

LIFE MEMBERSHIP

ERIC DESMOND FIELDEN

BAGrSc (NZ), BVSc (Syd.), FRCVS, FACVSc, Emeritus Professor (Massey University)

Des Fielden has had a professional career which has represented a significant contribution to many aspects of animal production in New Zealand. His initial association with animal production was at Massey Agricultural College, from where he graduated BAGrSc in 1951 and was awarded the Senior Scholarship in Agriculture. His education continued at the University of Sydney, graduating BVSc with honours in 1955. Additional professional qualifications included Fellowships of both the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons and the Australian College of Veterinary Scientists (FRCVS, 1970; FACVSc, 1978).

His first experience in practice was in 1955 with the Opotiki Dairy Association (Ltd). This was continued with the Gisborne Veterinary Club where Des had his interest in research stimulated by David McFarlane, President of this Society in 1954. His interest in cattle fertility was aroused through his involvement in the Gisborne Beef Cattle Survey. This interest continued after his appointment as a Research Officer at the Ruakura Agricultural Research Station in 1959 where he worked with C.P. McMeekan. His creative and organisational skills were demonstrated from 1960 to 1963 when Des established the New Zealand Dairy Board's Awahuri Artificial Breeding Centre as its foundation Superintendent. In this position he was also influenced by his Director who was another stalwart of this Society; namely Dr John James.

Des' involvement in education in veterinary science commenced in 1963 when he was appointed Professor and Head of Department of Veterinary Clinical Sciences at the newly established School of Veterinary Science at Massey Agricultural College. He initially spent a year at the Ontario Veterinary College in Guelph before organising the teaching responsibilities of his Department. This expanded with the development of the teaching programme at Massey, but did not prevent

Des from maintaining a research interest in animal production. There was less opportunity for personal involvement in research when he was appointed Dean of the Faculty of Veterinary Science in 1979. On his retirement from this position in 1989, he was appointed Professor Emeritus by the Massey University Council.

Some older members of this Society may recall the prolonged discussions and politicking which preceded the decision to establish New Zealand's Faculty of Veterinary Science at Massey Agricultural College. The obvious association between Veterinary Science and Agricultural Science was finally accepted as an important element in the Newly developing teaching program. Des was well qualified to maintain and expand this association. He has seen education in veterinary science at Massey University developed to the stage where its graduates are recognised throughout the world. This was clearly demonstrated at the 25th Jubilee Conference on "Advances in Veterinary Science" at Massey University in 1988. Des has been a strong supporter of what is currently described as continuing education and was instrumental in organising some of the original "in service" courses for veterinarians which preceded the establishment of the Foundation for Continuing Education in Veterinary Science. He was a keen participant in the formation of the "specialist societies" including the Dairy Cattle Society and the Sheep and Beef Cattle Society of the New Zealand Veterinary Association and served a term as President of the latter.

As well as his influence on undergraduate training, Des has supervised 24 graduate students who were from New Zealand, Australia, the West Indies, South America, Korea, Japan, Thailand, the United Kingdom and Malaysia. I can personally identify with the benefits of his supervision being his first graduate student when completing a masterate under his guidance at the Awahuri Artificial Breeding Centre. He has authored or co-authored over 50 refereed scientific publications. Most of these were related to animal production and included the original epidemiological studies on post-partum anoestrus in dairy cows in New

Zealand. Additional contributions to scientific publication have included terms as Assistant Editor and membership of the Editorial Committee of the New Zealand Veterinary Journal, and coordinating editor for chapters or sections of "New Zealand Beef Production, Processing and Marketing" (edited by A.G. Campbell for the New Zealand Institute of Agricultural Science) and "Current Therapy in Theriogenology". He is the editor of this Society's forthcoming Occasional Publication on "Reproductive Management in Grazing Livestock". Consultancies have included assignments for the World Bank on Animal Production Training in Burma (1976), for the New Zealand Government to Iran (1982) and for NZADI to Malaysia (1990). Des was Chairperson of the Maximum Security Quarantine Advisory Committee to the Minister of Agriculture concerned with the importation of exotic sheep from Scandinavia during the latter stages of this project and is currently the Chairperson of the National Animal Ethics Advisory Committee, and a member of the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee.

This Society has been of special interest to Des since his introduction to its activities by David McFarlane in 1956. He has been a frequent participant and contributor and has recognised the desirability of maintaining and extending the association between animal scientists and veterinary scientists in improving

the productivity of our livestock. This association was a significant theme in his Presidential Address to the Society in 1988, especially in relation to veterinary involvement in animal health and production programmes. His concluding statement is repeatable: "Animal productivity in this country can only benefit if all the groups concerned are prepared to work in harmony and trust. I believe this is happening and only hope that all concerned will continue to rise to the challenge." His involvement in the Committee for the recent Jubilee Conference of this Society was another example of his readiness to accept a challenge which had the potential to directly enhance the activities of the Society and to consequently contribute to improved animal productivity.

It is not surprising that Des Fielden's outstanding contributions to education, and to veterinary science have been recognised at the time of his recent retirement. He received the President's Award of the New Zealand Veterinary Association for services to the profession in 1989 and a New Zealand 1990 Commemorative Medal for services to veterinary science. It is appropriate that this Society should recognise his contributions to the Society's activities and to animal production in New Zealand by awarding him Honorary Life Membership of the New Zealand Society of Animal Production.

K.L. Macmillan