

the Gisborne and Banks Peninsula areas but has been also a regular speaker at field days and farming conferences throughout New Zealand. He has acted as supervisor of the Kirwee Experimental Farm 1946-8, Ashley Dene 1949-54 and the College Research Farm 1956-65.

He has been a member of the National Research Advisory Council and Chairman of the Primary Production Committee 1971-7, the Dryden Committee on Livestock Improvement and the Livestock Improvement Technical Advisory Committee. In his spare time he has made visits to the United Kingdom, U.S.A. and Australia and undertaken assignments to India and Nepal in 1963, Sri Lanka and Thailand 1970, Indonesia 1972 and 1973 and Thailand 1976.

It is not surprising, then, in view of these many contributions to New Zealand agriculture that he was honoured with the award of an O.B.E. in 1976 and with fellowships of the New Zealand Institute of Chemistry and New Zealand Institute of Agricultural Science.

Finally, he has made a notable contribution to the Society of Animal Production since joining in 1946, and was its President in 1955.

## THE McMEEKAN MEMORIAL AWARD

### P H. ELWORTHY

The first three recipients of the McMeekan Memorial Award in Animal Production were all distinguished scientists with post-graduate degrees who had made outstanding contributions to research and extension in their specialized fields. This year the Society of Animal Production is honouring Peter Elworthy, a man with a very different background, whose contribution to the cause of livestock production has been equally outstanding but of a very different kind.

Peter Elworthy is not primarily a man of science but a man of the farming industry. After obtaining station and back country experience at Glenaray in Southland he proceeded to Lincoln College where in 1955 he took the "Intensive" diploma course. From 1956 to 1958 he travelled widely overseas, examining a whole variety of farming activities. Then in 1959 he assumed overall managership of his family's farming venture, the Craigmore Farming Co. In this family concern Peter Elworthy's particular responsibilities were for the stud livestock enterprises and developmental work.

The 2060 ha Craigmore property in the Timaru district is predominantly limestone, tussock and downland, with 730 ha of steep to easy arable



land, of which 120 ha are alluvial flats suitable for lucerne production or crops, under sprinkler irrigation.

From 1959 to 1975 the Craigmere family interests expanded into a registered Hampshire flock which increased to some 1100 individually performance recorded sheep including 750 breeding ewes. A Charolais stud was also established, which consisted of graded-up animals with a small purebred nucleus with the stud spilling over into the commercial herd, so that currently some 70% of the Craigmere cattle have Charolais blood.

In 1970 Craigmere purchased an adjacent hill country block, Braeval, of 780 ha. This property, on a volcanic rather than a limestone base, has been run in conjunction with Craigmere and developed primarily by the installation of an extensive three stage, 1000 ft lift, water reticulation scheme, which, by enabling cattle to be grazed effectively, raised the property's carrying capacity by some 500 stock units — a notable achievement.

Then, in 1973, the Elworthy farming company purchased the 255 ha Papamoa block on the Morven-Glenavy irrigation scheme. A period of intense activity followed. Housing was provided and the property completely developed, fenced, and reticulated for 100% coverage for border dyke irrigation: Papamoa now carries some 850 deer in all, including 500 hinds, and the plan for the future is to run the farm as a specialist red deer production unit of 2000 hinds plus replacements.

At Papamoa Peter Elworthy pioneered the commercial application of the Wragg Automatic Irrigation Scheme which has been a major factor in the efficient and practical application of the unlimited quantities of water available. The development of Papamoa has resulted in a lift in production of some 3000 stock units.

Peter Elworthy's activities, however, have by no means been confined to land development and livestock production. Through Federated Farmers he has been prominent in farming industry affairs: in 1972-3 he was Chairman of the Timaru-St Andrews Branch of South Canterbury Federated Farmers; in 1973-4, Chairman of the Meat and Wool Section of South Canterbury, and from 1975 to 1977 President of the South Canterbury Province and a Member of the Dominion Council. Peter Elworthy is a leader, a man of independent mind, most articulate, and not afraid to be outspoken, even when his views are unpopular. Thus he was in favour of wool acquisition and did not hesitate to speak up on this controversial issue even though by doing so he lost favour with some sectors of the farming community.

During the past few years Peter Elworthy has made a notable contribution to the deer farming industry. Although there are a number of people who can claim an equal or greater contribution to the development of deer farming, especially those who in the early days fought for its legalization, and who had large herds before Peter Elworthy started, there is not the slightest doubt that he is now a dominant figure in the industry — through his organizing ability, his personality, and his businesslike approach. He played a key role in the establishment of the New Zealand Deer Farmers' Association in 1975, and was its first Chairman.

Peter Elworthy is a man who believes strongly that the farming industry needs to have some control over its own affairs. He has considerable business acumen, and is currently Chairman of the Ravensdown Fertiliser Company.

In view of his outstanding abilities and wide-ranging interests it is perhaps not surprising that in 1969 he was appointed a member of the National Research Advisory Council. He continued to represent farming interests on that body for a period of six years and, throughout his term of office, was a staunch and effective advocate of substantial research and advisory support for the primary industries. It is difficult to over-estimate the importance of his contribution in this area during a period when national livestock numbers remained fairly static and the value of agricultural research and extension services was being questioned, and when other sectors of the community were pressing strongly for an increased share of the science budget.

Late last year, a further demand was made of Peter Elworthy when he was appointed Convener of a committee established by the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries to undertake a review of MAF's sheep and beef cattle research programme.

Although this brief outline does not do full justice to the man, at least it indicates that the contribution Peter Elworthy has made to animal production has been on many different fronts. At the practical farm level he has been highly receptive to new technology and has made a substantial contribution by increasing sheep and beef cattle production. He has been active and innovative in helping get deer farming organized, and established as a promising new industry. Through his membership of the NRAC he has played an important part in the promotion, development, planning and co-ordination of scientific research and services in New Zealand. As an industry leader he has been prominent in Federated Farmers and in commerce. He has also contributed in a further way — as a first rate communicator who has been able to put very clearly the point of view of farmers to scientists and that of scientists to farmers, enabling both groups to be more effective.

It is the total of these many contributions that the Management Committee of the New Zealand Society of Animal Production has acknowledged in selecting Peter Elworthy as this year's recipient of the McMeekan Memorial Award.

A. M. BRYANT  
*President 1977-78*