

## HONORARY LIFE MEMBERSHIP

### Professor A R Sykes

*DSc (Wales), PhD (Edin)*

Since arriving at Lincoln College in 1978 as the newly appointed Professor of Animal Science succeeding Professor Ian Coop, Andrew Sykes has been a stalwart of the New Zealand Society of Animal Production. Within a few years he was appointed to the Management Committee and served as the Society's President in 1985. A highlight during this period was his organising, along with Ken Jury, of the fourth Asian-Australasian Animal Production Conference held in Hamilton in 1987. This conference not only showcased New Zealand and NZSAP, but generated a very healthy monetary surplus. This surplus was the genesis of the Society's Animal Science Awards from which many of our animal scientists have benefitted.

A more recent direct contribution by Andrew, along with Neville Grace, was his editing and major input in the revision of Mineral Requirements of Livestock "Managing Mineral Deficiencies in Grazing Livestock" Occasional Publication #15. Andrew has had a less obvious, but none-the-less significant, contribution to the Society through his role as Professor of Animal Science. His passion for good science and scientific writing is best summed up by himself: *"I have always seen my prime role as ensuring that Lincoln University graduates in animal science could go on from New Zealand to any university or research organisation in the world and not be out of their depth intellectually"*.

Andrew obtained his PhD from Edinburgh University in 1967 and worked for the next 10 years at Moredun Research Institute, Edinburgh. At Moredun, work was being done on tooth loss and bone weakness in sheep. The conventional wisdom was that the answer to these problems would lie in identifying and correcting mineral deficiencies. Based on medical work, Andrew was drawn to the idea that an investigation of nematode parasites might be more fruitful. His youthful enthusiasm was indulged with a small experiment which everyone believed would lead nowhere and conveniently serve to "shut him up". Well, the opposite happened astounding results emerged and suddenly the dominance of the mineral explanation for animal bone disorders was under challenge. This and subsequent nematode parasite work won international acclaim and led to speaking engagements and conference invitations abroad. From one such engagement, Andrew



travelled to New Zealand, visiting Wallaceville and Lincoln College. At Lincoln he met the Professor of Animal Science, Ian Coop, who was on the eve of retirement. As a result of this meeting, the College Principal, Professor James Stewart, invited Andrew to consider applying for the job, which he did. When Andrew arrived at Lincoln he saw the task ahead as one of shifting the emphasis in animal science from technical and extension work more towards rigorous scientific enquiry. Andrew's own research covered mineral metabolism, control of endoparasites, growth

and development of livestock animals, and parasite resistance. Narrowness of vision is abhorrent to him and he has been involved in medical research with osteocalcin studies, collaborated with the dental world in his studies of broken mouth in sheep, and he encouraged the early use in New Zealand of Computed Tomography (CT) scanning technology to determine muscle, bone, and fat composition in sheep.

Outside of Lincoln University, Professor Sykes is, a past president of the Asia Australasian Association of Animal Production Societies, and has been chair of the International Advisory Committee for the International Symposia on the Nutrition of Herbivores. He has been a regular technical consultant to joint programmes in livestock development for the International Atomic Energy Agency.

In 1991 he was the recipient of the New Zealand Society of Animal Production's prestigious McMeekan Memorial Award for his leadership in education, research and administration in Animal Science.

In 1992, in recognition of his contribution to animal health in the New Zealand livestock industries, he was invited to deliver the New Zealand Veterinary Association's prestigious Ira Cunningham Memorial Award address.

It is in recognition of Andrew's very significant contribution to this Society, New Zealand agriculture, in particular Animal Science, through his foresight and leadership that we nominate him for life membership.

*Nominated by: Dr Andrew Greer, Dr Graham Barrell*

*Seconded by: Chris Logan*