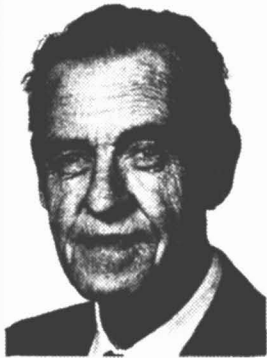


**Lawrence Henson, 1908-1978**  
Stephen Diachun and R. A. Chapman



Lawrence Henson, noted plant pathologist, Associate Professor of Plant Pathology in the College of Agriculture at the University of Kentucky, died at his home in Lexington, Kentucky, November 9, 1978. He was born on June 22, 1908, in Adair County, Kentucky, and lived all his life in his home state, except for a period of time for graduate study in Minnesota and for military service abroad during World War II.

He graduated with the B.S. degree from Berea College in 1931, and received the M.S. degree from the University of Kentucky in 1933. His graduate study toward the doctorate in Plant Pathology at the University of Minnesota was disrupted by the war.

Lawrence Henson joined the staff of the College of Agriculture of the University of Kentucky in 1931 as one of the early graduate students and research assistants in plant pathology. Later he was appointed jointly in plant pathology and forage crops agronomy, and still later as Associate Professor in Plant Pathology. He devoted his whole professional life to research and service in the College of Agriculture.

He became interested in diseases of forage crop legumes (particularly red clover) and grasses early in his career, developed competence and skill rapidly, and became known world wide for his vast store of knowledge about the diseases and development of red clover. He had unusual ability to detect and nurse along plants with special characteristics such as tolerance to disease and insect pests, unique flower color, high seed production, vigor, and self fertility. He was an indefatigable worker equally at ease in his plots

with a hoe, in the greenhouse, or at his microscope. It was his custom to be in the field early in the morning, often on his hands and knees, examining and almost caressing the clover plants he knew so well and liked so much.

Professor Henson's observations and studies convinced him that the tremendous genetic differences in populations of red clover provided opportunity for plant pathologists and plant breeders to select for desirable traits and to develop superior cultivars. Following his conviction, he did develop, in cooperation with Dr. E. N. Fergus and Dr. W. D. Valleau, Kenland Red Clover, a superior cultivar with resistance to southern anthracnose (caused by *Colletotrichum trifolii*), wide adaptability, and good vigor. This outstanding cultivar soon became the standard variety, not only throughout Kentucky, but also in much of the red clover belt in the eastern and central states. Kenland has maintained freedom from southern anthracnose for many years; in fact, southern anthracnose has become almost a curiosity in Kentucky.

Professor Henson's interest in forage crop plants was far ranging. Although he devoted his main attention to virus and fungus diseases of red clover, he worked also, with graduate students and colleagues, on problems of white clover, alfalfa mosaic, alfalfa leaf spots, rust and leaf spots of tall fescue, and even on the alkaloid content of fescue. With Dr. Chilton and Dr. Johnson, he helped develop and publish a useful detailed compendium of fungi pathogenic on *Medicago*, *Melilotus*, and *Trifolium*.

Professor Henson's tremendous energy allowed him to devote more than normal time and effort to plant pathology and also to participate vigorously in his family life, his church activities, and his departmental and college affairs. His family, colleagues, and his friends miss his intense loyal support, and his deep devotion and love.