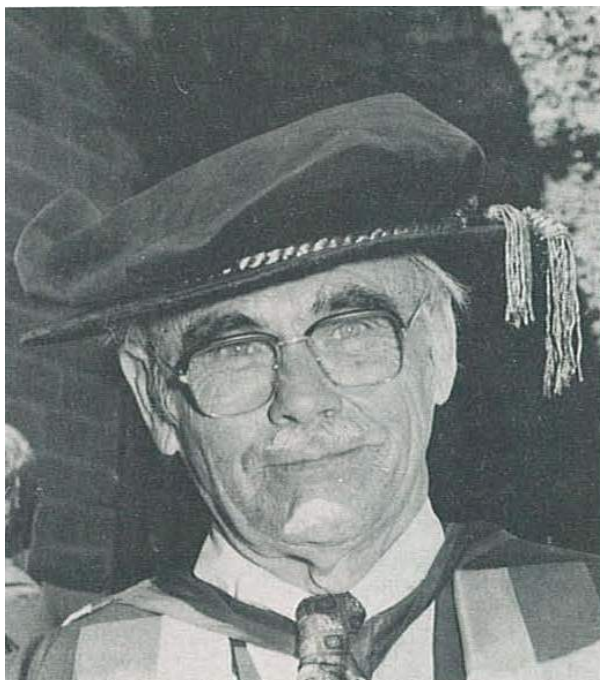


Dr Robert Vernon Stuart Bain

The honorary degree of Doctor of Veterinary Science was conferred upon Dr Robert Vernon Stuart (Bob) Bain at a conferring of degrees ceremony held on Saturday 5 April 1986.



Dr Bob Bain, *photo, The University of Sydney News, 15 April 1986, University Archives.*

Report

Life for former Associate Professor Bob Bain after retirement is little different from when he was a full time member of staff - except that these days he restricts himself to one thing at a time. His work continues, and in recognition of his contribution to the world of veterinary science, Dr Bain was given an honorary Doctorate in Veterinary Science at the Degree conferring ceremony on Saturday 5 April - only the second such award ever given by the University.

At the ceremony the Vice-Chancellor, Professor John Ward said: 'Who else in the animal health area has achieved so much interrelating an academic discipline with the problems of animal suffering and animal production? Mr Bain's work, made possible by his unrivalled knowledge of his chosen field, is a magnificent example of academic eminence in action.'

A former Dean of the Faculty of Veterinary Science for six years, Dr Bain is renowned for his work in Southeast Asia, working with teams that eradicated foot and mouth disease from Indonesia and developing a vaccine for hemorrhagic septicemia in cattle and buffalo in Sri Lanka and Thailand. The vaccine is still known in the area as 'Bain's vaccine'.

Dr Bain is now concentrating his activities on a cattle project closely linked with the Indonesian 'transmigration' program, which is designed to ease population pressure on the densely populated island of Java by encouraging some of the inhabitants to resettle on other islands.

Part of the 'reward' for migrating is the allocation of free cattle by the Indonesian government, to be paid back by returning the same number of offspring to the government. Dr Bain's job as consultant supervisor is to try to ensure these cattle remain healthy, under an Indonesian project funded by a loan from the World Bank.

'The Bali breed of cattle is the most available, and they are quite appropriate for small blocks of land as they are small and light on their feet so they can graze virtually anywhere,' Dr Bain said. 'Unfortunately there was an outbreak of disease called Jembrana disease about twenty years ago which wiped out 90 per cent of the cattle of Bali - it killed 30,000 head straight off.'

'This has settled down now, but the fear is that Bali cattle elsewhere in Indonesia would be susceptible if there was an outbreak of Jembrana disease. The Bali Cattle Disease Investigation Unit's job is to safeguard those cattle.'

The Bali cattle for the transmigration scheme now come from South Sulawesi, where there is a surplus of one million head. The cattle, worth about \$300 each, are shipped to the transmigration areas, and disease control is essential.

'We've just about got Bali disease beaten,' Dr Bain said. 'It's either a rickettsia disease or a virus - or possibly both.'

Dr Bain travels to Bali two or three times a year, staying for about one month at a time. While in Sydney he spends a lot of time in the University libraries, tracking down and photocopying research material relevant to the project. This is then sent off to Bali.

'It's important we keep on top of this disease,' he said. 'An outbreak elsewhere in Indonesia could be very damaging, so it's essential we are prepared.'

'These cattle are responsible for a growing meat consumption in rural areas - though females under eight years cannot be killed to ensure stocks continue to increase'.

'The project is now so big that it is computerised in Jakarta so they can keep in control of where the cattle are and who has got them.'

Dr Bain's original contract was for three years and has just been extended. 'It's enough for me, you've got to have some time to enjoy yourself', he says.

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