

Herbert Robert Seddon DVSc 1887-1964

Herbert Seddon grew up on his father's cattle station near Te Puke in New Zealand. Gilruth, who was chief veterinarian at the government laboratory at Wallaceville and a friend of the family, engaged Seddon to work as his laboratory assistant. In 1906, both men moved to Melbourne where Gilruth became Dean of the Faculty of Veterinary Science at Melbourne University of Melbourne and Director of the Veterinary Research Institute, and Seddon his chief laboratory assistant and secretary to the Faculty and the Institute.

Seddon, with the encouragement of Gilruth, combined work with study, enrolled in the veterinary course and graduated with honours in 1913. From 1909 until 1922, Seddon was on the staff of the Veterinary School as demonstrator then as lecturer in veterinary pathology and bacteriology. After Gilruth left in 1912 and his successor HA Woodruff left for the war in 1915, Seddon was responsible for both the teaching and the diagnostic work. He also carried out investigations into brucellosis in cattle for which he was awarded DVSc in 1921. He served in the Australian Army Veterinary Corps in 1917-1919 as a veterinary officer with the rank of Captain and was assigned to a camel brigade in the Middle East.

Seddon returned to Melbourne as Senior Lecturer but stayed only two years before joining the New South Wales Department of Agriculture as the first Director of Veterinary Research at the Glenfield Veterinary Research Station in 1923. Here he worked closely and effectively with HR Carne, who was responsible for diagnostic work, and with the Chief Veterinary Surgeon of NSW, Max Henry. He also lectured in veterinary pathology and bacteriology at the Sydney Veterinary School.

In 1936, Seddon moved to Brisbane as foundation Professor and Dean in the Faculty of Veterinary Science at the University of Queensland. His work was limited by inadequate resources and accommodation and by the small number of students, many of whom left when World War II broke out in 1939. The school closed in 1942 and Seddon moved into government service with the State and later the Federal government. After the war, he was appointed to the Commonwealth Department of Health, where between 1946 and his retirement in 1953 he wrote six volumes on *Diseases of Domestic Animals in Australia*. The volumes became valuable reference books for veterinarians in Australia.

In retirement, he could not afford to stop working. He supplemented a meagre pension with work as part-time Technical Director of the McGarvie Smith Institute and in general practice until ill-health forced final retirement at the age of 76.

Seddon was a foundation member of the AVA, which elected him president in 1929-31 and honoured him with the Gilruth Prize in 1950.

References

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