

OBITUARY - FRANK C. ALLEN

1919 - 1995



Frank Allen was born and raised in Sumner, and remained, all his life, a Canterbury gentleman of the old school. After graduating from Lincoln College, he joined the Crop Research Division of the DSIR, at Lincoln, working on the effectiveness of the newly discovered chemical weedkillers. He attended, but, uncharacteristically, did not appear in the recorded discussions of, the first National Weeds Conference, forerunner to the N.Z. Weed Conference, the N.Z. Weed and Pest Control Conference, and the N.Z. Plant Protection Conference. He gave his first paper at the second Conference in 1949.

In the early 1950s, Frank joined the Canterbury (NZ) Seed Company Ltd and remained with them until 1966, when he joined the Department of Agriculture at Lincoln. There, he carried out research on a very wide range of topics, including

weed control in crops (notably wild oats) and the biology and control of weeds in pasture (especially the barley grasses). In MAF, as the Department became, he rose to the rank of Regional Scientist but never lost his hands-on interest in weeds and their control nor his love of being in the field, looking at and counting weeds. His personal rating of weeds identifiable from a car at 50 mph is still in use by some of us today.

Frank contributed more than most to this Society. He presented about 35 papers, asked many pertinent questions of speakers and at AGMs, represented members on the Executive Committee for about 20 years, achieved presidency in 1960-61, and was elected a life member in 1976. He was one of the compilers of the first index to the Society's Proceedings.

Frank was a well-loved and popular member of the Society, and of the agricultural research fraternity of New Zealand. He was dedicated to agriculture, and especially to his chosen subject of weeds. The day before Frank died, he was still talking, with enthusiasm, about botany, and at the time of his death, he was working on a review of gorse.