

## McMEEKAN MEMORIAL AWARD 1983

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K. L. MACMILLAN M.Agr.Sci. (Massey), Ph.D. (Missouri)

In 1974 this Society established the C. P. McMeekan Memorial Award which is conferred at the discretion of its management committee, based on nominations received from members. The award seeks to recognise an individual outstanding contribution to animal production or to the Society, in the 5 preceding years. Seven awards have been made since its inception and your committee has decided this year that the recipient should be Dr Keith Lindsay Macmillan.

In making the award to Dr Macmillan, the Society is honouring someone whose work has ranged widely over research and extension, and whose efforts following his election as a committee member in 1976, and particularly with his assumption of the Vice-presidency in 1978, have made an outstanding contribution to the New Zealand Society of Animal Production.

Jock, who was born in Sydney, saw the advantages of a New Zealand agricultural education and entered Massey in 1958. He completed a Bachelor of Agricultural Science in 1961 and a Masters degree the next year. Having been the recipient of a Victorian Department of Agriculture Scholarship he returned to spend 2 years as a dairy husbandry officer there before taking up a research assistantship at Michigan State, from whence he graduated Ph.D. in 1967.

The next 10 years were spent with the New Zealand Dairy Board at the Awahuri Artificial Breeding Centre. His work there involved aspects of semen biochemistry, cattle breeding, management and fertility, oestrous behaviour and endocrinology. In 1977 Jock was appointed scientist at Ruakura Animal Research Station, with particular responsibilities for developing field research programmes in mastitis, cow condition, genetics and reproduction.

His early work had a marked influence on the degree of acceptance by farmers of artificial breeding, his results on submission rates particularly contributing to the success of artificial breeding in concentrating the mating in dairy herds. Subsequently the development and testing of tail paint occupied his interest. Associated with this has been the refinement of the use of prostaglandins to synchronise oestrus — both on-station investigations of the factors influencing the variations in response and time of response, and on-farm testing of various regimes of administration and insemination have been involved. Other research efforts have included large farm surveys to investigate the relationship between cow condition score and milk production, mastitis and dry cow therapy.

Throughout his career Jock has made an enthusiastic and effective contribution to the extension of research information and techniques to the dairy industry. This has been effected through his participation in farmers' conferences, field days, discussion groups and through contact with individual advisers and with farmers directly. Included in this area has been his long-running, regular contribution to the Dairy Exporter, 'Breeding Briefs'. The subject matter of this column has varied widely but has always been at a level of interest to farmers. Jock has continued a close association with the livestock improvement movement during his time at Ruakura and has been used regularly by Livestock Improvement Associations to assist them in all aspects of their activity. In particular, his knowledge of mating management made important contributions to the efficiency of all 6 Associations' artificial breeding services and more recently he has participated in the assessment of the usefulness of individual cow somatic cell counting. He has contributed to 'Live News' and has always stimulated farmers. His most recent contribution, proposing the case for an increased use of artificial breeding in heifers, is an example of his approach, setting out the factors farmers should consider in deciding whether to mate their heifers in this fashion. The fact that his arguments have not always convinced farmers is well illustrated by the response of a dairy farmer's wife to that article. She would not accept that 'anyone who calls himself (or herself) a dairy farmer with an ounce of humane feeling could look on a group of hurt, bewildered yearling heifers that have been raped by an AB technician and call this genetic progress'.

In conferring this award on Jock Macmillan this Society is particularly recognising his outstanding contribution during his period on its executive. As Vice-president and as President, Jock initiated moves for a close relationship between the kindred New Zealand and Australian Societies. This move was not in any way associated with the CER and appears to have had less problems in its implementation than has the government to government arrangement. It was, perhaps, a reflection of his own roots across the Tasman but whatever the motive, the consequent contact in the form of the visit of the ASAP President to our Dunedin conference in 1982 and the invitation for our President to attend their 1984 Conference, together with the jointly sponsored 'Dairy Production from Pasture' Conference, has