



**James (Jim) Stares Murby
(1912-2014)**

From a small beginning on a farm near Kerwood Jim and his wife Margaret moved their poultry operation to Aurora to take advantage of Toronto's fast growing Asian market where in 1950 he established King Cole Ducks.

King Cole is the only fully vertically integrated farm of its kind in North America: from research and development, breeding, hatching, growing and processing to product development /cooking and shipping, every step of the process is truly "in house" and hands on.

Today King Cole Ducks Ltd. processes 40,000 ducks per week and produces approximately 2.5 million ducks per year to create their delicious lines of ready to cook and fully cooked duck products for Canadian and international markets.

James (Jim) Stares Murby 1912-2014

James Murby was born November 20, 1912 in Chicago to Anne and Charles Murby. His sister Peggy was born six years later.

The family moved from Chicago to a 300 acre farm near Kerwood in 1923. His father, Charles, continued as a cattle trader in the Chicago Stockyards and came to Kerwood to see his family occasionally.

James attended elementary school in Metcalfe Township, then attended Watford High School. Following this, he attended Ontario Agricultural College from 1930 to 1935 graduating with a Degree in Agriculture.

Jim's farming career started at a young age by acquiring laying hens and producing meat birds. He recognized early on his sale of chickens had much competition while he had no trouble selling as many ducks as he could provide his customers. He raised horned Herford cattle and shipped his bulls as far away as Kentucky for an annual sale. In 1945 the cattle herd was sold. This provided the needed and capital to concentrate on producing poultry. In that same year, 1945, his Kerwood area poultry barn burned to the ground. So, rather than rebuild in Kerwood and after planning and analyzing his family's options, Jim decided to move his budding business closer to Toronto. He realized this seeming setback was an opportunity to be closer to a growing and more lucrative market and moved his family to Aurora in 1947 where he and his wife Margaret purchased an existing poultry farm which consisted of 3 acres; a house and 2 poultry barns. In 1950 they purchased a 100 acre farm and established King Cole Ducks. Now he began concentrating on duck production as a new market which was growing with the increased growth of the Asian Community in the Toronto area. This was the start of a family tradition of quality duck farming that would reach international markets.

King Cole Ducks Ltd. now process 40,000 ducks per week, also has a feather plant which ships to Korea. A cook plant was also added, which produces cooked and smoked duck products, which are shipped all over the world.

King Cole is the only fully vertically integrated farm of its kind in North America: from research and development , breeding, hatching, growing and processing to product development/ cooking and shipping , every step in the process is truly “in house “ and hands on.

King Cole Duck products are sold fresh and local, and are featured in retail food stores. Butcher Shops, and delis across North America. Also serve restaurants, resorts, hotels, and cruise lines around the world. Each year King Cole Ducks produces approximately 2.5million ducks to create their delicious lines of Ready – to-Cook and Fully Cooked duck products.

From the early days of his life, Jim Murby witnessed the dramatic ups and downs in agriculture and was able to adapt and thrive in what many would consider a niche market; meat duck production. Jim took advantage of each new challenge witnessed throughout his long and active life. His analysis of business opportunities arising from change and challenge has served him well over his 100 plus years. Still interested in the business of his creation, King Cole Ducks, Jim Murby continued his almost daily visits to the company’s storefront in Newmarket until his death January 29, 2014. He grew his small poultry business into what today can be described as a family dynasty. In recent years he has turned the reins over to the second and third generations. His 4 granddaughters run the farms now.

His keen interests in succeeding along with his astute observations of changing demographics and markets have provided a steadfast compass for his decisions. Of course this is the language of 2014. In his early days the goal was “How do I provide for my growing family”.

He drew the map in developing the industry for duck production for the meat market. Not satisfied with just producing ducks, Jim Murby recognized the bigger vision. He didn't wait for someone to be his supplier or marketer; he developed the complete value chain himself. Breeding, hatchery, processing and marketing aspects are all integrated to work as a whole. The distinct specialized yet integrated aspects of duck production is key to King Cole Ducks long lasting success. King Cole Ducks, with Jim at the head, worked to market the meat and utilize the many duck by-products. Every part is processed for an end product, using an innovative approach and attention to the environmental impact of his business.

Jim Murby's lasting legacy and accomplishments in the duck industry are extraordinary. Though the sector is small, his operation management success, introduction of new equipment, production management focus and applied practices within this sector brought about the advancement of the duck industry as a whole and today continues to expand. His industry innovation and broad expansion of markets both domestic and international for this specialty meat has had significant economic impact.