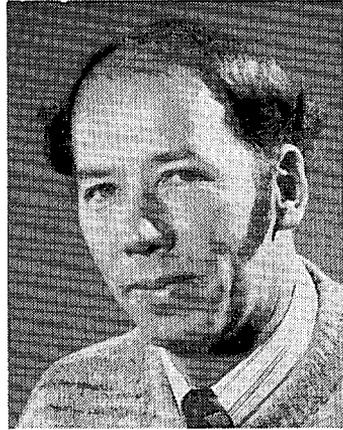


THE McMEEKAN MEMORIAL AWARD

K. R. DREW
M.AGR.SC. PH.D.



Kenneth Russel Drew was born in Dunedin and received his secondary education at Otago Boys' High School. His interest in agricultural research was first aroused when working at Invermay during the school holidays. After an intermediate science year at Otago University he went on to Lincoln College to complete a Bachelor of Agricultural Science degree in 1959. Then followed a Masters degree in the Animal Husbandry Department under Professor Ian Coop. A Wool Board Scholarship provided support at this time. His thesis, "The Maintenance Requirements of Grazing Sheep", was a valuable piece of work, and demonstrated that the feed requirements of grazing sheep were considerably higher than in pen fed animals.

On completing his degree Ken took up an appointment as animal nutritionist at Invermay (then known as the Taieri Agricultural Centre, under George Holmes as Director) to expand the scope of the very small research team at that time on the station. Facilities and support for nutritional research at the Invermay centre then could only be described as rudimentary.

It was then proposed that Ken would benefit from working in a more adequate research environment to further his experimental skills. The obvious choice was the Nutrition Centre at Ruakura, where he came under the wing of Dr John Hutton. Here he set up and evaluated an *in vitro* digestibility procedure, which has made a valuable contribution to nutritional research on ruminants in New Zealand. On his return to Invermay Ken undertook a thorough study of hogget nutrition including the evaluation of root crops as a winter feed and the effect of early nutrition on the subsequent growth and productivity of ewes. In this work he saw the possibilities for the exploitation of the phenomenon of compensatory growth. This interest took him to Cornell University in New York State, where he worked for 3 years with Professor J. T. Reid on changes in the body composition of sheep during compensatory growth. Financial support for his American studies came from the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries and from a Cornell University Fellowship in the Department of Animal Science. The result was the award of a Ph.D. in 1971.

On his return Ken pushed ahead with plans for the further development of the Nutrition Unit, now virtually complete, and a far cry from the laboratory he first set up in an old cowshed in 1963. During this development phase he had close liaison with Ministry of Works architectural and other personnel. This perhaps could explain some of the premature hair loss.

The first ten years at Invermay were, however, simply the groundwork for what was to follow. Ken saw the potential for a new industry based on the deer. Along with this he saw the need for a research contribution to this industry and in 1973 persuaded "higher powers" to let him go ahead with a preliminary evaluation of red deer farming. Small beginnings have now led to a deer research programme which puts Invermay on the map as the foremost establishment for deer farming research in the world. The programme, which covers research in red and fallow deer and wapiti, has produced a very substantial return for a relatively modest research input. This in itself is due in no small part to Ken's leadership.

An integral part of this programme has been the relationship with the deer farming industry, especially through the Deer Farmers' Association. The communication of research results to the industry has formed a very important part of Ken's work and along with others in the deer programme he has spent a considerable amount of time advising farmers and potential investors on aspects of deer farming. His strengths for this type of work are his personality and a well developed ability to see the most important features, obtain relevant information, to then sift it and pass it on in an appropriate form to a wide variety of end users.

Ken's contribution to the deer farming industry was recognised in 1978 with the award of a Lincoln Foundation travel grant to visit various institutes involved in deer research in a number of countries. This work took him to Canada, the United States, Britain, France, Poland, Norway and Mauritius and has provided Invermay and the New Zealand industry with the most up-to-date information available in the world, and many valuable commercial and research contacts.

As leader of the Nutrition Section at Invermay, Ken is responsible for the work of a further five scientists and 14 technical staff on a variety of research topics in sheep and cattle nutrition. Initial studies on levels of feeding on carcass developments of deer will be expanded and studies in the critical areas of pre-slaughter stress, methods of slaughter and conditioning and aging of venison will be possible with the completion of a research abattoir this year.

An important aspect of the communication of research information has been through two conferences promoted by this Society in 1974 and 1977. Ken played the major role in organising these and in editing the proceedings. He served on the Management Committee of NZSAP from 1972-6 and in 1974 was Convenor for the conference and annual meeting in Dunedin.

His contribution to NZSAP did not stop with his resignation from the Management Committee. With Dr Peter Fennessey he edited the Society's latest occasional publication, "Supplementary Feeding" which has just been published. This proved to be a demanding task involving not only the editing of the material, but in many cases, extrication of it from unwilling authors. He has also recently become convenor of the conference organising committee for a world symposium "The Biology of Deer Production" to be held in Dunedin in February 1983.

In conclusion, Ken Drew is very worthy recipient of the McMeekan Award, for his contributions to the development of the deer farming industry in New Zealand and to this Society. It is most appropriate that his wife Jenny is here with us this evening as her support and encouragement to Ken's work have materially assisted the very high level of commitment which has resulted in this recognition.

A. J. ALLISON AND P. F. FENNESSY