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## QUALITY MEATS FROM THE NZ BEEF AND SHEEP INDUSTRIES

### Consistent quality meat products

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### INTRODUCTION

Meat quality has different definitions for different people and in different countries, depending on their position in the value chain. However, the consumer who represents the endpoint of the chain has clearly signalled inconsistent quality of meat as a major consideration in the declining purchases of red meat.

World meat prices are determined by market forces at large, and in the total meat arena New Zealand is a relatively small player despite the majority of its lamb and beef production going for export. The 8% increase that has occurred in the US beef since 1994, is almost on par with the entire value of New Zealand's beef and meat exports in 1994, and a major cause of the decline in export beef prices during the last 12 months. If the New Zealand meat industry is to continue to improve its returns from meat and by-products (\$3.3m in the June 1995 year), it must add value to products and improve its marketing to higher priced outlets. The New Zealand Meat Producers' Board strategic plan 1993-2000 has projected that stock numbers are unlikely to increase because of loss of land available for pastoral farming. Service, quality and consistency in the eyes of consumers must not meet, but exceed the expectations of our target markets at all times.

To this end, the combined resources of industry and science providers in New Zealand will have to be harnessed

to address not only immediate quality problems but also to establish a vision to exploit the biology of the meat animal to produce new products which are relevant to the lifestyles of the modern consumers.

The following papers are a brief introduction to the range of disciplines which are currently active in meat research in New Zealand and cover issues from the market place to research funding and directions, through to the contributions that genetics and animal behaviour, and the possibilities of manipulating meat biochemistry via animal selection. Manipulating quality by the appropriate processing methods for a particular end usage and items influencing the flavour and odour of the meat, are important quality factors which were also considered. They are by no means exhaustive with respect to research currently being conducted in the red meat industry. It is hoped that this session will provide an ongoing focus for Society members by becoming a regular occurrence at the NZSAP Conference thereby providing a platform for a regular exchange of information across all sectors of our industry.

The session was chaired by John Gordon, the well-known rural broadcaster.

*P.A. Speck*