

WELCOME ADDRESS : INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON TICK BIOLOGY AND CONTROL

27/01/81

HONOURED GUESTS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.

THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, THE HON MR SAREL HAYWARD, WHO WAS TO HAVE OPENED THE CONFERENCE TONIGHT HAS HAD TO MAKE AN URGENT VISIT TO THE DISASTER AREA AT LAINGSBURG. HE IS EXTREMELY SORRY NOT TO BE WITH US THIS EVENING BUT HE HAS SENT ONE OF THE TOP MEN IN HIS DEPARTMENT, DR W HUGO, TO DEPUTISE FOR HIM AND TO DELIVER HIS SPEECH.

I AM SURE YOU WILL JOIN ME IN EXTENDING SYMPATHY TO THE PEOPLE OF LAINGSBURG, WHO HAVE SUFFERED SUCH A SUDDEN AND SEVERE DISASTER, AND WE ARE VERY GRATEFUL TO DR HUGO FOR MAKING THE JOURNEY HERE AT SUCH SHORT NOTICE.

IT IS WITH VERY GREAT PLEASURE THAT I WELCOME YOU TO THIS INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON TICK BIOLOGY AND CONTROL. I DO SO IN TWO CAPACITIES - BOTH AS VICE-CHANCELLOR OF RHODES UNIVERSITY AND AS VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE 1820 FOUNDATION, THAT HAS RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE BEAUTIFUL AND UNIQUELY FUNCTIONAL BUILDING IN WHICH WE ARE GATHERED THIS EVENING. IF YOU HAD HAD THE TIME LAST NIGHT, WHICH I DOUBT, YOU COULD HAVE GAINED AN IMPRESSION FROM THE TELEVISION SERIES OF WHAT LIFE WAS LIKE FOR THE INTREPID SETTLERS WHOSE ACHIEVEMENTS THIS BUILDING COMMEMORATES. BY NOW YOU WILL HAVE SAMPLED THE AMENITIES OF BOTH THE UNIVERSITY AND THE MONUMENT, AND I TRUST THAT YOU WILL HAVE FOUND THEM TO YOUR LIKING FOR WE ARE ALL VERY PROUD OF THEM BOTH.

EVER SINCE ITS INCEPTION IN 1904 RHODES UNIVERSITY HAS BEEN DETERMINED THAT ITS TEACHING AND RESEARCH EFFORTS IN THE BIOLOGICAL FIELD SHOULD LEAD AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE TO PRACTICAL RESULTS OF BENEFIT TO PRACTITIONERS IN THE FIELD. AS EARLY AS 1907 THE GREAT SIR ARNOLD THEILER WAS GIVING VETERINARY LECTURES IN GRAHAMSTOWN, BUT THESE EFFORTS WERE TRANSFERRED TO PRETORIA WHEN THE VETERINARY RESEARCH INSTITUTE AT ONDERSTEPSPOORT WAS ESTABLISHED. EVER SINCE THEN WE HAVE BEEN UNTIRING IN OUR EFFORTS TO ESTABLISH A VETERINARY FACULTY, SO FAR WITHOUT SUCCESS. MEANWHILE, HOWEVER, WE HAVE ESTABLISHED AN ENVIABLE REPUTATION IN THE BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES AND IN PHARMACY, FIELDS DISTINCTLY COGNATE TO THE SUBJECT OF THIS CONFERENCE.

IN 1969, A SYMPOSIUM WAS ARRANGED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF ZOOLOGY AND ENTOMOLOGY HERE AT RHODES IN CO-OPERATION WITH THE SOUTH AFRICAN MOHAIR GROWERS ASSOCIATION AND THE MOHAIR BOARD, AT WHICH THE EFFECT OF TICKS ON LIVESTOCK IN THE EASTERN CAPE PROVINCE WAS DISCUSSED.

ARISING FROM THAT SYMPOSIUM, A TICK RESEARCH UNIT WAS ESTABLISHED BY RHODES UNIVERSITY TO START A RESEARCH PROGRAMME INTO THE BIOLOGY AND CONTROL OF TICKS. SUPPORT FOR THIS WORK WAS OBTAINED FROM THE UNIVERSITY FROM THE MOHAIR BOARD, THE MEAT BOARD, THE WOOL BOARD, THE CSIR, AND MORE RECENTLY FROM OTHER ORGANISATIONS, COMMERCIAL AND NON-COMMERCIAL, WHICH WERE CONCERNED WITH FUTURE RESEARCH INTO THE SERIOUS TICK-RELATED PROBLEMS WE FACE IN THIS COUNTRY.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF ACARICIDE-RESISTANT STRAINS IN A NUMBER OF ECONOMICAL SIGNIFICANT TICK SPECIES HAS INCREASED THE NEED FOR FURTHER RESEARCH, WHICH MIGHT SUPPORT THE CONTINUED CONTROL OF TICKS WITH NEW ACARICIDES, OR DEVELOP ALTERNATIVE TECHNIQUES OF CONTROL. WITH THIS OBJECTIVE IN MIND, THE TICK RESEARCH UNIT AT RHODES UNIVERSITY HAS ACTIVELY CONTINUED

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RESEARCH INTO THE ECOLOGY, BEHAVIOUR AND PHYSIOLOGY OF TICKS, AND
THE APPLICATION OF MORE EFFECTIVE CONTROL METHODS.

WE AT RHODES ARE VERY PROUD OF THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THIS UNIT, WHICH
HAS PUBLISHED 47 SCIENTIFIC PUBLICATIONS DURING THE PAST 10 YEARS
WITH A NUCLEUS OF ONLY ONE OR TWO PERMANENT STAFF MEMBERS. AS A
MEANS OF CELEBRATING ITS FIRST TEN YEARS OF EXISTENCE AND REVIEWING
THE SCIENTIFIC PROGRESS OF THE UNIT, THIS CONFERENCE WAS ORGANISED
TO SERVE AS A FORUM FOR DISCUSSION AND CONSULTATION WITH OTHER
RESEARCH WORKERS IN THIS FIELD.

MORE THAN 40 PAPERS ARE BEING PRESENTED AT THIS CONFERENCE, INCLUDING
CONTRIBUTIONS FROM NORTH AMERICA, EUROPE, ISRAEL, TAIWAN, SOUTHERN
AFRICA, AND AUSTRALIA. WE ARE PARTICULARLY GRATEFUL TO THE PEOPLE
WHO HAVE COME FROM SUCH DISTANT PLACES TO SHARE THEIR EXPERTISE WITH US

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IT IS ALSO A GREAT PLEASURE TO BE ABLE TO WELCOME DELEGATES
FROM NEIGHBOURING TERRITORIES AND FROM THE OTHER CENTRES IN SOUTH AFRICA
ITSELF.

TO COVER THE PROPOSED OBJECTIVES OF THE CONFERENCE, THREE KEY SPEAKERS
WERE SELECTED. THE EFFECT OF TICKS ON MEAT PRODUCTION IN SOUTH AFRICA
WILL BE DISCUSSED IN THE PAPER BY MR S J J VAN RENSBURG, GENERAL
MANAGER OF VLEISSENTRAAAL; AND THE PRACTICAL USE OF GENETICALLY SELECTED
CATTLE BREEDS ON TICK POPULATIONS FOR THE PURPOSES OF TICK CONTROL
WILL BE PRESENTED IN THE PAPER BY PROFESSOR JAN BONSMAN, EMERITUS
PROFESSOR OF ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA. POSSIBLE
DIRECTIONS OF RESEARCH ENDEAVOUR FOR BETTER TICK CONTROL WILL BE GIVEN
IN A PAPER BY DR J NOLAN OF THE CSIRO LANDPOCKET LABORATORIES, DARWIN
AUSTRALIA.

RESEARCH WORK IN ZIMBABWE AND IN SEVERAL OTHER TERRITORIES IN AFRICA WILL BE DISCUSSED. SCIENTISTS FROM THE VETERINARY RESEARCH INSTITUTE AT ONDERSTEPSPOORT WILL BE PRESENTING A NUMBER OF PAPERS COVERING TICK BIOLOGY, TICK DISEASE TRANSMISSION AND CONTROL AS WELL AS GENERAL CONTROL OF TICKS. PAPERS WILL ALSO BE PRESENTED BY RESEARCH PERSONNEL FROM A NUMBER OF COMMERCIAL FIRMS DEVELOPING ACARICIDE CONTROL TECHNIQUES AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW ACARICIDES.

AS WITH ALL ACADEMIC AND SCIENTIFIC PURSUITS, THE DISSEMINATION OF KNOWLEDGE THROUGH CONFERENCES OF THIS SORT DEPENDS VERY LARGELY ON THE FINANCIAL AND ORGANISATIONAL SUPPORT IT RECEIVES. IN THIS REGARD, I WOULD LIKE TO EXTEND OUR GRATITUDE TO ALL THE ORGANISATIONS WHOSE FINANCIAL SPONSORSHIP HELPED TO MAKE THIS CONFERENCE A REALITY, IN PARTICULAR, THE AGRICULTURAL AND VETERINARY CHEMICALS ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AFRICA.

THE ORGANISATION OF THE CONFERENCE HAS BEEN LARGELY IN THE HANDS OF THE SYMPOSIUM SECRETARIAT OF THE CSIR, WHO IN LIAISON WITH STAFF AT THE TICK RESEARCH UNIT HAVE WORKED EXTREMELY HARD TOWARDS THE SUCCESS OF THE CONFERENCE. THANKS SHOULD ALSO GO TO DR J S STARKE, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF CONTROL OF THE TICK RESEARCH UNIT, AND PROFESSOR GRAHAM WHITEHEAD, HEAD OF THE UNIT AND CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN, FOR THEIR MONTHS OF DEDICATED WORK TOWARDS THE CONFERENCE AND FOR THE VERY REAL CONTRIBUTION WHICH WILL BE MADE TO THE FIELD OF TICK BIOLOGY AND CONTROL.

IT ONLY REMAINS FOR ME TO WELCOME YOU ALL TO THE CONFERENCE AND TO INTRODUCE TO YOU DR W HUGO, DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES.

D S HENDERSON

27 JANUARY 1981