



ROCA AWARD OF MERIT 1997 – James Pocock

Lameroo primary producer, **Jim Pocock (RDA, 1948)** joined an exclusive list of Australian agriculturists who have helped to shape the destiny of the primary production sector in this country.

Jim Pocock became one of the nation's leading exponents in the breeding and improvement of Merino sheep using scientifically based objective measurement techniques. He was intimately involved in his local community and was honoured in 1983 with the Roseworthy Centenary Award of Achievement.

His other activities included a six year term on the SA Advisory Board of Agriculture, twelve years on the Roseworthy Curriculum Committee and a sixteen year term as a board member of the University of Adelaide's Martindale Holdings.

Jim Pocock was born into a respected farming family at Lameroo in the South Australian Mallee during the harsh times of the 1920s and received his early education at the local Smithville school. Following later education at the Lameroo school and Scotch College, he attended Roseworthy Agricultural College, graduating in 1948. During his time at RAC, Jim was greatly influenced by the work of his animal science teacher, Dr Phil Schinckel, and also the legendary CSIRO Scientist, Dr Helen Newton-Turner.

He became convinced that sheep breeding was a science and he adopted this philosophy in his approach to practical Merino breeding upon his return to the home farm. Jim set out to measure heritable factors in a practical manner during shearing and from the mid 1950s, introduced culling of his flock utilizing measurement of body weight, fleece weight and wool quality. He was way ahead of other breeders in his adaptation of scientifically proven measurement as an objective means of flock improvement, leading to the development of a technique to measure all feasible heritable characteristics. Based on the principles of population genetics and the early use of rams from

Lance Lines' "Gum Hill" flock, Jim developed the extremely successful "Panlatinga" Merino Stud.

The history and achievements of the "Panlatinga" flock are too extensive to list, however the incorporation of sound scientific principles in the breeding program resulted in a unique type of Merino sheep that is exceptionally fertile and has a high level of natural resistance to the effects of internal parasites.

Jim's belief in the sound scientific principles he learned at Roseworthy set him apart from some other Merino breeders. Over the years, his zest for knowledge on sheep improvement took him overseas on several occasions.