

**OSTERHOFF, DIEDRICH (DIETER) RICHARD** (14 March 1925, Hemer, Westfalen, Germany – 8 January 2014, Pretoria, South Africa). *Animal scientist; geneticist (immunogenetics & cytogenetics)*. Son of Diedrich Friedrich Osterhoff and Karoline (née Richwinn). Married Bondida (Bonnie) Engel in South Africa in 1957.

**EDUCATION:** Izalav, Westfalen, 1943: Abitur  
University of Giessen, 1951: Diploma Agr Ing  
University of Uppsala, 1956: Dr Agri  
University of Pretoria, 1968: DSc (Agric)

**CAREER:** 1943 – 1945, military service during WWII;  
1951 – 1956, scientific assistant in Institute of Animal Genetics, Uppsala;  
1956 – 1961, professional officer on contract, Division of Animal Breeding & Dairy Products, Pretoria, South Africa;  
1961 – 1963, professional officer, Research Institute for Animal Breeding & Dairy Products, Pretoria, South Africa;  
1963 – 1990, Professor in Zootechnics and Head of Department of Zootechnology, Onderstepoort Faculty of Veterinary Science.

**CONTRIBUTIONS:** Established a blood group laboratory at Onderstepoort to study blood groups of cattle, sheep and horses, concentrating initially on cattle and providing a routine paternity determining service to the South African Studbook Association and the National Performance-testing Scheme for registration and performance testing purposes of young stud bulls. In due course this watchdog genetic service was extended to include local AI and embryo-transfer initiatives and given statutory status by its incorporation into the Livestock Improvement Act (Act No 25 of 1977). Further blood typing studies led to the establishment of blood group and other genetic markers for goats, sheep, equines, pigs and several species of wild animals. Branched into cytogenetics establishing a laboratory, inter alia for chromosome studies on horses.

Radically improved teaching facilities for zootechnology at the Onderstepoort Veterinary Faculty to accommodate drastic increase in student numbers in the 1970s. This included laboratory and office space, stables for stud livestock donated by various breeder associations and a large roofed show ring with seating accommodation for 100 students for demonstration purposes. Student visits to various livestock farming enterprises, shows and secondary agricultural businesses as well as holiday work by students were essential practical components of their training. He also extended his discipline to include companion animals, up till then a neglected veterinary competency in South Africa.

**HOMAGES AND DISTINCTIONS:** Prof Osterhoff received the following awards and distinctions: Honorary membership of the South African Veterinary Medical Association in 1967; the Havenga prize for Agriculture of the South African Academy for Science and Art in 1969; the Silver Medal for Research of the South African Society for Animal Production in 1978; the Gold Medal of the South African Veterinary Association in 1990; the MT Steyn Medal of the South African Academy of Science and Art in 1996; the German Order of Merit in 1996; elected to the Hall of Fame of the Witwatersrand Agricultural Society in 1997; the Tuks Alumni Laureatus Award in 2001. Guest professorships at the University of Gent, Berlin, Munich and Helsinki were further acknowledgements of his scientific and academic status.

**WRITINGS:** Author or co-author of 182 scientific publications – listed in undated and unpublished manuscript entitled: ‘*Curriculum Vitae*: Prof D.R. Osterhoff’, stored in the archives of the South African National Veterinary Museum.

Osterhoff, D.R. & Rendel, J., 1954. Die Bedeutung und praktische Anwendung der Immunogenetik. *Zeitschrift für Tierzüchtung und Züchtungs-Biologie*, 63, 1-20.

Osterhoff, D.R., 1957. Blood grouping and its utilization in cattle breeding. *Journal of the South African veterinary medical Association*, 28, 156-162.

Osterhoff, D.R., 1959. Welche Faktoren können die Zuchtwertschätzung in der Nachkommenprüfung beim Schwein beeinflussen? *Züchtungskunde*, 31, 36-44.

Osterhoff, D.R., 1960. Blood groups in bovines II. Normally occurring iso-antibodies in cattle. *Onderstepoort Journal of Veterinary Research*, 29, 89-106.

Osterhoff, D.R. & Van Heerden, J.A.H., 1965. Haemoglobin polymorphism in cattle. *Proceedings of the South African Society of Animal Production*, 4, 274-281.

Osterhoff, D.R. & Gothe, R., 1966. The use of red cell antigens for timing breakdown of erythrocytes during digestion in *Ornithodoros savignyi* (Audouin, 1827). *Parasitology, Cambridge*, 56, 613-618.

Osterhoff, D.R., 1980. Two decades of immunogenetical research in the Republic of South Africa. *Zeitschrift für Tierzüchtung und Tierzüchtungs-Biologie*, 97, 196-209.

#### **REFERENCES/OBITUARIES:**

1. **Memoiren.** Autobiography by D.R. Osterhoff published privately in 2010. Copy stored in the archives of the South African National Veterinary Museum.
2. Obituary (in Afrikaans). *VETNEWS* (Newsletter of the South African Veterinary Association), February 2014, p6.
3. Obituary (in Afrikaans). *VETNEWS* (Newsletter of the South African Veterinary Association), April 2014, p15-16.

R D Bigalke  
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