

McMEEKAN MEMORIAL AWARD 1988

K. E. JURY B.A. (N.Z.), M.Sc.(N.Z.)



The McMeehan Memorial Award is to recognise an outstanding individual contribution to New Zealand Animal Production and/or the Society during the last 5 years. The successful nominee for this award in 1988 is Kenneth Eric Jury.

Ken Jury graduated M.Sc. with 1st Class Honours from the University of Canterbury in 1958, and was subsequently appointed Assistant Biometrician to the late Dr. Alan Carter. His abilities were soon recognised in the award of a Shirtcliffe Fellowship to Cambridge University where he studied during 1959-60 for a Diploma in Mathematical Statistics.

In 1969 he assumed responsibilities for biometrics and computing at Ruakura Animal Research Station and supervised the development of computing facilities for the research campus. He saw, at an early stage, the possibilities in electronic data processing techniques for handling the large data sets generated by the Genetics Section and the large flocks under the Lands and Survey Department. Systems of data handling and manipulation were derived and analysis packages developed that allowed the sequential fitting of linear models to the characteristically *unbalanced* data that arises from many animal experiments.

Such developments allowed the comprehensive analyses of the large scale studies of sheep production on hill country initiated by Ted Clarke and continued by the late Graeme Hight. The series of publications that resulted were comprehensive assessments of reproductive and growth performance as well as wool production of the breeds involved in hill country production and stand as a landmark in animal science in New Zealand.

An interest in the description of growth and development was kindled by the work with Dr. Graham Everitt on Southdown x Romney lambs, published in the *Journal of Agricultural Science*, which led to a fundamental reassessment of the data Fourie had collected at Ruakura in the late 1950's from export lamb breeds.

The expertise and experience gained in this area was carried through into the evaluation, with Drs. Clive Dalton and Graham Everitt, of field trials which measured the importance to New Zealand agriculture of the growth and carcass characteristics and of the breeding cow performance of exotic beef breeds derived from semen imports. Two important associated investigations also arose. Firstly, the opportunity given by the sample of farms used to investigate the relationships between growth rate in early life, preweaning, and subsequent growth. The studies of these relationships were complemented by elegantly designed trials using identical twins. The other investigation was summarised in a paper to this Society which defined the opportunities for genetic evaluation of beef sires across herds using artificial insemination. Sire referencing is now promoted widely in both the beef and sheep industries.

Ken Jury's contribution in these fields was to provide constructive biometrical support to scientists through developing a rapport and respect which encouraged them to acknowledge and seek out the contribution he could make to improvement of their experimental design and analysis and therefore their effectiveness as scientists. The fact that he is an author on over 60 scientific papers reflects his immense contribution.

This role of encouraging and helping fellow scientists and particularly young scientists has been carried through in his position as Director of Animal Research at Ruakura between 1979 and 1987. His care for the welfare and development of young scientists and of junior technical and other support staff has been instrumental in maintaining the impetus and direction of research at the station through a very difficult period. It has not been an easy time for him. His recent appointment as Manager, Animal Research Groups, MAFTech North is a reflection of his skills and achievements in

this position.

Ken Jury's activities and influence extend outside Ruakura. He is well known for this close industry liaison. In this regard he has been a valuable and highly respected member of the New Zealand Dairy Board Livestock Improvement Council since 1979. These attributes led directly to his participation in the Livestock Improvement Association tour of U.S.A. in 1981.

His academic and administrative abilities, interests in the advancement of young people and in the application of biological and mathematical sciences in agriculture have led to his appointment from 1979 to 1985, and again for a third term, currently, to the Council of the University of Waikato. His commonsense approach to University matters and his ability to carry an appreciation of industry issues into this forum have been highly effective and appreciated.

Ken Jury has been one of this Society's staunchest supporters for an extended period. His has been the voice on Management Committee which has, on the one hand, urged caution based on experience and, on the other, set off initiatives to the great benefit to the Society. His most active and notable contribution to the Society and to New Zealand's Animal Production Industries has been in chairmanship of the organising committee for the Asian-Australasian Association of Animal Production Societies Congress held last year in Hamilton. This was a period of 2 years in which he first did battle with Management Committee to commit scarce funds to lay the ground for a full fulfillment of our responsibilities to the Asian-Australasian Association of Animal Production Societies in the previous Congress in South Korea. His was the ultimate responsibility to develop the publicity and profile for New Zealand at the Seoul Congress which stimulated such interest in the

Hamilton Congress. Then followed the responsibility of setting up a local organising committee, selection of chairpersons of committees, the setting of objectives and deadlines, and the continual encouragement of the army of workers who finally put together the immensely successful programme. That success can be measured in several ways. The scale of participation-700 rather than the 400 anticipated. The smooth running and superb atmosphere of the Congress itself which led to the easy interchange of ideas between countries in Asia, the significant contribution of industry in New Zealand to the Conference and the profile thus created within that industry for the Society. While no one would diminish the contribution made by many individuals, all acknowledge the immense contribution by Ken Jury as mentor and tormentor. The acumen he displayed on the Society's behalf in financial control is represented in the *New Zealand Animal Science Trust* currently being established and which will serve as a continual reminder of his contribution to our Society and New Zealand agriculture. There can be no doubt that the success of this Congress has enhanced the stature of the New Zealand Society of Animal Production internationally, and it is now up to the Society to ensure that this reputation is fostered so that it will flourish and blossom forth even more vigorously in the future.

These are the activities of a modest individual who derives greatest satisfaction from helping others and encouraging and promoting the efforts of others to assist the New Zealand animal industries. His endeavours and achievements in these roles are well worthy of the McMeekan Memorial Award.

A.R. Sykes
G.C. Everitt