

The stock did not change much during this period with regard to subjects covered. With the decline in Swiss-German influence following Theiler's retirement in 1927, English books started to dominate, with new research mainly emanating from the United States as well as Britain and the anglo-phone Dominions. The Commonwealth Agricultural Bureaux started publishing journal indexes and abstract journals such as the *Veterinary Bulletin* (1931) and *Index Veterinarius* (1933) and other more specialized ones during the 1930s.

A number of the first editions of some landmark books appeared in the 1930s. The appearance of the first edition of *Animal Diseases in South Africa*, in two volumes, by M. W. Henning (CNA, 1932) is such a landmark. This book was written to collate the, by then, extensive amount of knowledge generated in laboratories such as Onderstepoort and in the field. It was also the first book aimed at veterinary students. Other first editions of books of local veterinary importance that appeared in the 1930s are:

Watt, John M. and Maria G. Breyer-Brandwijk. *The Medicinal and Poisonous Plants of Southern and Eastern Africa*. (London: Livingstone, 1932);

Steyn D.G. *The Toxicology of Plants in South Africa together with a consideration of poisonous foodstuffs and fungi*. (South Africa: CNA, 1934).



*M. W. Henning, author of the first comprehensive handbook on animal diseases in South Africa (1932)*

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Mönning H.O. *Veterinary Helminthology and Entomology: the Diseases of Domestic Animals caused by Helminth and Arthropod parasites*. (London: Bailliere, Tindall and Cox, 1934).

P.J. du Toit, the then Director, mentions a 'Dr van Graan' in correspondence (1935). It is known that doctoral qualifications for librarians in South Africa only became available much later. Van Graan was possibly a veterinarian, or other scientist, managing the library, with or without other duties. Mr Ben Fouche had a son who became a professor of Librarianship. According to Prof B. Fouche, his father started his career at Onderstepoort in 1929 as a library assistant. Prof Fouche has a letter addressed by his father to the director, applying for the post of librarian. Dr van Graan was said to be resigning. Although the letter does not confirm his appointment, it clearly happened because Mr Fouche stayed until approximately 1946. He held the certificate of the South African Library Association and is believed to be the first trained librarian of Onderstepoort.

The era of professionalization under the Department of National Education (1958-1992)

The library at Onderstepoort was the responsibility of the Institute until 1958. During the course of 1958 a unit was



*View of the museum complex from the library balcony*



established in the Department of National Education (DNE) to manage all governmental libraries. Staff were appointed and remunerated by the DNE in order to improve their professional standing. During this period the library kept a filing system separate from that of the Institute. Both these files and those that are still available at the Department of Agriculture, only provide information since 1958.

The Onderstepoort librarian reported to the Chief Librarian of that department, with its various names over the decades. The DNE era brought standardization throughout the Public Service. The Onderstepoort librarian reported to another trained librarian and professionally trained librarians became available in each library as time went by. DNE's programme of continuing education courses for librarians further enhanced the quality of service delivery. One drawback of this dispensation was that the budget of each library was not managed by the DNE. Instructions from the DNE with financial implications were not always welcomed by the local supervisor appointed by the Institute. In fact at times the librarian was caught between opposing opinions on more than just financial matters.

The local supervision structure at Onderstepoort varied. Most of the time the librarian reported to the Deputy Director: Research. This was a very sound set-up as reporting was on

a high level and decisions could be taken quickly. Such a supervisor was also in contact with the researchers and could communicate their needs and monitor whether they were taken care of. At other times the Institute had a manager of all support services, including the library. Before the Faculty became independent from the Institute, the information collected covered a wider scope than just diseases. Literature on disciplines such as obstetrics and gynaecology, surgery, radiology, anatomy and others was procured until 1972. Thereafter, there was little or no growth in these classes as reflected on the bookshelves. The scope of the Institute was thereafter limited to mainly microbiological and parasitological disciplines, toxicology being an exception: the book, *Plant Poisonings and Mycotoxicoses of Livestock in Southern Africa* by T.S. Kellerman, J.A.W. Coetzer and T.W. Naudé (Cape Town: Oxford University Press,

Southern Africa, 1988) was the major contribution to South African veterinary literature in this era.

During a physical re-organisation project in the 1980s, it was decided to divide the library's book collection into 'dead' and 'live' subject classes and to shelve it accordingly. The dead classes were moved to the room occupied by staff, in order to minimize interference between browsers and other library users. Some of the classes that were only in the domain of the

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## OTHER "LIBRARIES"

A significant event during this era was the severance of the Faculty from the Institute in 1973. Little could be established regarding library service to undergraduate students before this separation. Anna du Plessis reported that few undergraduate students used the library during her term. The 'veteran veterinarians' consulted confirmed that they did not often use the library as students even though some service was also provided by the Merensky Library of the University of Pretoria. There was a so-called 'hostel library' and there are catalogue cards bearing an inscription in this regard. The present faculty library owns books bearing stamps of the institute library, altered in ink to 'Pta Univ' and 'OP Hostel'. It seems that the latter library was mainly recreational, but also contained a few books from the Institute's library. There is no indication that a fully-fledged branch library for the Faculty existed before 1973.

Another 'library' to be mentioned is the one at the Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) Laboratory. This entity has maintained a reading room since its inception. It houses a reprint collection, some books and other publications. Journals on circulation from the Institute's library are displayed and administered by an official library liaison officer, by lack of a better name. Some other research divisions have similar set ups, but FMD is the closest that we have to an officially recognized branch library. During the period when the FMD Laboratory was an independent Onderstepoort Institute for Exotic Diseases, it paid the Onderstepoort library for services rendered.



Inside the library

Faculty remained dead, but from scratch it was alarmingly clear that such an arbitrary selection was not foolproof. Some of the dead classes subsequently became very much alive again. One interesting case is Agriculture. Though the Institute traditionally reported to a state Department of Agriculture (of which the name and organisational structure changed many times) and thereafter to the Agricultural Research Council, agriculture as a topic never featured prominently in the library. This is to some extent still the case. However, with the present emphasis on resource-poor agriculture, this class grew significantly in the 1990s. The animal production class, which is more the domain of the Animal Production Institute at Irene, also accumulated more books.

The fact that disciplines often revolve around the aetiological agents causing disease, leads to the library often holding information, especially journals, covering ancillary disciplines. For example, an entomology journal may cover human, animal and plant entomology. The library could therefore always participate actively in the inter-library loan scheme of the country, supporting medical and other libraries, often as a major provider. In a report of 1967, it was mentioned that in a 6-month period, the library requested 195 items, but delivered 1085 items! The library had just as good a standing as the Institute itself.

The 50-year celebrations of the Institute in 1958 were still conducted in the central hall, but in 1961 it was converted into a stack facility in order to solve increasing space problems. Two different types of shelving may, however, indicate different stages of occupation. Ten years later space was again a problem and plans for a western wing were drawn up. Building commenced in 1976 and was completed in 1978.

Over the years several reorganizations took place and different rooms were used for different purposes. The large

upper floor area of the western wing was used as a reading room until 1985. It was occasionally also used as a function room. Librarian Yolanda Grundling moved the reading room back to Room 1, the original reading-cum-seminar room, which had also often been used as an examination room. New journals were originally placed on the tables in this room, proper display shelves only being introduced in the late 1970s. Before the western wing was built, Room 5 was divided into a toilet and a storeroom, according to the original plans. At one stage it also housed the Theiler museum which was subsequently moved to the old post office, originally built as a hostel. At present it houses the S.A. National Veterinary Museum.

The legacy of one bad decision can have an effect for many years afterwards. The contract for the binding of journals used to be held by a particular company with a good reputation. However, during the 1970s the contract was awarded to a different company. In addition to generally poor workmanship, it used a type of vinyl which melts in hot weather and fuses volumes together. This still causes much frustration in summer. Sometimes it is necessary to literally rip volumes apart and damage is unavoidable. In addition, a letter by the librarian at the time complained that rats damaged the journals while they were in the company's workshops!

Political influences played a role in this era. One journal exchange agreement after another was terminated due to the intellectual boycott against apartheid South Africa. Interestingly, there was an instruction from DNE in the late 1980s that showed how far the government of that time was prepared to go in developing homelands. A list had to be compiled of veterinary books and journals with a budget for the founding of a homeland library. It is not clear whether this was for a veterinary library or a veterinary collection in a library of broader scope. However, the maintenance of a collection of journals duplicating that of Onderstepoort would have been very expensive. There is no indication that this library was ever founded. The reason is not known, but

it occurred shortly before the political changes of the 1990s.

The first computer entered the library in 1986. There was an investigation specifically about library computerization in 1985 and a submission was provided to the 1987 Infoplan investigation aimed at computerization of the Institute. The resulting formation of a Division of Information Management, which existed from 1988 to 1992, clustered the library together with other information related sections such as the Computer Centre and Public Relations.

A Mrs Williams was apparently head librarian around 1950. Anna S. du Plessis reported that there was a formidable assistant with that name, and the good work that she performed is clear from the records. A leave form for a

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*J.B. Walker, senior author of a book on the brown ticks of the world*

Fouche, was in later years not regarded as sufficient. Some of the older hands amongst the librarians consulted believe that some of the assistants may indeed have held the SALA qualification, or the so-called lower diploma from universities. One assistant held a school librarianship qualification but this was not recognized. Even the 'library technicians' from the technikons were not always regarded as professional librarians. Today many of them head libraries in the Agricultural Research Council and elsewhere with excellent results.

Margaret Hamilton-Williams states her date of appointment as 1938. If it was the same person, she therefore had a long career in the library. According to du Plessis, she was initially not even allowed to handle certain publications despite having been appointed straight from the university!

A Miss I. Nell signed letters in a file as librarian during 1958. Her older letters must be in another filing system that could not be traced. Anna S. du Plessis was head from January 1959 to September 1960. She was the oldest librarian who could still be reached and consulted. She left an extensive collection of correspondence in the files and a comprehensive report when she resigned. She was later employed under her married name at the library of the Department of Agriculture. Dorothee E. A. Meyer was librarian from 1962 to 1967. She applied for study leave to go to Germany in 1965. Magdalena Korb signed letters during 1965. A file starting in 1968 contains letters signed by L. Serfontein. She later became Mrs L. du Plessis and seems to have left in 1975. John Frylinck was librarian from January to September 1976 and Meliza R. Spies from 1977-1984. She was succeeded by Yolanda E. Grundling from January to November 1985 and, in turn, by David A. Swanepoel in 1985.

The appointment of Alma Bester, later Mrs Liebenberg (1988-present), seems to be the first time that a second professionally trained librarian/library technician was employed by the Institute. The definition of a professional librarian is, however, open for discussion. The certificate of the South African Library Association (SALA), held by Ben

The names of assistants known for this period are the following: Mr W. G. Beyer, Mr Brits, F.O.L. de Villiers (gender unknown), Margaret Hamilton-Williams, Hella M. Heese, Maureen Jonker, Marie Laesecke, Katrina F. Koen, Samuel Mashisi, Joseph Mokoena, Lindiwe P. Motau, Marthella Naude, Janie Uys, Tineke van Staden.

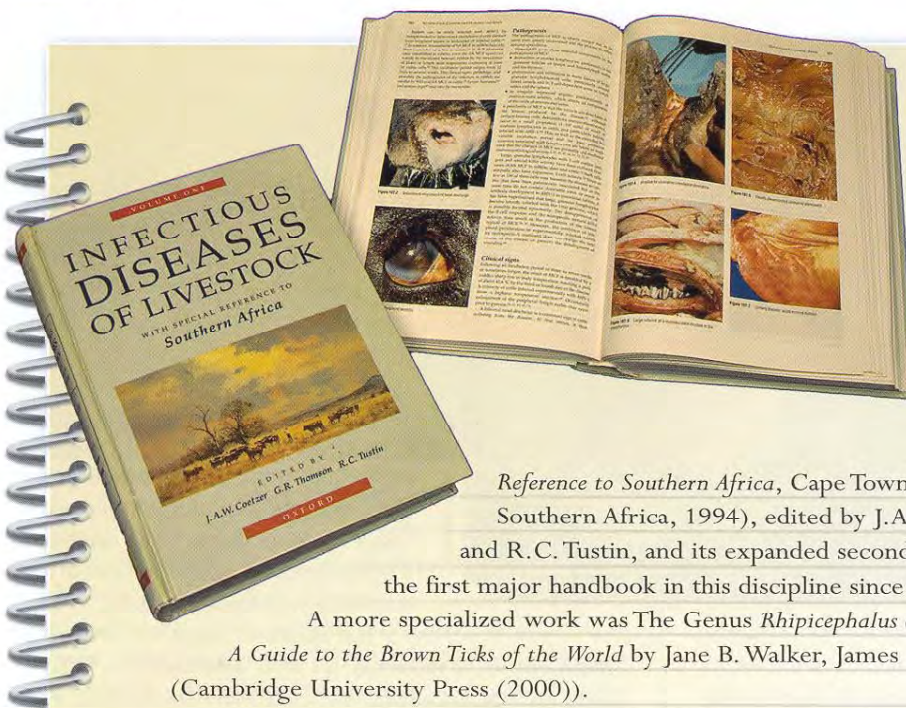
### The era of Agricultural Research Council (ARC) authority (1992-present)

The DNE period came to an end in 1991 when all state library staff were transferred to their host departments. This was fortunate as it facilitated the transfer to the ARC one year later on 1 April 1992. ARC libraries soon founded the ARC Libraries Forum, a body that meets periodically to discuss problems, makes decisions and arranges courses and mutual support. From then on the head librarian only reported to a senior person at the Institute. In 2007 a decision was reached that the ARC librarians would also report to the Knowledge Manager of the ARC. At the time of writing, details of the new management system had not yet been determined. In 2000 there was an exercise to look at closer co-operation

between, if not merging of, the Institute and Faculty. Three meetings were held between the libraries before the initiative was shelved. However, excellent informal co-operation existed between the two libraries before this initiative and has continued since.

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## LANDMARK PUBLICATIONS

The landmark South African publication that was first published during this period is the handbook *Infectious Diseases of Livestock with Special*

*Reference to Southern Africa*, Cape Town: Oxford University Press, Southern Africa, 1994), edited by J.A.W. Coetzer, G.R. Thomson and R.C. Tustin, and its expanded second edition in 2004. This was the first major handbook in this discipline since that by Henning in 1932.

A more specialized work was *The Genus Rhipicephalus (Acari, Ixodidae):*

*A Guide to the Brown Ticks of the World* by Jane B. Walker, James E. Keirans and Ivan G. Horak (Cambridge University Press (2000)).

carried out at the Onderstepoort Veterinary Institute and is reflected in the titles of journals subscribed to. The highly specialized nature of these journals means that they are not easily available on interlibrary loans. The collection development policy therefore needs to focus on them. In fact, the subscription list of 2007 hardly resembles that of a veterinary library, being dominated by biotechnological, medical and other ancillary titles. The number of titles is also low compared to that reported at the 50th anniversary of the Institute. Then there were more than 700 titles, compared to 70 in 2007. These figures are misleading, however, taking into account that the 700 probably included non-active subscriptions as well as those later transferred to the faculty library.

Today few library processes do not involve computers. However, much more needs to be done to computerize the vast holdings of the library into the library management system. The internet had a significant influence on the library world. Some of the journals to which the library subscribes are entirely in electronic form, others are hybrid and some are still received in paper form only. It is interesting to note that some problems described in a report of 1975, are still encountered in 2007. Photocopiers, like any machine, are always causing hassles. The lighting of some rooms was under discussion in 1975, and it is still the

case. Air-conditioning for the reading room, a major issue in 1975, was at last resolved in 2007. The function of the hall as an assembly utility was restored in 2002, but in 2007 it was decided to put it under shelves again. Plans for additional shelving on rollers could not be implemented for financial reasons.

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The years 1998 to 2004 were very difficult from a financial point of view. In 1998 almost two thirds of the subscriptions were cancelled due to a cut in the overall budget of the ARC. It was even worse towards 2001 when the Rand became a very weak currency but the situation slowly improved as the currency regained its strength. By 2007 strategies were developed to upgrade all ARC libraries, including a move to electronic corporate-wide platforms for journals. The library’s electronic catalogue already runs on a joint, corporate-wide system, according to modern principles.

David Swanepoel is fortunately still at the helm of the library at the time of writing, ably assisted by Alma Liebenberg, who was partially seconded in 2003 to the Public Relations Department to handle the *Onderstepoort Journal of Veterinary Research*. The following assistants were or are still employed: Dorah Chauke, Marthie Degenaar, Shirley Koekemoer, Samuel Lekalakala, Selinah Mataba, Karel Matlala, Rebecca Matemane and Piet Modiba.