Iain McDonald

Dr. Iain McDonald passed away on the evening of 31st January 1988. He was best known to Zimbabweans as Director of the Tobacco Research Board, a post which he held for 27 years and from which he only retired in April last year after 34 years' service with the Board. We in turn remember him as an active member of the Board of Editors of the "Beiträge zur Tabakforschung International".

Iain McDonald was born in East London, South Africa, of Rhodesian parents on 20th January 1922. He completed his schooling at Plumtree School where he won several scholarships as well as being a remarkable sportsman. He received his B.Sc. degree in chemistry and zoology from Rhodes University, Grahamstown, South Africa. Following his enlistment, he was commissioned into the Royal Corps of Signals and served in the United Kingdom. In 1946, Iain McDonald returned to the Chemistry Department of Rhodes University to take up a postgraduate scholarship. He was awarded a Rhodes Scholarship and went to Oxford where he received his M.A. in 1950. He returned to Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) to join the Ministry of Agriculture, where he worked four years on the chemistry of soils.

Iain McDonald joined the newly established Tobacco Research Board of Southern Rhodesia as chemist/agronomist in 1953 at Trelawney Research Station. From 1955 to 1957, Iain McDonald studied at North Carolina State University in Raleigh where he obtained his doctorate with a thesis on nitrogen nutrition of tobacco.

Upon his return to Rhodesia, Iain McDonald was appointed officer-in-charge of the Kutsaga Research Station and, in 1959, assistant director of the Tobacco Research Board of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. A year later, he became Director, upon the retirement of Ivan Neas. He was the first Rhodesian to hold the post, which he

held until his retirement in 1987. The high reputation of Zimbabwean tobacco is attributable to the high quality of research conducted under his direction. In addition to his reputation within the country, Iain McDonald had a remarkable international reputation. In 1965, he was invited on a lecture tour of Australia and New Zealand by the respective Ministries of Agriculture.

Within the CORESTA organization (Cooperation Centre for Scientific Research relative to Tobacco, Paris), he was held in very high esteem. He was first appointed to the Scientific Commission of CORESTA at the Third International Tobacco Science Congress in Harare in 1963. He served as Chairman of the Organizing Committee for this meeting. He was Chairman of the Agronomy Study Group of CORESTA from 1972 to 1974, Vice-Chairman of the Scientific Commission from 1970 to 1972 and again 1974 to 1976, and was elected President in 1976. In 1984, at the CORESTA Congress in Vienna, he was awarded the CORESTA Prize in recognition of his contribution to improving knowledge and production of tobacco. This recognition was a highlight of his international career and a tribute to his work for CORESTA and the furthering of international tobacco science.

In 1975, he was nominated by the Tobacco International magazine as one of their Tobacco Men of the Year, thus acknowledging him as an incontestable authority on tobacco agronomy.

Iain McDonald's interests and contributions were not limited to tobacco alone. He served on the Agricultural Research Council from its inception until he retired, and on the Tea Research Foundation of Central Africa. He was also interested in education and served on the Council of the University of Zimbabwe, the Board of Governors and Executive Committee of Peterhouse and on the Board of the Tobacco Training Institute. He

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served on editorial boards of the Zimbabwe Science News, the Zimbabwe Journal of Agricultural Research as well as the German scientific journal, Beiträge zur Tabakforschung International. He received the Farming Oscar in 1966 and the Order of the Legion of Merit in 1977. Iain McDonald had a strong sense of service to the community serving on the Tobacco Committee of the Zimbabwe Agricultural and Horticultural Society as well as the Conservation Trust. He was a sportsman being a keen cricketer and a long-time member of the Stragglers Cricket Club. He was an interprovincial hockey player and a low-handicap golfer. Iain McDonald published a large number of papers

throughout his career. Recently, Iain McDonald had been invited by the People's Republic of China to act as a consultant.

Iain McDonald will be sadly missed but fondly remembered by those with whom he worked as well as his numerous friends. Our deepest sympathies and best wishes to Hazel Gwendoline McDonald and daughter Elizabeth and son Iain and their families. We shall long remember Dr. Iain McDonald for his wise and diplomatic nature as well as his unlimited vision for the future. He leaves lasting legacies for tobacco research worldwide.

Thomas S. Osdene