

obituary

DON HOGG: Soil Chemist and Gentleman

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Donald Elvery Hogg, a former member of the New Zealand Society of Soil Science, died on 21 November 1996. This obituary is a tribute to Don and to some of the contributions he made to soil science during his thirty-year career as a soil chemist at Ruakura Agricultural Research Centre, Hamilton.

Don was born at Utiku, near Taihape, on 24 January 1911, and was one of six children. His early school days were spent in Utiku (he was dux at the local primary school). The family then lived in Dunedin before travelling to Bolivia where his father, a Presbyterian minister, was a missionary for several years. The family eventually returned to a parish in the Otago-Southland area and Don attended Southland Boys High School. Upon leaving school he worked as a grocer's assistant before undertaking a BSc degree in chemistry at the Otago College of the University of New Zealand from 1938-1940. A member of the New Zealand Army from 1940, he served overseas from 1941-1945 in ordnance corps supplying petroleum during campaigns in North Africa and Italy and other countries in the Mediterranean region during World War II. He attained the rank of sergeant.

Don's scientific career began relatively late after the war in 1946 when, at age 35, he joined the staff at the Rukuhia Soil Research Station located just to the south of Hamilton. He married in this year also. In the mid-1960s he transferred to laboratories in the newly-constructed Tower Block at the main Ruakura campus in Hamilton, attended the International Congress of Soil Science in Adelaide in 1968, and eventually retired from Ruakura as a Senior Scientific Officer in 1976. As a chemist, Don developed an early interest in soil fertility and specialised in plant nutrient and leaching experiments, particularly involving S, Mg, and K. As well as making significant contributions in these fields through publication in refereed journals (see



bibliography below), he also contributed to New Zealand farming by advising on the types and amounts of fertilizers to use under various conditions. In addition, he developed new field and laboratory methods for assessing leaching losses and for soil testing work. That Don could make his mark as a scientist simply with his bachelor's degree and a war-delayed start is a measure of both his character and ability and his sound undergraduate training.

Don Hogg is widely respected for both his scientific work and his courteous, quiet spoken, and gentlemanly nature. He was very widely read and knowledgeable in many subjects outside his scientific field. Don's retirement was spent with his wife, Grace, in Whakatane where he became well known for his interest in gardening and especially his beloved rhododendrons (no visit to his home was complete until the rhododendrons had been examined!). He kept detailed records of

meteorological and soil conditions relating to the rhododendrons, intending one day to write these up, but never did complete this task.

Don served his family, his country at war, and soil science — these contributions are appreciated greatly

by all who knew Don, and by those who 'know' him only through his written legacy of publications. He is survived by Grace, four children, and thirteen grandchildren.

Acknowledgements

I thank one of Don's sons, Alan, for his help in compiling this obituary. Alan followed Don's interests in soils and received the Morice Fieldes Award from the New Zealand Society of Soil Science for his Waikato doctoral thesis in 1980. He is currently Director of the University of Waikato Radiocarbon Dating Laboratory.

A selection of papers published by Don E. Hogg

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