

HONORARY LIFE MEMBERSHIP

Dudley Cameron Lane

OBE, B.Agr.Sc., B.A., Dip.Hum., FNZIAS, JP

Dudley Lane was born at Kaeo, North Auckland, in 1920. He grew up on his parent's dairy farm and when he left school in 1937 his goal was to become a dairy farmer. However he also had a passion for knowledge, and the education which brings knowledge. Accordingly he decided that before setting out in his dairy farming career he would endeavour to obtain a degree in agricultural science. He commenced studying for his degree in 1938 and completed it at Massey in 1941. His entry into dairying was however delayed by World War II. Immediately after completing his degree he enlisted in the navy for service until the end of the war in 1945.

On his return to civilian life Dudley started looking for a suitable dairy farm. In November 1946, with the aid of rehabilitation finance, he was able to purchase a farm in the Tokoroa district and in the following dairying season he started earning his first income as a dairy company supplier.

The farm was far from ideal. Sub-division was poor. The only water trough was at the milking shed. There was a heavy infestation of ragwort and because the previous owner was opposed to the use of so called "artificial fertilisers" the farm had not been top-dressed for the previous 11 years. A lot of management skill and hard work was required to get things going - improved sub-division, water reticulation, sodium chloride for ragwort control and the use of cobaltised super phosphate began to make a difference. Production and income rose steadily. Milking efficiency was markedly improved by building a new herring-bone shed, the first in the Tokoroa district, to replace the previous walk-through shed. Eventually Dudley was able to double the farm's area by purchasing the neighbouring dairy farm. In short Dudley was able to transform a very low-producing dairy farm into one of the highest producing farms in the whole Tokoroa district.

In improving his farm and dairy herd Dudley made very full use of the various services provided under the Dairy Industry Herd Improvement Plan by the Dairy Board Herd Improvement Council through his Regional Herd Improvement Association. This Association was one of the six co-operative herd improvement associations which collectively appointed the majority of the members of the Herd Improvement Council. Dudley regularly attended and participated in meetings of his regional herd improvement association, the Auckland Association. Fellow dairy farmers soon noted his managerial ability. In 1951, just four years after he began dairy farming, he was elected a director of the Auckland Herd Improvement Association.



As a director Dudley was involved in policy decisions relating to the operation of services in his association area and recommendations to the Herd Improvement Council on national policy matters. In 1957 Dudley became Deputy Chairman of his association and for the first time became directly involved in national herd improve-

ment decisions when he was appointed to the interim committee responsible for overseeing the early developmental stages of the Herd Improvement Council's Artificial Breeding Services.

Further involvement in national policy followed in 1961. In that year, to give recognition to the fact that the Auckland Association was by far the largest Herd Improvement Association, its representation on the Herd Improvement Council was increased from one to two members and Dudley joined his chairman Dr Alan Candy on the council. They were a formidable pair. Alan Candy was not only a leading figure in all aspects of the dairy industry but he had been Chairman of the Herd Improvement Council for 24 of its 25 years. Dudley was not only showing his ability in the herd improvement field but as a result of becoming a town milk supplier in 1956 he was now also making his mark in the town milk industry. Both were members of the New Zealand Society of Animal Production. Alan Candy was a founding member and was soon to become a life member. Dudley had now been a member for about 10 years.

It was an interesting time in herd improvement. New herd testing services had just been introduced, indexing of cows was taking place for the first time, a formal Sire Proving Scheme had just been developed as an integral part of the "AB" service and work was underway to further improve the systems of evaluating cows and bulls. To be successful all such changes had to be understood, at least in principle, by dairy farmers and be acceptable to them. This involved people, such as Dudley, in not only asking the right questions of researchers and executives, but also in ensuring that dairy farmers were kept well informed and given plenty of opportunity to debate the changes.

Alan Candy retired in 1969 and Dudley succeeded him as Chairman of both the Auckland Herd Improvement Association and the Herd Improvement Council. His ability was soon to be tested. It was suggested that faster improvement of all major species of livestock would result if the various organisations concerned pooled resources such as research and development under one national livestock improvement body. Following discussions it was decided as the first step, to co-ordinate the recording of both beef and dairy cattle through the Herd Improvement Association, the Herd Improvement Council and the National Beef Recording Council. While such co-ordination seemed to

be very logical in practice, it proved difficult to achieve because of the different structures and possibly of the beef and dairy industries. Despite strenuous efforts by Dudley and others to leave no stone unturned in resolving the problems, the co-ordination of beef and dairy recording, and with it the concept of a national livestock improvement body, was short-lived.

One result of this beef flirtation still remains however. The Herd Improvement Associations agreed to change their name to Livestock Improvement Associations. This approach has been carried forward to today's Livestock Improvement Corporation, the amalgamated organisation which came into being after Dudley's retirement as a result of discussions which first took place during Dudley's period as Chairman of the Herd Improvement Council.

Dudley relinquished his herd improvement responsibilities in 1981 primarily because of increasing commitments in other areas, in particular the town milk industry. As a result of the very rapid growth of Tokoroa and a consequent increase in the requirement for liquid milk, Dudley had entered the town milk industry in 1956. It was not long before he was a member of the local town milk committee and in 1965 he became a Director of the national body of the Town Milk Producers Federation. Again his managerial ability was soon recognised and in 1977 he was elected President of the Federation. In 1981 Dudley became a member and Chairman of the New Zealand Milk Board, the body ultimately responsible for the provision of liquid milk to New Zealand consumers.

One of the keys to Dudley's success that first became apparent at the start of his career, was his continuing interest in education and the acquisition of knowledge. Thus the government made a very good choice when again in 1981 it appointed him as one of its nominees on the Council of Massey University. He held this position until 1986. It is therefore not surprising that in 1984, when he relinquished his town milk industry responsibilities Dudley turned his attention to furthering his own education. In 1985 he enrolled as an extra-mural student in the degree of Bachelor of Arts in English. In so doing he achieved a position unique in Massey's history of being the only person, other than a student representative, to simultaneously sit on the University Council and be enrolled as an under-graduate student. On completing his B.A. degree Dudley began studies towards a post-graduate diploma in Humanities. He successfully completed this diploma last year and is now proceeding towards an M.A. degree in Roman and Greek history.

Dudley has received a number of awards for his services. In 1973 the New Zealand Institute of Agricultural Science elected him a Fellow. In 1990 our society awarded him its Jubilee Medal and in 1992 he was awarded the OBE for his services to the dairy industry.

As his record shows he has always believed very strongly that learning is a life long process and that the application of research findings and other knowledge is an essential feature of efficient animal production. He has also demonstrated in abundance that he has the qualities that encourage other people to follow his leadership. He has now been a member of our Society and a participant in its affairs for nearly 50 years. I am privileged to nominate Dudley Cameron Lane for Honorary Life Membership of the New Zealand Society of Animal Production.

J.W. Stichbury

OBITUARY

Dudley died at his home at Tauwhare in the Waikato on 31 January 1999, aged 78 years.

He was remembered and farewelled by a very large attendance at the Hamilton Park Crematorium Chapel on 5 February. Then, on 20 March, his wife Sue took a smaller group of relatives and friends to join some of his former shipmates on the sailing ship "Soren Larsen" at Auckland. Dudley loved the sea and it was in a moving tribute to this interest and to the man himself that his ashes were taken on the ship and scattered in the Hauraki Gulf, in the presence of many who loved and respected him.

The Soren Larsen was the tall ship on which he had sailed from Auckland to the Falkland Islands and Montevideo via Cape Horn at the age of 71 years. The examination date for one of his Massey University papers was to occur during this arduous voyage, so arrangements were made for the captain to act as examination supervisor. How many of us would want to sit a three-hour examination paper at that age, let alone on a sailing ship in roughish weather? Well, Dudley passed that exam as he had so many others, and indeed he was still undertaking further studies through Massey at the time of his death.

Dudley Lane was an important figure in the farming industry of his time, and in the lives of his family and a huge number of friends and colleagues. He will be sadly missed.

H.J. Clifford