



MERVYN CLAREIWE FRANKLIN

Died 27th January, 1967

Federal President 1954-55

Elected Fellow 1962

M. C. Franklin was born in Te Aroha, New Zealand, in 1905. He graduated **B.Sc.** from Auckland University College in 1926 and gained the degree of **M.Sc.** with First Class Honours in 1927. He was awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of the University of Cambridge in 1933 and returned to New Zealand to become Lecturer-in-Charge of the Animal Nutrition and Chemistry Departments, Canterbury Agricultural College, University of New Zealand.

In 1939, Franklin joined the Division of Animal Health and Production, **CSIR**, in charge of the Biochemistry Section, **McMaster** Laboratory, Sydney. He remained in this position for many years and developed the work in sheep and cattle nutrition that remained his personal research interest throughout his career.

Franklin's work there on the effects of diet on the dental development of sheep is well known; later he became interested in mineral metabolism in cattle. The research for which perhaps he was to become best-known, feeding sheep for survival during droughts, began co-operatively with the Department of Agriculture, N.S.W., in 1946; other workers later extended this research to cattle. As a result of this work he repeatedly advocated fodder conservation and the establishment of a national drought fodder reserve, and argued the case cogently in his Presidential address to the Society at Armidale in 1956. His interest in the feeding of stud beef-cattle also began at about this time and continued throughout his life. By advising a small number of stud cattle breeders, Franklin collected detailed records on the feeding and performance of hundreds of animals of all ages. He made this task a hobby and worked on the large volume of material at his home. Many in the Australian stud beef industry who sought his advice on nutritional problems benefited from this venture.

Franklin kept records of supplementary and complete hand-feeding ventures with commercial beef cattle from 1946. He was able to expand this interest greatly from 1950 onwards when he was appointed Co-ordinator of Beef Cattle Investigations, Southern States of Australia, at the request of the Australian Committee on Animal Production. The appointment coincided with the initiation of investigations, financed by the Australian Meat Board, into problems of beef production. Here, Franklin was also able to influence, at its outset, a large programme of work with grazing cattle that lasted many years. The position brought him into contact with all levels of the scientific, grazing and administrative communities, and gave him a comprehensive understanding of beef production throughout the southern states of Australia. In 1952, he travelled to Britain and the U.S.A. to study research in progress there in problems of beef production.

His interest in meat production predominated from the middle 1950's. In 1953, he became the first William **McIlrath** Fellow in Animal Husbandry at the University of Sydney. By 1956 he was so convinced of the need for a research programme to study all aspects of growth and meat production in cattle that he, together with Professor T. J. Robinson, successfully appealed for funds to found a Meat Research Laboratory at the Camden Animal Husbandry Farm of the University. He moved to the laboratory in 1959 and subsequently became its Director. In 1961, this was named the M. C. Franklin Laboratory by the Senate of the University as an acknowledgement of his unique contribution. Franklin lectured in Animal Nutrition during the period he was at the **McMaster** Laboratory and at Camden and thereby influenced many scientists now working in the field.

He moved to the Cunningham Laboratory, Brisbane, Queensland, in 1961 to lead a newly-created section of the CSIRO Division of Animal Physiology that was formed to investigate nutritional and reproductive problems in the cattle industry of Northern Australia. At this Laboratory he collaborated with workers in the CSIRO Division of Tropical Pastures in their programme of pasture improvement in the northern areas.

In 1964, at the request of the Australian Meat Board, he was appointed Executive Officer of the then Australian Cattle and Beef Research Committee (now the Australian Meat Research Committee), and occupied this position until his death.

Franklin was an outstanding worker in the field of animal nutrition. In his approach and writings, we find constantly an aim to use the knowledge derived from his education and research for the benefit of the community at large. It was this attitude, together with **his** integrity, that led to the respect with which his opinions were held by agricultural scientists, producers and administrators at all levels and enabled him to initiate and influence so much of the work in animal husbandry done in Australia during his lifetime.

(B.A.P.)

M. C. FRANKLIN MEMORIAL SYMPOSIUM

Chairman: Professor G. L. McClymont
University of New England

CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

Dr. M. C. Franklin, or "Frankie" as he was known to most, was one of the pioneers of drought feeding research. He was responsible for organizing, in the early 1950's, the first major attack on the problems of drought feeding in the Burdekin Unit at the New South Wales Department of Agriculture Veterinary Research Station. This Unit, in which I was privileged to work with Frankie, was run co-operatively by CSIRO and the Department of Agriculture, and provided a great bank of knowledge which has been extensively drawn on in all subsequent droughts, and has had an enormous impact on drought feeding practices. Dr. Franklin initiated work on calcium supplementation of grain diets which was a logical development of his early work in Cambridge, and on intermittent feeding which has been particularly important in increasing the efficiency of drought feeding.

Dr. Franklin always made himself readily available to producers for discussion. This was reflected in the research that he developed, which showed a deep understanding of the kind of knowledge that is needed to throw light on their problems. His work is also a constant reminder of the fact that effective research does not inevitably require complex equipment. The Burdekin Unit work was largely done with sheep, pens, a weighbridge — and critical observation.

As a colleague, **Frankie** was a delight to work with — always cheerful, co-operative and considerate, and always as much interested in the people he was working with as he was in the work itself.

This symposium is a very fitting memorial to him.