

LINCOLN COLLEGE CENTENNIAL AWARD 1988

D. J. AND J. M. CATHERWOOD



Doug and Jocelyn Catherwood first developed their association with Lincoln College in the early 1970's following the purchase of a run down, dryland, browntop dominated, 355 ha property at Hororata in Canterbury. The example of Ashley Dene, where high performances from sheep under a lucerne based grazing system, provided the basic inspiration for the Catherwoods to embark upon a similar development programme. In the period from 1970 to 1980 they built up their stocking rate from 2 hoggets/ha (1.6 su/ha) to over 11 su/ha and to productivity levels of 70 kg wool/ha and 120 kg meat/ha (both well above average for this class of country). These performance levels were based on use of the grazed lucerne plant in summer and turnips and grass for winter feeding. Seventy percent of the farm was eventually sown down in lucerne plant in summer and turnips and grass for winter feeding. Seventy percent of the farm was eventually sown down in lucerne. During this period the Catherwoods were stalwarts of Ashley Dene field days, actively

seeking ideas and directions to assist their farming venture.

The Catherwoods were quick to adopt new technology relevant for this class of country. The effects of aphids and sitona weevil and other pests and diseases in the mid and late 1970's forced a change away from lucerne to grass based pastures. The Catherwoods have been able to maintain their high sheep performance levels under this more conventional farming system by making changes to their flock feeding programme. Whereas previously lucerne growth through summer months was adequate for maintenance of ewes through January to March, a new feeding strategy using grain and other supplements was introduced to ensure that the best mating live weights and ewe flushing were achieved. The objective being to ensure that sufficient lambs were generated to utilise the good spring pasture growth.

Considerable effort has gone into the sheep breeding programme. They have considerable faith in the Corriedale breed which they have selected for fine, quality fleece and fast growing lean lambs. This has enabled them to capitalise on the better returns for fine wool and the heavy weight lamb market.

In the mid 1980's the potential for increased financial returns by exploiting out-of-season lamb production was introduced. The Catherwoods were among the first in Canterbury to mate ewes in December. They co-operated with Pastoral Consultants in experimentation with different drug regimes to identify the most cost-effective treatment for successful mating during the ewes' anoestrous period. Later with Waitaki International they were able to prove that production of lambs in May and June enabled them to exploit spring growth and thus produce 40 kg plus lambs in early October.

The Catherwoods have hosted many Lincoln College student field trips; often several different classes in one year. They have been consistently co-operative in providing the material required for students to evaluate their farming system.

The leadership and innovative capability; the ability to keep abreast of latest technology in a rapidly changing farming scene and excellent communication skills have been the basis of Lincoln College's field study programmes involving the Catherwoods.

It is for these attributes that Douglas and Jocelyn Catherwood have been awarded the Lincoln College Centennial Award for 1988.