

raised against traditional breeding methods. Being motivated towards breeding sheep in a more objective way, he made contact with scientists in the animal breeding and genetics field and began to follow procedures they recommended. He was amongst the first to select on an index based on weight of lamb weaned with various people such as Al Rae, Bob Barton, Graeme Hight and Neil Clarke helping with the calculation of the index. By the mid 1960s he had become a leader in breeding for higher fertility and for easy care.

He was however not satisfied with the relatively slow progress he seemed to be making. Discussions with his scientific advisors on how faster improvement might be achieved led to the concept of the group breeding scheme. Tony became an enthusiast for the scheme, sold the idea to some other farmers, worked out the details of how the scheme could become a practical reality and finally began to operate the first nucleus flock of a group breeding scheme in the late 1960s.

The adoption of the group breeding scheme concept by other practical breeders in New Zealand and other countries has probably been more due to Tony's enthusiasm and salesmanship than to any other factor.

He has presented a number of papers on the topic in New Zealand and Australia and was a leader in the establishment of the Federation of Livestock Breeding Groups which in 1974 and 1975 organised important sessions at which lay and scientific animal breeders met. However there was not enough new information coming forward for continuing meetings of this type and the efforts of the body became more diverse. Largely at Tony's instigation, the Federation became the umbrella for the 1980 World Congress of Sheep and Beef Cattle Breeding.

For his role in the adoption of more scientific methods of animal breeding and particularly for his role in the development and adoption of group breeding schemes, Tony Parker is a worthy recipient of the Sir Arthur Ward Award.

Since one of Sir Arthur's major achievements was his role in the adoption of scientifically-based selection methods by the dairy industry it is particularly appropriate that the third recipient of this award is honoured for his role in the adoption of scientific selection methods by the sheep industry.

G. A. Wickham

LINCOLN COLLEGE CENTENNIAL AWARD 1983

GRAHAM E. FIELDHOUSE

The skill and ability of Graham Fieldhouse in establishing and managing high-producing pastures was recognised in 1978 by the New Zealand Grasslands Association in presenting him with a Grasslands Memorial Trust Award. Now, on this occasion, the New Zealand Society of Animal Production wishes to extend the recognition to include his success in the efficient utilisation of high-producing pastures with a grazing dairy herd and I consider it a notable honour to have been invited by the Society to present a suitable oration to mark the occasion.

The prime objective of a pastoral dairy farmer is to produce large amounts of high quality grass, over as long a period of the year as possible, and then to convert it into milk as efficiently and profitably as possible. With dairy cattle, the efficiency of such a conversion process can be quite impressive. Some 20% of the feed energy consumed by the cow will be

recovered in the milk, while the protein conversion efficiency will be about 30%. Compare these efficiency figures for milk production with those for beef production at 8% for energy and 15% for protein, and with those for lamb production at 6% and 10% respectively. Hence the perspicacity of Graham Fieldhouse in choosing to be a dairy farmer, rather than indulging in less efficient beef or lamb production is immediately apparent.

There are many dairy farmers in New Zealand who are regularly producing high yields of milkfat from pasture and a small proportion of them, some 2%, achieve an output of over 400 kg fat/hectare/year. Graham Fieldhouse is in this category, but he achieves this production at Rongotea which is well-known to be subject to cold winds and an erratic rainfall and his farm includes much sand dune country. Had he chosen to farm in Kaponga or Cambridge, he could

have led New Zealand in milkfat production.

Graham Fieldhouse showed rather more wisdom when choosing his wife, for the successful operation of the property has been a husband-and-wife affair, with much help from an interested daughter. Patience, together with an intuitive understanding of the needs of stock and the sensible use of good records, have made stock-handling productive. In the dairy shed, hygiene standards and milking efficiency have always been high, as revealed by intelligent use of somatic cell counting records.

Like many farmers and farm supervisors Graham Fieldhouse has never been short of advice. His association with the Consulting Officers of the New Zealand Dairy Board has been particularly close, especially with the late Mr Don Johnstone. Extensive use of the property has been made by discussion groups of farmers for the collation of specialised survey data. Then research people, particularly Dr K. L. Macmillan, have used the herd extensively for cow fertility and mating studies. Lecturers from both Lincoln and Massey have found his property invaluable as a teaching aid. A characteristic of Graham Fieldhouse, which this current award is intended to recognise, is his unstinted co-operation with research, extension and teaching people over many years. Personally, I have had many groups of students over the property to discuss dairy production methods with him. Such occasions are critically important to a lecturer in providing some realism and substance to what might otherwise have been rather sterile academic dissertations, greeted by students with reservation, if not stark disbelief.

In New Zealand these days, some 55% of all dairy cows in over 60% of all herds are mated with artificial breeding, and Graham Fieldhouse has

participated in the Dairy Board's A.B. programme for at least 25 years. The national gain from the use of artificial breeding is about 22 kg milkfat/cow/year, and over cows sired by A.B. proven bulls about 28 kg fat/cow/year. The Fieldhouse herd probably has a breeding index of 124, due to the long-term use of artificial breeding. This indicates very high genetic merit and a significant proportion of the high milkfat production per hectare which has been achieved on this farm is due to the use of genetically superior stock in harvesting the pasture produced.

Finally, to ensure that a high proportion of the pasture available is consumed by the herd at a phase of their productive cycle when their need is highest, a high degree of skill is required in manipulating drying-off dates, calving dates and in allocating feed on a day-to-day basis. Mistakes, or misfortune in such aspects of herd management can be costly in terms of unrealised production. Proficient herd managers like Graham Fieldhouse, have appreciated the intimate relationships of these factors for many years, and have therefore profited from their sheer managerial skill.

Graham Fieldhouse has played many roles in the dairy industry—dairy company director, active membership of the Livestock Improvement Association, host to numerous dairying visitors from overseas and close associate of many people concerned with research, extension and teaching in dairy production, as well as with other dairy farmers.

For all these activities we seek to recognise his merit with the Lincoln College Centennial Award for 1983.

A. R. Sykes