

## **BIOGRAPHY**

**BISHOP, GEORGE COLIN** (13 June 1943, Malmesbury - 25 August 2001, Pietermaritzburg), Laboratory diagnostician, bacteriologist, serologist, virologist. Son of Bunny Bishop (a veterinarian) and Nell McKillop . Married Margie Hobson in 1971. Two sons, Michael and David

## **EDUCATION**

Merchiston Primary School, Maritzburg College and University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg – M.Sc. Microbiology 1972

## **CAREER**

Joined Allerton Regional (later Provincial) Veterinary Laboratory 1 February 1968 as Professional Officer, and stayed on in various capacities until his death on 25 August 2001 (33 years) aged 58. He was also elected to serve as member of the National Departmental Group to oversee correct and consistent implementation of bovine Brucellosis diagnostics. Later he served as secretary of the KwaZulu Rabies Action Group, secretary of the South African Rabies Advisory Board, also secretary of the Southern and East African Rabies Group.

## **CONTRIBUTIONS**

George Bishop was an outstanding diagnostician of the infectious diseases of animals, especially bacterial organisms. Meticulous attention to using the best methods and especially strict scientific interpretation of results obtained allowed veterinarians to make dependable diagnoses on a wide range of aetiological organisms. In the seventies and eighties his organisation and control of bovine brucellosis serology and bacteriology as well as interpretation of results enable the then Natal Province to almost eradicate the disease, but a short-sighted retraction of political support made this impossible. His name became a byword for excellence and useful service.

The Rabies situation became so serious in 1987 that Natal requested Allerton to process all provincial specimens in the interest of dealing rapidly with large numbers of specimens. This led to the formation of a dedicated laboratory for the diagnostics of rabies under his leadership. He became known successively as a provincial, national and international expert on all aspects of rabies control, and helped organise five international congresses on

the problem as well as delivering many scientific papers in Africa, US, Australia and Vietnam. He also co-produced educational videos and a major guide for veterinarians and medical practitioners as first author.

Another important contribution was diagnostic methods for Contagious Equine Metritis, recently introduced to South Africa, and the laboratory diagnosis of infectious causes of infertility in mares. Ovine footrot was not recognised in South Africa before he and others showed beyond doubt that the organism *Bacteriodes* (later *Dichelobacter*) *nodosis* was present and responsible for the disease in the Natal midlands in the mid 80s. This led to national control measures being implemented. Poultry was and is a huge component of the KwaZulu Natal livestock industry and George helped with accurate and reliable identification of causative organism of a range of poultry diseases. In 2000 George Bishop was part of the team that prevented the potentially devastating spread of Foot-and-Mouth Disease from a piggery in the Cato Ridge area of KwaZulu-Natal. The outbreak was the result of illegal importation of pig swill from a ship from Asia, via Durban Harbour. The Allerton Veterinary Laboratory expanded and improved during his time to become the premier Regional Veterinary Laboratory in South Africa.

## **PERSONALITY**

George was a very engaging and tactful man who could nevertheless make telling points, but not give offense. He was strictly honest and insisted on the best from his staff, but was willing to give credit quickly where it was due. He understood the value of a good work environment and was very protective of the name as well as the cleanliness and efficiency of Allerton. As a result staff respected and supported him and built the reputation for excellent service. He was a keen fly fisherman, and gifted carpenter, with a love of cricket and rugby.

## **HOMAGES AND DISTINCTIONS**

George Bishop was awarded Life membership of the Natal Branch and later the South African Veterinary Association (1988). He was widely acclaimed internationally as an expert on rabies diagnostics. In recognition of his signal contributions to veterinary science, particularly in his home province, the Epidemiology Unit of KwaZulu-Natal was named in his honour.

## **WRITINGS**

Obituaries record 15 scientific articles, five chapters in Infectious Diseases of Livestock as main author and five chapters as co-author. The following are confirmed:

- Bishop, G.C., 1984, 'A brucellosis serological survey on beef cattle slaughtered at Cato Ridge Abattoir', *Journal of the South African Veterinary Association* 55(4), 185-186.
- Keep, M.E. & Bishop, G.C., 1985, 'A brucellosis survey in Natal wildlife', *Lammergeyer* 35 47-48.
- Kitching, J.P., Bishop, G.C. & Mapham, P.H., 1985, 'Thromboembolic meningoencephalitis diagnosed in Natal', *Journal of the South African Veterinary Association* 56(2), 97-98.
- GC Bishop, GF Bath, PJ Posthumus, EM van Tonder, PMS Masters and G Faul 1988. Dourine in South Africa *Journal of the South African Veterinary Association* Volume: 59. Issue 1, page: 7
- Horner, R.F., Bishop, G.C. & Haw, C., 1992, 'An upper respiratory disease of commercial chickens resembling infectious coryza, but caused by a V factor-independent bacterium', *Avian Pathology* 21(3), 421-427.
- Swanepoel, R., Barnard, B.J., Meredith, C.D., Bishop, G.C., Brückner, G.K., Foggin, C.M. & Hübschle, O.J., 1993, 'Rabies in southern Africa', *Onderstepoort Journal of Veterinary Research* 60(4), 325-346.
- Horner, R.F., Bishop, G.C., Jarvis, C.J. & Coetzer, T.H., 1995, 'NAD (V-factor)-independent and typical *Haemophilus paragallinarum* infection in commercial chickens: A five year field study', *Avian Pathology* 24(3), 453-463.
- Mifflin, J.K., Horner, R.F., Blackall, P.J., Chen, X., Bishop, G.C., Morrow, C.J., Yamaguchi, T. & Iritani, Y., 1995, 'Phenotypic and molecular characterization of V-factor (NAD)-independent *Haemophilus paragallinarum*', *Avian Diseases* 39(2), 304-308.
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- Von Teichman, B.F., De Koker, W.C., Bosch, S.J.E., Bishop, G.C., Meredith, C.D. & Bingham, J., 1998, 'Mokola virus infection: Description of recent South African cases and a review of the virus epidemiology', *Journal of the South African Veterinary Association* 69(4), 169-171.
- Durrheim, D.N., Ogunbanjo, G.A., Blumberg, L., Speare, R. & Bishop, G.C., 2001, 'Human rabies: A tragedy that must be prevented', *South African Family Practice* 23(6), 12-19.
- GC Bishop, DN Durrheim, PE Klock, JD Godlonton, J Bingham & R Speare 2002 Rabies: Guide for the medical, veterinary and applied professions. Rabies Advisory Group 200, Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries. Pages: 74

- Bishop, G.C., 2004, 'Borrelia suilla infection' in Coetzer, J. A. W. Tustin,R.C. (ed.), Infectious diseases of livestock, 2nd edn,pp. 1437-1439, Oxford University Press, Cape Town.
- Bishop, G.C., 2004, 'Borrelia theileri infection' in Coetzer, J. A. W. Tustin,R.C. (ed.), Infectious diseases of livestock, 2nd edn,pp. 1435-1436, Oxford University Press, Cape Town.
- Godfroid, J., Bosman, P.P., Herr, S. & Bishop, G.C., 2004, 'Bovine brucellosis' in Coetzer, J. A. W. Tustin,R.C. (ed.), Infectious diseases of livestock, 2nd edn,pp. 1510-1527, Oxford University Press, Cape Town.
- Irons, P.C., Schutte, A.P., van der Walt, M.L. & Bishop, G.C., 2004, 'Genital campylobacteriosis in cattle' in Coetzer, J. A. W. Tustin,R.C. (ed.), Infectious diseases of livestock, 2nd edn,pp. 1459-1468, Oxford University Press, Cape Town.
- Van der Lugt, J.J. & Bishop, G.C., 2004, 'Glanders' in Coetzer, J. A. W. Tustin,R.C. (ed.), Infectious diseases of livestock, 2nd edn,pp. 1500-1504, Oxford University Press, Cape Town.

## **SOURCES**

Obituary Vetnews 2001 P.5

Obituary Focus 2002 P.69

Brown K 2011 Mad dogs and meerkats UCT Press

Gareth Bath: Personal memories

Members of his family