

Arthur William Turner OBE DVSc DSc 1900-1989

Arthur Turner was born, educated and worked for most of his career in scientific research in Melbourne. He graduated BVSc (Hons) in 1923 at the University of Melbourne where he was appointed to the teaching staff of the Veterinary school. During that year he qualified for the higher degree of MVSc for research built on the work of Dr HE Albiston on infectious necrotic hepatitis of sheep (black disease).

In 1924, he became Walter and Eliza Hall Fellow in Veterinary Science. He was awarded a Rockefeller Foundation Fellowship in 1926 and studied at the Pasteur Institute in Paris. There he received training and inspiration such as Dr JA Gilruth had received at that Institute at a similar age. In Paris, he continued his studies on black disease and ultimately developed an effective vaccine for the disease, which was responsible for heavy losses of sheep in eastern Victoria and southern New South Wales. In 1928, before returning to Australia to accept an invitation to join the staff of the newly-formed Animal Health Division of the Council for Scientific Research and Industry, he spent a period at the Institute of Animal Pathology at the University of Cambridge.

On his return, Gilruth, who was Chief of the division of Animal Health, appointed Turner as Officer in Charge of the new laboratory at Oonoonba, Queensland. Here he was introduced to an environment where contagious bovine pleuropneumonia (CBPP) was enzootic and where nutritional and protozoan diseases of cattle required investigation. He established the foundation for a lifetime interest in CBPP and his studies on the causal organism, serological diagnosis, vaccination and the general pathology of the disease were invaluable in this country and overseas. In 1930, Turner was awarded the degree of DVSc for his outstanding research on black disease by the University of Melbourne, where he was subsequently awarded the degree of DSc.

Returning to Melbourne in 1935, where Dr LB Bull had succeeded Gilruth as Chief of the Division of Animal Health of CSIRO was headed by Dr LB Bull at Parkville, Turner was appointed Officer in Charge of the Parkville laboratory. Always irked by the interruption of his research by administrative matters, Turner transferred the position to Dr TS Gregory and, until his retirement in 1960, spent his time on his first love, research. He earned a unique place in the estimation of veterinarians throughout Commonwealth for his achievements.

He was a Foundation Fellow of the Australian Academy of Science and a Foundation Life Fellow of the Australian College of Veterinary Scientists. He was awarded the Gilruth Prize and the Syme Prize, and was a Fellow of the AVA.

References

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March 2002