

## **NSW Department of Agriculture: Veterinary Laboratory Service**

The New South Wales Department of Agriculture (now called Agriculture NSW) has provided veterinary research and laboratory diagnostic services for the livestock industries of the State for many years. This article gives a brief history of these areas of activity.

### Physical facilities

In 1923 the Department built its first veterinary laboratory, which was located at Glenfield about 30 km south west from Sydney. It was called the Glenfield Veterinary Research Station and it consisted of two laboratories, a post-mortem room, offices and out buildings. Over the years it grew into a large complex with laboratories covering many scientific disciplines.

The limitations of having only one central laboratory to service the entire State was recognised and this led to the establishment of regional veterinary laboratories. The first was opened at Armidale in 1965, followed by Wollongbar (near Lismore) in 1968, Wagga Wagga in 1974 and Orange in 1982.

Because Glenfield was becoming urbanised and the older buildings on the Research Station needed replacing it was decided to build a new complex at Camden. This was occupied in 1990. It is called the Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute because it is on part of the original Camden Park Estate where the Macarthurs established Australia's commercial wool industry in the early 1800s.

### Diagnostic services

From the beginning Glenfield provided a diagnostic service on specimens and cadavers and this service was extended when the regional veterinary laboratories were opened. The laboratories serviced the livestock industries and worked on cattle, sheep, pigs and poultry and occasionally horses. Most diagnostic material dealt with endemic diseases with some coming from outbreaks of the exotic diseases swine fever and Newcastle disease. The laboratories played an essential role in the National Bovine Tuberculosis and Brucellosis Eradication Campaign.

### Research

Research was carried out on many diseases concurrently with the diagnostic work. Over the years specialist discipline laboratories developed. These included pathology, microbiology, virology, immunology, serology, parasitology, biochemistry, toxicology and molecular biology. Again work was carried out on production livestock. Diseases studied changed with the passing years but overall there are few livestock diseases in New South Wales that have not come under study.

### Conclusions

For over 80 years the veterinary laboratories have made valuable contributions in safe guarding the health of production animals and birds in New South Wales through their laboratory diagnostic and research work.

### References

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**PJ Mylrea**  
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