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COMMUNICATION PATTERNS AMONG SHEEPFARMERS

IN TWO NORTH ISLAND DISTRICTS OF

NEW ZEALAND.

by

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the Requirements for the Degree of Master of
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AUTOBIOGRAPHY

The author was born in 1941 and lived his first four years in Port Stanley, Falkland Islands while his father served there as Agricultural Advisor to the Colonial Government. When the family returned to New Zealand in 1947 his father took up a lectureship at Victoria University. The author's primary education was completed in Wellington and between 1956 and 1960 he attended Nelson College.

With the intention of taking an agricultural degree he enrolled for Agriculture Intermediate at Victoria University in 1961 and eventually decided to complete a B.Sc. degree there before carrying on to the Agricultural degree at Massey University. The B.Sc. degree was completed in 1964 and the author enrolled in the second year of the B.Agr.Sc. degree at Massey University in the following year. This degree, in the field of Farm Management and Economics was completed in 1967. During 1967 he held a bursary from the Department of Agriculture and in 1968 was posted as a Farm Advisory Officer to Rotorua.

An interest in the sociological aspects of extension and the influence of a farmer on his neighbours, which had developed during his last year at Massey University was fostered in Rotorua and resulted in an application for leave to undertake this study. A study award was granted by the Department of Agriculture and the author returned to Massey University in February 1969.

With the completion of this study the author has returned to farm advisory work with the New Zealand Department of Agriculture, stationed at Kaikohe.

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DEFINITION OF TERMS

- Acceptance - approval of, or agreement in principle with some practice or idea.
- Active involvement with an information source - to actively seek a personal interaction or confrontation with a source of information.
- Adoption - continued implementation or use (for a period) of some practice or idea.
- Congruence - favourable disposition towards a new practice or idea as a result of familiarity with a functionally related practice or idea.
- Farm Advisers, Extension workers and representatives of Commercial firms - are individuals primarily employed to provide advice, information and technical services to farmers. Extension workers include people such as Home Economists, Soil Conservationists and Specialist Advisers but the term has been used in a general way in this study to include all those individuals who serve farmers in an advisory capacity without emphasis on supervision or sales promotion.
- Farming tradition - the practice and philosophy of farming, often specific to a particular area, which develops in a district.
- Formal information sources - individuals or organisations employed to provide advice and information to farmers virtually free of commercial influence or salesmanship.
- Informal information sources - individuals, such as friends and neighbours, who are not employed to provide advice and information to farmers but from whom farmers may seek information.
- Innovation - an idea or practice that is new because it differs from existing practices or ideas accepted in a defined situation.
- Innovator - a person using an idea or practice which is substantially different from the generally accepted range of ideas or practices in a given area.

Monte Carlo simulation - a technique used to obtain a simulated sample. A simulated sample is usually taken because it would be either impossible, or too expensive to take an actual physical sample. The technique involves replacing the actual universe of items by its theoretical counterpart - usually described by some assumed probability distribution, and then sampling from this theoretical population by means of a random number table.