

Lincoln University

Professor Stephen Latham Goldson, FRSNZ, ONZM, Bledisloe Medal

2014

Professor Stephen Latham Goldson is recognised as an excellent scientist, an effective advocate for the applied sciences and a skilled communicator.

After a year as a school-leaver on Volunteer Service Abroad in Sarawak, his tertiary education began at Otago University in 1970. Nine years of continuing education, led to a Bachelor of Science in Zoology and Diploma in Science from Otago University and a Master of Science from Canterbury University. This culminated in a PhD in Entomology from Lincoln College in 1979.

Professor Goldson's PhD led directly to a research career as an entomologist in the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry's Agricultural Research Division to work on the management of the country's very damaging exotic pasture pest species (especially weevils). This led to 25 years of focused and well-supported, long-term ecological research. During which time he was able to lead useful contributions to the suppression of these pests based on imported parasitoid¹ wasp biological control agents.

This work has led to very positive results and greatly reduced exotic pest impacts on New Zealand's pastoral ecosystems. The economic benefits run into hundreds of millions of dollars per annum, but also there are on-going environmental benefits associated with reduced nitrogen pollution, and avoidance of the use of synthetic pesticides.

In 2002 Professor Goldson was appointed a professorial fellow at Lincoln University and in 2003 he became the deputy director of the then newly formed Bio-Protection Research Centre, a centre of research excellence based at Lincoln University. Currently he is the Centre's Theme Leader focused on Improving the Impact and Durability of Biological Control.

Between 2004 and 2007 he was also the Chief Science Strategist for AgResearch, one of New Zealand's leading research organisations, the mission of which was to enhance the value, productivity and profitability of New Zealand's pastoral, agri-food and agri-technology sector value-chains and thereby contribute to economic growth and beneficial environmental and social outcomes for New Zealand.

Also in 2002, Professor Goldson's influence was summed up in his appearance at number four on The Listener's list of the most powerful and influential people in the country under the subcategory science and technology, which stated: "*AgResearch's chief scientist is "a go-to guy for ministers and other bigwigs who want to talk science policy, and when he calls, they pick up".*"

As Professor Goldson's career developed he also has worked increasingly hard to support, defend and promote the science needed for the future of this country. The effectiveness of this has been reflected by his work as science adviser to the then Minister of Research, Science and Technology, the Rt. Hon Simon Upton in the mid-1990s and more recently, the recruitment in 2009 by Professor Sir Peter Gluckman, Chief Science Advisor to the New Zealand Prime Minister, as his principal advisor, focused particularly on agriculture and the environment.

¹ An organism that, during its development, lives in or on the body of a single host individual, eventually killing that individual

A feature of Professor Goldson's career is that he has doggedly done his utmost to stay research-active. Currently in partnership with the Bio-Protection Research Centre and AgResearch he continues to make research contributions to weevil biological control science. He has always been adamant that the best science advice tends to come from people that are actively involved in research.

Professor Goldson is a Fellow of the New Zealand Institute of Agricultural Science and a Fellow of the Royal Society of New Zealand. In 2014 he was recognised in the New Year's Honours List as an Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit for service to science.

In 2007 he was awarded the New Zealand Institute of Agricultural and Horticultural Science's Jubilee Medal for his contribution to primary industries research. In 2009, he was elected to the Council of the Royal Society of New Zealand as Vice-President, Biological and Life Sciences. Since 2011 he has been the Chair of the Academy of the Royal Society of New Zealand.

Professor Goldson is a genuine leader in the scientific community and has shouldered a wide-range of socially-responsible activities such as public engagement and lectures. This, in combination with his excellent scientific credentials, has led to him being highly respected in both the private and public sectors; an unusual combination.

He is an accomplished alumnus of Lincoln University and a worthy recipient of Lincoln University's Bledisloe Medal for 2014.