

THE McMEEKAN MEMORIAL AWARD 1991

Andrew Roy Sykes is from Yorkshire and for those who follow cricket he displays his County origins on and off the field. Andrew graduated for Bangor with a BSc (Hons Agr) and obtained his PhD from Edinburgh in 1967.

Whilst doing his PhD at ABRO he came under the influence of Professor H P Donald, a New Zealander. From 1968-1978 he worked at the Moredun Research Institute producing key papers on calcium and phosphorus metabolism and requirement and on the interaction of endoparasites and nutrition of sheep. This work displayed his ability to do work of practical significance but with the keen critical, scientific approach for which he is well known. This work gained him international acclaim.

In 1978 he took up the Chair and Head of the Department of Animal Science at Lincoln College following in the illustrious footsteps of previous Professors of Animal Science at Lincoln College, C.P. McMeekan and I.E. Coop. He quickly stamped his own style and vision for the future of animal science at Lincoln and in New Zealand.

The McMeekan Award honours people who have made a major contribution to animal production in New Zealand over the last 5 years and it is this on which we now concentrate. His contribution can be seen in four areas; The New Zealand Society of Animal Production, National Committees, Research and Education.

He was President of the Society in 1985, President of AAAP in 1985 and in 1990 Chairman of the Jubilee Committee. In all these positions he sought to extend the position of the Society in animal production in New Zealand and its role in the Asian-Australasian region. Under his leadership the Society re-examined its commitment to high standards of scientific research and debated its role to the rural community and New Zealand Society. The future not the present has been the hallmark of his contribution to the Society and the programme and papers for the Jubilee meeting in which he played a leading role will serve as a source of debate and reference for many years to come.

Andrew was on a number of national committees in the United Kingdom and has continued his involvement in this role in New Zealand. The various committees are too numerous to mention but he has had a recent involvement with three committees; the standing advisory committee on herd improvement of the livestock division of the New Zealand Dairy Board, the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries maximum security quarantine committee and the Royal Society of New Zealand *ad hoc* committee on animal welfare. In addition he is a member of key management committees of Lincoln University. Andrew brings a degree of organisation and vision rarely seen in committees.

His own research has been in a number of areas, best characterised by its orientation towards important practical issues but conducted with scientific rigour of the highest standards. Anyone who has been at the receiving end of a Sykes' interrogation of a research proposal will know of his insistence on the highest standards and the avoidance of reinventing the wheel. His approach has not always endeared him to all at our annual conferences but there is no doubting his scientific integrity. His research work in association with many students has covered mineral metabolism, control of endoparasites, growth and development of animals and parasite resistance. Perhaps Andrew's best attribute in research is to not let anything stand in the way of a good idea especially notions that agricultural scientists should stick to their own patch. This has seen him involved in medical

research with his osteocalcin studies, collaborating with the dental fraternity in his studies on broken mouth in sheep and encouraging the early CT scanning of sheep in New Zealand. His scientific achievements are recognised by the frequent invitations for him to address international conferences but perhaps his greatest achievement has been his ability to encourage and instill in others the wonders of science while keeping an eye open for the opportunities it presents for the New Zealand community.

We believe Andrew Sykes' major contribution to the animal industries of New Zealand has been in the field of education. This he has done in his role as Head of the Department of Animal Science, Chairman of the Animal and Veterinary Sciences Group and Pro vice-Chancellor of Lincoln University. August titles as these are, they mean nothing if the right attitudes are not instilled in students. Andrew has been a leader in course reorganisation and methods of learning. He has not always succeeded, he has not always been right but he has always been a catalyst for change. He has developed an active postgraduate school in animal science which has gained national and international recognition for its work. It attracts students from many countries. He expects students not only to acquire technical skills in the course of their research but also challenges them to see the wider picture of their research and the implications it has for the industry it serves. He has been committed to developing skills in graduates to enable the rural industries they serve to face future challenges to animal production and in association with this has been his concern for the education of farmers and personnel the service industries through his involvement in the Diploma of Agriculture and the establishment of the Lincoln College Animal Industries Workshops. He promotes the involvement of farmers in research and their adoption of new technology. Lately he has taken on the role of raising the profile of science at the national level.

Professor Sykes' most lasting contribution will be his vision of the future of animal production in New Zealand and his challenge to his fellow scientists and farmers to think of the wider issues of animal production. This is reflected in the enthusiastic and critical students who graduate from the animal sciences at Lincoln University.

In all this praise of Andrew it is as well to keep his achievements in perspective. This is the man who on taking over his own farm in 1989 has decided that he doesn't need to do a feed budget and that the expertise of his wife in calf rearing is a little better than his own.

We particularly pay tribute to his human side, his interest in people, their welfare and their careers and this is shown in his interest and encouragement of tomorrow's leaders. Without his continual challenge to such people animal production in this country would not have the people with sufficient breadth of vision to face the 21st century. His contributions make him a worthy recipient of the McMeekan Memorial Award.

D.P. Poppi
V.R. Clark
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