

NEW ZEALAND SOCIETY OF ANIMAL PRODUCTION — LINCOLN COLLEGE CENTENNIAL AWARD 1978

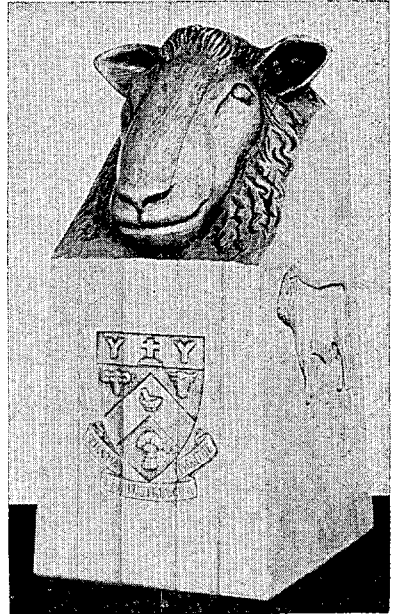
It is a pleasure and a privilege to present the New Zealand Society of Animal Production — Lincoln College Centennial Award for the first time.

Before presenting this award I would like to outline briefly how the award came about, and attempt to convey something of what the Society and Lincoln College wish the award to represent.

The New Zealand Society of Animal Production is a national professional body of scientists, advisers, farmers and students. Currently over 650 strong, the Society's principal function is the promotion and improvement of the science and practice of animal production. Through its annual conference, publication of information on many facets of animal production, and by fostering discussion the Society has continued to undertake a prominent and vital role in New Zealand agriculture. Our Society wished to

commemorate its appreciation of Lincoln College and what it has come to represent by establishing with the College this Centennial Award.

To a large extent, the development of Lincoln College and agriculture in New Zealand have been complementary. The College has contributed a great deal to modern farmers, who, in turn, have contributed much to the College and its students. Of particular note is the major contribution of the College in encouraging the study and application of farm management, through the championing of the whole farm business approach and the adoption of modern technology to this end. This has assisted in maintaining close links between old students and the College, and with progressive farmers over the length and breadth of New Zealand. These farmers have assisted greatly with the education of students not only in technical matters but in conveying that spirit of individual enterprise, a sense of proportion and belonging to the land that are hallmarks of the successful practice of agriculture. Farmers have provided an invaluable point of contact and a breadth of experience to students which cannot be captured in the lecture theatre, as well as a point of reference after graduation. The close co-operation and understanding that exist between the academic and practising agriculturalists are outstanding features of New Zealand agriculture. This close working relationship between farmers



and Lincoln College is unique. It is this relationship which the award seeks to recognize and foster in the years ahead.

The New Zealand Society of Animal Production — Lincoln College Centennial Award will be awarded annually, and be presented at each successive Lincoln College Farmers' Conference. It will be awarded to a farmer who has made a substantial contribution to the College either by hosting student field trips with a strong livestock emphasis, and/or by supervising students' practical work, or whose achievements are used regularly to demonstrate to students methods of reaching animal production goals or implementing high levels of stock management. The award shall be held by the recipient for one year. In addition some form of permanent recognition will be presented by Lincoln College.

Nominations for the award may be made by any member or group of the College staff or students and must be in the Lincoln College Selection Committee's hands by February 28 each year. The Selection Committee will comprise the President, N.Z. Society of Animal Production or his local nominee; Principal of Lincoln College; Professor of Animal Science, Lincoln College; and the Chairman of the Lincoln College Farmers' Conference Committee. The Secretary will be the Secretary of the Farmers' Conference.

In developing this award we are indebted to V. R. Clarke who suggested that a suitable trophy be created from kauri timber out of Ivy Hall. The spirit and meaning which we wished to convey have been portrayed with skill and imagination by a Canterbury artist, Bryan Verey. He has succeeded in carving a unique trophy symbolizing the many facets of animal production.

The first recipients of this award are D. B. (Barry) and W. A. C. (Bill) Abbis of Halcombe, Feilding. They have been host to groups of visiting Lincoln College students since 1948, both VFM and more recently degree students.

The Abbis brothers farm in partnership 384 ha of rolling country. They have been particularly successful in integrating a very intensive grazing system for sheep with both forage and cash cropping, and adapting modern sheep breeding practices. Their combined managerial skill in grassland farming is outstanding. The rationed use of pasture with temporary 3-wire electric fences leading to high intensity feeding of up to 3500 ewes from April until lambing, as well as intensive grazing of about 1200 ewe hoggets, and the finishing of up to 7000 lambs is particularly noteworthy. High and even levels of utilization of pasture, high stocking rates, with high levels of per acre and per animal performance, are a key to efficient sheep farming and high profitability. Their use of movable electric fences to enable daily shifting of both ewes and ewe hoggets is another feature of this outstanding farm.

Another key feature is their involvement and success with a Coopworth ram breeding flock, which is part of the Rangitikei Coopworth Breeding Group, and a South Dorset Down Group Breeding Scheme. The Coopworth ewes exhibit high fertility — in excess of 145%. The principles of group breeding schemes, where sheep of high merit are screened from a larger population on several farms to a central nucleus where they can be selectively mated and compared in a common environment, and sires of high genetic merit generated for use in contributing flocks or sold are of considerable significance to farming.