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◆ OBITUARY ◆

John Patrick ('Jack') Makeham

One of Australia's most colourful (to put it mildly) agricultural economists, Jack Makeham, passed away peacefully on 15 June 1996. At the time of his death, Jack was an Honorary Fellow of the University of New England.

Following war service Jack obtained an honours degree in agricultural science from the University of Melbourne and was a classmate of Bruce Davidson, another legendary Australian agricultural economist. University days over, Jack worked for the Victorian Department of Agriculture but left the Department to establish one of Australia's first agricultural consulting practices with a client base in south-western Victoria. This was at the time of the 'sub and super' pasture revolution and his practice soon expanded to the point where he had his consultants practising throughout south-eastern Australia. Several highly-successful consultants learned their trade under Jack's guidance.

Jack was influenced to move to UNE in 1967 by the then newly-appointed Foundation Professor of Farm Management, John Dillon. Over the next 30 years Jack was to make a major contribution to the training of agricultural economists in the areas of farm management and agricultural extension and, in the process, helped in building the reputation of agricultural economics at UNE.

Students exposed to Makeham-thinking at UNE, and put through the Makeham learning-by-doing farm management case studies, left UNE with invaluable knowledge borne of an indelible experience – Jack Makeham, and friends, and dogs and so on. Two of Jack's maxims were: students can only concentrate for 20 minutes at a time and you can only get two ideas across in any lecture. Another dictum was: 'You have to know your subject – you can't fool students – but if you know it, it comes out.' Jack was a great communicator and students were always grateful for the individual attention he gave them.

Jack was a writer of books rather than journal articles. He wrote ten books in all, three of them after he had 'retired'. His first book, 'Farm Management Economics', published in 1968, is widely regarded as the classic whole-farm management text. It was to be followed by other masterpieces such as 'The Farming Game' co-authored with his former student and close friend, Bill Malcolm.

The unifying thread running through all Jack's work, wherever in the world, was a deep and abiding love of agriculture and its challenges. All over the world there are farmers and students whose lives

have been deeply enriched and vastly improved by knowing Jack Makeham.

The Department at UNE received many tributes from Jack's former students and colleagues. These have been placed on a file along with other Makeham 'memorabilia', such as faxes from Cambridge University Press richly annotated in Jack's 24-point handwriting, which must be preserved at all costs. Included are some notes recorded at Jack's retirement dinner held in Melbourne in which Andrew Kennon is quoted: 'He (Jack) has the folly of the really wise and that measure of madness which makes men free.' This is how Jack will be remembered by those who knew him well.

Bill Malcolm, University of Melbourne
Roley Piggott, University of New England