

Stock Inspectors 1918 to 1936 by Conference

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STOCK INSPECTORS BEFORE THE INSTITUTE

This was the time of the horse and sulky, very few PP Boards had cars. The first car went to the Stock Inspector Broken Hill in 1913. The Stock Inspector Forbes got his first car in 1928. The main source of information for stockowners and the general public was the newspaper as even radios were rare. All Stock Inspectors were men. The first world war started in 1915 and was ongoing in March 1918.

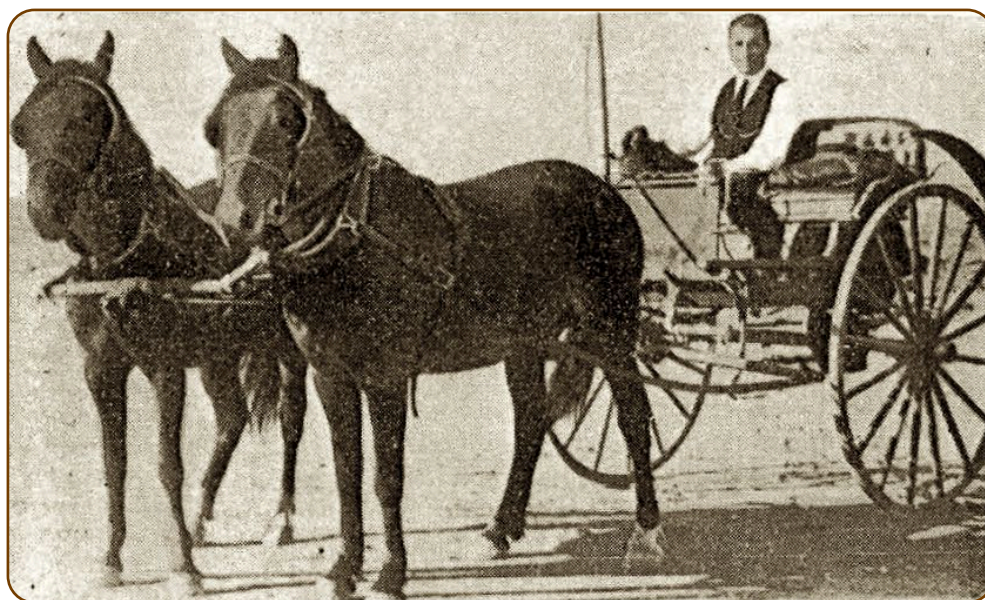


Image 1: F Hildred, Ivanhoe

After sitting an examination, Stock Inspectors were appointed by the Minister of Agriculture took instructions from the Chief Inspector of Stock, but carried out duties for, and were paid by, the Pastures Protection Boards. They were not listed under the public service employee award. Individual Boards determined how much Stock Inspectors were paid, some paying annual bonuses, and others not. There was little consistency between Boards in relation to salaries and conditions. For example, Muswellbrook PP Board provides conference expenses for Stock Inspector Brooks but Bathurst PP Board provides none for Stock Inspector Brett in 1918.

This was further complicated by paying a Stock Inspector a lump sum annual salary, with no statutory allowance for equipment or travelling - usually a horse and sulky, a bicycle or motor car. Thus, the proactive inspector who travelled widely in his district and was, arguably, more effective at his job, was worse off, financially. Some even had to pay for transport of samples to Sydney out of pocket. There was a haphazard system of leave entitlements and no superannuation or pension rights.

The Institute was brought into being by a provisional committee, including EA Lucas (Canonba), FF Forster (The Hume), CJ Woollett (Tamworth), DFW Batten (Bourke), CR Brett (Bathurst), EA Hamilton (Moss Vale) and GC Shaw (Secretary, Canonba Board) . The instigators appointed a professional secretary, EC Bluett, who was also secretary to the Association of Local Government Clerks and who organised their first conference in 1910. (Mr Bluett remained Secretary until 1938). It was Mr Bluett, with his experience, that brought the 1918 conference into being for the Stock Inspectors. Mr Bluett later defines the objectives of the Institute:

1. By conferences, discussions and dissemination of papers to assist the members in keeping in touch with modern and up-to-date methods so that generally speaking they may render more effective service.
2. To secure for its members reasonable conditions of employment.

At this time, not all Stock Inspectors knew each other. The Denman Stock Inspector commented that during his 17 years in the job he had not met more than 5 of his brother officers. The Executive was not

elected until the third day of the first conference, presumably in part to allow the Stock Inspectors to get to know one another during the days and at the advertised theatre party and smoke social.

1918 CONFERENCE

The 1918 inaugural conference was held at King's Hall, Hunter Street, Sydney over three days, Monday 25th, Tuesday 26th and Wednesday 27th March 1918. Present on the first day were 37 Stock Inspectors, eleven Secretaries and four Rabbit Inspectors. Mr CR (Charles) Brett (Stock Inspector, Bathurst) was elected provisional chairman.

At 10 am, the Institute was officially formed on the motion of Mr EA Lucas (Nyngan) seconded by Mr HE Palmer (Gundagai), stating, "*that for the better working of the Pastures Protection Act, and in the interests of the officials employed under the Act, an association be formed.*" It was named the **Institute of Stock Inspectors and Pastures Protection Board Officials of New South Wales**.

The conference immediately adopted a **loyalty resolution** proposed by Mr RW Dawson (Goulburn), seconded Mr JAT Roachfort (Gundagai) - "*that this institute places on record its unswerving loyalty to the cause of Great Britain and her Allies: its firm belief in the righteousness of that cause, and its determination to assist in upholding the hands of those in authority in prosecuting the war until a victorious peace is assured.*"

At 11 am the conference was opened by Mr George Valder, Under-Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, who apologised for the absence of the Minister of Agriculture. Mr Valder's speech touched on mutual cooperation and benefit between the Institute and the Department of Agriculture.

At 12 pm there was an address by Mr STD Symons, MRCVS, Chief Inspector of Stock and Chief Quarantine Officer, on *Imported Stock and the Quarantine Laws Governing Their Introduction and a History of the Commonwealth Quarantine Station*.

At 2 pm there was an address by Mr WW Froggart, Government Entomologist, on *External Parasites of Stock*. There was a report of an address by Mr RJ Higgins on behalf of stockowners commending the Institute and the value of the conference.

On Tuesday, 26th March, the second day of conference, there was a lecture by Mr S Dodd DVSc FR-CVS on *Internal Parasites of Live Stock* followed by visits to Commonwealth Quarantine Station at the old Zoological Gardens at Moore Park, then Homebush abattoirs.

On Wednesday, 27th March, the third and final day of conference, the inaugural annual general meeting was held. The following list of motions was carried:

Veterinary museum (That in the opinion of this body it is advisable that a veterinary museum be founded in connection with the Stock Department, and that the members of the institute do all in their power to procure suitable specimens of educational value)

Work defined under control of CVO (That with the view to economy and efficiency it is desirable that all work carried on by the Government department in relation to animal breeding, control of diseases in animals, meat inspection, and matters of a kindred nature, be placed under the control of the chief veterinary officer of the Dept of Agriculture)

Compilation of a treatise on stock diseases (That recognising the fact that there does not exist an Australian treatise of diseases in stock, that stock inspectors of New South Wales be asked to compile papers bearing on the different diseases in their district, and that at a subsequent conference the cooperation of the stock departments of Queensland, Victoria, and South Australia, and other sections of the Commonwealth be asked to assist in the compilation of such a work)

Registration of Stock Inspectors as veterinary surgeons (That in the event of the Veterinary Surgeons Bill becoming law representations to the Minister for Agriculture be made beforehand, asking that provision be made for the registration of stock inspectors as veterinary surgeons after three years from date of appointment)

Brands Bill progress (That the Minister, for Agriculture be urged to bring before Parliament at an early date the Brands Bill, previously submitted, so as to allow of the cancellation of a large number of unused brands, the owners of which have in many instances been deceased for years)

Stock Inspector salary, equipment and travelling expenses (That the present system of paying an Inspector of Stock a salary out of which he has to find his equipment and travelling expenses constitutes a tax on the energetic officer, and is against the best interests of the working of the department. In the opinion of this conference the salary should be a net amount, and expenses allowed at so much per day while away from headquarters)

Rabbit Inspector salary and forage allowance (Where an officer is solely employed as a rabbit inspector, his minimum salary should be £300 a year, with a forage allowance that should also cover the wear and tear of equipment)

Stock Inspector volunteers elected honorary members (That in view of the sacrifices made by two brother-officers, Messrs. Flood and McPherson—who volunteered for active service abroad, this conference elects these gentlemen honorary members of the institute).

The following office bearers were elected:

President: RW (Robert Weston) Dawson (front row, second on left in photograph); Vice-presidents: C Brooks and CR Brett; Council: C Dargin (Sydney), PW Gavel (Dubbo), EA Lucas (Nyngan), WJ Smith (Young), PH White (Mudgee), CJ Woollet (Tamworth), EJ O'Connor (Coonamble), EA Hickey (Yass), RJ Spinks (Lismore), GC Shaw (Nyngan).

The institute was named the Institute of Stock Inspectors and PP Board Officials of NSW, as it included stock inspectors, rabbit inspectors and Board secretaries. By 1920, the secretaries and rabbit inspectors, with different interests, had dropped out, and it became the Institute of Stock Inspectors of NSW.



Image 2: Stock Inspector attendees at inaugural conference in 1918

RESISTANCE TO THE INSTITUTE? BRETT V SULLIVAN

It seemed, on reading newspaper articles, that there was some resistance to the establishment of the Institute from PP Boards. In fact, on closer inspection, nearly all of the criticism emanated from a Mr JJ Sullivan, director of Bathurst PP Board and further, that his criticism of the Institute was a side-effect of his trenchant antipathy towards the Bathurst Stock Inspector, Mr Charles Brett, and his general demeanour towards his fellow directors.

The following are actual stories run by local Bathurst newspapers.

From 1917: *'Trenchant criticism of Stock Inspector CR Brett over report and work by JJ Sullivan'* and *'Stock Inspector CR Brett castigated and Chairman Boyd irritated by JJ Sullivan.'*

From 1918: *'Mr Sullivan strongly objects to "aristocratic" institute'* and *'Institute Secretary (EC Bluett) issues rejoinder to JJ Sullivan's criticism'* and *'Bathurst PP Board member (JJ Sullivan) retorts with a veiled attack on Stock Inspector.'*

Then there is this: *'Bathurst PP Board member (JJ Sullivan) and Stock Inspector (CR Brett), A Mill'* published in the National Advocate, Bathurst on 15th June 1918. Excerpt from the PP Board meeting:

"The Board," went on Mr Sullivan, "pays Mr Brett a big salary for his services as Stock Inspector and not as a clerk."

Mr Brett: "I do my duty."

Mr Sullivan: "You do not. I can mention several cases, but I will mention only one case which has been hanging fire for six months and has not been attended to yet."

Mr Brett (warmly): "You're a liar."

This was too much for Mr Sullivan, who sprang out of his chair, and despite his bulky proportions, sprinted smartly around the table, where he shaped up in a business-like manner and commenced the assault. Mr Brett at first devoted his efforts to defensive tactics, but Mr Sullivan got through the defence, however, and landed a straight left on the side of Mr Brett's face. Mr Brett then counter-attacked and a heavy left swing landed on Mr Sullivan's right ear, which turned red and blue in quick succession and increased to extraordinary dimensions. In the meantime the mill was increasing in violence, and the heavy weights in their manoeuvres sent table, chairs and directors in all directions. Finally, the pugilists were separated from a firm embrace by the efforts of some of the directors, who prized them apart with the assistance of chairs.

Mr Boyd then declared the meeting adjourned till after lunch.

From 1919: *'Bathurst PP Board criticises Minister, excoriates Stock Inspector over Institute resolution on salaries'* and *'Bathurst PP Board's Mr JJ Sullivan interrogates—but denies having a set on—Stock Inspector Brett'*.

From 1920: *'Bathurst PP Board two-hour closed meeting on friction between two officials with a motion passed'* and *'Bathurst PP Board squabble over Stock Inspector's recommendation to the Board'* and *'Argument at PP Board'* - "The periodical attack by Mr JJ Sullivan on the Stock Inspector, Mr CR Brett, occurred rather unexpectedly at the monthly meeting...at times the atmosphere was electrical (sic)."

In 1921, Stock Inspector Brett moves to Warialda PP Board and in 1922, JJ Sullivan retired from Bathurst PP Board after more than 40 years as a director.

Resistance also appeared from other Bathurst staff - *'Lively discussion over purpose of Institute, with Secretary stating it is for Stock Inspectors only.'* Then, the Bathurst Secretary and Rabbit Inspector refuse to attend the 1918 conference. This prompted a resolution from the conference (the Stock Inspectors abstained from voting) - *"We, the secretaries and rabbit inspectors of PP Boards here in conference desire to dissociate ourselves entirely from the remarks of the secretary and rabbit inspector of the Bathurst PP Board, as reported in the daily press. We are satisfied with the constitution of the institute..."*

Over the ensuing years, individual directors remained critical of the Institute, particularly its function of betterment of Stock Inspectors salaries—its 'union' function—but the general consensus remained in favour.



Image 3: 1927 Conference group

CONFERENCES 1919 TO 1936

All of the conferences have been researched up to 1936, and activities for each day of each conference can be perused in the *Flock and Herd* archive¹. Suffice for this paper to present a few of the highlights up to 1936. In 1919 there was no conference, as it had been abandoned on account of “the epidemic.” The conferences dates slowly crept into May, then July, before being set for the week preceding Easter at the 1923 conference, where it settled. The 1932 conference was cancelled due to tick infestation and Stock Inspectors were required to be on duty to inspect all stock introduced from northern areas.

TRIBULATIONS FACED BY STOCK INSPECTORS DURING THIS PERIOD

World War I was still being prosecuted in 1918. The following year saw the Influenza outbreak, which caused great upheavals including the cancellation of the 1919 conference.

Severe drought was experienced from January 1918 to January 1920 with a session at conference on drought in 1920 with the Minister of Agriculture and the Chief Inspector of Stock. Stock Inspector numbers were down in 1920 due to the demands of managing travelling stock.

Rabbits were a perennial issue with presentations on the rabbit problem in 1921 (Mr W Rees, Inverell, on *The Rabbit Problem*), in 1922 (W Rees, Inverell, on *The Group System of Rabbit Destruction*), in 1924 (Mr WG Dowling, Forbes, on *Another Shot at the Rabbit*), in 1926 (Mr FF Forster, Goulburn, on *A Radius System of Inspecting Holdings for Rabbit Destruction*), in 1928 (Mr WP Bluett, grazier, Queanbeyan, on *Economic Cost of the Rabbit Pest*) and in 1933 (Mr. Max Henry, Chief Veterinary Surgeon, commenting on the financial position of graziers as a factor in (lack of) rabbit control).

Pleuro-pneumonia was a common diagnosis with a presentation in 1924 by Mr EA Lucas (Holbrook) on *Experiences with Pleuro-pneumonia*. There was a swine fever outbreak in 1927, with two papers at the 1927 conference, discussion by Dr HR Seddon on research on swine fever at Glenfield in 1928, and on opening the 1929 conference, Minister Thorby declared that swine fever had been practically stamped out. In 1935, Mr Max Henry mentioned that Johne's Disease had been detected in imported cattle.

The economic depression of the late twenties and early thirties impacted on Stock Inspector's work and recompense with references made to hardships during the 1930 and 1931 conferences.

ADVOCACY ON BEHALF OF PP BOARDS AND STOCKOWNERS BY INSTITUTE

The first objective listed for the Institute was to assist members to render more effective service. The following actions, motions and propositions were dealt with by conferences during this period, in the interests of the PP Boards and the stockowner.

In 1922, a resolution was passed on the size and position of brands under the new Brands Act, recommending a regulation on size to avoid using large brands on calves. Another was passed recommending that the government act on cattle earmark registrations.

In 1923, the Institute recommended the establishment of pounds by PP Boards for holding straying stock. They also called for the restrictions on the sale of poisons, particularly cyanide of potassium, which was freely available from chemists at the time, due to losses in stock and the destruction of 'possums, other native animals and birds.

In 1926, the Institute suggested that State forests should control their rabbit populations due to the impact on surrounding stockowners. They also requested the Minister to impose maximum penalties for failure to eradicate prickly pear. In 1927, the Institute advocated the legalising of cattle earmarks and the imposition of full penalties for failure to suppress rabbits.

In 1929, Mr CJ Woollett, Lismore, made waves with a presentation on “*Human Consumption of Diseased Meat*.” He made use of simple epidemiological principles:

“Out of 20,959 head of cattle killed in the north and north-west only 11 were condemned, whereas, assuming the incidence of disease to be the same as among those killed at (city) abattoirs, there would have been over 240 head condemned had the standard of inspection been the same.”

At this time, inspection at country killing works was overseen by the police service. The public outcry after the 1929 conference saw improvements in the inspection service, including training provided for new police recruits.

In the same year, the prescient Stock Inspector Armidale links decreased pasture quality to over-clearing of land:

“General denudation of green timber constituted the main cause of a decreased carrying capacity of the land.”

In 1930, the Institute recommended that Stock Inspectors copy quarantine notices to inspector of districts when returning stock. They also recommend Boards establish their own museum for noxious weeds and diseased specimens, that lambs at foot be exempt from branding at sales, and call for quality controls in the manufacture and sale of sheep licks.

In 1931, the Institute warns against peddlers of quack veterinary medicines and draws the attention of the Minister to the need for a Pig Branding Act. Then in 1933, an improved branding technique was demonstrated to conference a new implement using needles and ink, rather than fire-branding.

In 1934, the Institute requested that the Department of Agriculture take more active interest in rabbit control and suggested that they increase the severity of sheep-stealing penalties. In 1935, they brought attention to the cruelty of dehorning aged cattle, describing it as “diabolically cruel.”



Image 4: 1929 Conference group

ADVOCACY ON BEHALF OF STOCK INSPECTORS BY INSTITUTE

The second objective listed for the Institute was to secure for its members reasonable conditions of employment. The gains made were incremental and it took many years to secure equitable conditions of employment for all Stock Inspectors and consistency between Boards.

In 1918, a communication from the Chief Inspector of Stock was sent to all PP Boards. This advised that the Minister for Agriculture had decided that Stock Inspector salaries should be quite distinct from expenses of travelling, and to fix the minimum salary at £350, with 12/6 a day travelling expenses, and an allowance of £100 a year for the maintenance of “a vehicle and two horses or a motor car.” The Minister's attitude in the matter is the outcome of resolutions recently passed at the stock inspectors' and PP Board officials' conference in Sydney.

This proposal was put to the PP Board convention and rejected. Mr. Brownlow (Bathurst PP Board director) stated that he attended the PP Convention and that it was unanimously decided that the matter of fixing salaries be left in the hands of the Board. Many Boards are reported in the press as wishing to make their own determinations in this area. For example: Deniliquin PP Board discusses the resolution on salary and equipment allowance...“that the Board paid its employees good salaries, and considering the present war conditions did not feel justified in expending more than was required.”

In 1920, a communication from the Chief Inspector of Stock sent to all PP Boards. This advised that the Minister for Agriculture had decided that Stock Inspector salaries shall be £300 per annum and the maximum £350 per annum. There shall be an equipment allowance of £100 a year and travelling expenses when the Stock Inspector is away from headquarters. In the same year conference passed a motion that then Institute be registered as a trade union, put by Stock Inspector Donald McPherson (after brushing back his hair).

In 1921, the Mudgee Stock Inspector was given leave to attend the conference, but a motion by one director to supply expenses of £5/5/- was not seconded, so the Stock Inspector attended without expenses. In the same year, the Warialda Stock Inspector was given leave to attend with expenses of £15.

It was stated in the 1921 annual report that the past year had been marked by the registration of the Institute of Stock Inspectors as a trade union. It had been thought that "it would be more satisfactory if a properly constituted tribunal fixed the salaries and conditions of stock inspectors, which could best be done by means of a conciliation committee appointed under the Industrial Arbitration Act. For this reason the step mentioned had been taken. It would, still be a plank in the Institute's platform to exhaust all peaceable means before seeking redress by any other method, and, although asking better conditions for its members, the union did not intend to bolster up incompetence."

The 1921 conference passed two resolutions in this respect. The first was that the stock branch appoint and control of Stock Inspectors, including their salaries and equipment allowances. The second was that in the event of an Inspector's position becoming vacant, preference of applications should be from men already appointed to other districts. Preference should also be given to returned soldiers.

Also in 1921, the Institute and PP Board Council of Advice reached tentative agreement on salaries and conditions, which was furnished to PP Boards, with advice recommending favourable consideration "to save the expense of fighting the whole matter in the Arbitration Court."

The claim and agreement: Salary minimum of £400 to maximum of £520; equipment allowance of £150 per annum for Inspectors with own horses and buggy or £250 for using their own motor car; travelling allowance of 15 shillings per day and costs of conveyance; leave of absence 18 days in each year in Eastern and Central divisions and 21 days for all others; long service leave of three months on full pay for ten years' service up to two years on full pay for forty years' service; removal expenses of all necessary expenses plus family members at first-class fares.

Stock Inspector award made by Industrial Arbitration Court in the application by Institute of Stock Inspectors, with divisions into Class and Grade, with districts correspondingly graded to retrospectively take effect on 11 August 1921.

In 1922, Mr Tout, a director of Young PP Board describes the Stock Inspector conference "as a union meeting."

In 1923, conference adopted a proposed insurance scheme, provided retiring age is fixed at 70 years.

In 1925, Mr FA Chaffey, Minister for Agriculture (unable to attend opening on Tuesday) regretted the forced retirement of old stock inspectors without the benefit of superannuation. The annual report referred to the compulsory retirement of six inspectors and plans for a future superannuation scheme. There was also mention of training courses provided to stock inspectors at Glenfield through the year.

In 1926, a motion passed recommending that the incoming council of the Institute should proceed with a superannuation scheme for stock inspectors. A second motion requested that Stock branch should take complete control of all inspectors of stock. (The superannuation scheme became operational in December, 1940).

In 1927, Stock Inspector Kenny (Glen Innes) refused permission to attend conference by the PP Board. The conference held a discussion on the classification of districts in regard to salaries and allowances provided for each. Another resolution was passed asking proposing that control of Stock Inspectors revert totally to stock branch.

Conference also requested the appointment to the examining board for stock inspectors, of a stock inspector. Also that the president of stock inspectors be on the committee of enquiry into stock inspectors.

In 1928, there was a salary increase of 10% granted.

In 1930, the Council of Advice advise Boards to cease paying conference expenses to Stock Inspectors, though Bathurst Board decides to pay. Also, the Council of Advice recommend cutting Stock Inspector's salary, to match public service cuts, but Bathurst Board refuse to do so.

Conference passes resolutions stating that the Inspector's leave of absence should be the same for eastern and central divisions, that the Minister be asked to appoint an appeals committee, and that before an inspector is dismissed, an enquiry by a police magistrate be held.

In 1932, the Stock Inspector's salary is decreased 8½ per cent.

In 1933, there is a press report of the denial of long service leave monetary value due a Stock Inspector, because of his death before retirement. The Institute petitioned for a change to the legislation.

NOTABLE LECTURES

Max Henry, Chief Veterinary Surgeon, Department of Agriculture, made presentations nearly every year to conference. In 1926, he opened the conference saying he recognised its importance as it "made possible the discussion of the stock inspectors' troubles and allowed a sympathetic exchange of views." In 1933 he spoke on the change of outlook from disease control to disease eradication, then he referred to the old fashioned habit of forcing healthy animals to consume large quantities of drugs.

In 1923, the Minister for Agriculture announces the opening of Glenfield Veterinary Research Station.



Image 5: 1929 visit to Glenfield Veterinary Research Station

HG Belschner BVSc, Stock Inspector Nyngan, and one of the first veterinarians to work as a Stock Inspector, presented a paper in 1923 on *Forage Poisoning*.

Ian Clunies Ross, Director McMaster Animal Health Laboratory, University of Sydney presented lectures to the Stock Inspector conferences in 1926, 1929, 1931, 1933, 1934 and 1935 all in the area of Veterinary Parasitology.

Mr Dunne, Minister for Agriculture opened the 1927 conference, paying tribute to the work of the inspectors and then promising to **abolish Pasture Protection Boards**.

Professor JD Stewart, Dean, Faculty of Veterinary Science, Sydney University, himself previously the state's Chief Inspector of Stock presented lectures in 1933 on *Disease Control*, and 1935 on the thorny path of the expert and the dubious mind of the farmer.

TG Hungerford, BVSc, presented a paper in 1936 on *Differential Diagnosis of Catarrhal Diseases in Fowls*.

EXCURSIONS

A feature of all conferences, beginning with the first, was the half-day or full-day outing in the interests of professional development. In 1918, the Stock Inspectors visited the Commonwealth Quarantine Station and the Homebush abattoirs. In 1920, the Hawkesbury Agricultural College. In 1921, Taronga Zoo and Meggitts Ltd, Parramatta, stock food manufacturer and Colonial Wool Combing, Weaving and Spinning Works, Botany and John Bayley and Sons' Tannery, Botany. In 1924, Thorpes Ltd, stock feed manufacturers, Homebush Bay.

In 1923, Glenfield Veterinary Research Station was opened and it was first visited in 1925, along with Dairy Farmers' Co-operative Milk Co. in Harris Street. From 1926 to 1936, Glenfield Veterinary Research Station was an annual expedition, except for the years 1928, 1930 and 1933.

Additionally, visits were made to Taronga Park Zoo in 1928, Botanic Gardens National Herbarium and the Homebush Abattoirs in 1930, John Stewart and Son's Veterinary Hospital at Randwick in 1931, Vita-Lick factory at Millers Point in 1933 and Randwick laboratory of the Biological Institute of Australasia Ltd in 1936.



Image 6: 1931 visit to Glenfield Research Farm

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES AT CONFERENCE

The 1918 conference advertised the inclusion of a smoke social and a theatre party. While there is a likelihood that there was an annual dinner nearly every year, mention of one is made only for the years 1930, 1933 and 1934, the latter two held at the Hotel Metropole.

HOW MANY CONFERENCES?

Is the 2018 conference the 100th? If there had been a conference every year, 1918 would be the first, 2017 would be 100th and 2018 would be the 101st conference. But five conferences were not held: 1919 due to the influenza epidemic (the human type), 1932 due to an outbreak of cattle tick in NSW, 1940 and 1942

due to disruptions caused by the war (although a Year Book was produced both years) and 2007 due to the outbreak of equine influenza.

So, 2018 is technically the 96th conference. But it is the centenary of the first conference. Held exactly one hundred years earlier—to the week.

STOCK INSPECTOR'S ROLE

The *Sydney Morning Herald* on 1st August 1918 publishes a letter from Professor JD Stewart who defends (and defines) Stock Inspectors:

At the recent Farmers' Conference, a delegate is stated to have asserted that “*some of the Stock Inspectors know no more about diseases in stock than a dog did about his father.*” To allow this assertion to pass without comment would be unfair to a body of deserving public servants whose exact position in relation to veterinary science is not understood by many stockowners.

It would appear that there is a fairly widespread impression that stock Inspectors have passed a special examination in veterinary science, and are almost, if not quite, as well equipped in knowledge for the general practice of veterinary science as a qualified veterinary surgeon, and should, therefore, be able to diagnose and treat all and sundry ailments of animals.

While it is true that a stock inspector must possess some veterinary knowledge to pass the examination which governs his appointment, this requirement is but a small portion of all that is prescribed, and the knowledge demanded is of an elementary nature, relating chiefly to the suppression of infectious and contagious diseases of animals. Many of these officers, however, have had wide and varied experience in animal husbandry, and are recognised as men of sound judgment in matters connected with the pastoral industry.

Consequently they are capable of much useful service to stockowners. But as they have not had the advantages of systematic instruction and training in the various subjects that comprise the curriculum for qualification in veterinary science, it should be recognised without any reflection upon their services that limitations must exist as to their veterinary knowledge.

It is therefore unreasonable for stockowners to expect from them that which only qualified veterinarians are capable of rendering. Attached to the stock branch, Department of Agriculture, is a staff of qualified veterinary surgeons, the benefit of whose advice and counsel is available to stock Inspectors upon application to their chief, who is also a qualified veterinary surgeon. It is, in fact, the routine procedure for the Inspectors to report upon the occurrence of disease in stock to the Chief Inspector, and be advised as to any further action deemed necessary. The interests of the stockowners are, in this manner, safeguarded.

It is therefore obvious that the assertion of the delegate referred to does not correctly indicate the true position of stock Inspectors. In relation to veterinary science. Stock inspectors have multifarious duties, and their veterinary knowledge is sufficient to carry out all that is officially required of them.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Acknowledgement is made of the efforts of past historians of the Institute / Association, including Barry Kemp, ex-DV Forbes, for his history of the Institute and Association, authored in 2003³. Before him there is EA (Arthur) Lucas, who wrote a history of the Institute in the 1945 yearbook² and who was the proposer of the motion to form the Institute in 1918.

CITATIONS

This history from 1918 to 1936 is the outcome of a comprehensive search of (nearly) all NSW newspapers found in the National Library of Australia for that period, in the national collection known as Trove. The full set of subsequent findings can be found in the archive section of *Flock and Herd*¹, referencing some 240 newspaper articles.

On 22nd March 1918, the *Sydney Stock and Station Journal* wrote that they had received an invitation to attend the inaugural conference of PP Board Officials, showing that not only were newspaper reporters allowed, they were encouraged, hence the extensive newspaper coverage.

REFERENCES

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ADDENDUM

FIRST “FLOCK AND HERD ARTICLE”

The Northern Star (Lismore) on Saturday 31 December 1932, page 7, published what might be recognisable as the first *Flock and Herd* article.

KILLED BY PIECE OF WIRE

Note the swellings under the jaw and around the brisket. It was found necessary to kill the cow. Four days previously Mr. Woollett, stock inspector, Lismore, gave it as his opinion to the owner, Mr. Howard, Burns Point, Ballina, that the cause of the cow's condition was a piece of wire sticking into the heart. A post mortem examination confirmed the diagnosis. Wire, inches long, had worked its way through the second stomach and punctured the heart. The sac around the heart, instead of being about as thick as a piece of paper, was a quarter of an inch thick. Apparently the cow picked up the wire whilst grazing.



Exact reproduction of the piece of wire which caused the trouble.

