

Julius van der Werf



Julius van der Werf was born into a dairy farming family in The Netherlands and progressed to a Bachelor of Agricultural Science and Master of Science in 1984, then a PhD in 1990 at Wageningen University. This period included Research Assistantships at Cornell University and the University of Guelph. From 1985 to 1993, Julius was an Assistant Professor at Wageningen University and then a Senior Research Scientist in dairy cattle breeding at the National Institute for Animal Science and Health in The Netherlands from 1993 to 1996.

Julius moved to Australia in 1997 to a senior lecturing position with the University of New England (UNE), Armidale, bringing strong passion and expertise in dairy cattle breeding and soccer. He quickly became a highlight for animal breeding and genetics in Australia, with contributions to fundamental methodology, practical implementation, and training a generation of animal breeders in Australia and overseas. Julius was appointed Associate Professor (in 2001) then Professor in Animal Breeding and Genetics at UNE in 2007.

Julius developed covariance function methods used in dairy cattle, and this has spread widely to other species. With his students he pioneered genetic evaluation and breeding design across purebred and crossbred populations, and many other areas too numerous to list. Most notably for the Australian sheep industries, he has developed methods and designs to best exploit genomic information for speed of genetic gains, and played a key leadership role in having these technologies effectively implemented as a Program Manager in genetics for the Sheep Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) from 2002 to 2019. He has also been on the

technical committee for Sheep Genetics since 2005. Julius was also a Program Manager for the CRC for Beef Quality from 2001 to 2006.

Julius has generously shared these and other abilities with many students and colleagues, including the development of educational and decision-aid software made publicly available. He launched and runs the Armidale Animal Breeding Summer Schools series, bringing world-leading experts and international PhD students for about 20 years. This has played a major role in making Australia a destination of choice for students, sabbaticals and settlement.

A long-term supporter of AAABG, Julius was President for the 17th AAABG Conference held in Armidale in 2007, also co-hosting an associated symposium 'Adaptation and Fitness in Animal Populations'. In addition, if you look through the author indexes of AAABG Proceedings, invariably Julius van der Werf's name appears as one of the most prolific authors.

Apart from his long list of significant publications as a senior author or co-author, Julius has made a long-term contribution in editorial roles with scientific journals, with almost 20 years as Co-Editor in Chief of *Genetics, Selection and Evolution* and as an Associate Editor of the *Journal of Animal Breeding and Genetics*. Has also been on the Editorial Board of *Livestock Science* from 2006–2011.

For his outstanding contributions to the science of genetics and animal improvement, the Association for the Advancement of Animal Breeding and Genetics is pleased to elect Julius van der Werf as a fellow of the Association.