

## SIR ARTHUR WARD AWARD 1990

---

T.D. MACKENZIE

The Sir Arthur Ward Award recognises the successful application of the principles of animal production in New Zealand. Thomas Duncan Mackenzie is a worthy recipient of this Award, through his direction of the Fields Division of the Department of Lands and Survey, and his active pursuit of the improvement of the Department's animal production operations.

Tom was born in Balclutha and received his secondary education at Waitaki Boy's High School, Oamaru. He served as a pilot with the RNZAF during World War II in England, India, Burma and the Pacific. Such aerial endeavours were brought quickly back to earth at the end of the war, as Tom

studied for, and completed, the Diploma of Valuation and Farm Management at Lincoln College in 1947.

Tom's public service career started in 1948 with the Valuation Department in Hamilton. In 1949 he transferred to the Department of Lands and Survey, working in Hamilton and Blenheim, before being appointed District Field Officer in Rotorua, in January, 1966. Later that year, Tom was appointed Supervising Field Officer in the Department's head office in Wellington.

In October 1968, Tom became Fields Director with the Department of Maori Affairs, holding this position for three years before returning to the Department of Lands and Survey as the Assistant Fields Director. Tom was appointed Fields Director in 1976, until his retirement ten years later, in January 1986.



Tom's direction of the Fields Division of the Department of Lands and Survey was, appropriately, a "fields" direction. Despite having considerable responsibilities and expertise in such board room areas as formulating Land Settlement Board policies for the management of Crown land, leaseholds, farm settlement schemes, and appreciation of farming operations in the field.

Tom was active in pursuing the improvement of the Department's farming operations. He was, in effect, manager of New Zealand's largest farming operation. This operation involved some 600,000 ha of land carrying 1.4 million sheep, 140,000 run cattle, 3,500 dairy cows, 1,700 deer and 1,100 goats.

During Tom's directorship, stock performance and financial performance improved, despite the fact that the Department's farm settlement function continued to draw the better land and livestock of the system.

Tom was, and still is, blessed with enthusiastic ability to listen to new concepts and ideas, and to act on those ideas he deemed appropriate. (Even if he considered a concept to be inappropriate, Tom's sense of fair play and charity rarely left the unfortunate promoter feeling disappointed!). It is a worthy testimony of the man that "appropriateness" to Tom was measured in terms of potential contribution to New Zealand agriculture. Tom was in for the long term benefit of the industry, believing that investment in proposals paid off in the future.

Tom's style of management was one of open

door approachability. And many did approach Tom from all avenues of agricultural production. He worked closely with organisations such as the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, Lincoln College, Massey University, Federated Farmers, Local Authorities and other Industry Organisations. Most noticeably, Tom permitted the Department's resources to be used widely for agricultural research. Among these, included the animal breeding research projects conducted by the Genetics Section of Ruakura Agricultural Research Centre.

Member of this Society will be familiar with many of the Department of Lands and Survey block names on which animal breeding research and evaluation experiments have been run. For example, beef breed evaluations on Goudies and Tahae, sheep and cattle selection experiments and a cow twinning selection experiment on Waikite, exotic sheep evaluation on Crater (albeit briefly), sheep strain evaluation and performance trials on Rotamahana, lean lamb evaluation and selection work at Wiremu;...the list could continue.

Whether operated by agencies such as MAF, or by the Department itself, Tom was highly supportive of animal breeding projects on Lands and Survey properties, often at a time when there were many detractors from the cause. Tom claims that he first appreciated the breeding potential of the Department of Lands and Survey's flocks and herds when he was working in Marlborough. On visiting Molesworth Station, E. (Ted) A. Clarke and the late C.P. McMeekan enthused to Bill Chisholm and Tom on the selection resource represented by the 4,000 cows that were running on the property at that time. The potential was discussed fully in the true Molesworth tradition, sitting round a fire with a bottle of scotch!

In his position as Fields Director, Tom brought to animal breeding an enthusiasm and an understanding of the fundamental requirements of the researchers;

namely, access to the Department's land and livestock resource, and use of the Department's farm staff. This contribution has not only helped the researchers, but has also helped the successor of the Department's Field Division, Landcorp Farming Limited, with an excellent working base of both high merit livestock and experienced livestock managers.

Tom was aware of the need for scientific research in New Zealand animal production, and more aware than most of the resources required to conduct that research. Tom believed he directed a national asset, and was always willing to consider committing land and livestock resources into a soundly based research project, regarding it as an investment for future productivity of national benefit. It is to his credit that he took this responsibility seriously.

Tom Mackenzie was a manager supreme. Those fortunate enough to know Tom well believed that his skill in managing a large organisation was directly attributable to his background training at home! His Christian listening skills, his faith in the integrity and ability of not only his own staff, but also of staff in other institutions, and his diligent communication through innumerable "Notes for File" to keep everyone informed, ensured that this man held the respect of all who dealt with him.

Above all, Tom's willingness to pursue improvement in animal production, his support of long term research projects (often conducted on a scale few have equalled), and his appreciation of the practical implications of such work, are all qualities that Sir Arthur Ward would applaud. It is the total of Tom MacKenzie's direct and indirect contributions to the application of the principles of animal production, that the Management Committee of the New Zealand Society of Animal Production has acknowledged, in selecting Tom Mackenzie as the 1990 recipient of the Sir Arthur Ward Award.

B.A.R. Card  
G.B. Nicoll  
A.L. Rae