

“CHARITY BEGINS AT HOME”

I thought I might write about wool for this editorial, and hence the title. When we see farm accountants placing wool sales in “Other Income” it’s a sign of 1 or 2 things – either wool is in dire straits, or we are slowly coming to view it that way.

In real terms, the crossbred wool average price, as monitored by Meat & Wool New Zealand’s Economic Survey has actually only fallen 1% per annum since 1990. Not good, but far less than most crossbred farmers would guess. What has compounded the ‘image’ problem though is that lamb increased its price in real terms by 5% per annum, and the costs of harvesting wool have increased steadily. While lamb has improved its quality by achieving the target carcass weights processors asked for, carcasses have been further processed and more and more goes overseas chilled, our crossbred wool clip has become ever coarser, to the point where over half the clip is now over 38 microns. At this point processing and end use options start to become reduced.

At an average \$3.90/kg clean, crossbred wool is equivalent to other commodities (Lamb \$4.00/kg cw, Milksolids \$4.59/kg, M Bull \$2.91/kg). Wool price possibly cannot be expected to break out of the commodity products “price band”. The answer then will lie in productivity gains, or the return from wool relative to the cost of producing it. This is driven for wool by the amount produced per stock unit or per hectare, relative to the cost of wool harvesting. Increasing wool production per ewe wintered has limited potential at this time. For example, intensive Southland farms have shown little change in wool production per sheep since 1980. Top producers have reached physical ceilings for wool production per hectare – there is a limit to just how much wool we want a ewe to carry around in a wet winter or a hot summer.

The main limitation for crossbred wool production is that we cannot produce as much per hectare as we can of meat. Stocking rate trials have shown that sheepmeat production per hectare for breeding/finishing systems is usually 3-4 times production of clean wool. Biologically we can produce more meat per hectare than wool, and as primary producers that makes our focus fairly obvious.

So, would we be any better off if we bred sheep that grew no wool? I’m not aware of any evidence to suggest the shortfall would be sufficiently taken up by extra meat production – in fact I hear studies suggest the opposite. Wool can remain a valued *co-product* of sheepmeat, but to do so requires 3 things – at least maintaining the price in real terms, work to reduce the cost of wool growing and harvesting (currently a major focus of Meat and Wool New Zealand and Australian Wool Innovation) and most importantly of all a positive attitude towards the product by those involved in the industry. I recently attended a farmer field-day where the representatives of, variously, a government ministry close to farmers’ hearts, a nationwide agricultural consultancy company and a farmers’ advocacy organisation were all resplendent in branded synthetic polar-fleece garments. I guess if even they can’t wear wool, the price is still too high?

Aaron Meikle

The opinions expressed in this Newsletter are those of the author and not necessarily those of the NZSAP.

VERY IMPORTANT NOTICE

- 1. SUBS ARE NOW OVERDUE – SEE THE YELLOW SHEET INCLUDED – AND PLEASE SEND THEM TO LYNNE SMITH, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY ASAP!**

PRESIDENT'S PIECE

Hi all

Although I was a member of the conference organising committee, I can take none of the credit, because I was on holiday in the Cook Islands pre-conference. So, thank you to the Lincoln team for the hard work putting it together. Even the weather was fabulous for delegates' flight plans.

Now let me get back to that topic of the Cooks – yes please let me get back to the Cooks! I went with prejudice, having read about Polynesia in the *Future Eaters*. I visited the place where the wakas left for Aotearoa, and wondered what were they thinking! I heard first hand about the extinction of the coconut crab and over fishing of the local giant clam. Then I saw, first hand the effect of humans on an island, not eroding and degrading it, but creating one. No joke. Honeymoon Island was a sand bar about 10 years ago and honeymooners (and long since honeymooners) are encouraged to plant a coconut tree on what is now a "motu". The trees have stabilised the sand bar, other plants have moved in, birds are nesting and the surrounding coral is being inexorably smothered. An unprecedented cyclone season saw 5 storms carve a bit off it this summer, but there it is, the newest island of the atoll. Despite the storms, and surprisingly in the tropics, the islands face water shortages! Fishing, agriculture, horticulture and now tourism have forever changed these islands, like little subplots of some great agrarian experiment, like small versions of New Zealand with erosion, nitrification, recycling, water shortages and pollution-bearing coconut-planting tourists like me.

I saw an \$80 million dollar hotel, almost finished in the 1980's sitting idle, unused and literally corroding away and causing most of the Cooks international debt. I met a guy on Aitutaki atoll who said he ran the "Raro" factory in Rarotonga. From what I could work out, the global juice price and labour market finally squeezed the Raro out of Raro'. Maybe that will be a godsend because of the reduction in fertiliser and pesticides? To be honest the Islanders themselves looked none the worse for the collapse, because every juice squeezer now seems to be involved in the rapidly expanding tourist market selling either good times, black pearls or riding about on a scooter. I see my shares in Moginie and Garrett's *Blue Sky Mining Company* have risen since the latest terror attacks.

Scobie

COMMENTS FROM THE PAST-PRESIDENT

The 2005 Conference is now a memory, and a pleasant one to those that attended. I would like to take this opportunity of thanking, on your behalf, the Organising Committee for a job well done. The various planned activities flowed well and made for a pleasant and interesting four days.

For those of you not able to attend the Conference I based my Presidential Address on the theme of bridges. I drew an analogy that the science and technology associated with animal production is effectively a bridge linking farmed livestock with the final consumer of products harvested from farmed livestock. Many of the bridges associated with the transformation of product are old, others are new, some are simple, others are complex, some are made of basic materials while others are made of new high technology materials.

Whichever "animal production" bridge you are designing, building, repairing, servicing or using, in your day to day work, I wish you well as you face the challenges ahead during the forthcoming and following years. Our role in helping to feed and clothe the world is important. If the science and technologies we develop are not sound "our bridges" will not stand the test of time. New Zealand has a fine tradition in animal production. It is up to the younger members in our Society to maintain these traditions regardless of whether they are involved with applied technologies or high "tech" technologies within a particular supply chain. Agricultural science has always been essential for man's survival and, despite what some pundits say, will continue to be essential in the future. New technologies will support animal production, but never replace it. While the emphasis on different areas of animal production will wax and wane, the science of animal production will continue to be a major keystone on which rests New Zealand's future prosperity.

Roland Sumner, Past-President

NZSAP CONFERENCE 2006

The 2006 Conference is to be hosted by the Palmerston North members of NZSAP. However, we have decided to hold the conference in Napier. This will not only give us a different area of New Zealand to enjoy (and hopefully some warmer weather!), but will also mean we can have common sessions with the Dairy Veterinarians Conference which is to be held in Napier at the same time.

After announcing it at the Annual dinner in Christchurch we have already had a number of requests for visits to various wineries and Rush Munros ice-creamery! So be guaranteed there will some enjoyable evening events to tie in with our scientific content, and further suggestions are welcome.

We have also had a number of suggestions for contract sessions including metabonomics, parasitology and mycotoxins which we will be investigating further.

The conference is to be held the week of the 26th June 2006 at the Napier War Memorial Conference Centre, which is situated on the water front.

We will the confirm dates ASAP. Abstracts will be due early November, with further details to follow in the next newsletter and on the website.

We hope to see you all in Napier in June 2006.

Tricia Johnson, Conference Convenor.

ADDRESS TO CONFERENCE BY MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE JIM SUTTON - KEY POINTS

- Agricultural goods are subject to some of the highest tariffs on the world market, with dairy products facing the worst of those. For meat - tariffs can run as high as 50% in Japan, 150% in the EU, or 200, 300 even up to 700 percent in Switzerland and Norway for various meat products. Often in markets for dairy, beef and sheepmeat there are tariff quotas which allow a limited amount of product in at a lower rate of duty.
- The EU spends almost NZ\$ 3 billion per year on export subsidies on dairy products alone. So while our exporters are receiving about \$2 700 per tonne for butter from the international market, the EU exporters get the same price – and a cheque from the government for approximately NZ\$2,250 per tonne of butter they sell.
- Another potential requirement for market access in the future may be traceability. This could be market driven and/or government imposed. Traceability could be a market advantage for New Zealand exporters to high value export markets which are now demanding farm to plate traceability after recent food scares and growing consumer preferences e.g. organics and animal welfare. However if exporters had to meet the over zealous mandatory traceability requirements imposed by importers it could reduce our market access and impose unjustifiable costs on New Zealand producers.
- Much of these traceability requirements have resulted from BSE. New Zealand does not have BSE and our pastoral based production system means that some information included in other countries mandatory traceability systems, such as feed types, would not be relevant in the NZ case.
- It can be argued that traceability is inevitable if New Zealand wants to keep exporting product to high value markets. New Zealand runs the market risk of lagging behind on international developments and demands in overseas markets and retailers seeking assurances about the exact location of all food sources.

- Major trading partners, including Australia, the United States, Japan, Canada and countries in the European Union have, or are in the process of implementing, animal identification systems, with the requirements these become mandatory across livestock sectors.
- In May 2005, the US outlined plans that would force the country's livestock industry to introduce electronic tracking of cattle, sheep and goats by 2009, as a way of locating diseased animals and safeguarding against "agro-terrorist" attacks. By 2008, all US farms, ranches and livestock will have to have unique identity numbers. National Animal Identification System (NAIS). Tracking of animal movements will be mandated by 2009. Canada mandated individual identification of livestock in 2002 and decided to adopt permanent Radio Frequency Identification tags from 1 January 2005. Major importing countries like Japan and Korea have already mandated animal identification and traceability in their domestic markets.
- We are moving closer to a national livestock traceability system. The Government is supportive of an industry-driven process that is well underway now. The authors of a MAF and NZFSA-published discussion document on Support Systems for Animal Identification and Traceability facilitated the establishment of an animal identification working group. That industry-led working group, chaired by Jeff Grant of Meat and Wool New Zealand, began work last year. It includes representatives of the cattle, deer and meat processing sectors, Federated Farmers, MAF and NZFSA. Following consultation a business case will be developed outlining the preferred option for developing a national livestock identification system. It is envisaged that the cattle and deer sectors will adopt the system in the first instance. The current aim is to develop an open system with recording and sharing of data through a series of business rules, and coordinated by a governing body.
- New Zealand system will build on existing practices and overseas experience of implementing traceability systems. By waiting and watching NZ can take the best from each of the models that our competitors have implemented. So we can implement something that is cost effective, provides a long-term solution meeting our needs while remaining consistent with international trends. Meat and Wool will also be funding research to see how animal identification can be put to profitable use on the farm.
- The Government's position on encouraging traceability is that essentially the ability to trace animals from farm to plate is largely a commercial concern, between New Zealand primary industry and demands of international consumers. However the New Zealand Government does have interests in being able to speedily trace the movements of animals for biosecurity reasons and product for food safety. The speed at which animals implicated in a disease outbreak can be pinpointed greatly determines the extent of the outbreak's impact on agriculture.

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McMEEKAN AWARD 2005 – PROFESSOR TOM N. BARRY

Tom Barry has made a major contribution to the understanding of the effects of condensed tannins and other secondary plant compounds in forages on ruminant animal nutrition and sustainable production. His studies of secondary plant compounds over more than 20 years have made a significant contribution to agricultural science. Although the McMeekan Memorial award recognises work in the last five years, it is necessary to go back further to put Tom's recent work in perspective. Tom has been involved with:

- basic indoor feeding and laboratory studies examining the effect of forage condensed tannins upon nutrient supply, especially protein
- grazing trials examining effects of secondary plant compounds on animal productivity and health and, more recently,
- farming systems trials, examining the effect on animal production on a yearly basis, of integrating plants containing secondary compounds into grazing systems.

Tom has published extensively in local and international journals, with 72 peer-reviewed conference papers, 167 published full-length peer-reviewed scientific papers in international journals and four book chapters. In 1996 he was awarded a DSc, primarily for his work in manipulation of ruminant protein digestion.

Research achievements in the last five years

This nomination recognises Tom's research into secondary plant compounds in the last five years. During the last five years, Tom's published papers have reported substantial effects of condensed tannins on wool production, reproductive efficiency and lactation in ewes, and on parasitism and growth of deer. His studies have extended into the development of sustainable grazing systems, particularly forages in dry climates. During that period he has published 43 full-length peer-reviewed papers in international journals, of which 26 specifically relate to plant secondary compounds, and 18 peer-reviewed conference papers.

Main areas of research

- developing forages for sustainable venison production from farmed deer, with reduced chemical inputs
- studying the effects of condensed tannins upon reproduction in grazing sheep,
- taking the sheep work with condensed tannin-containing forages to a systems level,
- initiating a new research area into the value of willow and poplar as supplements to livestock during drought conditions.

Tom's achievements have been recognised by the international science community through invitations to be plenary speaker at the following conferences:

- The Second World Congress on Deer Farming, Ireland 1998,
- International Deer Biology Congress, Hungary 1998
- the International Tannin Workshop, Adelaide June 1999
- International Grassland Congress, Brazil 2001.

Tom Barry is recognised worldwide as an expert in ruminant nutrition, as indicated by a very high number of citations. He received a high citation award in 2001 from the American Society of Information Science and Technology, placing him in the top 0.5% for citations in the field of Agriculture. He is one of 250 people world wide to receive this award and the only one from New Zealand.

Tom's contribution to agricultural science, both in NZ and world-wide, during the last 25 years, and particularly his contribution to the understanding of the effects of plant secondary compounds in ruminant nutrition and animal production in the last five years, thoroughly warrants his receipt of the McMeekan Memorial Award.

Sam Peterson

SIR ARTHUR WARD AWARD 2005 – GREG MIRAMS

Greg Mirams graduated from Lincoln University in 1987 with Diploma's in Agriculture and Farm Management. After leaving Lincoln University Greg spent 3 years in the UK as a project accountant before returning to New Zealand in 1992. At this time he re entered the Agricultural industry working on several properties where he gained valuable insight into the internal parasite problem in New Zealand.

In 1993 Greg launched FECPAK International Ltd, having seen the need for an accurate, quick and reliable method of measuring FEC (faecal egg count) on farm. At the time FEC testing services were a logistic problem, were expensive and the time delays in receiving the information significantly reduced their value to farmers.

The concept of FECPAK was to empower farmers and groups of farmers to undertake their own FEC testing to provide inexpensive and timely information to make quality internal parasite management decisions. This service is supported with guaranteed backup and technical support.

In developing FECPAK, Greg invested significantly in research to upgrade the McMaster counting slide which had been the standard in research institutes during more than 50 years. By reconfiguring the slide and approach to sampling flocks he brought the technology into the technology and cost range for on-farm use.

The Cattletech trial, in 1998, saw the development of the FECPAK system for the Cattle sector. This required a change to the sensitivity of the methodology. Since then the company has also launched its Equine System. All of these systems have been internationally validated, and now FECPAK is used by many research agents and governmental agencies around the world for industry trials into internal parasite issues. His collaborators include: University of Bristol; Teagasc, Ireland; Danish Veterinary Institute, Moredun Research Institute, Edinburgh.

The company also exports to many diverse markets such as Australia, the UK and South America.

In the last two years FECPAK has become involved in expanding it's services to the agricultural sector with delivering to a number of research projects, the most notable projects being the S³ project and ParasitePlan.

Greg has proved a very effective communicator to the industry. He has filled a serious gap in this dissemination of technical information to the industry and has raised the awareness and capability of livestock farmers to control measures for nematode parasitism. In addition to providing farmers with a technology and promoting this sincerely and professionally both domestically and internationally Greg has had a major impact and put the industry in a much stronger long-term position to deal with the future problem of drench resistance.

Andrew Sykes and Alastair Nicol

YOUNG MEMBER AWARD

And the winner for 2005 is.....Andrew Greer

Brought up on a sheep property on the outskirts of Nightcaps in western Southland, Andrew Greer ventured north to Lincoln University in 1997 to commence his agriculture science degree. With that complete he continued with and successfully completed an honours project before starting a teaching fellowship four years ago. As well as working towards his PhD in animal nutrition under the supervision of Professor Andrew Sykes he spends half of his time working for the university, including teaching animal nutrition and animal production science classes. Andrew is currently writing his thesis which he intends to have completed toward the end of this year before starting a post-doctoral position in Scotland. Andrew's receipt of the Young Members Award for his paper 'Corticosteroid treatment prevents the reduction in food intake and growth in lambs infected with the abomasal parasite *Teladorsagia circumcincta*' at this years annual dinner capped off a successful night for the family as his uncle Tom Barry was also honoured with the McMeekan Memorial Award.

TRAVEL AWARD REPORT – PENNY BACK

Between 21 Nov – 1 Dec 04 I visited Melbourne, to attend the International Dairy Federation meeting. It also gave me the chance to visit a dairy farm at Maffra (and experience milking in a 'double-up' and flood irrigation) and Kyabram research centre.

At the conference, I attended the nutrition sessions, where results of clinical trials with milk components were presented. This covered a range of compounds found in milk. The large health benefits demonstrated shows the importance and relevance of our work here in trying to understand the production, regulation and control of these compounds by the cow.

However, this wealth of information also creates a problem with marketing milk and dairy products as 'how much information becomes too much information?'. These problems were addressed during several interesting marketing sessions. After 3 days it was information overload but I was rescued by the technical tour. This was extremely tasty and the highlights were visits to 2 boutique cheese makers. Jindi cheese has 5 farms that supply milk under contract to them. To have a consistent supply of high quality milk, suppliers are contracted to supply milk with a SCC of less than 20, 000. Proves low SCC can be achieved with the right incentives in place !!

My most interesting visit outside the conference was to the Dairy CRC at Melbourne University (thanks to bumping into Jock McMillan at the conference!). Here they are developing fascinating wallaby and seal models to understand the physiology and control of lactation. Did you know that wallabies can control the amount of protein in their milk? Or that seals can switch off lactation for up to 25 days when they are at sea and then resume at the same stage of lactation when they come ashore? No, neither did I !! One question I was asked was what research we are doing to understand why cows being milked once a day have more concentrated milk (in terms of gross and minor components). It would be great to think that maybe with the development of these models, this could be a potential collaborative project.

A big thank you to NZSAP for partially funding this trip. The main benefit for me was the exposure to the exciting fundamental research that is going on with regards to understanding the physiology of lactation.

Penny Back

PROPOSED NZSAP OCCASIONAL PUBLICATION 14

As part of its objective to 'widely disseminate knowledge and information of value to NZ animal production', the Society publishes from time to time an Occasional Publication which draws on the expertise of its members in the research institutes and Universities as authors to produce a 'state of the art' review of key areas in animal production.

Two of the more successful of these are 'Supplementary Feeding' (OP 7, published in 1980) and 'Livestock Feeding on Pasture' (OP 10, published in 1987). Thousands of copies of each of these have been sold and there is an ongoing demand for them, especially from educational establishments. However, these publications are around 20 years old and some of the material and much of the format of these books is outdated. The Society sees a opportunity to produce a new Occasional Publication (both a printed and electronic version will be produced) which will replace OP 7 and 10 and be the definitive reference source on this subject for the next 10 years.

The Society has appointed Dr Peter Rattray, Dr Alastair Nicol (Lincoln University and Editor of OP 10) and Dr Ian Brookes (Massey University) as Editors of the new publication.

Suggested Title: Pasture and supplements for grazing animals

Outline:

Chapter	Title	Authors
1	Pasture and Supplement Resources	Dr Ian Valentine, Massey University Dr Gavin Sheath, AgResearch, Hamilton
2	Growing Pastures and Supplements	Dr Derrick Moot, Lincoln University Dr Cory Matthews, Massey University
3	Principles of Nutritive Value	Dr Garry Waghorn, AgResearch, Dr Eric Kolver, Dexcel, Dr Jennifer Burke, Massey University
4	Control of Grazing Intake	Dr Gerald Cosgrove, AgResearch Dr Grant Edwards, Lincoln University
5	Importance of Pasture and Supplement Quality	Dr Annette Litherland, AgResearch Dr Greg Lambert, AgResearch
6	Types of Supplements their Nutritive Value and Use	Dr Terry Hughes, Consultant, Lincoln Dr J de Ruiter, Crop and Food Mr Tom Fraser, AgResearch
7	Substitution and Supplementation	Dr Dave Clark, Dexcel Dr Sharon Woodward, Dexcel
8	Non-Nutritional Feed Constraints to Animal Production	Dr Wayne Nichol, Wrightsons Dr Stephanie Bluett, Dexcel
9	Energy and Protein Requirements of Grazing Animals	Dr Ian Brookes, Massey University Dr Alastair Nicol, Lincoln University
10	Principles of Grazing Management and Feed Planning with Pastures and Supplements	Mr Rex Webby, AgResearch Mr Alan McRae, Consultant, Palmerston North Dr Tony Bywater, Lincoln University
11	Pastures and Supplements in Production Systems: - Dairy	Dr Colin Holmes, Massey University Dr John Roche, Dexcel
	- Beef	Dr Steve Morris, Massey University Mr Duncan Smeaton, AgResearch
	- Sheep	Mr Rex Webby, AgResearch Dr Paul Kenyon, Massey University
	- Deer	Dr Simone Hoskin, Massey University Dr Wendy Griffith, AgResearch
12	<i>Impact of Pasture and Supplement Feeding on the Environment</i>	Dr Keith Cameron, Lincoln University Dr Mike Hedley, Massey University Dr Harry Clark, AgResearch

UPCOMING EVENTS

- ❑ 22-24 Sept 2005 American Assn of Bovine Practitioners Annual Meeting, Utah
- ❑ 11-13 October 2005. NZ Grasslands Society Conference, New Plymouth
- ❑ 16-20 October 2005. World Assn for Advancement of Vet Parasitology, Christchurch
- ❑ 28-30 October 2005. BCVA Congress Torquay UK
- ❑ 17 November 2005. Royal Society of NZ Annual Conference, Wellington. "Security and Biosecurity"
www.rsnz.org
- ❑ 27-29 March 2006. British Society of Animal Science Annual Meeting University of York www.bsas.org.uk
- ❑ 13-17th August 2006. 7th International Ruminant Reproduction Symposium, Wellington, New Zealand.
www.ruminantsymposium2006.co.nz

VIVA LA FENCE

While I was on one of the Pacific Islands not used by the French for nuclear testing I saw few fences and only one was electrified to keep stray goats and pigs out rather than keep anything in. It got me thinking about the difference between our culture and a couple of others over the fence. Frightening to me, but obviously not to them, are the vast areas of the world that are not fragmented by fences in America, Africa, Asia and Antarctica. Indeed, Americans paranoid about homeland security have whole towns without so much as a suburban backyard due to a freedom from fences.

The two countries that I have lived in seem to have a fascination for fences. The memories of my childhood are filled with mirages of the sunburnt country washing up onto the ubiquitous five foot high corrugated iron fence surrounding an area of the same dust and heat haze and the struggling excuse for "lorn". One definition of fence from the Macquarie Dictionary is; "to enclose by some barrier, thus asserting right to possession." Of course the Macquarie is an Australian dictionary and maybe fences evolved from the need to keep out the people the land was asserted from! Indeed, the Macquarie provides yet another definition of fence which is; "a person who receives and disposes of stolen goods", that you would expect from a convict colony. Did we inherit this fondness for fences from our European ancestors like Hadrian of the wall fame. The Māori had fortified Pa and we often hear about Fortress New Zealand. Where is this fence fetish from?

I think the real need for fences arose from our pastoral pastime. Imagine several million cattle roaming both islands, in a seething flock of 30 million sheep. Not to mention the indiscriminate fornication thwarting LIC and frustrating SIL, and the total devastation of native flora from the fragile high country to the disputed foreshore.

Fencing is for tractable animals though. I know sheep netting was ineffective against elephant seals in experiments on Campbell Island and is certainly not that useful against land-based elephants either Asiatic or African. Fences for farming fallow and red deer took quite some time to develop, and flexible fencing for feed breaks has harnessed the grazing animal like never before and spread from New Zealand all over the world.

Indeed, without fences, the undecided in our culture could no longer be fence-sitters! Face facts, without No. 8 wire what a frightful state this country would be in. Finally then, fundamental to the fortunes of farming, this country and particularly for the Animal Production Society, is the fence.

Scooby-Doo

MEMBERSHIP

A warm welcome on behalf of NZSAP to our new members:

JIM MCPHEE, XCELL BREEDING SERVICES, KAIAPOI
ROBERT DERRICK, WINSLOW FEEDS, ASHBURTON
BEVIN HARRIS, LIVESTOCK IMPROVEMENT CORPORATION HAMILTON
BILL MONTGOMERIE, NZ ANIMAL EVALUATION LIMITED, HAMILTON
ELISABETH FEARY, AGRESEARCH WALLACEVILLE
LINDSAY MATTHEWS, AGRESEARCH RUAKURA
GINA MICKE, MOSMAN PARK, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

MICHAEL LUCEY, OAMARU
MARK COOK, OHAKEA
CRAIG TROTTER, PALMERSTON
LORNA WHEELER, PIOPIO
KARIN SCHUTZ, AGRESEARCH RUAKURA
RENE CORNER, MASSEY

Resignations were received from 5 members, 22 members were removed from the membership list for non-payment of subscriptions over the last 3 years, one member passed away, and we signed up 13 new members, for a Current Membership Total of 520.

TRAVEL AWARD REPORT – MARK FISHER

Do we take science too seriously? Is science the only way of knowing about animal welfare? Where are the “Greenpeace’s” for human health? These were among the more thoughtful questions addressed at a recent international conference on animal welfare. *From Darwin to Dawkins: the science and implications of animal sentience*, was organised by the Compassion in World Farming Trust, and held in London during March.

The existence of sentience (having feelings) has never been seriously doubted by most of those who interact with animals. The “problem” of whether animals are sentient seems to have been “created” by science and philosophy. Descartes (1596-1650) said that animals are like machines which do not think and are without feeling. This was furthered with behaviourism and the belief put forward by powerful scientists of the time that studying feelings was a wasted effort.

Although the view that animals are sentient seems obvious, over 600 people from 50 different countries attended the conference to promote sentience and animal welfare.

There was a call to be anthropomorphic when studying animal welfare. One speaker claimed he was unable to find evidence to say science is better than intuition – being anthropomorphic may actually be more valuable than being objective. Perhaps we know a lot more about animals than we give ourselves credit for.

There were also calls to reconnect people with the food system, but by using modern technology rather than expecting the clock to be turned back. It is society (not just producers) who must decide what is fair – “don’t criticize farmers with your mouth full”.

Concern for animal welfare is becoming a part of the food war, the reshaping of the supply chain. Farming needs to change to improve public health by supplying more fish, vegetables, cereals and nuts. The emphasis on producing as much food as quickly and as inexpensively as possible needs to change. It has brought both hunger and over-consumption, obesity at an unprecedented rate in human history, and a huge increase in diabetes in some regions.

The future of animal welfare research will thus have several different dimensions. Important areas for study in animals will involve memory and cognition, and emotions and feelings. Animal welfare will also be inextricably linked to food safety and human health.

The Compassion in World Farming Trust is an educational charity promoting respect for farmed animals and the environment. Mark Fisher attended their conference with the assistance of an Animal Science Award from the New Zealand Society of Animal Production.

Mark Fisher

NZSAP LISTSERVER

The NZSAP operates a listserver as a means of communicating rapidly with the membership, or providing a way to distribute messages that may be of general interest. A listserver is simply a way in which an email can be sent and automatically distributed to all the email addresses held in the 'list'. The NZSAP listserver is 'moderated', meaning that when a message is received by the listserver, it has to be approved by the moderator (the Website Manager) in order to be distributed to the email addresses in the list. This stops the listserver being used as a way to distribute spam and ensure only appropriate messages are distributed to the membership. Currently, there is less than one 'appropriate' message a month being sent to the listserver, so it generates a very small amount of additional email for those members who have subscribed.

An email sent to the listserver containing the programme for the Lincoln conference recently highlighted the fact that many of the email addresses in the listserver are out of date, and that many members have not subscribed. *Subscription to the listserver is voluntary, and so if you would like to receive emails from the listserver then please follow the instructions given below.* General information on the NZSAP listserver can be found by following the "E-Mail List" link on the NZSAP home page, or by going directly to <http://lists.earthlight.co.nz/mailman/listinfo/nzsap>.

If you received the email containing the Lincoln Conference programme, you are currently subscribed and do not need to do anything. The following are a list of instructions for the main listserver functions.

To subscribe to the NZSAP listserver

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Go to <http://lists.earthlight.co.nz/mailman/listinfo/nzsap>. Enter your email address in the box at the bottom of the page and click the "Edit options" button. Enter your password in the appropriate box in the "Unsubscribing from NZSAP" section, and click on the "Unsubscribe" button.

Forgotten your password?

Go to <http://lists.earthlight.co.nz/mailman/listinfo/nzsap>. Enter your email address in the box at the bottom of the page and click the "Edit options" button. Go to the "Forgotten your password" section and click the "Email my password to me" button.

To post a message to all the list members:

Send the email to nzsap@lists.earthlight.co.nz. There are some guidelines to remember when posting to the listserver:

- The message goes to everyone on the list, not just the one who may be interested in your message. Therefore keep the message brief and to the point.
- Make the subject heading clear so the reader doesn't have to open it to find out what it is about. If they aren't interested in the topic, they should be able to delete it without opening it
- Do not include attachments in the email, especially those containing graphics. Some members download email through a dial-up connection and get really annoyed when they download large files that they have no interest in. If you want to distribute a document, send it to the Website Manager to put on the website and email the link to the listserver, or ask people to reply to your message requesting the document.

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An electronic version of this newsletter and other information on the Society is available at:
<http://nzsap.org.nz>

Any contributions to the Newsletter should be forwarded to: Aaron Meikle, Meat and Wool New Zealand, PO
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