

Awards of the Tropical Grassland Society

The Society awards Fellowships to those within its membership who have made significant contributions to the understanding, use and improvement of tropical and subtropical pastures.

An annual award, The Tropical Grassland Society-ANZ Bank Award, is made to a commercial operator who has been an innovator in some aspect of tropical or subtropical grassland development.

Fellow of the Tropical Grassland Society 1990

VICTOR ROBERT CATCHPOOLE

Vic Catchpoole was born at Brisbane, Queensland. He completed his Diploma of Agriculture at Gatton College in 1950, his Bachelor of Agricultural Science degree at the University of Queensland in 1954 and his Master's degree in 1960. Vic joined the CSIRO Fodder Conservation Section in 1959 and is still working with CSIRO.

Vic's initial studies were on the production of silage from tropical pasture species. He commenced this work in Melbourne and continued it in Brisbane after his transfer to the Division of Tropical Pastures in 1963. It was pioneering work. He documented the complex fermentation pathways of tropical forages as contrasted with the classical lactic acid pathway of temperate pasture species. Vic's series of papers are still the definitive work on the topic.

After 1970, Vic commenced work on the nitrogen cycle of tropical pastures. In this field he played a major role in measuring the volatilization of ammonia from pastures and defining the conditions under which ammonium loss is greatest. He has contributed greatly to our understanding that this pathway can be a major source of loss of nitrogen from both unfertilized and nitrogen fertilized pastures.

Vic's research in the past 10 years has pro-

vided a good understanding of the serious problem of nitrogen rundown in tropical grass pastures in clay soils of the brigalow region. He has shown that old pastures of green panic are seriously nitrogen deficient with low soil nitrate levels throughout the profile. In contrast, on the same soils, most annual crops are unable to use all the nitrate released through cultivation and nitrate can accumulate in the soils below their depth of rooting. Thus an occasional deep rooted crop in a rotation on these soils could recover nitrate that might otherwise be lost. In recent years Vic has turned his interest into using cultivation as a means of rejuvenating the 'run-down' condition of grass pastures in brigalow soils and thereby increasing their productivity.

Vic has made an outstanding contribution to tropical pasture science through his involvement in the Tropical Grassland Society. He served for 11 years on the Executive Committee as Treasurer. During this period his input into the Society was far greater than that of managing money, yet as Treasurer he laid the foundations for the firm financial standing that the Society has to-day. This length of involvement with the Executive Committee has been unequalled by any other member of the Society. Vic is among the foremost of the Society's quiet achievers.

Tropical Grassland Society — ANZ Bank Award 1990

BRUCE CHAPMAN

Bruce Chapman is a grazier of "Rowanlea", Calliope. He runs 2 000 head of beef cattle on the 7 000 ha property of undulating open-forest/speargrass country receiving 870 mm annual average rainfall. About 40% of "Rowanlea" is suitable for pasture improvement and 900 ha have now been sown to improved pastures.

Bruce has pioneered pasture improvement within a whole farm development plan over many

years. He readily takes new technology and adapts it to his own conditions. He willingly co-operates with scientists and extension workers in devising and testing new pasture and animal management technologies. More importantly, Bruce has shown a ready willingness to share his experience and promote the successful ideas among his fellow graziers.

Bruce's overall aim is to provide high quality pasture for a longer period of the year thus

facilitating an earlier turnoff of steers, better weaner and breeder nutrition as well as a high carrying capacity. He is achieving this by implementing a combination of low, medium and high input pasture systems according to soil fertility, slope and required use.

His innovative nature has been demonstrated in his development of erosion-prone, sloping native pasture country using a strip planting technique. Broad strips 7–8 m apart alternating with similar sized native pasture strips, are cultivated across the slope. Several key strips are surveyed on the contour and intervening strips are run parallel to these. Drainage lines and waterways are left undisturbed. Only two disc ploughings are given with planting and covering of seed incorporated in the second operation. A common pasture mixture used is Callide Rhodes,

Hatch bluegrass, Seca stylo, Wynn cassia and Siratro. A key feature of management is late summer/autumn spelling to allow seeding. This has resulted in the spread of sown species through the native pasture strips.

This technology has wide application in coastal Central Queensland. Bruce has shown it to be easy to achieve with readily available equipment, that it is relatively inexpensive and limits erosion.

Bruce is an active community and industry leader in the region as his contribution to Local Government, UGA and Calliope Soil Conservation Association testifies.

The Award recognises this leadership which has contributed greatly towards the development and promotion of successful pasture technology in Central Queensland.

Book reviews

Lucerne Management Handbook — Second Edition

(Edited by Peter J.M. Thompson and Colin J. Paull). Queensland Department of Primary Industries Conference and Workshop Series. 1990. 56 pp. A\$15.

The other day I was asked, quite out of the blue, to give an opinion on how many hectares of lucerne, cut for hay, would be needed to provide a decent income for someone who was considering leaving the ratrace and was thinking about becoming a lucerne grower. Luckily, this Handbook was on my desk, and within a couple of minutes I was able to give him some basic figures on expected gross margins.

The first edition of this Handbook was produced following a workshop in 1982. The present second edition is a welcome update. There are 12 chapters, all by QDPI authors, covering a wide range of aspects of lucerne usage, from varietal selection, controlling insect pests, weed control, fertilizer management, irrigation, haymaking techniques, grazing management, and economics. They are written in an easy-to-read style, and manage to convey the technical information in a form that is readily understood. There are 25

colour plates illustrating various pests and diseases, and a useful disease key.

There is inevitably a certain degree of overlap between some of these chapters, particularly "Selecting the right lucerne", "Dormancy and Growth Patterns", and "Persistence and Production". However, the advice given is always sound, often detailed (e.g. four pages of information on chemicals for weed control in lucerne) and internally consistent. A useful touch is the inclusion of a Farmnote with the latest cultivar and management recommendations in a pocket on the back cover, where it can be updated readily in the future.

I found few errors, although it is *Stemphylium* leaf spot that is illustrated in Plate 23, not black stem as suggested in the text. I am not sure if the "fine-tuned" implements referred to in the weed control chapter should perhaps be "fine tined"!

This is indeed a useful publication; it has attained the editors' stated aim of being a current and comprehensive reference work for both experienced and new lucerne growers. I suggested to my afore-mentioned enquirer that he should buy his own copy forthwith.

R.A. Bray