

Australia loses an outstanding agricultural engineer – Dr Graeme Quick

In mid May 2015, Australia lost one of its most prominent and innovative agricultural engineers, with the passing of Dr Graeme Quick at his home in the Sunshine Coast hinterland, Queensland.

Graeme was one of the world's leading experts on grain harvesting technology, having been a partner in the initial development of the Axial Flow combine harvester. His expertise extended to other farm machinery, including the Kwik-Cut front for harvesting soybeans. After graduating in engineering from the University of Melbourne, and taking a Ph.D. from Iowa State Uni in the 1960's, Graeme spent the first few years working in the N. American farm equipment industry. He then took up a position as Principal Research Scientist in CSIRO Division of Mechanical Engineering from 1976-1981. Between 1981 and 1988 he was Director of Engineering for the NSW Department of Agriculture. He was Head of the Agricultural Engineering Division of the International Rice Research Institute in Los Banos, Philippines, between 1988 and 1995.

In 1995-96 he worked on projects for FAO involving small farm machinery improvement in the developing world. In 1997 he took up the position of team leader in the Power & Machinery Engineering Section and Adjunct Professor, Agricultural & Biosystems Engineering Department, Iowa State University until his retirement in 2004.

His research interests with Iowa State were on the engineering aspects of farm machinery design, particularly on harvesting of grains and biomass, and in crop cutting and other machine/plant phenomena. He has built many pieces of field machinery, including a tractor-loader and several harvesters.

During his professional career Graeme was awarded 15 design patents, has produced fourteen farm machinery books and over 150 peer-reviewed documents and research articles, He is the first Australian to have been made a Fellow, American Society of Agricultural Engineers (ASAE) He was also a Fellow and Chartered Professional Engineer, Institution of Engineers, Australia. In 2004 he was awarded US Agricultural Engineering's highest recognition– the CH McCormick - JI Case gold medal, for his meritorious contributions to the profession.

Throughout his professional career Graeme cultivated an exceptionally amicable relationship with all aspects of the farm machinery business, from the largest multi-national corporations to the smallest short line manufacturer.

He was equally at home with research colleagues or yarning in the paddock with farmers, and formed many lifelong friendships. Since returning home to Queensland he continued book writing – book number 14 was recently published. He also conducted engineering consultancies (including GRDC), on going R & D on soybean hargesting technology, combine harvester fires, herbicide-resistant weed management, and most recently on an autonomous tool carrier development.

He will be greatly missed.

(This article is compiled by colleagues Jeff Esdaile and Jeff Tullberg and approved by the Quick family).

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