

LINCOLN UNIVERSITY CENTENNIAL AWARD

Andrew and Tinks Pottinger

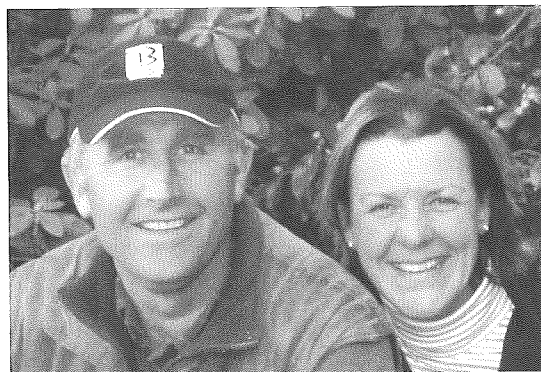
In 1978 the New Zealand Society of Animal Production instituted the Lincoln College Centennial Award in recognition of the then College's long association with the Society. Both the Society and the College noted the importance of ensuring that the academic aspects of New Zealand livestock production were supported by contact with practising agriculturalists, resulting in the establishment of the Award to 'a person or persons who have made a substantial contribution to the College either by hosting student field trips and/or by providing practical work opportunities'.

The North Island Field Tour, involving five days in the lower North Island, is a high point of the Lincoln University experience for second year BAgSc, BAg and BCom(Agr) students. A particular highlight of the tour is the visit to 'Anerley', the Wairarapa hill country property of Andrew and Tinks Pottinger. The Pottingers have hosted this visit for at least 15 years. It is not a highlight just because of the sometimes exciting, extensive tour of the property on four wheel farm vehicles and trailers. It is a farm visit they vividly remember, for all the right reasons, years after they have left the Lincoln campus.

The simplest way to describe this 1,154 ha property is as 'an intensive North Island sheep and beef property on steep slopes' with a high level of management input and stock performance reminiscent of much easier country.

The original property of 526 ha was taken up as a rehabilitation block by Andrew's father in 1950. Many of the extensive woodlots on the farm are a legacy of those earlier years. Andrew and Tinks bought the neighbouring 628 ha farm, 'Rahiwi', in 1980 to amalgamate two of the blocks from the original rehabilitation allocation.

Under Andrew's stewardship, an extensive subdivision programme including an extensive reticulated water supply, has been undertaken resulting in around 120 paddocks and an excellent central lane system. The excellent infrastructure and pasture quality make an immediate impression on students. However it is the discussion of Andrew's stock and pasture management policies and the levels of animal production the Pottingers achieve, that is an 'eye-opener' for students. Andrew has been an 'early adopter' of technology and animal breeding. He articulates clearly that the key to farm productivity is the total weight of lamb meat produced; the product of stocking rate and lambing %, both of which are high



for their farm class at 12.1 SU/ha and 150% respectively. The original Romney flock was replaced by Finn x Coopworth ewes and latterly by Highlander ewes, Rissington Breedline's synthetic maternal breed. Andrew is involved in this company's 'Breed Partner' programme in which he sells all the Highlander ewe lambs but buys a proportion of them

back as 'lambled hoggets' for his ewe replacements. This allows him to justifiably claim that he is selling 'genetics as well as meat and fibre'.

Andrew is a strong defender of the value of beef cows on hill country. He recognises their flexibility to reduce their winter feed demand by utilising body reserves, and to replace the condition later in the spring as feed supply increases. He acknowledges their vital role in maintaining pasture quality due to their large mouths restricting their ability to select higher quality species from lower quality pasture.

A new feature of the Pottinger's stable is a 'finishing' property on the outskirts of Masterton. The complementarity of this area with the hill property gives the opportunity to move lambs and finishing cattle from the hills and eliminates the dependency on a fickle 'store' market. Added flexibility was well illustrated this year, when despite a very good late spring and early summer, conditions which often lead to a pasture surplus on hill country, Andrew was able to hold lambs for longer on the hill to benefit from the improved pasture quality. It was interesting for us, who have visited the farm several times to observe the huge impact this new purchase has had on Andrew's demeanour.

On behalf of the myriad of Lincoln University students and staff who have benefitted from the Pottingers long term commitment to hosting Lincoln student visits we are pleased to be able to recognise this by nominating them for the 2010 Lincoln College Centennial Award.

Alastair Nicol and Derrick Moot