American Hereford hits internet record

The American Hereford Association in Kansas City is Australia’s largest corporate user in the USA. It processes about 70,000 registrations per year and a similar number of weaning weights through BREEDPLAN.

Arthur Rickards and Christopher de Crespiigny visited AHA in November, 2005 to discuss a wide range of issues including enhancements to Internet Solutions and the development of a supply management system for the highly successful Hereford Verified product. In January, 2006 the AHA posted a world record for use of ABRI’s Internet Solutions with 357,459 page enquiries in a month – up 40% on the AHA’s usage in January 2005!

Though his Breeder Schools in Australia, New Zealand, Canada and Brazil, Roger Hunsley has become a legend in the international beef industry.

Dr Keith Hammond, formerly Director of AGBU, recognised that most Australian academics have little practical livestock expertise. In Dr Hunsley he saw the opportunity to connect the research of the University at Armidale with the practical requirements of the livestock industry.

Dr Hunsley first came to Armidale in 1979 and returned in 1981 on sabbatical with his wonderful family and the legend began. At the time, Australia’s cattle were too small, too fat and too inefficient. In Roger’s Breeder Schools, that were a sell out every time, he preached the virtues of growthy, lean and well muscled cattle that were structurally correct. I do not exaggerate when I say that the Doc changed the Australian cattle industry forever by his commonsense message to our leading cattle breeders.

This meant that when Keith Hammond’s group rolled out the BREEDPLAN multi-trait genetic evaluation system in 1985 it was adopted enthusiastically because the Doc had already bridged the gap between science and practice. This exercise was repeated with great success in New Zealand and Canada.

In the early 1980’s Australia opened its doors for the first time in 50 years to North American live cattle. ABRI was the agent for many plane loads of seedstock that came to Australia.

In the Autumn of his career the Doc has taken on the greatest challenge of all working with the 170 million head cattle herd of Brazil. His recent workshop there was not about polite conversation – it was about radical change in breeding objectives – more akin to a revolution.

Canadian Angus have signed with ABRI for their third five-year term. CAA registrations have more than doubled since adopting the ABRI system ten years ago. CEO Doug Fee and Maureen Armitage are all smiles during the ABRI visit.

In November, 2005 Dr Roger Hunsley was the recipient of the US livestock industry’s highest award. A portrait of the “Doc” was hung in the Sirloin and Saddle Club in Louisville, Kentucky. Arthur Rickards attended the presentation and was invited to give the citation on Dr Hunsley’s international achievements. The following is an extract from that address.

In 1989, ABRI was demonstrating the new BREEDPLAN International software at the Denver Stock Show. The Doc said to me, “You know, all the Red breeds should really get together to make maximum progress”. It didn’t happen then but it is now starting to happen – 16 years later. The Doc’s vision has once again been vindicated.

Through two decades the Doc has judged cattle in most of the world’s leading cattle breeding countries – and in doing so he has brought great credit both to himself and to the American cattle breeding industry.

In the Autumn of his career the Doc has taken on the greatest challenge of all working with the 170 million head cattle herd of Brazil. His recent workshop there was not about polite conversation – it was about radical change in breeding objectives – more akin to a revolution.

No wonder they fondly call Doc the “Che Guevara of the Brazilian cattle industry”.

We salute you Dr Roger Hunsley as a visionary, as a legend in the World’s beef cattle industry and as a truly great American.