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John Brian McFerran

About the cover

Professor John Brian McFerran CBE, BSc, PhD, DSc, FRAgS, MRCVS 1931-2012. Born in Belfast, Northern Ireland, Brian McFerran gained his veterinary qualification at the University of Edinburgh in 1957. He completed a PhD degree in 1960 at the Queen's University Belfast (QUB) Department of Medical Microbiology, and was a research fellow there from 1960 to 1962. He then moved to the Veterinary Research Laboratories (VRL), Stormont, now Veterinary Sciences Division of the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute.

He set up and headed the virology department at VRL from 1962 to 1987. He also served as Deputy Director of VRL from 1968 to 1987, when he was appointed Director of VRL and Professor of Veterinary Sciences at QUB. He retired in 1991.

Brian published approximately 120 peer-reviewed papers, including work on avian adenoviruses and paramyxoviruses, IBD virus, chicken anemia virus and a number of avian enteric viruses. He also published work on virus diseases of cattle, sheep and pigs, and pioneered the use of negative contrast electron microscopy in the diagnosis of virus infections. However, he is probably best known for his identification and characterization of Egg Drop Syndrome (EDS) virus. He devised an eradication scheme for EDS in Northern Ireland, based on his own epidemiological observations, and the infection was eradicated within 19 months from its initial recognition – a remarkable achievement.

His work was recognised by awards from academia, industry and the state, including the Dr Bart Rispen Research Award in 1977 and appointment to Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (CBE) in 1992.

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