

Presidential Report

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It is with some trepidation that I even listed Presidential Report on this programme of this seminar for I look on this society and this gathering as a working, get-down-to-it group. Somehow, to me, formal items don't fit such a pattern

However, I would like to mention some facets of the society's history for the benefit of the new members and the non-members attending this seminar

This is the first New Zealand Veterinary Association Sheep Society Seminar to be held away from Palmerston North. The first meeting of veterinarians to discuss ram soundness was held there in 1968, followed by the second at Massey. From these the Sheep Society was formed in 1971 under the guidance of veterinarians like Bruere, Quinlivan and Somerville. It was the first specialist branch of the N Z V A. and has continued since then with a strong membership. Our parent body has approved the formation of an associate membership category which will help increase the scope of the society.

A further move to increase the scope of the Society is to be put before the Annual General Meeting today — the inclusion of beef cattle in the name and aims of the society. Beef cattle have appeared on the annual seminar programme several times. Many members see it as an advantage to include them with sheep, thus embracing both meat producing ruminants in one group. The final decision rests with members and needs the approval of the Council of the New Zealand Veterinary Association.

The main activity of the society each year is the annual seminar. The emphasis at these seminars is on individual participation. This is one of the advantages of their small size. Sessions are programmed to allow everyone to participate in the workshops and discussions. Use is made of people from other professions and occupations to examine subjects in depth.

What we have to offer you this year is printed in the leaflet. Each participant will have his or her own opinion of which is the highlight of the programme. To me this is the first session where practising veterinarians have actively involved farm consultants in investigating all of the ramifications of a problem of ill thrift in sheep.

We hope to keep you awake after lunch with some exercise. Today it is a visit to the Wool Research Organisation. We have been trying to arrange lame cattle for you tomorrow with little success at the moment, but we do have abattoir specimens which we hope will stand in their stead

There is no doubt that a lot of the society's strength is due to the efforts of a group of veterinarians working in the Palmerston North area and the facilities offered by Massey University. The society is very grateful to these people and to Massey University for this help. The current strength of the society is due in no small way to their work. I thank them on behalf of all who attended these seminars

Lincoln College is the logical place to have a Sheep Society Seminar. It has all the physical facilities necessary. There are the professional and technical skills of its staff on tap, and it is in a large sheep raising area. It also has the advantage of being able to provide a live-in situation which I feel sure will add to the value of this seminar.

It would be inopportune of me not to update these words without reference to the news last night of the diagnosis of a further case of scrapie in a Finnish Landrace ewe, a descendant of one of a group of several exotic breeds of sheep imported into New Zealand from the United Kingdom earlier this decade. The New Zealand Veterinary Association, through the action and industry of several of the N Z V A. Sheep Society members, particularly Professor Bruere, did not support this importation. Professor Bruere actively campaigned for the cessation of the experiment and the slaughter of the sheep and their descendants following the first case of scrapie. Now the warnings of members of the veterinary profession have been justified.

This episode emphasizes the necessity of informed veterinary advice in animal breeding programmes, particularly when they involve such drastic actions as the importation of sheep or any animal from areas where exotic diseases occur. We can only hope that the following months unfold a situation that allows us to proceed once again as a country free from scrapie

The administrative organization of this seminar has been done mainly by Jim Hutton, our secretary, and Brian Cox, our treasurer. I am very appreciative of their work. I am also very appreciative of the help given us by all sections of Lincoln College — the academic staff, the Union manager and staff and other College departments, such as the Teaching Aids Unit. Thank you all very much.