

FAGAN, THOMAS WALLACE (1874 - 1951), agricultural chemist

Name: Thomas Wallace Fagan
Date of birth: 1874
Date of death: 1951
Spouse: Helena Teresa Fagan (née Hughes)
Parent: Katherine Fagan (née Griffiths)
Parent: James Wallace Fagan
Gender: Male
Occupation: agricultural chemist
Area of activity: Nature and Agriculture; Science and Mathematics
Author: Llywelyn Phillips

Born 4 February 1874 at Talysarn, Caernarfonshire, son of James Wallace and Katherine Fagan. He was educated in the local school, Denstone College, and Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, and graduated in 1898. He was for a short period chemistry master in Abertillery secondary school (his successor in that post was **Thomas Jacob Thomas**, 'Sarnicol'), and then went to study under the professors Dobbie and Winter at University College, Bangor. He was appointed lecturer in the Harper Adams Agricultural College, Salop, in 1904, and was afterwards lecturer in the department of agriculture of Edinburgh University. In 1919 he was appointed to the staff of the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth, as an adviser in agricultural chemistry under the Ministry of Agriculture for the counties served by the college. He became head of the department of agricultural chemistry of the college in 1924, as successor to J. Jones Griffith. He was promoted Professor in 1931 and retired in 1939.

In collaboration with the Welsh Plant Breeding Station between 1919 and 1939 Fagan became one of the leading British scientists studying the chemistry of grass and its conservation. He was a pioneer in this field and his articles, most of which were published in the *Welsh Jnl. of Agric.*, bear testimony to his ability, dedication and leadership as an agricultural scientist. His meticulous and accurate analyses were of inestimable value to plant breeders, and according to **R. G. Stapledon** Fagan laid sure foundations for understanding the innumerable factors affecting the nutritive value of grasses, clovers, and other grassland plants. He continued his researches to the end of his life, but did not receive the commendation which was due to him for his pioneering work, possibly because he was by nature unassuming, and reluctant to extol the value of his own researches.

He married Helena Teresa Hughes, and they had one son. Fagan died in Aberystwyth, 10 February 1951, and was buried in the town cemetery.

Author

Llywelyn Phillips, (1914 - 1981)

Sources

Information given by J.H.W. Fagan

Journal of the Agricultural Society, University College of Wales, Aberystwyth, 1952, 33

Richard Phillips, *Pob un Âd'i gwys* (Aberystwyth 1970)

personal knowledge

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