

Forbes Donald Brien



Associate Professor Forbes Brien was raised on a mixed farming property at Birregurra near Colac in Victoria. His secondary school years were at Colac High School and Wesley College. He was part of the family farm partnership until 1995. After selling the family farm, Forbes and his wife Christine purchased a 650-ha sheep and cattle grazing property at Nareen Victoria and sold it in 2006.

He completed both an Agricultural Science degree and a Masters majoring in sheep reproductive physiology at Melbourne University. Forbes worked for the Victorian and South Australian State Governments both twice. He started with the Victorian Department of Agriculture after completing his degree. He was initially based at Werribee where he also completed his Masters. During 1977–1979 Forbes was in training as a Sheep Industry Advisory Officer at Ballarat and then in 1979 he began as a Sheep Industry Officer at Warrnambool. He was awarded a postgraduate scholarship from the Australian Wool Research and Development Council and spent 1981 to 1985 undertaking his PhD at University of Edinburgh in Scotland. There he combined his interests in reproductive physiology and productivity by studying the genetics of reproduction and feed efficiency using mice as a model species. The work still has relevance today as evidenced by the number of attempts to repeat similar work.

Forbes returned to the Victorian Department as a Livestock Research Officer based at Hamilton. In 1987 he moved to South Australia and commenced work as the National Coordinator of WOOLPLAN. This was a perfect way to combine his skills in Merino sheep, genetics and

extension. However, it was also a very difficult role where the majority of Merino breeders and their commercial clients saw little relevance in objective measurement. In 1994 he was appointed Program Manager, Wool in Primary Industries SA, and in 1995 Chief Scientist, Livestock Systems in South Australian Research and Development Institute.

In 1998 Forbes was appointed Resource Manager, Animal Science at the Pastoral and Veterinary Institute, Hamilton Victoria and this facilitated the move to the farm at Nareen. He held another two leadership positions within Agriculture Victoria before returning in 2004 to SARDI as Principal Research Scientist, Livestock Breeding and Genetics including Leader of Turretfield Research Centre. He worked closely with University of Adelaide colleagues during this time and was appointed to his current position of Research Associate Professor in 2013.

Forbes has been a member of AAABG since 1991 and was on the organising committees of three conferences in South Australia. He has served as Vice President and is the current President. He is a true industry servant in that he understands the needs of seedstock and commercial breeders and has spent his whole career committed to industry development including some genuinely tough leadership positions and periods.

For his outstanding contributions to quantitative genetics and breeding, and in particular for his management and advisory work in the wool industry, the Association for the Advancement of Animal Breeding and Genetics is pleased to elect Forbes Brien as a Fellow of the Association..