

Edward Mark Hutton, B.Agr.Sc., D.Sc.

Dr Hutton was born at Renmark, South Australia, on 15th March, 1912. After graduating from the University of Adelaide in 1933 with the degree of B.Agr.Sc., he joined the South Australian Department of Agriculture. In 1936 he joined the staff of Roseworthy Agricultural College as Assistant Plant Breeder. Four years later he moved to the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (now C.S.I.R.O.), the organisation with which he was to spend most of his professional life. His first position was with the Genetics Group in Canberra under J.R.A. MacMillan who later was to become Professor and Dean of Agriculture at the University of Sydney.

Dr Hutton's early work with the C.S.I.R. was associated with vegetable seed production, because of its importance during World War II. He later turned his attention to inheritance of virus resistance in potatoes and disease resistance in tomatoes. While still in Canberra, he became interested in pasture species and published work on subterranean clover and Phalaris, both temperate zone species.

Dr Hutton maintained his academic studies and in 1941 obtained his M.Sc. degree. In 1951 he was awarded the D.Sc. degree on the basis of his publications on plant breeding and genetics.

The year 1952 was a memorable one for Dr Hutton, for Queensland and indeed for the tropical agricultural world, for in that year Dr Hutton moved to Queensland to join Dr J. Griffiths-Davies and others. This very active group of C.S.I.R.O. scientists later formed the Division of Tropical Pastures with Dr Hutton in charge of the plant breeding section. Dr Hutton and his colleagues attacked problems relating to breeding systems of tropical legumes and grasses. From this work, and after investigation of a number of tropical plants, some of which were used for pastures and some not, Dr Hutton made a cross between two strains of plants native to Mexico. After much research and rigorous selection, plants derived from this cross were given the name Siratro. Siratro became well known throughout the tropical world as one of the most important pasture plants for certain environments. He also worked on other plants, one of the most important of which was Leucaena leucocephala, also an important legume for grazing animals.

Dr Hutton was Chief of the Division of Tropical Pastures from 1969 to March 1977 when he reached the age of retirement.

He has published extensively in Australian and international journals. His eighty-six scientific papers cover a broad range of topics in the fields of plant breeding, virus resistance, seed production and pasture management.

Dr Hutton has always been interested in the profession of agricultural science. He was a foundation member of the Australian Institute of Agricultural Science. He was President of the Queensland Branch of the Institute in 1965 and national President in 1966.

Dr Hutton has maintained close connections with the University of Queensland. He was among the first appointees to the position of Honorary Research Consultant and in that capacity supervised a number of postgraduate students of the University. He has served on selection committees of the University and has given a series of advanced lectures on plant breeding. He has always been helpful to the Faculty of Agricultural Science and has served on its Faculty Board.

The importance of Dr Hutton's work was marked on the occasion of his retirement by a special issue of the journal Tropical Grasslands and by an all day symposium at the University of Queensland in which thirteen papers were read on various aspects of Dr Hutton's pasture legume Siratro.

Dr Hutton has been honoured by various professional societies in Australia and overseas. Among these honours were a Fellowship of the Australian Institute of Agricultural Science (1967) and the Farrer Memorial Medal (1968). In 1970 Dr Hutton was President of the XI International Grassland Congress. He has been awarded Honorary Fellowships in the Japanese Society of Grassland Science (1974), the Indian Society of Forage Research (1976) and the South African Grassland Society (1977).

Since his retirement Dr Hutton has been in demand by overseas organisations. He recently visited Brazil to give a series of lectures and act as a consultant. Dr Hutton's work has enhanced the reputation of Queensland agricultural science throughout the tropical world. He has worked closely with the University and has served it well. It is appropriate that the University of Queensland honour Dr Hutton during the year of his retirement.