

Samuel Sherwen Cameron MRCVS DVSc 1866-1933

Samuel Cameron was born in Cumberland, England, where his family farmed. He studied at the Royal (Dick) College, Edinburgh, and was admitted MRCVS in 1888. He was selected by WT Kendall's brother and professional colleague to fill a staff vacancy at the Melbourne Veterinary School, Fitzroy, migrated to Australia and was appointed lecturer and hospital surgeon (1889-1894). Cameron was destined to exercise considerable influence on subsequent veterinary history in Victoria, an influence, which, unfortunately, was not always regarded by his colleagues as being in the best interests of the profession.

He spent about two years in New Zealand in 1895-96, as veterinary officer in Dunedin, but returned to work as inspector for the Board of Public Health (Victoria) for ten years during which he was associated with drafting the *Meat Supervision Act* 1901 and the *Milk and Dairy Supervision Act* 1905.

Cameron was appointed Chief Veterinary Inspector, Department of Agriculture, Victoria, in 1906, and Director of Agriculture in 1911. He reorganised the government agriculture services and contributed substantially to the establishment of the Veterinary School and the Veterinary Research Institute at Melbourne University. His enthusiasm and foresight ensured the success of the State Research Farm, Werribee, on which land the clinical departments of the veterinary school of the University of Melbourne were later established. He maintained his link with veterinary education by lecturing in veterinary public health and in animal husbandry at the University of Melbourne from 1909 until undergraduate teaching ceased in 1928.

However, about the time that Cameron was appointed Director of Agriculture, the Department embarked on a policy of considerable expansion of the staff of lay inspectors without any corresponding increase in the number of veterinary officers. In fact, the latter staff was allowed to shrink by tardy replacements when vacancies occurred. Several attempts were made to change this policy. The final attempt was made during 1924-25 when it was proposed that rural practitioners should be employed as part-time stock inspectors and for tuberculin testing and other duties. At the meeting of the Australian Veterinary Association in June 1925, Dr Cameron met this proposal with an uncompromising refusal.

Cameron was noted for bridging the gap between the scientist and the farmer, and for assisting in the formation of young farmer groups and animal breed societies. He was the first recipient of the degree of Doctor of Veterinary Science when the University of Melbourne conferred the degree in 1909. He was a foundation member of the Australian Veterinary Association.

References

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