

Citation – Professor James Rowe

South African born Professor, James Rowe, immigrated to Australia to follow his interest in agriculture, completing his Bachelor of Rural Science and PhD in ruminant nutrition at UNE in 1978. Upon completing his PhD, James' first position was with the United Nations Development Program, working under Dr Reg Preston in the Dominican Republic. The two-year assignment kick-started what was to become a rewarding and extensive career in both sheep and cattle production. The UK was James' next career path destination, with two years spent working with ICI's Pharmaceutical Division (now Astra Zeneca), exploring methods of altering gut fermentation with the goal being to reduce methane production and increase energy retention in sheep and cattle production systems.

Upon return to Australia, James joined the Western Australia Department of Agriculture as a Research Officer working on the nutritional management of sheep, focusing on the impact of nutrition on reproductive performance and wool production, especially during the dry summer months. Research on acidosis led to the development of the feed additives Eskalin (for safe feeding of grains to ruminants) and Founderguard (for reducing the risk of laminitis in horses). The positive benefits of collaboration across different scientific disciplines became very apparent during James' time in WA and strong relationships were also forged with the private sector, working with sheep and cattle producers, as well as commercial feed manufacturers. For the last six years of his time in WA, James was the Head of Cattle Industry R&D, which afforded him more chances to take on leadership and management responsibilities – standing him in good stead for his future career progression.

In 1994, James accepted the position of Professor and Head of Animal Sciences at UNE and enjoyed the range of activities that included undergraduate teaching, supervising postgraduates and further research on acidosis in collaboration with Pfizer Animal Health, culminating in a six-month sabbatical at Pfizer's research headquarters in Connecticut.

In 1999 the Premium Wool CRC's future looked doubtful, so James began to work with Dr Rob Woolaston, the Officer in Charge of the CSIRO's Chiswick Research Station, on planning a "Sheep CRC". Wool had always been the dominant player in sheep industry research, with very little cross-over between wool and sheep meat R&D. The aim of the new CRC was to understand how to get the most out of integrated wool and meat production systems. James' hard work with Rob Woolaston and others paid off, and he was appointed CEO of the new CRC in 2001. The CRC was subsequently successful in being granted a second seven-year term in 2007, and a final five-year extension from 2014 - 2019, when it finally ceased operation. The Sheep CRC delivered transformational changes to the sheep industry. Professor Rowe oversaw research that delivered new breeding programs for well adapted sheep, developing new quality control systems for comfortable next-to-skin knitwear and ensuring lamb production included the appropriate balance for improved lean meat yield and eating quality for consumers.

James has always thrived on the values of giving back to the Industry that supported him and he has always emphasised that close links between industry and researchers will ensure success for the adoption of that research by end-users.

Professor James Rowe is nominated for the title of Emeritus Professor in recognition of his contribution to the University's agricultural pursuits.

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