

Amos William HOWARD (1848-1930)

In 1839, Amos Howard found subterranean clover growing near Nairne, South Australia. He recognised its great promise and was the pioneer of its use in sown pastures. He harvested the first seed and distributed it widely throughout Australia.

Through Howard's foresight, devotion and tireless effort the value of subterranean clover was firmly established, and it has become the most important pasture plant in Australia.

By transforming millions of acres of infertile soils into productive pasture lands it has multiplied our flocks and herds. By restoring the fertility of large tracts of worn out wheatlands it has increased our harvests.

The work of this man has contributed in generous measure to Australia's progress and prosperity.

John Hawkes William MULES (1876-1946)

In 1904, John Mules first saw fly strike as a real and increasing problem to the sheep industry. In 1929 he carried out the first trials on removing skin folds below the tail. They proved to be successful. Acceptance of the operation was very slow, but a few farsighted people clamoured for further work to be done along these lines. The C.S.I.R. and Mr. Mules collaborated in 1937 and refined the technique but still few graziers adopted it, even though those that did got excellent results. By the 1940's new equipment, viz. holding cradles, the use of hand shears rather than roll cut secateurs, enabled the modified Mules operation and tail strip to develop as we know it now. Public reactions at that time varied. Some thought it a cheap and quick method to reduce fly strike incidence while others thought it cruel and drastic (although not blanching at the thought of castration and tailing).

Today the operation is much more widespread, and its adoption is increasing as State Agricultural Departments undertake active extension along these lines.

John Mules' conception, although slow and crude has become a valuable tool in fly strike control. As accurately as it can be estimated, it probably saves the sheep industry in Australia \$20,000,000 per annum.

John MURRAY (1813-1886)

In 1843 John Murray founded a Merino stud in South Australia's northern wheat belt using a mixture of New South Wales and Tasmanian blood lines. He was an astute studmaster, and with careful inbreeding and selection, produced a strain of sheep that had strong constitutions and produced heavy fleeces of good combing wool. He gained notoriety by breeding fleeces resistant to sun and dust, under harsh field conditions. As a result, he attracted the attention of stud breeders elsewhere, particularly in the Riverina of New South Wales.

He maintained his stud without the introduction of outside blood for nearly a century. One of the parent studs of the Australian sheep industry, it had a big impact on the development of the Merino sheep in this country, and set a standard of excellence and adaptability for much of last century that many tried to emulate, benefiting the industry as a whole.

Charles Brown FISHER (1818-1908)

Fisher founded one of the first Merino studs in South Australia in 1838, using Tasmanian sheep. His main impact on the industry did not come about until he established "The Levels" based on New South Wales blood, in 1854. After trying both Australian and overseas rams, he turned successfully to breeding his own rams. These rams achieved considerable notoriety in the show ring. "Charles I" his most famous sire, was never beaten, and "Charles II" one of the former's progeny twice won his class at the Sydney Show.

Fisher's rams were sold all over Australia, mainly to the Riverina areas, and even to Ceylon and South Africa. Wool from this stud won a gold medal at Paris in 1878.

The excellence of Fisher's sheep stimulated selection in other studs and led to wide distribution of his sheep. He contributed materially to the rapid genetic progress of the Merino sheep last century.

Hon. George Charles HAWKER (1819-1895)

G.C. Hawker established the original and now famous Bungaree Stud in South Australia in 1841, making it one of the earliest studs in the State's history. The ewes were brought overland from New South Wales.

The Bungaree type of sheep was mainly intended to go into the low rainfall pastoral areas where sun and dust reduced the wool of other sheep to a fluffy consistency. As the stud developed, its sheep became renowned for large body size, strong constitution and fleeces of considerable weight and merit. By now the name Bungaree is known throughout the nation, and as far away as New Zealand and South Africa. In developing a sheep for the large tracts of Australia's pastoral and marginal country, G.C. Hawker enabled the size of the national flock to continue its rapid increase and contributed to the very rapid increase in productivity of those sheep. Marked for further titular distinction, he died before these could be bestowed upon him.

Professor John Daniel CUSTANCE (1842-1923)

It was early practice in Australian cereal farming to use little or no form of fertilizer on crops. In a few cases powdered bone was distributed, but the benefits from this were slight.

In 1881, J.D. Custance came from England to become principal of the Roseworthy Agricultural College. He brought with him the latest fertilizer practices of the times. He realised that the relatively unknown material superphosphate was far more effective than bone dust in improving crop yields, and he advocated dressings of up to 3 cwt/acre on all cereal crops. Although trial results at the College amply demonstrated his ideas the use of super was slow to gain acceptance.

It was partly due, however, to his initiation of the concept in Australia that the national cereal crops have reached the level of productivity that they now have.

Professor William LOWRIE (1858-1933)

In 1887 when William Lowrie succeeded J.D. Custance as principal of the Roseworthy Agricultural College, the stage was set for the widespread extension of superphosphate use. Lowrie's energies in advocating its use overcame the scepticism and tardiness of the farmers, and in 1892, a small group of farmers adopted the application of this phosphatic manure as a standard farm operation. Gradually acceptance of this new idea spread, and by 1901 two plants to manufacture super were operating.

It is due to the pioneer work done by Lowrie that the low natural fertility of Australia's soils was not depleted, but coupled with the introduction of legumes by Howard, improved considerably.