WADDY, FRANCIS EDWARD

Farm Manager / Pure Seed Manager

Mr Frank Waddy retired from the Department of Agriculture in March 1938 after a distinguished career spanning 25 years, 20 as the Manager of the State Seed Farm at the Turretfield Experimental/Demonstration Farm and previously 5 years at the Booborowie Experimental Farm.

Francis Edward (Frank)Waddy was born on 13 April 1873 to Richard and Alice Waddy. He lived at Norwood, an inner Adelaide suburb and attended Prince Alfred College. In 1898 he married Sarah Elizabeth Hughes and they had two children, Jean and Eric.

It is likely that he took his family to the mid north, around Saddleworth as in 1912 he was appointed a member of the Saddleworth School Board of Advice. It is also likely that he worked on a farming property, reflecting his interest in agriculture.

In 1913 he was appointed Manager of the recently established Booborowie Experimental Farm. The area had been subdivided for closer settlement, the Farm being one of subdivided blocks of North Booborowie Station. The intent of the Experimental Farm was to demonstrate crop, pasture and livestock management options for the blocks created by closer settlement. For several years the Farm was used as a training farm for disadvantaged local boys.

Frank Waddy oversaw the establishment of the Booborowie Experimental Farm for the first five years of its existence. The boys training role ceased early and progressively the focus of the farm was on lucerne and wheat seed production.

In 1918 Frank Waddy was transferred to the Turretfield Experimental Farm. Ten years earlier the Department of Agriculture acquired Turretfield and established it as a dairy farm under the leadership of PH Suter. Over a 10 year period the farm was run by Apps, Wilson, J Brown and GH Stevens until Waddy’s appointment.

Until 1931 Waddy managed a program aimed at costing wheat production and in particular to demonstrate how properties in this region could be run along business lines. His practical engineering skills led him to design and construct a mobile feeding unit which provided efficiencies in livestock management.

The depression period however placed great financial stress on the network of experimental farms and many were sold. In 1931 Turretfield was identified as one of the farms to have the stock and plant disposed of and the property leased

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A deputation was made to the Minister of Agriculture to continue Turretfield as a pure seed farm, to meet the great shortage of quality seed for sowing. Under Waddy's leadership Turretfield was run as a stud seed farm at no net cost to the Department. The following was reported in the Departmental Bulletin around 1933, by Mr RC Scott, Chief Experimental Officer:

*The work that is being done by Mr Waddy is not easy and its value to the farmers is impossible to estimate.*

Waddy remained in this position until his retirement on 13 April 1938

The farewell function at the Lyndoch Institute, Barossa Valley was attended by the Minister of Agriculture, the Director of Agriculture and many senior Departmental staff as well as industry leaders. The following outlines the report of his retirement in the Gawler Bunyip, 3 March 1938

*“When the Government decided to sell the Turretfield Demonstration Farm in 1932. he regarded it as a retrograde step and urged its retention as a seed wheat farm. This was done and today the Government was proud of it. Moreover the Government was fully appreciative of Mr. Waddy's ability and only that morning- the Premier (Mr. Butler) had asked him to urge Mr. Waddy to extend his time for another year or two if he felt disposed. Mr. Waddy had, however, while appreciating the Premier's offer, decided to retire.”*

At his retirement the Presidents of the Rosedale, Gawler and Roseworthy Bureaux expressed their appreciation and presented him with the plaque below.

Frank Waddy retired to Gawler East before moving to Glenelg in 1943.

He maintained an active life in retirement contributing to a wide range of community and agricultural activities. These include:

* Appointment to the Rural Employment Board
* President of the Gawler AH&F Society. In 1943 he was farewelled as President of the Gawler AH&F Society as part of his relocation to Glenelg..
* Running for the Member for Gawler in the Legislative Assembly election in 1941 where he was beaten on preferences.

He died on17 February 1964 at 90 years of age.

Prepared by Don Plowman

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