

PREFACE

Professor Dr. D. M. DE VRIES retired from the Institute for Biological and Chemical Research on Field Crops and Herbage, and from the Agricultural University, Wageningen, on 1st May 1965, thus ending his very successful career in agricultural research and education. After obtaining his Doctor's degree in 1929 DE VRIES trained as a plant sociologist, began work at the former State Agricultural Experiment Station at Groningen. Here he dealt with the practical problems of grassland in the new Zuiderzee polders and the permanent grasslands of the old established land.

During the first period the new plant-sociological methods had to be adapted to agricultural needs. By the time he went to Wageningen in 1939 to take up his duties at the new Central Institute of Agricultural Research his methods had improved to such an extent that they could be applied on a large scale.

By his work DE VRIES showed he was an outstanding research worker. The list of scientific publications under his name in Dutch and foreign periodicals is evidence of this. As a plant sociologist he has enriched grass-

land research with methods that have greatly increased our knowledge. The methods he developed are now employed by research workers in many different countries.

Besides being a research worker DE VRIES was a first-rate tutor. From the outset a great number of pupils worked in his laboratory at Wageningen.

The many publications written in co-operation with others are evidence of the interest he aroused in some 25 research workers in the preparation of a scientific subject. For many this meant the first publication of scientific work. His appointment as part-time lecturer in botanical grassland research at the Agricultural University in 1949 was an obvious corollary, and in 1955 he was appointed as part-time professor. A great many students have benefited by his enthusiasm.

As a lecturer he knew how to interest his audience, especially during field excursions, but also in the lecture room or at a private gathering.

But his interests were not confined to the plant growth of grassland; recently he has been devoting an increasing part of his time to fauna and to avifauna in particular.



Prof. Dr. D. M. DE VRIES

With the support of his wife and as a result of his long experience in plant-ecological research, he has assembled much detailed material on birds, only a part of which has been published.

In addition to his professional duties DE VRIES served on many committees; I would mention the "Commissie voor Biosociologie en Veenonderzoek in Nederland" (Committee of Biosociology and Peat Research in the Netherlands) and the "Nederlandse Vereniging voor Weide- en Voederbouw" (Netherlands Society of Grassland and Fodder Crops). He was one of the founders of both bodies and has held various posts on them for many years.

His pupils and friends are glad to be able to present him with a special issue of the Netherlands Journal of Agricultural Science, believing this would be the best way of expressing their gratitude; at the same time it affords an opportunity of publishing the work inspired by DE VRIES.

We know that his retirement will not mean the end of his scientific work. For his own sake and that of his wife, we hope he will be successful in continuing his work and we look forward to many more words of wisdom from his lips or pen.

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