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Obituary

Emeritus Professor Terence James Robinson (14 July, 1919 to 3 September, 2004)[☆]

Terry Robinson (Prof) will be remembered as one of the inspired leaders of research in animal reproduction. His research included approaches that he pioneered in controlled breeding, especially in sheep. He was instrumental in demonstrating the usefulness of the ewe as a model for studying mammalian reproduction in relation to cycle regulation and of the importance of nutrition in reproductive performance and productivity. His earlier studies included the development of a bio-assay for phyto-oestrogens that were found to be the causative agent of “clover disease” in sheep.

His first degree was conferred by the University of Western Australia, where he also obtained his MSc (Agric). He was awarded his PhD and a DSc by Cambridge University where he studied with Sir John Hammond. His PhD involved research that showed that sheep could be induced to breed at times of the year when they would not normally breed. He was still applying principles derived from this research in the ewe flock on his own property after he retired in 1984 and right up until the time of his death. This continuing interest was reflected in the title of the last manuscript he published. It was with Prof. Rex Scaramuzzi as his co-author and was entitled: “Induction of breeding in anoestrous crossbred ewes with progestagen and PMSG with or without prior immunization against an androstenedione-protein conjugate” (Robinson and Scaramuzzi, 1994).

This manuscript was published in *Animal Reproduction Science*. The poignancy of this occurrence was that Terry Robinson was the founding editor-in-chief of this journal. In his introductory editorial he described some of the difficulties encountered in establishing a new journal (Robinson, 1978). In addition, he wrote: “Animal Reproduction Science is not a journal concerned only with zootechnie; animal reproduction is interpreted in a wide sense. Papers dealing with fundamental topics of reproductive biology are as welcome as those dealing with application. Individual merit rather than topic determine whether or not a paper is considered suitable for publication.” Not surprisingly, he noted that: “A rigid policy

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of refereeing has been established and, in addition to being of a high scientific standard, work must be presented in an acceptable form". These founding principles contributed to the development and expansion of this journal to the point where it now ranks amongst the highest in its citation index within its specific field.

"Prof" remained as this journal's editor-in-chief until 1984. In the editorial he wrote announcing that he was standing down from the editorial position, he commented: "Animal Reproduction Science is different from other journals in that it is primarily concerned with agriculture. We need reliable data on reproductive characteristics of species and breeds of animals from areas other than Europe and North America. We are interested in the impact of modern technology – controlled breeding, embryo transfer, artificial insemination – on these characteristics" (Robinson, 1984).

The continuing development of the journal is testament to the vision that "Prof" had in the journal's formative years. It can also be regarded as an appropriate monument to the significance of the scientific career on one of the leaders in "Animal Reproduction Science". Many of his postgraduate students have had outstanding careers in this field of specialization. Several have served on the editorial advisory board as well as collating and reviewing manuscripts for special issues.

This special issue is dedicated to the memory of the life and work of Professor Terry Robinson.

References

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