

Press Release

Renowned cattleman and cattle industry figure, Dick Vincent was awarded an Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) medal in the Queen's Birthday Awards for distinguished service to the beef cattle industry, including internationally and to thoroughbred horse breeding and racing.

Mr Vincent played major roles in the introduction of Simmental cattle to Australia, the establishment of the National Beef Recording System in Australia, the introduction of Computer Aided Marketing of Livestock (CLASS) to Western Australia and the development of the Australian Registered Cattle Breeders Association.

Dick Vincent was a very early breeder of Simmental cattle in Australia and a leader in the establishment of the breed. He established the Hamelin Park stud at Williams, WA, which was a leading Simmental stud herd in Australia for more than a decade until it was dispersed to breeders in every mainland state in 1991.

Dick was on the Federal Council of the Australia Simmental Breeders Association with six terms as President and served for 18 years on the Western Australia Simmental Council with seven terms as president. He was also on the World Simmental Federation for 12 years serving as president for three years.

Dick Vincent was a member of the National Beef Recording Scheme (NBRS) Advisory Committee for a number of years in the late 1970's and early 1980's. NBRS was in its formative years and benefited greatly from Dick's practical advice on organisational structure and strategies. Today the NBRS and its BREEDPLAN® genetic evaluation tool are accepted as world leaders. The technology developed is used in 15 countries which speaks for itself. Economists have put the net present value of BREEDPLAN to the Australian beef industry in the hundreds of millions of dollars.

In the early 1980's the Agricultural Business Research Institute was involved in trialling the computer-aided sale by description of livestock. This was a ground-breaking project – it essentially offered eBay style marketing concepts 3 decades ago! Mr. Vincent saw the trial system in operation and immediately took steps to have it introduced in Western Australia under the name CLASS. This gave WA livestock producers an opportunity to use this advanced technology for three years before the national scheme called CALM (now Auctions Plus) was introduced. Given the huge distances involved in the supply chain of livestock products in WA, this technology has provided the opportunity to achieve economies in transport of livestock to abattoirs, better animal welfare outcomes and higher meat quality. It was only through Mr Vincent's sheer enthusiasm about new technology, his reputation for picking winning projects and his detailed knowledge of the agri-business environment in WA that this opportunity materialised.

The Australian Registered Cattle Breeders Association in ARCBA was formed in the early 1970's to provide a national voice of breed associations in areas of common interest such as Government policy initiatives, disease control, showing standards and so on. The concept was good but the execution poor. In 1979 Dick Vincent was elected as President and found that ARCBA had just 12 breeds as members, no money, no well-articulated program of activities and used the offices of one of its members as its head quarters to save money. In the first two years of his term as president he increased membership to 35 breeds (essentially all those in the industry representing about 13000 registered breeders), increased membership fees so that the Association had adequate financial resources for an ambitious program, transferred the head quarters to the University of New England, appointed a breed-independent Executive Director (part time) and had the Constitution changed so that future Presidents would be distinguished breed-independent appointees. Many of these changes were considered radical at the time but in hindsight they have proved to have been very wise and have added materially to industry organisation and wealth nationally. Post 1979, ARCBA is considered as an authoritative Peak-industry Council and has taken on many major projects for the cattle breeding industry including:

- Managing the cattle imports through Cocos Island (thus giving the Australian industry a huge genetic boost)
- Providing certification of live cattle exported for breeding (which provides a

\$100M+pa income boost to Australian breeders)

- Negotiation with Government over compensation measures of registered herds that are quarantined due to animal disease,
- Having a major voice on developments within the genomics industry,
- Services such as breeder education, provision of statistics, financial benchmarking to help with better managerial decisions of member breeds.

Personal Achievements

Richard “Dick” Vincent is an icon of the Western Australian beef cattle industry as well as the thoroughbred horse breeding industry in that state. His fame as a breeder of the finest livestock for commercial conditions has spread nationally and internationally. To have achieved such distinction from resource-poor beginnings has been an extraordinary accomplishment in itself.

Following secondary schooling at Hale School, Perth, Dick went to the “The Grange”, on the Irwin River, then owned by his Grandmother, Mrs. Francis Mitchell. Soon afterwards he enlisted in the RAAF in World War II being discharged in 1945 when he returned to The Grange. With just 200 pounds in his pocket he took up horse breaking and share farming. In 1950, a war service loan allowed him to acquire ‘Tanga’, a 1350 acre farm at Toodyay. Over the next 50 years he was involved in a number of cattle properties including, “Bonniefield” Hereford and Brahman Studs, commercial cattle and grain production (13,000 acres) at Dongara; “Hamelin Pool” Station, Sharks Bay, running Brahman and Hereford (450,000 acres); “Matilda Downs”, Mt. Barker, Hereford (5,000 acres); “Minilya Station”, Carnarvon, Hereford and 30,000 Merinos (670,000 acres); “Hamelin Park”, Williams, Simmental Stud and “De Grey Station” Port Hedland, which carried 20,000 Shorthorn cattle (1,000,000 acres). The Hamelin Park stud founded by Dick was a leading Simmental stud in Australia for more than a decade until dispersed to breeders in every mainland state in 1991. He now breeds thoroughbred horses on De Grey Park at Capel and Droughtmaster cattle on a larger property in the South West. Despite being in his 91st year, Dick still derives great satisfaction from both applying his experience and intellectual skills to the elusive goal of breeding the “perfect” animal and the arduous physical management of these animals through to sale.

