

Livestock Management in the Arid Zone. Victor Squires (1981). Inkata Press Pty. Ltd. Melbourne. 271pp. A\$35.

The book was written as “a practical guide for students, as well as a reference manual for pastoralists, graziers, livestock operators, land administrators, extension workers and researchers”. No volume can expect to reach all these audiences well but thankfully the actual content is especially oriented to the student.

Throughout the book the author has combined detailed results with generalities (both in the text and in figures) which although unusual are generally effective in transfer of the message. No doubt students will be interested in the types of experiments and data which are being collected in the arid zone. The author has wisely drawn heavily on some of the classical texts and has listed these for further reading.

The writing style is refreshingly simple but the occasional statement of the obvious e.g. “the level of nutrition can affect reproduction in sheep” spoil the overall readability. Another fact which caused me some concern was the repetition in some chapters which resulted from the structuring of the text.

Because of the breadth of topics covered in the book the detail of individual topics is variable. The chapters on water requirements and diet selection of both cattle and sheep are the most thoroughly discussed. I would have liked the author to have discussed at greater length the effect of man and his animals (both domestic and non-domestic) on the arid zone environment. The topic was touched on many times but the author missed the opportunity to give us the benefit of his undoubted wisdom in a more concentrated form; another volume perhaps!

The book will serve a useful purpose to students in particular, in that it brings together many topics relating to cattle and sheep management in the arid zone. The many excellent photographs and figures serve a useful purpose and compliment the text.

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“*A Manual of Australian Agriculture*”, 4th (revised) Edition. Ed. by R. L. Reid. for Australian Institute of Agricultural Science. Published by William Heinemann Australia Pty Ltd, Melbourne, 1981. ISBN 0 85561 047 6. pp 850. (Available from AIAS, 191 Royal Parade, Parkville, Victoria, 3052 or Mr. E. S. Wallis, Publications Officer, AIAS Office, Department of Agriculture, University of Queensland, St. Lucia, 4067. Price \$49.50—discount to AIAS members).

Agriculture probably embraces more skills or disciplines than any other field of endeavour. It not only involves scientific and economic specialists concerned with research and basic concepts but also the application of these latter by “the man on the land”. And in agriculture this general practitioner probably has a more intimate knowledge of the basic concepts than in any other vocation. To produce a text that provides a reference to basic concepts and scientific, and economic information and recipes for their practical application is a mammoth task. This has been done in *A Manual of Australian Agriculture* with great success.

The Manual was first published in 1961. This 4th edition is completely revised, enlarged and brought up to date. Its 37 chapters are from over 100 authors, all experts in their respective fields. At the end of each chapter is a bibliography of “Further Reading”, providing about 350 references.

An interesting feature of the 4th edition is the increased coverage of the business side of agriculture. Also some attention is given to energy conservation and general resource (or environmental) conservation.

Then as a preliminary to the main section on crops the basic factors involved—soils, water, nutrients and fertilizing—are treated in some detail.

In agricultural texts it is usual to consider climatology as a factor controlling crop production. Here the only specific reference to climate is an Appendix of seven maps of Australia showing the average maximum and minimum temperatures for January and