

ELECTION OF HONORARY LIFE MEMBER

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Graham Everitt first appeared on the New Zealand animal production scene in 1958 when he was appointed to the staff of Ruakura Agricultural Research Centre following a distinguished early academic career in Wales and Cambridge. I have no intention of presenting a dry catalogue listing in minute detail all Graham's various awards, commissions and official positions. No doubt these can be cited by anyone who may wish by application to the Wanganui computer. Instead I will highlight some of his notable contributions to animal production.

Following some classic work at Ruakura on the growth and development of lambs, a subject which is still very much to the fore today, he left for the Waite Institute in Adelaide to pursue a Ph.D. study on the growth of foetal lambs.

Graham returned to Ruakura in 1965, then under the Directorship of Dr L.R. Wallace, and began what was to be a major contribution to the development of the New Zealand dairy beef industry, until this time long neglected as a potential contribution to the New Zealand beef cattle industry. His typically clear, concise and precise research studies covered aspects of dairy beef production literally from the cradle to the grave.

The initial work on the growth and survival rate of crossbred calves not only helped dairy farmers

make decisions on suitable sires for dairy beef calves but stimulated those breeds which did not fair too well in the comparisons to include a reduction in calving problems as a criteria in their selection programmes. Most of the many hundreds of calves in these studies were reared on dairy farms, by dairy farmers and their wives. As a result of this off-station research, Graham not only had the opportunity to develop a good rapport with farmers, but it allowed him to identify the apparent importance, which he later tested in some elegantly designed research with identical twins, of the level of nutrition in early life on subsequent growth and profitability of these calves. Important by-products of this work included studies on the stimulus of calf suckling on lactation, calculation of genetic parameter estimates of production traits and identification of the opportunities for sire referencing of potential dairy beef sires within the industry.

Detailed studies on stocking rate by breed interactions provided essential data for extension workers devising target growth patterns and dairy beef systems in which Graham had significant input. To a thorough scientist like Graham, an evaluation of the product was necessary and it was he who developed the use of the yield of trimmed boneless cuts, obtained under commercial conditions, as a recognised measure of beef carcass value. His extensive carcass data were used as a basis for the improvements he advocated to the New Zealand export beef grading system.

Graham's close association with those practically involved in the fledgling dairy beef industry led to his involvement in the formation, and ultimately chairmanship of, the South Auckland Dairy Beef Development Committee and through it the establishment of special dairy beef weaner sales which are now a regular component of livestock sales throughout the country. Graham Everitt can be seen, at least figuratively, as the father of the New Zealand dairy beef industry. It must give him some considerable satisfaction to see the industry as it is today; a major contributor to beef production.

During this time Graham not only carried out this intensive research programme but found time to simultaneously contribute to the management of both this Society and the Institute of Agricultural Science. On behalf of this Society he was very active in building up the membership and raising its profile in furthering the cause of animal production. It was during his term in office that the only definitive review of the New Zealand beef industry ever published, *New Zealand Beef: Production, Processing and Marketing* was conceived, co-

ordinated and published by the New Zealand Institute of Agricultural Science. It must be a mark of his good organisational skills that he managed to stagger his Presidency of these 2 bodies by as much as 2 years.

All this professional activity did not divorce Graham entirely from extra-mural activities and he has had a long and sympathetic involvement in marriage counselling. Golf has always been a good hobby but apparently his spells at the cricket wicket for the Ruakura team did not usually keep him very active for long. On 1 occasion he left his admiring wife and family for a spell at the crease, 1 of the younger children became a little distressed as his father's leaving. "Don't worry" said his wife Margaret, "he won't be away long". His spells at the bridge table have however been much more rewarding.

In 1973, Graham was seconded part-time to serve as National Co-ordinator of Beef Cattle Improvement and Executive Officer of the National Beef Improvement Council. I believe Graham found this one of the more difficult jobs he has had. Because of all the diverse interests involved, Producer Boards, pedigree beef breed societies and their members, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries etc, politics often loomed larger than techniques of beef improvement. In this environment it required all of Graham's patience and diplomacy not to alienate some of the various sector groups involved while still maintaining his scientific principles. It was not easy and it is a tribute to his diplomacy that he was able to maintain the respect of the diverse interests involved and yet ensure that Beefplan developed on a sound scientific basis.

In recent years, from 1979, Graham has had a senior management role as Director of Agricultural Research for the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries in Northland. Under his stewardship the Keri Keri Horticultural Research Station was established in a relatively short time and is now making a major contribution to the horticultural industry. This addition of horticulture to his professional bow must have meant a major new learning curve for him over this period. That he achieved this very successfully is indicated by the respect with which he is held in the horticultural industry. He must surely be the only animal scientist who is also a member of the New Zealand Society of Horticultural Management.

It is perhaps over this period that Graham's skills with people have had their greatest impact

although he has always had an interest in people. There are many younger scientists who kindly remember the interest and encouragement shown to them by Graham Everitt. This interest in the younger scientist has found formal recognition at each Annual Conference in the Young Member's Award which was a Graham Everitt suggestion.

Graham's chuckling sense of humour is never far from the surface, helping to relax, if not disarm those in his conversation. As a scientist he is always stimulating and delights in dropping in new ideas for discussion. He has always loyally supported his colleagues and staff in many ways although there have been times when he has been quite glad of the close support of some of his colleagues himself, for example, the time he and 1 or 2 others accidentally wandered into a 'gay' bar in the middle of Melbourne.

Graham Everitt's good value has been widely recognised overseas. He has been to Australia many times advising various institutions and presenting papers on beef grading, recording systems and other beefy topics. More recently the Ministry of Foreign Affairs commissioned him to review a New Zealand overseas aid project in Indonesia concerned with artificial breeding of cattle and the need for a national breeding programme. This ultimately led to the establishment of the Bali Cattle Improvement programme, a model system for developing cattle industries. As usual Graham's enthusiasm and willingness to tackle a new challenge was to the fore in this project, even if it did get him into a bit of hot water once or twice. For example, when practicing his embryonic Indonesian he thought he had asked the charming girl in the hotel what was on the breakfast menu only to be told he had really asked after her breeding programme.

The attributes which have resulted in Graham contributing so much to animal production and the Society are his sound technical knowledge, an active brain, the enthusiasm and desire to achieve the goal of the moment coupled with an engaging and caring personality.

It is for these reasons that this 'gentleman' of New Zealand animal production is most worthy of election of honorary life membership of this society and I call on all members present and all Friesian dairy beef cattle to support this nomination.

A.M. Nicol