

Gus R. Douglass

Gus R. Douglass was elected to his ninth four-year term as West Virginia's Commissioner of Agriculture in November 2000. With 32 years of service, he is now



the Senior Commissioner of Agriculture in the United States. Douglass was elected to previous terms in 1964, 1968, 1972, 1976, 1980, 1984, 1992 and 1996, and was a gubernatorial candidate in 1988. In addition to his position as Commissioner of Agriculture, he and his son Tom operate their 400-acre family farm in Mason County, specializing in beef cattle and grain production.

Douglass started with the West Virginia Department of Agriculture in 1957 as Assistant Commissioner. Prior to working in the Department, he operated a farm equipment and motor truck dealership.

Raised amidst agriculture in Grimms Landing, West Virginia, Douglass served as state and national president of the Future Farmers of America (FFA), was chosen as a West Virginia Star Farmer and later helped to organize and served as first president of the National FFA Alumni Association. He is also a 4-H All-Star. He holds a bachelor's degree from West Virginia University, an honorary Doctor of Laws degree from West Virginia State College and an honorary Doctor of Sciences degree from West Virginia University.

He has served as president of the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) and the Southern Association of State Departments of Agriculture (SASDA), and was chairman of the Southern Regional Committee for Food and Agriculture under President Jimmy Carter. Additionally, Douglass has served twice as president of the Southern United States Trade Association (SUSTA). He also participated as a member of several national agriculture committees and task forces, and has been frequently called upon to give testimony before Congressional committees regarding national agricultural policy. He currently chairs the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture's Advisory Committee on International Foreign Animal and Poultry Diseases, representing the state departments of agriculture. He serves on three NASDA committees, including International Marketing and Trade, Food Regulation and Nutrition, and is chair of the Animal and Plant Industries Committee.

Douglass has received a number of awards and honors, including the Gamma Sigma Delta award for Distinguished Service to West Virginia Agriculture and *Progressive Farmer* magazine's "Man of the Year" in West Virginia Agriculture. In 1990, he was enshrined into the West Virginia Agriculture and Forestry Hall of Fame.

He serves on the West Virginia Rural Development Council, of which he is past chairman, and also chairs the State Conservation Committee. Currently, he is a member of the West Virginia Housing Development Fund and the Air Quality Board, a director for Peoples Bank of Point Pleasant, and a trustee for Pleasant Valley Hospital. He is a member of the board of the State Farm Museum, and is on the board of directors for the State Fair of West Virginia. Throughout his career, he has served on more than 25 boards, commissions and committees, including chairman of the West Virginia Air Pollution Control Commission and the State Forestry Commission.

He and his wife Anna Lee, also a 4-H All-Star, have four children and six grandchildren, and belong to the Leon Baptist Church. Douglass is a Mason and a Shriner.