
Editorial

It is with sadness that we record the passing of two great men of the poultry industry, Professor F. B. Hutt and Mr Cyril Thornber.

Professor F. B. Hutt, who died on 6 September, will be remembered as one of the greatest poultry scientists of the 20th century. Starting from the foundations of poultry genetics, and indeed the very science of genetics itself, laid by such pioneers as Bateson, Punnett, Morgan and Wright, F. B. Hutt assembled a prodigious amount of information. Much came from his own discoveries based on careful experimentation and observation and equally diligent studies undertaken to clarify the basis for existing beliefs. This led in 1949 to the publication of the classic, *Genetics of the Fowl*. From the 1930s onwards, and as the result of many lectures, articles, scientific papers and his book, F. B. Hutt provided literally thousands of poultry breeders in many countries with the means of enhancing the effectiveness of their breeding programmes and saving themselves countless hours of misdirected endeavour. His achievements, resulting from his background, a meticulous approach to scientific method and a constantly enquiring mind, won recognition amongst fellow scientists at the highest level, as well as great esteem within the world of stock improvement. The legacy of knowledge he has left is enormous. It was very fitting for Professor Hutt to have been elected to the WPSA International Poultry Hall of Fame at the World's Poultry Congress in Japan in 1988. The obituary on page 92 has been written by Professor R.K. Cole who worked closely with Professor Hutt at Cornell University for about 50 years – indeed as the result of their joint research and the many papers they co-authored, the names of Hutt and Cole have become permanently and famously linked – although they also published widely on their own accounts.

Cyril Thornber, who died in August, was one of a very few poultry breeders in the UK in the middle years of the 20th century to combine a recognition of the remarkable capacity of the domestic fowl to respond to selection with both the desire to apply the latest scientific knowledge of genetics – and poultry science in general – and the ability to plan and operate a large scale poultry breeding enterprise. Although as breeders 'Thornbers' had been supplying day-old chicks and growing pullets to customers throughout the UK since the early years of the century, it was from the 1950s to the 1970s with the launch of the first of a series of hybrid layers that the company was to establish itself as pre-eminent. Although the fortunes of his company declined in the 1970s, Cyril Thornber remained a practising poultry breeder until his death. However, at least as much as for his achievements as a poultry breeder, he will be remembered for his unstinting efforts towards helping to solve industry problems and for the generosity of his advice. An obituary will appear in the July issue.

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