

JAMES COOK UNIVERSITY'S CONTRIBUTION TO
TROPICAL ANIMAL PRODUCTION

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One of the most pressing issues in the world today is a need to improve animal health and increase animal production, especially in the tropics. There is therefore an increasing demand for training and retraining at all levels of activity from the laboratory to the field (Moore 1975). The Department of Tropical Veterinary Science of James Cook University of North Queensland is a postgraduate research unit with a firm commitment to overseas animal production through the training of scientists and advisors at courses held both in Townsville and in their own countries. It is unique within Australia being the only such institution in the tropics.

The school comprises research and graduate training staff in both animal production and health. There is a wide range of technologies represented including animal nutrition, reproductive and environmental physiology, animal breeding and genetics, as well as most aspects of the animal health sciences. These skills are applicable not only in Australia but elsewhere in the tropics. To make an effective contribution to overseas animal production it is necessary to be fully aware of the students' home environment, of the many sociological factors which operate, and these are kept in mind at all times. Staff are encouraged to work in developing countries and most have acted as consultants or spent study leave periods in Africa, Asia or Oceania. The Department makes a considerable contribution to animal research through the Australian-Asian Universities Cooperation Scheme, providing training courses for South-East Asian animal scientists within their own countries. Follow-up research programmes provided within these schemes have proved an essential part of the training process.

The Department attempts to educate each individual to his needs, and provides facilities in Townsville not only for advanced training but also for updating the knowledge of graduates who have been professionally active for a number of years. Since the spectrum of interest of applied scientists is wide, options are provided to meet many individual interests. Approximately one half of the current enrolment of 32 graduates are from countries other than Australia. In the past six years alone 30 nationalities have been represented.

Support is received from a variety of schemes; not only the Australian Development Assistance Bureau, which administers the Colombo Plan, Special Commonwealth African Assistance Plan and South Pacific Aid Program, and the Australian-Asian Universities Cooperation Scheme, but also the Ford Foundation, World Bank and the World Health Organization.

MOORE, C.P. (1975). Wld Anim. Rev. 13: 38.

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