

# CHAPTER ELEVEN

## THE FARMERS

They were what it was all about over the years - those who are the working livestock farmers. They should be receiving the information disseminated from the Annual Grassland Conferences, as they can benefit from the innovations revealed at these meetings.

Throughout its 90 years, NZGA has attracted a good proportion of farmers as members - from 33 percent in 1950 to over 50 percent from the 70s to the 21st century. Farmers have always ranked as the highest proportion, compared with research/university and agribusiness membership, except when local publicity was lacking, as in 1975 when the Hastings meeting was poorly attended by farmers

Individual farmers have been key NZGA members, serving on the Executive Committee, as Presidents and Life Members. Many have given presentations, and have generously hosted the conference attendees on the field tours of the regions. Every year NZGT awards two of the host region's farmers for excellence.

As a Life Member, I am proud to have known some of the following notable farmers who gave far more in NZGA service:

### **RA Candy**

Dr RA Candy (OBE, CBE, DSc) was an outstanding leader in the dairy industry and the only farmer honoured by NZGT in the years when it was the Memorial Trust. Alan Candy was born in Whanganui in August 1903, the second child of a farmer at Manaia, Taranaki, and his wife, Isabella. He was educated at Manaia and New Plymouth Boys' High School.

In 1920 he took a job on William Nicholson's dairy farm at Springdale in Waikato. A year later he moved to a farm his father had bought at Ngarua. Alan married the daughter of his former employer, in May 1925, and the couple had two sons and two daughters.

Alan took over the farm management at Ngarua and he gradually turned the poorly drained peat into productive farmland by experimenting with fertilisers and testing his cows for butterfat production, in the years before milksolids!



He was an early believer in farming practices that are now commonplace - heavy top-dressing, adequate subdivision, and good drainage and controlled grazing. Alan Candy started a Ngarua herd-testing group in 1926 and in 1933 he became chairman of the Auckland Herd Improvement Association, a post which he held for 33 years.

Over the next 35 years he featured in many farming organisations:

- Director (1935–68) and deputy chairman (1952–57) of the NZ Co-operative Dairy Company;
- Chairman (1957–61) of the NZ Dairy Products Marketing Commission,
- Deputy chairman (1961–65) of the NZ Dairy Production & Marketing Board,
- Member (1937–46) and Chairman (1944–46) of the Massey College Council (later Board of Governors).

He had an unusual ability to work with scientists, to recognise the relevance of their work, and to translate technical information into practical advice to farmers. At meetings of mixed groups of scientists, farmers, politicians and industrialists, he led the discussions to a productive conclusion.

Alan was one of the first farmers to present a paper at an NZGA conference and became a firm supporter, but obviously lacked the time to serve on the Executive Committee.

Alan recognised the importance of diversifying both products and markets, and foresaw clearly problems when Britain joined the European Community. He travelled extensively overseas and laid the foundations for today's dairy marketing strategy.

Alan Candy's work for the dairy industry was recognised with an OBE in 1946 and a CBE in 1969. The honorary DSc conferred by Massey in 1968 was the first awarded to a non-academic.

His Ngarua farm became a showplace noted for high production. Alan had a prodigious memory - he knew the name, number and test results of each of his 120 cows. His daily diary was written up every day from 1927 on.

He was also a pioneer in dairy beef production, persisting despite skepticism from other farmers. He established dairy beef as an important part of the dairy industry. Young people working for him were encouraged to save and were offered generous bonuses to help them take up their own farms. Many later became leaders in the dairy industry.

Alan Candy was devoted to his family, and he contributed to the social life of the Ngarua district, serving on committees and attending dances and school concerts. He enjoyed golf, swimming, skiing, and the cinema. During World War Two he helped to start the Ngarua unit of the Home Guard. He registered for military service but was told that he would contribute more to the war effort by continuing his work for the dairy industry.

In 1968 he retired from all his public offices, believing he should make way for younger people. But he remained interested in the home farm and properties at Okoroire and Broadlands. However, after a time he became depressed and died in Waikato Hospital on 27 October 1974 from a gunshot wound to the head, sustained while out rabbit shooting on his Ngarua farm. He was survived by his wife and four children.

Alan Candy was generous in hospitality and friendship. He earned the respect of employees, colleagues, his fellow farmers and NZGA.

**Bill Hurst** was a farmer near Waimate in South Canterbury and was well-known in that district among the community. His father was also Bill - AW Hurst who fell asleep during tedious conference papers, so Bill Senior gave some funding to present a Most Interesting Paper Award in the mid-1960s.

Bill Junior soon became addicted to Grassland Conferences and was a keen NZGA member in the 1960s and 70s. Bill and his wife Jesse used these events as annual holidays. They also were famous among regular members for their after-hours hospitality. Bill was the first farmer to serve as President during 1976. Once he was elected to the NZGA Executive Committee, Bill had to put his effort where his mouth was!

He became good friends with Grasslands director Ray Brougham in the 1970s and regularly visited Grasslands in Palmerston North when passing, for a catchup and a tour around the campus, to collect ideas for using on his own farm.

He was chairing the AGM at the 1976 Nelson Conference when the Committee was called "a bunch of old women" and didn't take that comment lightly.

Bill remained active in the Grassland Memorial Trust in the early 1980s and judged the farms nominated for Farmer Awards at the 1986 Alexandra Conference. Bill Hurst died in May 1991.

### **Jim Inglis**

Jim and Jonnie Inglis farmed rolling hill country at their property Ratahiwi, under Wharite Peak, near Woodville. Jim had a dry wit and was always ready to comment. He was born in Havelock North, brought up on the family farm and attended Wanganui Collegiate. He later qualified as an accountant, practising in Dannevirke for a few years. When his father died in 1947 Jim and sister Helen took over the family farm, with Helen focusing on managing the farm.

Jim was a keen supporter of innovation and joined NZGA and the Manawatū Agricultural Club. He hosted scientists and farmer groups on his farm and tried new techniques, including aerial topdressing, scanning ewes for pregnancy, oversowing

improved grasses and legumes, and nitrogen fertiliser use.

When DSIR Grasslands scientist Roger Ball carried out nitrogen fertiliser trials for his doctorate on Jim's farm, he disclosed to Jim that nitrogen boosted pasture growth. So Jim promptly had much of the farm aerially topdressed with nitrogen – including Roger's trial area!

The Hawke's Bay farming industry regarded Jim highly and from 1965 to 1985 he was a director of the Hawke's Bay Farmers Meat Company. Jim was also a member of the Royal Society of New Zealand (Manawatū Branch) and served many years; he was elected a Life Member of the Manawatū Branch at the 1998 Annual General Meeting.

In 1965 he presented a paper at the NZGA Whanganui Conference and from then on attended the annual Conferences. He also travelled to attend the International Grassland Congresses in Russia, the USA and Queensland. He became a keen contributor in discussion sessions and his opinions were highly regarded at meetings and field days. Indeed, I first met Jim when he held a field day at Ratahiwi in 1974 and I was a new arrival at the Ballantrae hill country research station nearby. He impressed me from that day on.

In 1975 Jim married teacher Jonnie McIntyre from Whanganui, and before long Jim Junior and Iain were born. Jim's keen participation at annual NZGA conferences led to him being elected to the NZGA Executive Committee and eventually he served as President in 1981-82. I took over as Secretary at this time and enjoyed working with Jim during the 1982 Blenheim Conference; and we became firm friends.

From 1982 Jim then served on the Grassland Memorial Trust, now NZGT, and Jim, John Lancashire and I collaborated to alter the Trust's direction to a more democratic course. In 1984 he was elected as an NZGA Life Member but he suffered a heart attack that year so was unable to be honoured at the Annual Conference held in Timaru.

In 1987 he took over as GMT chairman and led an innovative team effort until he stepped down in 1995. In 1993 Jim, John Lancashire and I judged the farms nominated for awards in Wairarapa, and subsequently Jim and I became the farming judges, travelling around several farming regions judging the top farms. Jim would assess the livestock and financial status, these being his particular forte, whereas I would assess the pastures.

Together we identified those farms that truly deserved the two annual grassland farming awards. In certain years Grassland Trustees Michael Smetham, Alan Stewart, Keith Widdup, Gavin Sheath or Mike O'Connor, joined us judging in regions they knew particularly well.

Jim was ahead of his time in that he always considered the sustainability and environmental impact of the farms we visited; and he dismissed several enterprises

because they were lacking in these areas.

During these travels we had some unusual experiences, including being driven through a blizzard from Dunedin Airport to Invercargill in a shuttle van one night when the flight was diverted; and riding over rather undulating land on the tray of quad bikes. In 1995 we were confined to a Whangarei hotel with the Labour Party caucus when a storm prevented our departure that evening. Jim had served as National Party treasurer in John Falloon's Wairarapa seat for several years, so the last people he wanted to be confined with in a storm were Helen Clark, Mike Moore and colleagues! Then in 1999 Jim and I had stopped to buy lunch at a takeaway café in Motueka and were waiting to be served, when in a fully patched bikie entered to buy his lunch. That day I learned much about body language from my fellow judge!

Eventually I succeeded Jim as Trust chairman but we continued to appreciate his experience and wisdom at the biannual meetings for some years, when we brought the Trust back alongside NZGA as its investment and recognition wing and changed its name to the NZ Grassland Trust. Jim finally retired from NZGT as the century ended but Jim, Jonnie and sons Jimmy and Iain kept on attending the Annual Conferences. In 2003 at the Conference in Palmerston North NZGA presented Jim with a Long Service Award, recognising his significant contribution to the country's grassland farming.

He gradually took a back seat in his farming business, letting his sons take over expanding the Inglis enterprise with novel enterprises that failed. However, Jim and Jonnie enjoyed holidays and cruises, but his health deteriorated, and he developed Parkinsons Disease. Jim spent his final year in a retirement home in Havelock North and died on 25 May 2012. He was 86. He will be remembered as an innovative farmer, a witty communicator and as a true gentleman. Not many farmers would change for dinner after a day on the farm!



**Jim Cresswell** was a Marlborough farmer and well-known as a lucerne seed grower. He enjoyed communicating with other Marlborough farmers and the farm advisers and served on local committees.

Jim had served on the local organising committee for the 1962 NZGA Conference and retained interest in the Association.

Jim was elected to the Executive Committee at the 1980 Greymouth Conference and was President during 1984 at

Timaru.

As a past president he was elected to the Grassland Memorial Trust and enjoyed participating in the twice-yearly meetings. He resigned as a trustee in 1989 after serving the usual five-year term, but retained his NZGA membership for some years afterwards.

At a later conference I remember him telling me that he was enjoying a high life and travelling overseas.

**Malcolm Guy** was a dairy, beef and deer farmer with three dairy herds totalling 1100 cows and a bull-beef finishing and venison operation on 800ha at Koputaroa, in Horowhenua just north of Levin.



The Guy family's association with the dairy industry began with his grandfather, Joseph Nathan, who created Glaxo at Bunnythorpe in the Manawatū in 1904. This dried milk business was to become a foundation stone of one of the world's largest and richest pharmaceutical manufacturers, Glaxo Smith Kline.

But Malcolm was dedicated to the Horowhenua region and he gave long service there as a local government Councillor, Chairman and Mayor. Malcolm followed his family's tradition of service to Horowhenua, as his father Duncan Guy had served for 35 years, and Malcolm's son, Nathan, was MP for Otaki from November 2005 to 2020 and served as Minister for Primary Industry in the John Key and Bill English National Governments.

Malcolm developed excellent local contacts and gained in his farming experience by seeking advice from DSIR Grasslands director Ray Brougham, through dairy and beef discussion groups led the Horowhenua MAF farm advisers Tom Sewell and John Heslop, and from the regional Dairy Boards consulting officer Don Johnston.

In 1977, he hosted a field trip stop during the NZGA Conference held that year in Palmerston North, presented a paper on his farming philosophy and became a member.

From then on Malcolm and Betty Guy were regular attenders at the annual conferences, and at the 1986 Conference in Alexandra, I remember that he and Betty suffered an accident - their hotel bed broke during the night! He suffered regular ribbing about that at later meetings...

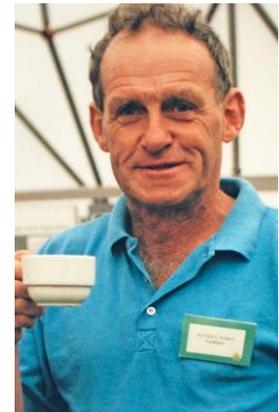
Malcolm was never hesitant to ask 'curly' questions during the sessions. He was elected to the Executive Committee at the Timaru Conference in 1984 and served for eleven years, going through as President in 1992. In June 1999 I attended another field day hosted by Malcolm and son Nathan, which attracted a good audience.

His local government work occupied much time later in Malcolm's life and he served as the district's Mayor for several years. His efforts gained him a QSM award. However, he developed health problems and died in late May 2017 aged 80, survived by his wife Betty, sons Christopher and Nathan, and five grandchildren.

**Maurice Yorke** and his wife Meree live on the shore of an inlet of the Waikawa Harbour, on the Southland coast east of Invercargill, where Meree's great grandfather built a sawmill back in 1857.

Maurice was born February 1938 and had his schooling at Progress Valley 5 kms away. He was thrown into farming at the deep end when his father was killed in a farm accident in 1962.

Since then, Maurice and Meree have built the stock up to 9500 ewes with 13000 lambs 136% lambing. All lambs are sold store other than the replacements. They also run 400 breeding cows, with all progeny taken through one winter before selling. They have been involved in trading cattle - any number from none to 1,000 at their peak.



In 1978 the Progress Valley Discussion Group, who had been involved with DSIR in Gore (specifically Allan Harris and Ken Brown) won an award at the Invercargill Grassland Conference.

This triggered his lifelong involvement in the Association. He and Meree have only missed two Annual Conferences since then!

As a result Maurice became heavily involved in the 1990 Conference in Gore. He also featured in a local music group that entertained at the barbecue dinner following a very pleasant field trip - Eastern Southland laid on lovely shirtsleeve weather that year!

It's uncertain whether the music played a part or not, but Maurice was elected to the Executive Committee at the Gore AGM and he felt that representing the farming sector as NZGA President in Oamaru in 1996 was a highlight and an honour. Since then the Yorkes have been consistent attenders, not letting the researchers get away with anything slack during their papers.

The Yorkes were finalists in the Southland Ballance Farm Environment Awards in 2010. They sold their farm in 2014 but retained 40 ha which was Maurice's great grandfather's original property. They have since built a cottage by the Catlins and have bought other areas of land. In their "so-called retirement" they trade about 2,000 Angus calves annually.

His contribution to NZGA on behalf of the farming sector has also earned Maurice a Life Membership.

### **Bryan Guy**

Bryan grew up in a family of six children, living on a small dairy farm in Feilding where his parents milked 30 cows. When in his teens this farm was sold and his parents purchased 55 ha over the Oroua River from Feilding.

Bryan left school at 16, declined the chance of a university education and worked on dairy farms in Waikato and Manawatū for two years. When he was 19 he purchased an adjoining 70 ha, and extending the farm over the next 25 years, purchasing more land as it became available.

Bryan married Joanne in 1976 and they raised four children on the farm. By 2000 they had purchased his parents' interest, enabling them to retire. Bryan and Joanne formed a company which by then owned 250 ha and milked up to 700 cows.

Further land was leased to rear young stock and grow crops for the milking herd.

Milking continued year-round to supply milk for the local market. Their farming became very intensive, with extra feed brought in as silage or concentrate. Cow numbers peaked at over 700, but controlling costs of production and improving profitability was a continual focus.

In the 1980s Bryan and Joanne began attending the conferences run by NZGA, Massey and the Large Herds organisation. He inevitably became involved in organising committees of some of these conferences, and was elected to the NZGA Executive in 1994, serving until 2000, and he was NZGA President 1998/99. He then spent 21 years on the NZGT, with 11 of those years as chairman.

Bryan presented papers at several Massey Dairy Farmers, Large Herds and NZGA Conferences, as well as the British Cattle Breeders Club in Cambridge, Britain, and the XVII International Grassland Congress in New Zealand during 1993. He also attended the XX International Grassland Congress in Dublin, the XIV International Silage Conference in Belfast, the International Committee for Animal Recording (ICAR) in Switzerland and New Zealand, and Co-operative Association and Dairy Conferences in Australia.

Bryan then became involved in dairy industry politics in the late 1980s. Over the years he served on the boards of LIC (the Livestock Improvement Corporation), Tui Milk Products, Kiwi Dairy Co-operative, AgResearch and the Dairying Research Corporation. He has also been associated with various dairy industry committees and the judging of several sharemilker and dairy farm manager competitions.

Over the years Bryan was also involved in his Feilding community through many activities, including school committees and Boards of Trustees, supporting his local Anglican parish, and assisting the Manawatū-Rangitikei Rural Family Support Trust. He was a Trustee of the philanthropic Eastern and Central Community Trust, and is currently chairman of the Trust that manages the Coach House Museum in Feilding.



By 2008 Bryan and Joanne had moved off the farm and their son Scott and daughter Anna and their spouses were, at that stage, partners in the farming business. Unfortunately, everything changed when in 2010 Scott was murdered early in the morning as he left home to start milking. Nine months later Anna's husband was arrested and tried for the murder, but found not guilty. He did, however, serve a prison sentence for the conviction of several other offences.

These events became very public, and were a defining moment that led them to re-examine their lives, values and priorities. What was once important to them was now not necessarily so, and after much deliberation Bryan and Joanne retired from dairying and sold the farm in 2016.

The Guys now live on a small rural property near Feilding and enjoy spending time with their family, which includes 14 grandchildren. They enjoy the therapy and solitude of a large garden and involvement with their community, which has been so supportive over the years.

### **Russell Hurst**

A North Otago farmer, Russell was born in March 1961 in Oamaru to Sid and Hazel Hurst, the fourth of five offspring. He attended school at Enfield and finished at Awamoko after his parents moved to what's now his present farm.

Russell spent four years at Waitaki Boys High School and then worked for 18 months in the McKenzie Basin on a large sheep, beef and deer station, followed by six months on a British cropping and sheep farm. He returned to study at Lincoln, during the late 1970s, completing diplomas in agriculture and farm management. Following Lincoln, Russell worked on a mid-Canterbury mixed cropping and sheep farm during the holidays.



He returned home in 1982 and carried out a dairy conversion on part of the farm, milking 300 cows from that August onwards. He now has four dairy farms and milks 2400 cows, with 500 nurse cows that rear three calves each. The Hurst operation also includes irrigation races where he runs 4,000 super-fine merino wethers. He tried deer farming in 1983 and built up to 250 hinds and a similar herd of stags. However, he gave up the deer farming in the mid -1990s. Russell and Cathy Hurst married in 1989 and now have three sons.

His association with NZGA started when he was asked to chair the LOC for the Oamaru Conference in 1996. He continued on the Executive Committee after the Oamaru conference and served as President in 2003. Russell continued in the NZGT for several years before returning to focus on his regional commitments.

One aspect that Russell became interested in after his NZGA executive service was the potential of Caucasian clover after hearing about it in papers given at conferences. In collaboration with Lincoln contacts, Alistair Black, Dick Lucas and Derrick Moot, he carried out an on-farm trial on different establishment methods and they presented the results at the 2000 Invercargill NZGA Conference.

These days Russell is kept busy with his farming and he is also a director on two local irrigation companies.

**Pat Garden** is a farmer and agribusiness leader from Central Otago who was elected to the NZGA Executive Committee in 2004 and served as President five years later.



*Pat Garden*

He was born in 1944, attended Waitaki Boys' High School in Oamaru and started farming in 1961. His parents insisted - to all their seven children - that once they achieved University Entrance, they could leave high school and choose their own careers.

However, Pat's father took a different approach. When Pat returned to the 200 ha family farm in Moa Flat, full of ideas and enthusiasm, his father said, "Ok, Pat, you're in charge - I'll tell you whether I think your decisions will work or not, but you'll have the final decision."

Pat found that the combination of his youthful exuberance, steadied by his father's knowledge and long experience, created a marvellous working relationship that he still treasures. Pat feels that the value of transferring responsibility in a way that allows youth its head but acknowledges experience, is quite a challenge for the pastoral industry, especially as the age of farmers gradually increases.

Any thoughts of him going on to Lincoln or Massey were forgotten as the excitement of responsibility gripped Pat. However, results from the research stations were permeating the grassland industry by then, and helping to shape its growing success and importance. He was soon able to put them into practice on the farm. So most of his working life has been spent farming Avenel, a 2200 ha high country property up on the Lammerlaw Range above Millers Flat. The farm has four well developed income streams - prime lambs, beef finishing, timber from 300 ha of forestry, and carbon through the forest portfolio.

All along Pat has been a great believer in the information farmers can acquire through learning from each other; and when expertise is included in the mix, then so much the better. Several discussion groups operated in his valley, including a Farm Forestry group, a Conservation group, a Share Investment group and the Millers Flat Farm Discussion group. He learned from them all, but 25 years of the Millers Flat Farm

Discussion Group was the biggest influence in terms of innovation, benchmarking and maintaining enthusiasm.

In January 1977, Pat met a young Swiss girl at the World Conference of Past Young Farmer/4H Exchange Winners held in Christchurch. After a lightning courtship he proposed by phone and married Marcelle in Switzerland in August that year and they settled back on Avenel and later they had a son (Nick) and daughter Jo, who married a Swiss engineer and lives there!

Marcelle later joined a group of valley wives who started a share club during the investment boom, and everything they touched turned to gold. So their husbands decided to start a men's version, expecting to show them how to really make money. Then about a year later the women suddenly decided to sell up and they enjoyed a group trip to Australia – with their gains and their husbands. Three weeks later the share market crashed and the men's club was left holding expensive but worthless paper!

Recently, Pat and Marcelle decided to hand the management of Avenel over to Nick, allowing them to move down into the Teviot Valley. So Pat's current farming role is as a mentor and adviser on strategy.

But in addition to Pat's first love of farming, there have been several outside roles, within the local community and at a national level, including:

- Chair of High Country Section of Federated Farmers 1990-1993.
- Director of the Foundation for Research Science and Technology 1993-1999.
- Chair of Technology New Zealand 1998-2006.
- Chair of MAF's Sustainable Farming Fund 2003-2006.
- Chair of numerous Advisory Panels for several organisations between 2004 - 2010, including the Tertiary Education Commission Advisory Panel; the AgResearch Sustainable Agriculture Advisory Panel; and the Enterprise Scholarship Panel.

Pat was elected an NZGA Life Member at the Timaru AGM in 2016. He had served as NZGA President at Waitangi in 2009 and he was the Chair of Colin Brown's *TracMap NZ* from 2007 until 2017. At the 2006 NZGA Conference Dinner in Dunedin, he gave the best *Address to the Haggis* by Robert Burns that I've heard in New Zealand (except for my wife, a direct Burns descendent!). He also gave the Inaugural Levy Oration at the 2012 NZGA Conference in Gore.

He chaired the Otago Conservation Board from 2014 to 2019 and is currently serving as a trustee of the Roxburgh Medical Services Trust and the NZ Grassland Trust. Pat Garden was made a Member of NZ Order of Merit at the 2006 Queen's Birthday Honours for services to science and farming - not a bad achievement list for a self-taught high country farmer!

**Warwick Lissaman** is from one of Marlborough's early farming families; the fourth generation of his family to farm in the Awatere Valley. The family farm he owns has just ticked over the 100 years ownership in the family.



*Warwick Lissaman*

Warwick followed his grandfather and his father onto the family property after completing a Bachelor of Agriculture and a Bachelor of Commerce with a post graduate diploma in Rural Valuation at Lincoln. He had an active role in NZ Young Farmers and has since taken responsible positions in the rural sector.

Warwick chaired the Local Organising Committee for the 2008 Blenheim NZGA Conference. He has since served eight years on the NZGA executive committee including two years as President. He has also served terms with NZ Meat & Wool and NZ Beef & Lamb Marlborough Monitor Farm executive committees.

He has also been a trustee on the Awatere Community Trust and is chairman of the Chilean Needle Grass Action Group, and in the NZ Beef & Lamb *Pastures for Profit* Marlborough group. Warwick helped to secure funding for dryland pastoral research and his involvement in a dryland legumes technology transfer research project led to his appointment to the Marlborough Research Centre Board in 2011.

He hopes to see the region's pastoral sector make greater use of the research capacity of the Research Centre. He believes that science and research is the key to unlocking future opportunities and that it is in the mutual interest of each of the productive sectors of Marlborough to work closely together to fulfil the potential of the district.

### **Richard and Jackie Porritt**

This King Country couple farm west of Taumarunui and attended the annual conferences since they joined at Te Kuiti in 1973. They view these events as short breaks away, a chance to gain more friends and some good ideas for their farming. His first conference impressed him so much that his wife Jackie joined him at later meetings. They liked what they saw, who they met and what they heard.



The Porritts were among a growing group of farming couples who enjoyed a spring holiday, the social and technical benefits. Over the years they have seen more of New Zealand regional farming and have gained much valuable information.

When I met them and Richard showed me the farm in the early 2000s, they were farming 1,000 hectares of Taumarunui hill country, where the horizon may look level but the land is anything but! Richard had his land subdivided into 100 paddocks and they ran 5,800 ewes, 2,000 hoggetts and 260 Angus cattle. The soil phosphate levels ranged from 9 to 60, indicating the variability of this country.

Their pastures were developed in the 1930s but little oversowing has been done since, except for including suitable clover seed during aerial topdressing in recent years. This endowed the pastures with good clover content and excellent forage feed supply.

He took me around on his quad bike at a slow pace and I opened and closed about 200 gates for him as we went, though I lost count! However, that afternoon, I developed a good appetite for dinner...

**The Chamberlin family** of Ponui Island were always attending the NZGA Conferences during the 70s and 80s, especially those in the North Island.

**Alan Brough**, who farmed near Benneydale, was another regular attender who enjoyed meeting people from the other sectors at conferences.

**John McIntyre** of Taranaki contributed at several conferences when they weren't too far from his base at Inglewood. The field trip visited his property on at least one occasion and John told us of the natural gas prospecting and extraction on his land.

**David Shepherd** who chaired the Dunedin LOC for the 2006 Conference, was a Lincoln graduate was a well-known farmer-politician now living near the Invermay Research Centre in Mosgiel. He farmed at Gimmerburn on the way into the Maniototo district, a dry area where water is usually at a premium.

A stalwart of the South Island High Country was **Rodney Patterson** who took over the 15,000 ha family farm, Longslip Station near Omarama after graduating MAgSc from Lincoln. He believed that intensification was needed in high country farming, so he started a large programme of oversowing, topdressing, fencing and building a good tracking system.

In only eight years Rod tripled his production, from 6,500 to 17,500 stock units, erected 180 km of fences and achieved one of the highest stocking rates per labour unit in New Zealand. He also firmly believed in research and ran his own selection programme to resolve foot-rot susceptibility in Merino sheep. He also tackled this problem on a large scale, buying down-country properties that were foot-rot prone, to challenge the progeny of his high country rams. He successfully developed a genetic test for foot-rot resistance. With regard to his pasture feed, he was convinced that Caucasian clover had potential but wasn't impressed with the plant material then available here, so he travelled to the Caucasus Mountains, east of the Black Sea and collected seed there in collaboration with the University of Georgia.

Rodney was an active advocate and formed a High Country Accord with fellow farmers to grapple with threats from a government tenure review. He attended four International Grassland Congresses, one of few to do so, and made many useful contacts. But in February 2006, he underwent a routine operation and died unexpectedly, aged only 51. Rodney Patterson was a great loss to pastoral farming in the high country.

**Ashley Cole** is Managing Director of Murumuru Farms Ltd, which combines sheep and beef farming, with a machinery/roading division and a bee/honey division. She has responsibility for the 1100 hectare hard hill country property in the Ruapehu district, including daily livestock management with her team of working dogs, finance, feed budgeting and marketing.

Ashley is a member of the Beef and Lamb Farmer Council, the Red Meat Sector Strategy Advisory Group, and the AgResearch Invermay Reproduction Project Advisory Panel. She is totally convinced that the sheep and beef sector is sustainable.

**And then there were all the award-winning Farmers...**