencing yield and the canning quality of peaches and apricots. He also was involved personally in the then rapidly developing field of chemical pest control and pesticide application methods.

Later, under his direction, the department became involved in solving the Corporation's problems resulting from the economic desirability of replanting in land where the same crop had previously been grown. This led to his expertise in soil fumigation, crop rotation, and breeding for resistance to soil-borne pathogens. Breeding for higher yield, improved canning quality, disease resistance, and the extension of the packing season eventually became the dominant role of Agricultural Research under his guidance and resulted in the development of cultivars particularly suited for each of Del Monte's growing areas.

In 1961, Dr. Caldis retired as Agricultural Research Director for the Del Monte Corporation and served as a consultant until 1971. In the latter capacity he surveyed agricultural, production, and marketing practices in Japan, leading to a report which played an important role in the extension of Del Monte operations to Japan. He made similar studies in Mexico and Greece for the international operations of the Corporation. His final assignment at Del Monte was a French-to-English translation of the book "The Pineapple", by Clyde Py.

In 1946, while Director of Western Agricultural Research for Del Monte Corporation, he served as Vice-Chairman of an international commission of eleven scientists who made a 4-month study of the agricultural economy of Greece for the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization.

In addition to his membership in the American Phytopathological Society, Dr. Caldis was a member of Sigma Xi, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the American Institute of Biological Sciences, the American Society of Horticultural Sciences, the American Society of Plant Physiology, the American Society of Agronomy, the American Entomological Society, the Soil Science Society of America, the Botanical Society of America, and was the Corporate representative to the Agricultural research Institute of the National Research Council. He was a member of the California Academy of Science, a member of the advisory board of Strybing Arboretum in Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, past president and a permanent director of the San Francisco Business Men's Garden Club, a member of the Garden Club of Oakland, and of AHEPA (Greek Club).

He was a prolific photographer of children, flowers, and the rolling hills of California, as well as of subjects pertaining to his work. A lover of plants and flowers, his garden always more than overflowed with rare and not-so-rare plant specimens from all over the world which he was never too busy to share with others.

A resident of Berkeley, California, for the last 40 years of his life, he is survived by his wife, Maria; two daughters, Niki and Noel; a son, Jay; and two grandchildren, all of whom reside in the San Francisco Bay area.