SYMPOSIUM 1

AUSTRALIA'S CONTRIBUTION TO OVERSEAS ANIMAL PRODUCTION IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

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INTRODUCTION

The role of animal production in developing countries is a subject which has generated vigorous, even acrimonious, discussion for at least 20 years. There have been those who believe that a programme to feed a hungry world has no place for animals; energy production per unit area should be the sole criterion for deciding agricultural priorities. On the other hand, animal products provide high-quality protein which complements the lysine-deficient proteins of the cereal grains, which are the source of 50% of the world’s protein and which, in many countries, contribute more than 75% of the total protein available. This justification for increased animal production becomes less important with increasing time, as our knowledge of protein nutrition and the quality of available food proteins steadily increases.

In any case there are large areas of the world where animal production is possible and intensive crop production is not, and the increasing numbers of people in these areas are beginning to press more heavily on animal food resources. And it cannot be denied that the demand for animal products in developing countries tends to increase as fast as economics allow. For these and other reasons, there is much work being done to improve the efficiency of animal production in developing countries, and Australian scientists have always been major contributors to this work.

The Organizing Committee therefore considered it appropriate to include a symposium on Australia’s contribution to overseas animal production in the programme of this Conference. They were fortunate to obtain four experienced speakers to consider four aspects. The institutional problems which underlie cooperation between developed and developing nations will be considered by Mr. Gurnett-Smith, Officer-in-Charge of the Centre for Animal Research and Development at Bogor, Indonesia. Dr. Lambourne will draw on his own wide experience to discuss the technical and technological aspects. Mr. Campion will give a personal view of the problems, both present and future, faced by those who commit themselves to a career in developing countries.

Finally, Professor Tulloh also draws on his experience, in the Australian-Asian Universities Cooperation Scheme, to discuss a critical problem: how to improve the tertiary training of animal production workers in the developing countries themselves. Professor Tulloh’s paper is also his Presidential Address to this Conference.

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