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SENIOR OFFICERS RETIRE

DAIRYING CHIEF

Mr. H. G. ELLIOTT, Chief of the Department of Agriculture's Dairy Division, retired in July after one of the longest careers in agricultural science in Western Australia.

Mr. Elliott joined the Department as a cadet in 1924. Permanently appointed in 1927, he was an agricultural adviser in the then botany and plant pathology branch, working with the late W. M. Carne, H. A. Pittman and C. A. Gardner on the establishment of seed testing, on nitrogen-fixing bacteria culture, botanical identification, plant disease identification, potato seed certification and tobacco growing. With Carne and Pittman he undertook research into bitter pit of apples.

Mainly because of his interest in pastures he was transferred to the Dairy Branch in 1932 and in 1939 was appointed Agrostologist (pasture specialist) in the Branch. He became widely known for his research and advisory work on pasture species, establishment and nutrition and was associated with early work on minor element deficiencies, particularly copper deficiency in the Busselton-Margaret River area.

During the World War he was Government Liaison Officer for flax production in Western Australia and made a major contribution to the flax industry. He investigated fertiliser requirements for flax production and was associated with the Department's flax breeding programme.

Early in 1950, Mr. Elliott was promoted to Assistant Superintendent of Dairying and in 1968 he became Chief of the Division. During the past two years he has been concerned largely with the overall development of the industry during a period of rapid re-organisation and modernisation. Redevelopment of the Division's two dairy research stations, particularly the Denmark Research Station, was one of his main interests as Chief of the Division.

For many years he has been closely associated with the Royal Agricultural Society, judging district displays, cattle and pigs at Perth and country shows. He is a member of dairy cattle and pig breed societies.

As an adviser on the growing of lawns and turfs he has assisted sporting organisations, householders and owners of playing fields for the past 30 years.

SOIL CONSERVATION PIONEER

Mr. L. C. LIGHTFOOT, the first agricultural scientist to make a career of soil conservation in Western Australia, has retired after 23 years in the Department of Agriculture's Soil Conservation Service.

Mr. Lightfoot's first job with the Department of Agriculture was soil surveying in the remote southern mallee area, from 1933 to 1935. Late in 1935 he joined the Department's Irrigation Branch, and worked mainly in the Harvey-Brunswick-Dardanup areas for the next 10 years.

Mr. Lightfoot was the second officer appointed to the Soil Conservation Service, which he joined in January, 1947. The first Commissioner of Soil Conservation was Dr. L. J. H. Teakle, appointed in 1946.

As Senior Soil Conservation Officer, Mr. Lightfoot had the task of developing a soil conservation advisory and technical service for the farming community.

In 1957 Mr. Lightfoot was appointed Superintendent (later Chief) of the Soils Division and Commissioner of Soil Conservation, with responsibility for the Department's Irrigation and Soil Research and Survey Branches as well as the Soil Conservation Service.

After 10 years in this position Mr. Lightfoot asked, for health reasons, to be relieved of the administrative responsibilities of Chief of the Division and Commissioner of Soil Conservation and returned to pure soil conservation as a soil conservation officer with special duties.

Little work had been done on soil conservation when Mr. Lightfoot joined the Soil Conservation Service, and he was responsible for developing standards for mechanical erosion control in Western Australia. He established the techniques for contour surveying and contour farming that are still used by the service, with only minor modifications.

When the first field officers were appointed he trained the soil conservation advisers and technicians in erosion control methods.