

NEW ZEALAND SOCIETY OF ANIMAL PRODUCTION LIFE MEMBERSHIP

Dr Arnold Max Bryant

Arnold Bryant has spent his professional lifetime serving New Zealand's dairy industry conducting research into aspects of herd management and dairy cow nutrition. He has also provided research leadership to ensure that Ruakura maintained its national and international reputations in these areas.

This lifetime of research commenced in 1955 with training for a B.Agr.Sc. degree as one of the original Rural Field Cadets selected for this course. It meant that he spent time at Lincoln and Massey Agricultural Colleges. While at Massey he was awarded the Sir James W Wilson Prize, as well as being the George Terry memorial Scholar, the Shell Scholar and the Senior Scholar in Agriculture. He received an M.Agr.Sc. in 1962, and a Ph.D. in 1968. In 1967 he was appointed as a Scientist at the Ruakura Agricultural Research Station. His initial studies involved field trials relating to systems to maximise utilisation of seasonal pasture supplies. It is interesting to recall that this early work included measuring pasture responses to N fertiliser. After spending time at the University of New England in 1972/73, Arnold became involved in the calorimetry work at Ruakura.

His responsibilities were extended in 1979 when Arnold was made Leader of the Dairy Science Group, a position he held for the next 12 years. His responsibilities initially covered Ruakura No 5 Dairy but were soon extended to include all of the dairy research resources with overall responsibilities for programmes relating to reproduction and fertility, milk harvesting, disease control, animal nutrition and dairy herd management. It was at the start of this period that Arnold and Tim Trigg in particular collaborated to complete a comprehensive series of field and feeding trials studying the differences in production and productivity between High and Low BI Jersey cows. These studies, in addition to those at Massey University with Friesian cows confirmed that superior genetics was associated with superior efficiency and productivity.

Arnold has publicly championed the cause for continuing research on dairy cow efficiency, feed production and grazing management. A memorable instance was his Presidential Address to this Society at its Annual Conference in 1978, where he expressed the opinion that research administrators were guilty of "perpetrating a monstrous deception" in allocating insufficient resources to dairy research. The published record uses less emphatic words. Roles as spokesperson within MAF Tech for matters relating to dairy research, as a prominent liaison person with dairy companies and his prominence at dairy farmers' meetings throughout the country placed Arnold in a good position to become involved in the numerous exploratory discussions preceding the formation of the Dairying Research Corporation (DRC). This involvement had to be successful if the significant dairy research resources at Ruakura were to survive. Not surprisingly, he has one of the foundation appointments to the DRC and then accepted the role of allowing the staff to work their way through the unchartered waters of employment contracts. Arnold has been a mentor and adviser to many staff and would readily advocate on their

behalf. One specific instance has become known as "The Colonel's Coup".

During these times of uncertainty, Arnold's abilities in leadership, negotiation and consultation were continually demonstrated. At the same time, he was still responsible for field trials, in particular the Jersey-Friesian comparison at two stocking rates. This trial and the High BI-Low BI comparisons were conducted at the No 2 Dairy. These and other trials maintained the reputation of this unit as well as Ruakura in general as a focus for herd owners, their advisers, other scientists, and overseas visitors. C P McMeekan may have conducted the early trials in dairy herd management, but Arnold's name is deservedly part of a dairying research honour board which includes others like L R Wallace, A H Carter, W G Whittlestone, A G Campbell, J B Hutton and D G Clayton.

It is a measure of the success of the continuing work conducted at the No 2 Dairy and the related extension-technology transfer programme that eventually it was criticised as not being significantly ahead of some of the higher producing farms in the Waikato. There was nothing special about producing 700 kg mfat/hectare; especially if the principles demonstrated at the No 2 Dairy were adapted and adopted.

The newest challenge is for the No 2 Dairy to produce at least 1750 kg milksolids/hectare. Quite appropriately, changes have been made from lbs mfat/acre to kgs, hectares, protein and/or milksolids. Arnold has seen these changes come and go. Possibly one of the biggest has been his own most recent change in interest to establish a new programme on the effects of nutrition and aspects of herd management on milk composition and processing characteristics. He has led the way in recognising the value of research which relates milk production to processing and marketing.

This latter change may not seem so compatible with a person who has addressed 40 to 50 conferences, discussion groups, field days, student groups, and advisers' conferences each year. But Arnold's skills as a communicator, especially at the Ruakura Farmers' Conferences are legendary. Herd owners would heed his words on milk composition in the future as much as they have in the past in relation to more conventional aspects of herd management.

This Society has also had the benefits of his association. He served on its Management Committee during the 1970's, was its President in 1977/78 and received the McMeekan Award in 1984. He has been an ambassador for New Zealand science with frequent invitations to conferences and workshops throughout the World including 7 long weeks in Saudi Arabia. Work commitments have not prevented Arnold developing interests in rock hounding, including opal hunting in Australia, in New Zealand's native plants, especially its trees, and in wood carving.

It is most appropriate that this Annual General Meeting should recognise the outstanding and longstanding contribution of one of its more prominent members by supporting the nomination of Arnold Bryant as an Honorary Life Member of the New Zealand Society of Animal Production.