

## ROB WOOLASTON



Raised at Somerton, NSW, Rob grew up on a livestock and grain property, attended Farrar Agricultural High School, and then completed a B.Sc(Agric) degree at UNSW, graduating with first class honours. He then undertook postgraduate training under the supervision of Professor Euan Roberts. After attaining his PhD in 1975, Rob returned to the family farm and spent 7 years finding out about the vagaries of primary production. A desire to return to research saw him then spend 7 very productive years at the Animal Breeding and Research Institute, Katanning, WA, where he began his studies of genetic variation in Merino sheep. Working with Bob Howe and Roger Lewer, Rob's research outputs and delivery to breeders, had a major impact on Merino breeding in WA during this time.

After a stint as Senior Biometrician in the Tree Breeding Section of Queensland Department of Forestry, in 1989 Rob joined CSIRO as Quantitative Geneticist and Project Leader of the Parasite Resistance group at CSIRO Animal Production in Armidale, NSW. During the ensuing 5 years, Rob initiated and conducted many insightful investigations into the genetics of host-parasite interactions in sheep, with particular focus on *Haemoncus contortus* in Merino sheep. During this period he was also involved in breeding research in Fiji and China.

From 1993 Rob's career in CSIRO moved increasingly into research management, and between 1996 and 2001, he was the Manager of the CSIRO Livestock Improvement Program and the Senior Officer-in-Charge of the CSIRO Pastoral Research Laboratory at Armidale. It was during this time that Rob led the successful bid for the establishment of the Australian Sheep Industries Cooperative Research Centre. In 2001 Rob moved to Brisbane, and between this time, and when he left CSIRO in 2004, Rob filled roles as Deputy Chief, and Acting Chief of the Division of Livestock Industries. This was a particularly exciting time within CSIRO as the molecular technologies began to become available to research into livestock breeding. Under Rob's leadership CSIRO made key strategic investments that led to leadership in the international efforts to map key livestock genomes.

Rob's career since 2004 has focussed on provision of consulting services to the major livestock industries. He has performed roles as MLA R&D co-ordinator and technical advisor, and R&D Manager of Pfizer Animal Genetics, and contributed to many other industry boards and advisory committees. In particular Rob has made a major contribution to the Technical Committee of Sheep Genetics, filling the role as Chair between 2005-2008, and again currently.

Rob is the author of over 130 scientific and technical publications, including invited papers at international conferences in Australia, New Zealand, Canada, UK, USA, Uruguay, China, Pakistan and Indonesia. He has co-edited three books on the genetics of host-parasite interactions and animal breeding.

For Rob's very significant contributions to the Australian livestock industries through his research, research management, and contributions to industry boards and advisory bodies, the Association for the Advancement of Animal Breeding and Genetics is please the elect him as a Fellow of the Association.