

SUZANNE I. MORTIMER



Sue Mortimer is a Research Scientist, NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (NSW DPIRD) within Livestock Systems. She joined NSW Department of Agriculture (now NSW DPIRD) on the 14th February 1985 and was based at the Trangie Agricultural Research Centre.

Sue's appetite for agricultural science stemmed from her childhood interest in Australian history, particularly the importance of the wool industry and its contribution to the economy. Sue grew up in Sydney with no real connection to the land, so she studied agriculture, choosing Wool and Pastoral Sciences at the University of New South Wales where she undertook genetics subjects and graduated with first class honours. Sue went on to do her PhD under the

supervision of John James, looking at the relative efficiency of index selection and independent culling levels for two traits under a range of conditions and their responses in breeding objective traits, with and without restrictions on genetic gain in one trait. In 1985, at the completion of her PhD Sue was appointed to a position at Trangie Agriculture Research Centre. At the time, the Trangie site had a substantial mix of young and old scientists which Sue found to be exciting. Sue is now based at the NSW DPIRD's Armidale Livestock Industry Centre located at the University of New England, Armidale.

Over the past 40 years, Sue's research has applied quantitative genetics to sheep breeding, particularly by estimating genetic parameters for economically important traits for use in genetic evaluation and breeding program design to improve the profitability of sheep production enterprises. Working with Kevin Atkins, her early focus was on evaluating the relative amounts of genetic and environmental variation in Merino wool production traits. From there her research program has included: the genetics of sheep meat production and eating quality, particularly the relationships of those traits with wool production and quality traits in the Merino breed; genetics of flystrike in non-seasonal rainfall environments; and genetic benchmarking of Merinos using industry data (central test sire evaluation, wether trials). Sue has supervised the research programs of many of the genetic resource flocks conducted at Trangie, as well as being involved in managing several of the Merino central test sire evaluations hosted there. Her involvement in central test sire evaluation continued with the establishment of the Merino Lifetime Productivity site at Trangie. Her extensive involvement in the QPLUS selection lines and earlier resource flocks at Trangie has had a large impact on Merino genetic improvement in Australia.

During her career, Sue has had an extensive publication contribution (over 150 papers). As senior author or a co-author, she has contributed more than 40 papers to the association's proceedings since 1985. Sue has served as an Associate Editor for Animal Production Science and as a member of the BREEDPLAN and Sheep Genetics Technical Committee.

For her excellent contribution to the genetic improvement of the Australian Merino industry, the Association for the Advancement of Animal Breeding and Genetics is pleased to elect Sue Mortimer as a Fellow of the Association.