ELECTION OF HONORARY LIFE MEMBER

J.W. STICHBURY
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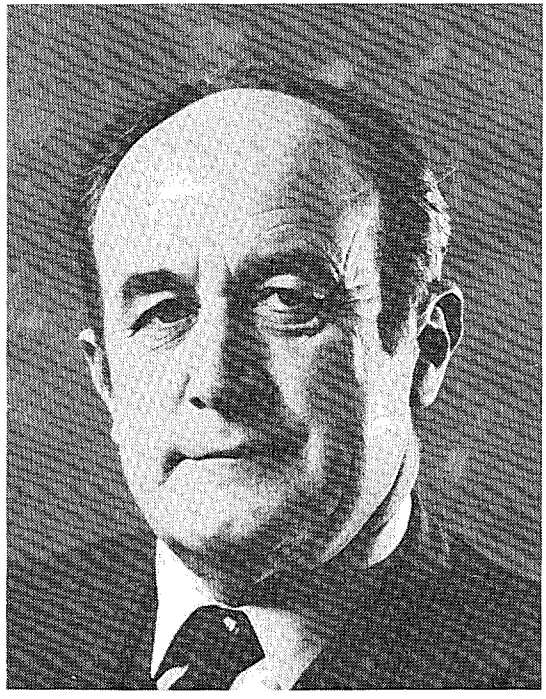

Jeff Stichbury joined the New Zealand Dairy Board as a Consulting Officer in 1950 after completing his B.Agr.Sc. degree at Massey. His early life was spent in Auckland and on leaving school at the end of 1940, he accepted an office position with the Auckland Farmers Freezing Company. In 1943 he joined the Royal New Zealand Airforce and trained as a navigator. Within a few months of returning to New Zealand (from Canada and the United Kingdom) at the end of war he enrolled and commenced his studies at Massey.

It did not take long before his outstanding attribute as a logical thinker was recognised by his colleagues in the Board. In 1952 he was appointed to a new head office position, Assistant Technical Officer. Jeff Stichbury's rapid promotion continued with his appointment as Director of Herd Improvement in 1956 when he replaced Mr A.H. (now Sir Arthur) Ward who had been promoted to General Manager of the Dairy Board. In 1980 the responsibilities of the position were widened with his appointment as an Assistant General Manager of the Board, in addition to becoming Controller of Herd Improvement. Then in 1984, after 28 years as the Senior Board staff member in the herd improvement area, he was appointed Management Consultant to the Livestock Improvement Council and the New Zealand Dairy Board.

During the period he headed the Herd Improvement Department of the Board (renamed Farm Production Division in 1969), New Zealand became recognised as a world leader in herd improvement systems and developments. New Zealand led the world in introducing several of the most significant improvements in dairy cattle breeding systems. It was largely because of Jeff Stichbury's good understanding of the importance of breeding systems and animal genetics that the surveys, investigations and research work necessary before new systems could be developed and then introduced were undertaken on such a comprehensive basis.

The most significant of these new systems in the herd testing area were the introduction of the Alternate Month Testing System in 1957, followed 6 years later in 1963, by the twice yearly testing system, called the Production Ranking Test system. The Board purchased its first high speed computer for processing herd test records in 1967. The capacity of the present computers is many times larger than the original one and without this early foresight many of the recent herd improvement developments which rely heavily on computer techniques would not have proceeded as rapidly or as well.

Over the period many improvements were made to the Sire Survey system. The most significant of these were the inclusion of genetic ancestry and the genetic value of herdmates and basing the regression calculation on the herdmate comparison. This general method, which is still the basis of sire proof systems used throughout the world, was adopted by New Zealand several years before any other country.

A flow on from the sire survey work was the development of Breeding Indexes and Production Indexes for cows. Many other countries with advanced dairy cattle breeding programmes trailed New Zealand by several years in introducing similar systems.

In artificial breeding one of the most significant developments occurred in 1961 with the decision to use a special group of herds for proving young bulls, prior to the best of the bulls being widely used