



# SEEDCO

## SEEDS OF SUCCESS



**A Twenty Five Year History**

**STOCKTAKE  
1990**



# **SEEDCO**

## **SEEDS OF SUCCESS**

**A Twenty Five Year History**



## Contents

Introduction . . . . .	4
I Foundation and Formation . . . . .	5
II Early Struggles . . . . .	12
III Continuing Growth Through The Seventies . . .	19
IV Substantial Growth In The Eighties . . . . .	31
V The Libyan Story . . . . .	52
VI Seed Processing And Storage . . . . .	58
VII The Woodside Research Farm . . . . .	62
VIII The Warrabri N.T. Project . . . . .	67
IX A Brief Review Of Seed Crops Introduced During The First 25 Years of Seedco's History . . .	69
X Some Statistics/Facts Of Seedco . . . . .	79

## Introduction

This history is presented in an effort to publicly record and preserve, the chapter of events which took place during the first twenty five years of the South Australian Seedgrowers Co-operative Ltd (Seedco). An organisation which was formed by a group of S.A. primary producers who had a fervent desire to set up their own marketing organisation.

It has become a most successful business venture which today rates very highly in both the Australian seed industry and the world seed trade. Perhaps the biggest achievements have been in the field of export where it has been awarded National Export Awards in 1972, 1977, 1982 and 1986.

A major source of information has been the official minutes of board meetings, a small collection of historical press cuttings and pictures plus the personal involvement of the two authors in the direction and management of the Co-operative virtually throughout its first twenty five years.

November 1988

R.H. Badman  
P.A. Farnan

## CHAPTER I

### Foundation and Formation

Production of pasture seed, once a flourishing industry in South Australia, went into decline for a period of seven years between 1954/55 and 1961/62. From a total of 14,473 bags of certified seed produced in the peak year of 1954/55, output slumped to an all time low of 1103 bags produced in 1961/62, but production showed a sharp increase to 9350 bags in 1963/64.

Two factors governed this recovery. First, a field extension program initiated by the Department of Agriculture in 1963 to encourage greatly increased use of legume pastures in the cereal growing areas, which created an unprecedented demand for top quality pasture seed. Second, in order to meet portion of this demand, seedgrowers in the State's South East were quick to tap the unlimited supplies of shallow depth water for irrigated seed production, prompted primarily by the report of Newton S. Tiver, chief agricultural adviser of the Department of Agriculture who had studied irrigated seed production and marketing in the USA, under a Harkness Fellowship in 1960/61.

Erratic seed supplies during the seven year period of decline created fluctuating prices, with the grower the eventual loser. Parcels of seed passed through the hands of successive resellers, each of whom added on his own margin. It was reported that at least in one instance, seed grown on a property in the South East, found its way to a merchant in N.S.W. and eventually ended up on the property next door to where it was originally grown, at more than double the price paid to the initial grower. With no measure of control to worry about, merchants fixed their own prices and in most cases the grower suffered. Even the end purchaser, the cereal grower, in particular, was dissatisfied with unstable marketing conditions and many turned to interstate sources of supply rather than buy on the erratic South Australian market. Farmers in some of the State's cereal growing areas who required large quantities of seed for swinging over to the recommended



legume pastures, resorted to importing their seed supplies direct from Western Australia, sometimes even in semi trailer loads.

In 1962, a handful of growers with potential to produce seed under irrigation, met on the property of Ralph James at Lucindale. The meeting was convened by Newton Tiver, following his return from the Harkness Fellowship Studies in U.S.A.

In his report which was placed before the meeting, Mr Tiver pointed out to growers the potential that existed for specialised seed production in the South East with its good rainfall, mediterranean climate and ready availability of good quality underground water. "I see no reason why the South East can not become the seed bin of Australia, but the production must become specialised and achieve high seed yields" he added. A further section of the report recommended that growers form their own seed producers association and they become involved in the marketing of their seed.

## Keppoch grower has amazing lucerne seed yields

A self-propelled windrower had solved many problems in drying lucerne seed, the largest single producer of the seed in the South-East, Mr. Arthur Longbottom, said at the recent Naracoorte seed growers' meeting.

Mr. Longbottom's address was highlighted by figures of his seed production in the past season which had been ideal for lucerne seed crops and pasture in the South-East area near Keppoch.



Chief agricultural adviser in the Department of Agriculture, Mr. N. S. Tiver, was outside the conference hall at Naracoorte with Mr. Hedley Hannaford, of Adelaide, and one of the speakers, Mr. Arthur Longbottom, of Keppoch, and Department officer, Mr. Perce Denley.

1963.

# SEED HARVESTING DISCUSSED AT NARACOORTE

By Staff Reporter, JASON HOPTON

Harvest reports for subterranean clover given by growers at the Naracoorte seeds conference revealed the vast scope existing for agricultural engineers to design machinery to speed up the harvesting of seed—preferably in one operation by one man.



One of the speakers at the Naracoorte seeds conference, Mr. Gordon Brown, of Kongai.



Agronomist, Mr. E. D. Higgs; senior information officer, Mr. A. E. Engel; Entomologist, Peter Birks, and Naracoorte seeds officer, Mr. David Ragless, were in the Department of Agriculture team attending the Naracoorte seeds conference.

## High return per acre

No form of primary enterprise was likely to return as much as seed crops or annual legumes because of the high return per acre, Mr. E. D. Higgs, agronomist with the Department of Agriculture said at Naracoorte during the first Department sponsored small seeds growers' meeting.

1963.



This meeting was followed by a public meeting in July 1962 at Naracoorte. In May 1963, a further public meeting elected a steering committee and in August 1963 at a third public meeting in Naracoorte, SASPA, (South Australian Seed Producers Association) was officially born and its constitution ratified.

After the first meetings of the new producer body, it became obvious that marketing should be completely divorced from the activities of SASPA and if producers wished to enter into the marketing of their products it would be necessary to form a separate marketing body. On January 15, 1964, the South Australian Seedgrowers Co-operative Limited was registered with Anthony Brookman, Meadows, Chairman, and eight seed growers from various districts scattered throughout the State, on the board as follows:

Anthony Brookman	Meadows
Ron Badman	Naracoorte
Don Brown	Keppoch
Gordon Brown	Mundulla
Rex Jettner	Morgan
Arthur Longbottom	Keppoch
Stan Rowett	Marrabel
Ken Schuster	Naracoorte
Ken Stuckey	Millicent

Gordon Brown was appointed manager and Peter Murphy, of the firm Tilley, Murphy, Hughes and Co. (formerly John Tilley and Nettle, Gawler Place, Adelaide) Chartered Accountants, was appointed Secretary.

All board meetings including the formative one were held in the office of Anthony Brookman, Brookman Buildings, 25 Grenfell Street, Adelaide until the buildings were demolished in 1974. Since then the board has met in the board room of Tilley, Murphy, Hughes and Co., 135 South Terrace, Adelaide.

Within weeks of its inauguration, sixty per cent of seedgrowers in South Australia had pledged their support for the new body and purchased shares whilst other growers indicated their willingness to join the Co-operative once they were clear of seasonal commitments to the merchants.

On March 3rd 1964, the Co-operative made its first move in the struggle to stabilise the price of pasture seeds in South

## SEEDCO - FARMERS' MILLION POUND BUSINESS VENTURE

By PETER B. ENGLISH



Manager of South Australian Seedgrowers' Co-operative, Mr P. A. Farnon has wide experience as a grower on his own Culcain property. He was with Riverina Seedgrowers' Co-operative.

Seedco, a wholesale trading body formed to stabilise grass and clover seed markets in South Australia has been launched by growers. It will co-ordinate marketing, and could end up a multi-million pound business.

The men behind Seedco. They are, Anthony Brookman, Chairman, (left from Chairman — Peter Murphy, Secretary, Ken Jettner, grower from Morgan, Ken Schuster, grower from Kybelle), (right from Chairman—Ken Stuckey, Deputy Chairman, Gordon Brown, grower from Kangas, Ron Sadman, grower from Naracoorte, and Stan Rowett, a leading license grower from Marrabel). Two other members of the Board (not shown in the picture) are Don Brown and Arthur Longbottom.



Extract from Australian Country, December 1964.





*The foundation board of Seedco.*

*Left to right, back row: Ken Schuster, Don Brown, Gordon Brown, Ron Badman, Arthur Longbottom. Front row: Ken Stuckey, Anthony Brookman (chairman), Peter Murphy (secretary), Arthur Longbottom. Absent: Rex Jettner.*

Australia with a letter to the president of the South Australian Seed Merchants Association, seeking a conference with them to discuss orderly marketing, seed supplies, branding of bags, wholesale and retail prices, distribution and to seek some means to co-ordinate production and marketing. In due course the merchants indicated they would be prepared to attend the conference and expressed willingness to go along with the scheme if the Co-operative could meet their requirements.

The main aim of the Co-operative as stated to the media by the Chairman, Anthony Brookman, "was to stabilise the price of pasture seeds in South Australia. If this could be achieved then everyone must benefit." When it became clear that demand was on the increase and some form of stabilisation in the market would be needed, it seemed clear that only a co-operative body of growers could achieve this. The nucleus was already in SASPA and it was from this body that Seedco was formed with a shareholding of two hundred £1 shares per member, paid up to five shillings per share. The fundamental basis of the operation was that the grower receives the full price paid by the merchant for his seed less a charge to cover

handling and administrative costs. Cleaning, freight and warehousing charges would be the growers' responsibility and any surplus funds after costs had been met would be rebated to growers.

The launching of Seedco as a business venture was complete by the end of 1964. It was sired by SASPA and nurtured by the Department of Agriculture. With a full time manager, a devoted board and the prospect of strong support from an expanding group of seed growers, the future was more or less assured.

The venture could never have begun without the outstanding strength of character and business acumen possessed by each and every member of the Foundation Board of Directors.



*The first Seedco logo.*



## CHAPTER II

### Early Struggles

The first year's trading was a particularly difficult one. A quotation from the first Annual Report read "Seedco has had its share of teething problems but successfully weathered initial setbacks and the board is confident that it will grow from strength to strength and play an important role in the marketing of South Australian pasture seeds in the future".

In the first part of 1964, a heavy load fell upon the shoulders of Vice Chairman Ken Stuckey, Manager Gordon Brown and Secretary, Peter Murphy. The Chairman was absent overseas at this time.

Many complications were to arise with the marketing of the Seedco lucerne seed crop. Lucerne has always been one of South Australia's biggest and most important seed crops. Certain sales were made forward against the 1964 crop but some Seedco members later diverted their seed into other market channels leaving Seedco to carry the burden. The reason for this action was that there was a short fall in the production of lucerne seed that year resulting in a sharp increase in price and merchants took advantage of Seedco's first mistake of quoting to members the return they would receive for their seed. One such contract was written with M.F. Hodge and Sons Pty Ltd, Adelaide. It was not fulfilled so Hodge bought seed elsewhere to obtain their requirements and debited the extra price paid to Seedco, total cost £1100. Further possible litigation regarding non delivery under a large contract with Wright Stephenson (Aus.) Pty Ltd was finally avoided when the General Manager, Ernie Officer personally met the Seedco board on 2nd July 1964 and advised that his company had no intention of taking action to enforce delivery of the 130 tons of Hunter River lucerne seed which had been purchased on a contract with Seedco earlier in 1964. He further stated that his company would accept as final settlement, 30 tons of lucerne seed at 3/6½d per lb.

This news was a great relief to the fledgling board for had Wright Stephenson and Co. taken successful legal action

against Seedco at that time, the amount of the claim would have been sufficient to put Seedco out of business in its first trading year.

On 16th May, 1964, Gordon Brown resigned as Manager. He had occupied the post in a part time capacity. The board decided to advertise nationally for a full time Manager, finally appointing P.A. Farnan B.Com., formerly Secretary of the Riverina Seedgrowers Co-op Ltd, Culcairn, N.S.W. who commenced his duties on the 17th August, 1964 in an office on the premises of Tilley, Murphy, Hughes & Co, 135 South Terrace, Adelaide, which office was also the registered office of Seedco.

The first annual meeting and symposium of Seedco was held in the Wool Auction Room at Brookman Buildings on 27th November, 1964 when the Chairman, Anthony Brookman thanked Ken Stuckey, Gordon Brown and Peter Murphy for their valuable efforts during his absence earlier in the year and also the board for their loyalty in this formative year. He also welcomed the new Manager, Pat Farnan. Arthur Longbottom did not seek re-election to the board and his son, Brian, was elected to fill the vacancy. At this time membership stood at fifty seven.

Three important policy decisions were made during these early times:

1. Trading was to be conducted on a wholesale basis only. Retailing of seed was rejected.
2. It was decided that Seedco should aggressively enter into export as soon as overseas markets had been surveyed.
3. A multiple pooling system was to be introduced for all varieties of certified seed.

Despite a difficult year for the Australian seed industry, Seedco increased its turnover in 1965 and membership rose to eighty five. First export orders were the large sales of subterranean clover seed to Uruguay and Spain. Uruguay's purchases were financed by the World Bank in Washington D.C. and were awarded on a tender basis. Spanish purchases on the other hand were made by a small "club" of private seed merchants and were subsidised by the Spanish Government up to sixty per cent of C.I.F. cost. The subsidy was intended to benefit the local farmers by encouraging them to sow down improved pastures with subterranean clover but



## S.A. SEED GROWING IS VITAL INDUSTRY

The seed industry was certainly not a large one—compared with many others—but it was a vital one, the manager of the SA Seedgrowers Co-operative Ltd. (Mr. P. A. Farnan) said last week.

He was speaking at the co-operative's symposium held in Brookman building, Adelaide.

Mr. Farnan said that in many spheres seed was regarded as a very unstable product because it was affected by the laws of supply and demand.

For this reason there was no easy street in seed production and all seed-growers — if they were not already conscious of it — must accept this fact.

"The urgent need to have an association of growers in the SA seed industry led to the formation of firstly, the S.A.S.P.A. and secondly the co-operative," said Mr. Farnan.

"Between the two bodies the aim is to help the seedgrower all the way

through from the time he sows seed production till he begins marketing his product.

"The co-operative was formed principally to provide an orderly marketing service for the seed producer, a service completely removed from commercial interests in every respect.

"It is designed to be able to provide accurate and reliable information to its members who have seed for disposal and who have in the past been completely left to their own resources with the marketing of their products.

"The co-operative management has access to all official and non official marketing channels in the Commonwealth.



Mr. Farnan

December 1965.

the system was abused by the merchants and finally was dropped by the Spanish Government.

On the Australian market, Seedco was generally well accepted interstate but was experiencing opposition from some members of the South Australian Seed Merchants Association. In fact one of these parties informed the manager that he was working for "a bunch of rebels".

Early in 1966 the board resolved that the manager should travel overseas to investigate and report on the lines of development that the Co-operative should take in the future, also to seek ways of developing export markets for Seedco seeds. The trip was successful despite the fact that the timing of the European sector was bad because it was in the summer holiday season. An important recommendation followed with the introduction of seed marketing agreements for all members

## SOUTH AUSTRALIAN SEEDGROWERS CO-OP. LTD.

Telephone: 51 5877  
After Hours: 9 1217

135 South Terrace,  
Adelaide, S.A.

12th March, 1965

### NEWSLETTER

The seed harvest is now under way in most areas and it is certain that an overall record for bags sealed will be achieved, as the total number of bags sealed ALREADY exceeds the complete total for 1963/64 with all of the Lucerne and Strawberry Clover yet to come.

Figures to date are:

	Bags Temporarily Sealed	
	1964-65	1963-64
<u>Sub. Clover</u>		
Clare	800	920
Howard	324	55
Mt. Barker	2,145	224
<u>Medics</u>		
Barrel 173	1,027	1,279
Harbinger	3,145	154
<u>Perennial Grasses</u>		
Currie	2,041	714
Phalaris	1,636	216

Barrel 173 is selling well, as is Harbinger but not at the same rate as Barrel 173. It is obvious that eventually the price of these two Medics must be equal and when that happens there should be a good steady demand for both varieties.

Due to seasonal conditions in the Eastern States there is little activity at present in seeds which we would normally sell in those areas. It appears there will be a carry over in some of these seeds but future overseas demand will play an important role here.

The most significant increases in production this year, so far, are in Mt. Barker, Currie Cocksfoot, Howard, Phalaris and Harbinger, the increase in the latter variety being rather sensational.

Everything has now been arranged with the Bank for finance for our Pools and in fact the first payment has already been made to growers who had seed in the February Harbinger Pool.

There has been an excellent result in the membership drive and at least ten new members should be accepted at the next Committee Meeting in April.

Lucerne harvesting has just begun in the North and generally yields are better than last year. Lucerne prospects elsewhere are very obscure. N.S.W. production of Lucerne this year will be negligible but a good break is needed to encourage buying from that State.

Strawberry Clover is just being reaped but prospects here are not definite at this early stage.

P. A. FARNAN

Manager

A copy of an early Seedco newsletter, 12th March, 1965.



## Churchill Grants To Six In S.A.

### Seed Producer

Mr. R. H. Badman, 54, pasture seed producer and grazier, of Naracoorte, will undertake a four-month study of irrigated seed production, processing and marketing in the western areas of the US from May.

Mr. Badman, a graduate of Roseworthy Agricultural College, was an honor to the seed industry and a recognition of the growing importance of the industry to the future of agriculture in Australia.

He would visit field stations and meet many professors of agriculture and advisers in many different centres.

As a practical producer, he hoped to bring back a number of new ideas in irrigated seed production.

Mr. Badman, transferred to the South-East in 1940 after having lived in the North for about 10 years.

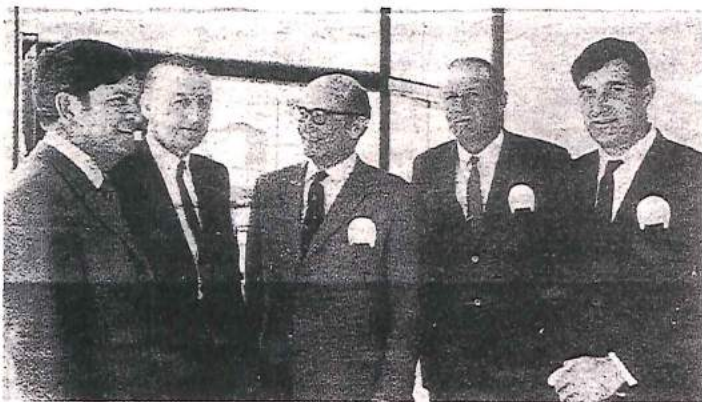
His programme is for \$2,151.



Mr. R. H. Badman, of Naracoorte, was one of the six South Australians announced yesterday as winners of the 1967 Churchill Fellowships.

Advertiser, May 16, 1966.

BELOW — Secretary of the SA Seed-growers Co-operative Ltd., Mr. Bert Hansberry, is with the general manager of the State Bank, Mr. Harry Gray; chairman of the co-operative Mr. Anthony Brookman; Mr. Stan Rowett, Marrabel; and Mr. Ted Higgs who is a senior research officer in the Department of Agriculture, at the SA Seedgrower Conference at Wayville this week.



3/12/70.

## IMPROVE PASTURES NOW WITH BARREL MEDIC 173

### AMPLE SUPPLIES OF SEEDCO BRAND

certified Barrel  
Medic 173 seed

NOW AVAILABLE THROUGH  
YOUR USUAL SEED MERCHANT  
SUPPLIER

Be sure it's Barrel Medic 173 and be sure it's Seedco brand . . . your surest guarantee of quality and results. "SEEDCO" is grown by members of S.A. Seedgrowers Co-operative Limited.



First Seedco  
Promotion.

and all seed varieties whereby the grower committed the total crop for the marketing thereof for a stipulated period. This document has become a most important one because it gives the Co-operative the ability to sell seed on a firm basis without fear of defection of supply from the grower. It was modelled on a document which had been in use for some years in the U.S. Seed Co-operative, Caladino Seeds at Willows in California. At the same time Seedco management succeeded in gaining its first overdraft from the State Bank of S.A. Ltd on the basis of sixty per cent of sundry debtors up to sixty days and fifty per cent of the value of stocks on hand. The result, with marketing agreements completed by the growers and an assured cash flow, Seedco could now make harvest advances all over the board.

Total sales in 1966 were \$817,000 and in 1967 which was a year of major drought, sales exceeded \$900,000 with almost all seed supplied by growers on irrigation. Membership had risen to 137 by the end of 1967.



Director Rex Jettner resigned in 1968 and Geoffrey Treasure, Georgetown, was invited to fill the casual vacancy. He was subsequently re-elected at the Annual General Meeting later in 1968. In December 1968 the board accepted the recommendations of a sub committee comprising Anthony Brookman, Stan Rowett, Peter Murphy and Pat Farnan as follows:

1. The principal function of the Co-operative is marketing and as such greater emphasis must be placed on national sales programs and sales promotion including market surveys.
2. That this function can only be achieved by relieving management from as much office work as possible necessitating the employment of a junior clerk and increased office space.
3. That an investigation be made regarding the engagement of a field officer on a temporary basis for a period of three to four months.
4. That the Co-operative does not enter into seed cleaning, but the matter be kept under constant scrutiny.
5. That a combined store and office is not a proposition whilst the Co-operative continues to act as a wholesaler.

A greatly reduced harvest in 1968 was reflected in sales figures for that year of \$681,000. An important staff appointment was made in 1969 when Bertrand T. Hansberry was appointed Accountant. He commenced duties on 7th July, 1969.

The volume of seed sales for 1969 was double that of 1968 and turnover \$991,000, a record. Export sales increased markedly in the same period, representing eighteen per cent of total sales whilst membership had risen to 195.

## CHAPTER III

### Continuing Growth Through the Seventies

The future looked bright for Seedco as it entered the seventies. The organisation was now well established and in many ways had weathered its more difficult years, the formative ones of the sixties.

The subject of marketing agreements which was first introduced in 1966, was reviewed by the board in 1970 and as a result, a new form of marketing agreement covering a five year optional period was adopted. This updated document was to prove an extremely valuable aid to future management of Seedco.

During 1970, contract seed production was undertaken for the first time when contracts were written for the multiplication of marrow stem kale seed for the United Kingdom. Unfortunately the activity proved to be a failure for many reasons, but mainly due to lack of management skills for the crop which was found to be better adapted to areas with a minimum latitude of 40 degrees. 1971 saw the introduction of an important new seed crop, Persian clover, variety "Maral". Today it is still a major seed crop for both domestic and export markets in 1988. The first crop was grown by Gordon Brown, at Kongal for re-export to the West German seed company, L.C. Nungesser K.G., West Germany which firm became a regular buyer of Seedco "Maral" Persian clover seed. Incidentally it should be recorded here that Gordon achieved a seed yield of 1300 kg/Ha. Nungesser had previously obtained all their supplies from Afghanistan and Iran but Seedco was able to compete successfully with these foreign suppliers mainly due to superior seed quality and absence of dodder.

A highlight of a difficult year's trading was the sale of 170 tonnes of Hunter River lucerne seed to Argentina. Argentine law demanded that five per cent of the seed be stained with a green dye in order that imported seed could be identified and not sold as locally produced seed. The staining operation was a



difficult and unusual one but was eventually accomplished successfully in the shed of Robin Coleman, Saddleworth.

Domestic sales were poor in 1971, due to a general downturn in Australian agriculture and many other economic factors. The Australian seed trade was becoming increasingly reluctant to carry significant stocks of seed and in some quarters displayed growing resentment to the expansion of Seedco's activities in the field of export. The downturn in domestic sales prompted the board to again review activities in sales promotion and it was resolved that considerable funds be directed towards production of a new technical bulletin in English, French and Spanish.

Some early highlights of 1972 were (A) the first visit to Australia and Seedco, of the famous West German seedsman, Kurt Eisele, Principal of L.C. Nungesser K.G., (B) the sale of 150 tonnes of lucerne seed to Yugoslavia and (C) first Seedco management report of the big potential for sales of annual medic seeds to Libya and other North African countries. Following is a quotation from the manager's report dated 29th June, 1972 after his second visit to Libya, the first visit taking place in 1966 when Libya was a kingdom. "There is no question whatsoever that the greatest potential markets for Australian pasture seeds, particularly annual medics, exist along the North African coast from Morocco through to Algeria, Tunisia and Libya. There will be an explosion in the use of annual medics in these countries. We must maintain very close contact with developments in that area."

The continued growth in membership, increasing duties of the manager on account of more frequent overseas trips, and the general expansion in both domestic and export trade had all contributed to greatly reduced contact by management with growers. The matter had given the board considerable concern for some time, so in an attempt to remedy the situation it was resolved in June 1972 that the concept of area business meetings be introduced. It was envisaged these be held in appropriate country locations in the autumn and spring each year. An equally important problem was the need for more adequate office staffing and space. In August 1972 it was decided to lease new office premises at 89 South Terrace, Adelaide, a move which was made with some reluctance because Peter Murphy had literally fathered the small Seedco

staff since the arrival of the Manager, Pat Farnan in their premises on 17th August, 1964. It is interesting to record that the rental was a mere £6 per week. The new premises were occupied on 20th November, 1972.

A further highlight of 1972 was the announcement from Canberra in October 1972 that Seedco had been awarded its first export award. The manager was duly presented with the award by the Governor General Sir Paul Hasluck in Canberra in November 1972. He was accompanied to Canberra by the Chairman of the board, Anthony Brookman.

The award was really a milestone in the short history of the Co-operative which had achieved the following export earnings over the previous four years as follows:

**Export earnings as %  
of total earnings F.O.B. basis**

1968/69	18%
1969/70	13%
1970/71	40%
1971/72	43%

In 1971/72, exports were effected to the following countries in order of magnitude:

Spain, Yugoslavia, West Germany, Italy, Chile, Argentina, South Africa, Uruguay, Libya, Portugal, Switzerland, Holland, Kenya, New Zealand, Brazil, Tunisia.

Trading had meantime taken a dramatic turn around and a sellers market now existed for all varieties. Seedco was successful in gaining a large proportion of the Uruguayan tender for 585 tonnes of subterranean clover seed for shipment late 1972.

The Co-operative participated in its first international trade fair in Tehran in September 1973, being represented by David Ragless who at that time was the senior seed certification officer in the South Australian Department of Agriculture, on loan from the Department.

Further in 1972, discussions were held with the firm L.C. Nungesser K.G., West Germany, regarding a scheme to commence a programme for seed multiplication in the southern hemisphere of lucerne variety, "Luna". A major barrier to overcome was the overly strict laws which prohibited importation of foreign lucerne seed except in minute quantities



and under very restrictive conditions. Not to be denied, however, Seedco succeeded in obtaining the lease for one year of a glass house at the Waite Agricultural Research Institute, Adelaide. The unit was in an approved quarantine area and in it, some 1500 "Luna" lucerne seeds were seeded in small plastic peat pots for a period of one year, during which time, they were subjected to constant inspection by the authorities. Finally in 1973, the plants were released from quarantine and transplanted in an area generously provided by Max Davies at Kybybolite in the South East of South Australia. The resultant seed production was used to build up significant quantities of commercial seed for re-export to West Germany. A very very tedious enterprise, nevertheless a successful one.

The concept of a federal Co-operative for marketing of small seeds was again discussed at board level but was rejected as impractical at that point of time. Ken Stuckey tendered his resignation from the board on 14th June, 1973. He was Vice Chairman from the formation of Seedco and had rendered outstanding service to the Co-operative, particularly in 1964 in the difficult period when the chairman was overseas and there were many problems with defections of lucerne seed to merchants. Tom Preece, Mt Gambier, was chosen to fill the casual vacancy and was re-elected at the next annual meeting in November 1973.

Meantime there was much activity regarding the Libyan project. The manager had reported from Libya not only of the need for a team of four expert farmers to work on the Jabel Akhdar Project for three months from September 1973, but also of the request from Bashir Joudeh, Chairman of the project for the South Australian Government to set up and manage a model farm on 1000 hectares at El Marj, Libya. It is interesting to record that El Marj was previously known as Barce and that the area was once considered to be the original grainery of the world in the days when the Romans occupied the country.

During a prolonged visit to Libya during June/July 1973, the manager successfully negotiated a contract with the Jabel Akhdar executive authority for the supply of a large quantity of annual medic seeds, seed oats and seed barley. It was also agreed that Seedco supply the authority with the services of four farming experts to work on the project for three months

from September 1973. The following were chosen for the formidable task: Geoff Treasure (Leader), Gordon Brown, Neville Crawford, and Geoff Rowett.

Another project was launched in 1973 for multiplication of "Luna" lucerne seed at Warrabri, N.T. It is fully reported upon in a separate part of this history.

Seedco experienced many problems in connection with the shipment of the 1973 Libyan seed order. There was no regular liner shipping service from Australia to Libya and Australian exporters were forced to accept a part chartered vessel, the *M/V Marco Marulic* to transport a mixed cargo of Seedco seeds and other agricultural materials, all destined for the Port of Benghazi plus a cargo of smelters ex Port Pirie for La Spezia, Italy, shipped by another Australian exporter.

The first setback was the extreme lateness in the arrival of the *Marco Marulic* in Port Adelaide. Next, a survey of the ship revealed the presence of Kafra Beetle which caused the quarantine authorities to order total fumigation of the vessel causing a further delay of six days and some hidden costs to Seedco and the other shippers. Many frustrations were to follow and finally the *Marco Marulic* sailed from Port Adelaide on approximately the date which had been originally nominated for its arrival in Benghazi, finally arriving in Benghazi early December 1973 after being diverted from its threatened first European call at La Spezia as a result of strong intervention by Seedco management and Austrade, Canberra.

By this time it was quite impossible to placate the Libyan authorities who just would not accept the fact that such a chain of misfortunes was not the fault of Seedco. Naturally the embarrassment and anxiety being suffered by the first Seedco farmer team, patiently waiting in Libya for the cargo of seeds to arrive, was extreme. Because of the grave situation, the manager made a special trip to Libya in December 1973, only to be greeted by Bashir Joudeh with the news that his executive authority would never deal with Seedco again because the late arrival of the seeds had jeopardised the whole program for the 1973/74 season and also future years. Fortunately the season at El Marj was a very late one and a good one and the majority of the seed was seeded successfully in December 1973 through January 1974. To add to the strain imposed on management by this most unfortunate chain of events, the manager was a very



very close witness to a P.L.O. hijack in Rome Airport as he was returning to Australia from an extremely stressful trip.

Late in 1973, the board resolved that an assistant be appointed to the manager. The position was advertised nationally and eventually Max Jongebloed was appointed to the position, commencing his duties in January 1974. He was already well known to many members through his duties over some years as seed certification officer with the South Australian Department of Agriculture both in the Mid North and the South East of South Australia.

Despite the problems with the Libyan contract in 1973, another large contract was negotiated with the Jabel Akhdar authority during a visit to Libya by the manager in April 1974. More shipping problems were to be experienced with the subsequent shipment in the Spanish vessel *M/V Alonso De Ojeda*, mainly account industrial problems with the Maritime Seamen's Union in Australia. Another team of farmer experts was sought by Bashir Joudeh and the following personnel were chosen: Gordon Brown (Leader), John Dunkin, Clem Obst and Barry Williams. The first team in 1973 had set tremendously high standards and had achieved much for Seedco's reputation in Libya.

Much later in 1974, South Australia hosted a visit of a V.I.P. group from the Libyan Government including the Minister of State for Agricultural Development, Abdul Majeed Al Gaoud and the Chairman of the Executive Authority for Jabel Akhdar, Bashir Joudeh and other senior officials, all of whom praised the work done by the Seedco farmer teams and Seedco management. Seedco's future in Libya was now secure, provided it could maintain the standard of service for which it had become renowned.

Seedco participated in its second international trade fair late in 1974 when Ted Higgs, Senior Agronomist (Pastures) S.A. Department of Agriculture, on loan to Seedco for the Australian Exhibition in Peking late 1974 and Max Jongebloed were the representatives.

Another major highlight of trading in 1974 was the successful negotiation of a contract with the plan Agropecuaria Ltda, Montevideo, Uruguay for the supply for a three year period of 350 tonnes of subterranean clover seed per annum including 200 tonnes of "Clare" clover.

The contract was a milestone in the history of Seedco and something unheard of in the history of the Australian seed trade. As "Clare" seed production had always been an important crop for Seedco, news of the contract was received by growers with much satisfaction because many of them had the management skills and irrigated areas to take advantage of the large contract.

The board resolved in May 1975 that the uncalled share capital of Seedco be called up. The result, a call of \$1.50 per share. The year was a gloomy one in Australian agriculture, nevertheless Seedco's overall performance that year was a record one, mainly on account of large exports to more than 19 countries. The slow conditions in 1975 coupled with large seed production in the same year, resulted in rather substantial carry overs into 1976, of almost all the main varieties in which Seedco traded. However market conditions in Australia in 1976 started to improve whilst exports were maintained at a satisfactory rate. Already after ten years' trading it had become patently obvious to the board and management, that if Seedco growers were going to continue to produce significant quantities of small seeds, the total production could never be absorbed on the domestic market. Therefore it was again resolved by the board that the main function of Seedco in its marketing activities was the promotion of seeds on both the national and export markets.

The discovery of spotted and blue green aphids in Australia in 1976 caused a major upheaval in Australian agriculture and in particular the seed industry. Consent was given for imports to all states except South Australia of certain U.S. varieties of lucerne seed which contained resistance to aphids. The importers of these varieties sold large quantities of seed at very high prices so much so that one of them admitted that the advent of the aphids had been a seedsman's bonanza. Two domestic breeding programs were initiated in Australia in an attempt to produce local varieties of lucerne with resistance to aphids, one at C.S.I.R.O. in Canberra, the other by the Department of Agriculture at Northfield, South Australia. Naturally Seedco management was maintaining a constant vigil over all these activities because it was already obvious that "Hunter River" lucerne variety would in the long term be superseded by new aphid resistant varieties.



Area business meetings at all chosen venues had proven successful, giving growers the opportunity to discuss either publicly or privately, matters of concern to them. They were being conducted at Georgetown, Owen, Keith, Bordertown and Naracoorte in the early autumn and late spring. Management was given the power to add new venues if thought desirable. The matter of promotion of publicly bred cultivars on the domestic market again received much attention, particularly as domestic sales were slow. Deep concern was also expressed at the number of new growers entering into the production of annual medic seed.

A mechanised accounting machine was introduced into the office in August 1976 in an effort to reduce the work load of the accountant, Bert Hansberry. Another change of office to premises at 95 King William Road, Unley was made in August 1976. Seedco's staff numbers were growing and the space at 89 South Terrace was inadequate.

The subject of plant varietal rights was raised for the first time at a board meeting in 1976 whilst concern was expressed regarding the possibility of a decline in demand for seeds in Libya. On the domestic scene the market had picked up and by mid 1976 it had gained considerable strength.

## Seedco wins big Libyan seed contact again

SA Seedgrowers Co-operative Ltd. has won another major contract to supply pasture seed to Libya.

The contract for SA grown medicago seed is worth more than \$220,000.

The general manager of Seedco, Mr. Pat Farnan, said yesterday this was the sixth time in as many years that the co-operative had negotiated a major contract with the Jabel Akhdar authority at El Marj, Libya.

"The market is very valuable for SA medic seed growers," Mr. Farnan said.

Mr. Farnan also indicated that for the sixth successive year the Libyan authority had arranged for a team of SA seedgrowers and farmers to help develop their project at El Marj.

The 10 member team will leave Adelaide on September 2 and work with the project for three months.

The team is: G.H. Patterson, Bute; J.R. Ellaway, Kielpa; H.D. Hahn, Mudoorra; T.C. Schwarz, Mudamuckla; T. Polkinghorne, Arthurlton; G.H. Simmons, Sandilands; G.A. Philby, Geranium; A. Sowers, Coonalpyn; M. Crocker, Adelaide; R. Weedon, Bute.

Mr. Farnan said Seedco's activities at El Marj were

completely separate from the SA Government's demonstration farm.

"However, we work very closely with their personnel," he said.

According to Mr. Farnan, the area is beginning to reap the benefits of the technical expertise that has been provided from SA.

"One of our growers under a two year contract to the authority, Mr. Linden Richter, from Roseworthy, recently reported the area has experienced an excellent harvest," Mr. Farnan said.

"Some farmers in the area will receive more than \$A30,000 for 70 tonnes of wheat alone."

Mr. Richter has reported that the authority is buying hay from the farmers at very good prices.

The first steps towards Seedco entering into research were taken in October 1976 when a sub committee consisting of Stan Rowett, Ron Badman, Tom Preece and Pat Farnan was formed to report on the feasibility of leasing an area of land on the property of Ed Wuttke at Woodside. The subsequent report was favourable and in due course a lease was secured on 7.5 ha and plans set in motion to develop the area for research activities.

Notice was given by management in May 1977 of the urgent need to have "Hunter River" lucerne variety inscribed on the Italian list. Approval was given for immediate steps to be taken to work with the Italian firm, Pratense SRL, Alessandria to effect this inscription, an action which was to prove of great economic benefit to Seedco lucerne seed growers in future years.

Further reports followed of the activities of lucerne aphids and considerable dissatisfaction was expressed regarding the policy of the South Australian authorities towards importation of foundation seed of U.S.A. varieties with resistance to lucerne aphids. Seedco was given permission to import 100lbs of foundation seed of the outstanding winter active variety "Cuf 101" which contained some resistance to both spotted and blue lucerne aphids, so this was at least a start in the struggle to introduce new varieties of U.S. lucerne.

In September 1977, the board considered broadening the base of Seedco and re-affirmed its policy that the principal activities of Seedco were production and marketing of:

- (A) Publicly bred varieties of pasture seeds
- (B) Contract multiplication of Australian and foreign owned private varieties of pasture seed
- (C) Contract multiplication of vegetable seeds and spice seeds.

A highlight of the latter part of 1977 was the news that Seedco had been awarded its second export award by the Federal Government. No other Australian seed organisation had previously attained this distinction.

The official citation read as follows: "South Australian Seedgrowers Co-operative Ltd, winner of an export award in 1972, has shown sustained growth, apart from a period of general world economic downturn and exports of agricultural seeds now provide more than sixty per cent of the organisation's total sales, reducing the producer's exposure to



many risks common to agricultural products. Recent developments have been the export of certain vegetable seeds and the emergence of strong markets in the Middle East and Southern Europe. The company provides technical assistance by sending experienced seedgrowers to developing countries."

In the year when this award was announced, Seedco exported to sixteen countries as follows: Algeria, Brazil, Greece, Holland, Italy, Iraq, Libya, New Zealand, Portugal, South Africa, Spain, Tunisia, United Kingdom, Uruguay, U.S.A. and West Germany. The largest customers were Libya, Uruguay, Italy, West Germany, Algeria, Tunisia and Portugal.

The matter of handling charges, always a vexed question, had received serious study and discussion at board level and in November 1977, it was agreed that the handling charge of 7.5 per cent which had been in vogue since formation in 1964, be raised to 10 per cent.

Production of all seeds declined in 1978 and prices rose accordingly. The duties of Max Jongebloed who joined Seedco staff in January 1974, were gradually being broadened and he was now actively involved in overseas work visiting such countries as Libya, Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia, U.A.E., Kuwait, Iraq and Sth East Asia. Seedco's efforts were being directed towards penetrating the market for contract production of open pollinated Asian vegetable seed crops.

During 1978, board member, Ron Badman made an important visit to South Africa with the aim of promoting the use of annual legumes in the winter rainfall zone of the Cape Province. The visit was sponsored by a large South African fertiliser company, Agricol Seed Co, Bellville, the major South African customer of Seedco and of course by Seedco. During the course of one month, Ron Badman addressed twenty two meetings attended by more than seven hundred Cape Province farmers. The main theme of all the meetings was "The Incorporation of Pasture Legumes in Cereal Farming". Ron Badman's work was conducted in an honorary capacity.

Trading results in 1978 were excellent, another record year despite adverse seasonal conditions.

Barry Langbein advised Seedco management early in 1979, that he was purchasing approximately 8.5 ha of land at Woodside where he proposed to erect a large seed store which



*Seedco board 1979.*

*Left to right, back row: Max Davies, Geoff Treasure, Tom Preece, Peter Murphy (secretary), John Summers, Don Brown. Front row: Gordon Brown, Stan Rowett, Anthony Brookman (chairman), Pat Farnan (general manager), Ron Badman.*

would be available for leasing by Seedco and other land would be available for the continuance of the research activities, if so desired. The board agreed with the recommendation of management in October 1979, that Seedco enter into a long term lease with him for rental and management of the new store and for the research area. The decision to embark on this venture with Barry Langbein was to prove of enormous value to Seedco as it entered the eighties.

Meantime Seedco's office was again transferred to more spacious quarters at 138 South Terrace, Adelaide, just a few metres east of the original office address at 135 South Terrace. Apart from a more spacious office, it was considered that the address in South Terrace was a desirable one because it was located in the agri centre of Adelaide and in close proximity to the office of the Seedco Secretary, Peter Murphy.

During the year discussions were held with representatives of the Yorke Peninsula pea growers regarding the possibility of Seedco marketing their field pea crop. It was later agreed with the pea growers that Seedco would market their 1979/80 crop. Some 140 growers signed marketing agreements which committed approximately 6000 tonnes of bulk peas which were



sold subsequently to the E.E.C. and shipped from Port Giles in March 1980. The shipment was the first ever shipment of bulk peas from South Australia and received much publicity in the rural media.

The chairman of the Seedco board reported at the annual general meeting on 19th November, 1979 as follows: "We have but a short time left of the seventies. Our Co-operative can look back with a great deal of satisfaction on this decade. It was a period of establishment in the seed world and one in which we faced the challenges of changing market requirements. Production must now be planned for markets more often involving contract growing. As we move into the eighties, this type of seed production must expand."

The seventies had proved to be a period of very considerable growth as evidenced by the following figures:

	DOMESTIC \$	SALES % OF TOTAL	EXPORT \$	% OF TOTAL	TOTAL \$
1970/71	570,000	62	340,000	38	910,000
1971/72	635,000	61	411,000	39	1,046,000
1972/73	978,000	63	578,000	37	1,557,000
1973/74	1,320,000	62	827,000	38	2,147,000
1974/75	734,000	29	1,764,000	71	2,498,000
1975/76	834,000	31	1,824,000	69	2,658,000
1976/77	979,000	40	2,437,000	60	3,416,000
1977/78	1,162,000	36	2,059,000	64	3,221,000
1978/79	1,304,000	27	3,556,000	73	4,860,000

Membership increased to 285 during the above period.

## CHAPTER IV

### Substantial Growth in the Eighties

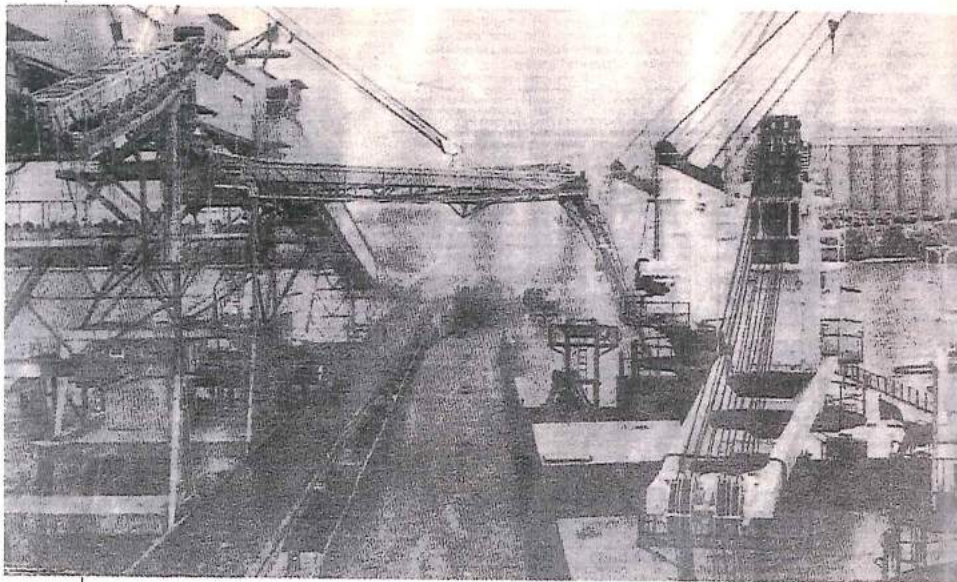
Entering the eighties it was pleasing to record that the magnificent new store at Woodside was functioning well and that the trial plots had been established. The progressive move to this new location was destined to be of inestimable value to the operations of Seedco in future years.

Seedco was requested to take over management of the Libyan demonstration farm at El Marj which had been vacated by the South Australian Government. Following a visit to Libya by the assistant manager and subsequent report, the board resolved that a contract be signed with the Jabel Akhdar executive authority to manage the farm for a short term and Lindon Richter was appointed first Manager of the activity. Lindon had already served with distinction in Seedco short term teams and was well equipped for his new task.

During the second half of 1980, Ron Badman made another overseas trip on behalf of Seedco, this time to Chile and Argentina. He had previously made two successful trips to South Africa, promoting the use of improved temperate legumes in the winter rainfall zone of that country. The visit to Chile was sponsored by the Santiago based seed firm, A.N.A.S.A.C. and that to Argentina by Crawford Keen, S.I.A. Buenos Aires. The visit was a complete success and Seedco is still reaping the rewards in 1988.

Seedco has always been fortunate with the calibre of its small staff. One of them, Pauline Johns, export documentation clerk, became the recipient in September 1980 of a Federal Government Export Dedication Award. At that time Pauline had been on Seedco's staff for a period of five years having joined the organisation as a young clerk/girl friday with no specialised training in export documentation. The prize was a first class return air trip for two persons to any destination in Australia. Pauline was able to use this on her honeymoon some weeks later when she and her husband journeyed to Cairns and return.





# FIRST OVERSEAS BULK PEA SALE

**YORKETOWN**—The shipment of about 6,000 tonnes of bulk peas from Port Giles late last month was a milestone for Yorke Peninsula pea growers. The "Brooknes", a Christian Jepsens ship out of Hamburg, chartered by the SA Seedgrowers Co-operative Ltd., loaded the peas en route to Rotterdam.

This was the first bulk shipment of peas from South Australia and possibly the first from any Australian port.

Among the observers at Port Giles during the loading of the "Brooknes" were Kadina-based Department of Agriculture officers Trevor Dillon and John Both, members of the four-man pea marketing committee (Messrs George Tucker from CYP area; Gordon Stone, Donovan Correll and Mostyn Hoyte from SYP area). Mr P. A. Farnan (General Manager of the SA Seedgrowers Co-Op. Ltd.) and Mr Ian Brown, local representative for the Co-Op.

Three cells of the C.B.H. silo held the peas, which came from about 146 Yorke Peninsula growers.

The effect of silo handling operations on peas was monitored in tests last season in the Port Giles C.B.H. silos, where about 2,500 tonnes were stored in a cell for a South

Australian buyer. Peas were also subjected to a conveyor belt test prior to shipment.

Soon after loading commenced it was found possible to increase the loading rate to 700 tonnes per hour, approximately the same rate as for barley.

## TIMELY ANSWER

A member of the local committee said this overseas sale was a timely answer to current marketing problems.

Increase in average down to peas in recent years, coupled with better yields, had brought disposal problems and some producers were on the verge of going out of pea growing.

At a public meeting last year producers elected the local marketing committee, instructing it to seek alternative markets. An approach to the Protein

Committee of the United Farmers & Stockowners led to a worthwhile sale of peas for pig feed and, indirectly, to the first experiment with C.B.H. silo cell storage of peas.



Our top photograph shows the loading of bulk field peas grown on Central and Southern Yorke Peninsula into a hold of the "Brooknes", berthed alongside the SA Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. wharf at Port Giles. The bottom photograph is of Mr P. A. Farnan, General Manager of SA Seedgrowers Co-Op. who arranged the sale. He was at Port Giles during the loading.

## Delivery of YP export peas sought

Pea growers on Yorke Peninsula with export contracts have been asked to start delivering their crop to Port Giles.

General manager of the SA Seedgrowers' Co-operative Ltd., Mr. P. Farnan, said yesterday growers with contracts with the co-operative could start bulk deliveries on Monday.

Deliveries should be completed by February 29 as shipping had been arranged for early March.

The co-operative had negotiated a contract to export up to 7,000 tonnes of peas for stockfeed.

This will be the first time that peas have been exported from Australia in bulk for the stockfeed market.



Mr Farnan

## \$.75m. seeds contract

The SA Seedgrowers' Co-operative Ltd. has again been successful in negotiating a major sale to Libya.

Mr. P. Farnan, the co-operative's general manager, said in Adelaide yesterday a contract worth \$750,000 had been signed with the Jabel Akhdar Development Authority at El Marj.

It was the eighth consecutive contract the co-operative had made with the authority.

The sale included clovers, medics and cereal seed.

Mr. Farnan said the co-operative had also arranged for eight SA farmers to work at El Marj for three months to supervise the sowing program there.

The seedgrowers' involvement was separate to the SA Department of Agriculture's demonstration farm at El Marj.

The SA farmers would be led by Mr. L. Richter, who recently returned to SA after spending two years in the area.

21/8/80

Extract from the  
Stock Journal, 7/2/80.

Extract from Country Times, 7th May, 1980.



'GIRL FRIDAY' HANDLES MILLIONS

## Pauline's a top export winner

Attractive Pauline Johns, 26, is used to running a "one-man-band" administrative work show.

By Gery Shipway

In fact her rags to riches story is one of a Girl Friday to a multi-million dollar co-

The tale begins five years ago, when Pauline joined a small seed export company, S.S. Seed Growers Co-operative, as a young clerk, cum-odd jobs girl. Her previous job was a clerical position with a export endeavour of their type and general merchant



Pauline Johns . . . rags to riches

Extract from The News, Thursday, September 18, 1980.

Much anxiety was caused by news in 1981 of a claim regarding germination of a considerable quantity of lucerne seed shipped by Seedco to Baghdad, Iraq in second half of 1980. The seeds arrived at their destination some six months after shipment date because the shipping containers sat for three to four months on the quay in Dubai on account of the commencement of hostilities between Iraq and Iran. This extreme exposure to the elements was obviously the cause of the deterioration of the seeds, but as it was an obvious case of "force majeure", there was nothing Seedco could do about the matter because the seeds were in perfect condition upon shipment. In the final analysis the buyers refused to pay for the ten per cent outstanding under the contract and in the circumstances an amount of \$30,000 was written off as a bad debt.

During the same year, Seedco incurred another bad debt with the bankruptcy of a well known Spanish seed firm, Cusesa. The debt was \$US40,000 but the transaction was insured with Australian Government Credit Insurance Commission E.F.I.C. so the net loss was only \$US4000. These two bad debts had occurred within a short space of time and were the first of their kind in seventeen years of trading.

The year 1981/82 was not as successful as the previous one. Sales dropped by \$1.5 million and exports were down by 3 per cent. The problem was greatly reduced prices in Australia

which was a reflection of drought conditions plus depressed conditions in the world seed trade.

Seedco was awarded its third export award in October 1982. Only 22 other firms in all Australian industry had achieved this distinction and no other seed firm had ever been awarded more than one award since their inception in 1963.

During the year 1981/82 exports were effected to thirty two countries in varying quantities. The largest customers were in the following order: Libya, West Germany, South Africa, Portugal, Italy, Chile, Japan, Tunisia, Spain and Thailand and U.S.A.



Presentation 1982. Export award by Hon. Mr. Andrew Peacock to P.A. Farnan, November 1982.



# Enterprise and innovation win 25 firms 1982 Export Awards

## The judging panel

Mr W. O. Adcock (Chairman of judging panel), Chairman, Confederation of Australian Industry Trade Council,  
Mr D. M. Monro, Chairman, National Export Committee;  
Mr J. N. Litten, President, Australian Manufacturers Export Council;  
Mr P. O. G. Forbes, Senior Trade Commissioner, Department of Trade and Resources;  
Mr T. R. Muecke, Australian Chamber of Commerce;  
Mr T. F. Wilson, President, Industrial Design Council of Australia;  
Mr L. C. Miller, President, Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SA) Inc.;  
Mr C. H. Bull, President, Chamber of Manufacturers of NSW;  
Mr T. J. Parry, President, Queensland Confederation of Industry;  
Mr D. Harlem, Treasurer, Tasmanian Chamber of Industries;  
Mr J. Whitelaw, Executive Director, National Farmers' Federation; and  
Mr H. Hurley, Vice-President, Victorian Chamber of Manufacturers.

Enterprise, skill, initiative and innovation were major factors in the success overseas of 25 firms which won Awards for Outstanding Export Achievement in 1982.

The awards, sponsored by the Confederation of Australian Industry and the Department of Trade and Resources, have been made yearly since 1963.

A panel comprising representatives of major industry organisations and the Department selected the winners from 90 applications received from firms in all States.

Awards are made regardless of the scale of operations of the applicants. The panel takes into account growth in exports during a specified period and the quality of methods used to penetrate export markets.

Products exported by the winning firms included acrylic paints, wines, serums and vaccines, chocolates, lightning protection equipment, travel guidebooks, camera tripods and dollies, refrigeration compressors, rotary cultivators, sheepskin products, computers and scientific instruments, builders' hardware and security items, hospital and laboratory equipment and seafoods.

Other items were turf-aerating machines, consultancy services, slurry and irrigation pumps, acoustic couplers, grains and food

storage and materials-handling equipment, pasture and crop seeds, food and minerals processing machinery, ploughs and cultivators, air coolers and dental alloys.

Five firms won their third awards and seven won for the second time.

Victoria received 10 awards, New South Wales eight, South Australia three, Queensland two and Western Australia and Tasmania one each.

Successful firms generally showed both willingness and ability to adapt their marketing strategies to suit the requirements of overseas countries.

Some firms entered into joint-venture or manufacture-under-licence arrangements with foreign firms.

Improved freight and packaging methods helped several of the winners to achieve better, more economical product distribution to export markets.

The firms stressed the importance of having good overseas agents and maintaining contact with them. Some brought agents and distributors to Australia for training.

Sales and promotional visits to export markets were essential to the winners' export successes. The importance of personal contact was emphasised. One firm received a visit by a scientific delegation from the USSR as a result of a sales visit to that country.

Trade displays proved an important means of promotion for most of the firms.

It was now obvious that Seedco was well established as a reliable supplier to both the domestic and export markets.

Earlier in 1982, the state received a visit from two senior executives of the well known U.S. lucerne breeding firm, Waterman Loomis & Co., who publicly stated at Keith they were highly critical of the poor knowledge of basic management techniques possessed by Australian lucerne seed growers and that better seed yields could not be achieved due to extremely poor research to establish better management concepts. Their statements were not particularly well received in some quarters, nevertheless Seedco board took action later that year to initiate in conjunction with the Department of Agriculture and the United Farmers and Stock Owners Association of South Australia, a concerted lucerne seed production research program.

Stan Rowett, Vice Chairman of the Seedco Board of Directors since 1973, formerly announced in October 1982 that he would not be seeking re-election. He was one of the foundation board members and had given Seedco tremendous service over a period of eighteen years as evidenced by a quotation from the 1982 Annual Report as follows "Anyone who has served on a board will know how difficult it is to commence and develop a successful business organisation. Stan has given much. He must be pleased to know that he has played a part in seeing Seedco grow from an initial membership of thirty with a turnover of \$280,000 in its first year's trading to today's membership with a turnover of \$8.5 million." Geoff Rowett, son of Stan Rowett, was elected to fill the vacancy on 25th November, 1982.

The involvement in the "Sidi Hamid" demonstration farm Libya, was terminated in January 1983 because it had become impossible to manage the project on account of lack of funds and direction from the Libyans. Seedco was owed the sum of \$15,000 at this point in time and can never hope to recover it.

Market reports early 1983 indicated very firm values for all subterranean clovers except "Clare" where there was a carry over of approximately 350 tonnes and an estimated new crop of 175 tonnes. Production of other varieties was forecast as being small. Concern was expressed at the over supply of "Clare" and management recommended a low harvest advance for the 1983 "Clare" pool, at the same time pointing out that

## THE HONORS LIST

### Third award

Commonwealth Serum Laboratories, Parkville, Victoria  
Howard Rotavator Pty Ltd, Northmead, New South Wales  
Napier Grasslands, Dalby, Queensland  
South Australian Seedgrowers Co-operative Ltd, Adelaide, South Australia  
Whico Pty Ltd, Brisbane, Queensland

### Second award

Charlick Trading (Division of Charlick Operations Pty Ltd), Mile End, South Australia  
H. I. Clements Pty Ltd, North Ryde, New South Wales  
James N. Kirby Pty Ltd, Milperra, New South Wales

R. E. Miller Pty Ltd, Artarmon, New South Wales

Red Tulip Chocolates International Division, South Yarra, Victoria

The Snowy Mountains Engineering Corporation, Cooma, New South Wales

Southern Dental Industries, Bayswater, Victoria

### First award

ATPV Bell Bryant Ltd, Kew, Victoria

S. J. Baoks and Son Pty Ltd, Fairfield, Victoria

Chroma Acrylics (NSW) Pty Ltd, Asquith, New South Wales

Dexon (Australia) Pty Ltd, Blackburn, New South Wales

E. F. Australasia Pty Ltd, Hobart, Tasmania

Electro Medical Engineering Pty Ltd, Armadale, Victoria

International Fisheries Pty Ltd, Osborne Park, Western Australia

Interskin Products Pty Ltd, Bendigo, Victoria

Labtest Equipment Co (SE Asia) Pty Ltd, Braeside, Victoria

Lonely Planet Publications Pty Ltd, Richmond, Victoria

Seeley Bros, St Marys, South Australia

Warman International Ltd, Artarmon, New South Wales

Wynn Winegrowers Pty Ltd, Nunawading, Victoria

Overseas Trading, 3rd December issue, 1982.



"Clare" was a major Seedco crop and too big a cut back in production would be equally harmful as overproduction.

The board discussed the activities of SAGRIC International in producing and marketing commodities such as seed. Most of the apprehensions arose because of the involvement of SAGRIC International in Iraq and nowhere else. The concerns were later allayed by time.

Seedco took the initiative in 1983 to form a consortium of South Australian seedsmen with the aim of inscribing "Hunterfield" lucerne on the Italian list of approved



Seedgrowers who heard Max Jongebloed's address at the annual symposium of the SA Seedgrowers' Co-operative in Adelaide on Friday included, from left, Messrs Tom Preece, a director of the co-op, of Mount Gambier; Stan Rowett, a past director, of Saddleworth; Willis Draper, of Keith, and Robert Mock, of Bordertown.

## Fescues are fine for fodder

**SA seed growers should consider producing fine fescues for pasture production and tetraploid ryegrasses which, in the US, were used with clovers in pasture mixtures.**

Mr Max Jongebloed, sales manager of the SA Seedgrowers Co-op. Ltd., who recently returned from three weeks in Oregon, told the co-op's annual symposium there could also be potential for SA producers to move into white clover because Oregon

producers felt their production was not high enough and were phasing out the crop.

A wide variety of beans was also becoming increasingly popular and Australia should be paying closer attention to them, particularly since they were legumes and so had additional value in rotations.

Mr Jongebloed said radish production in Oregon had made him rethink several aspects of that crop.

Growers in the US invariably grew it under contract.

They sowed it early and the crop was normally produced under flood irrigation and harvested using rotary headers with neoprene concaves.

That suggested radish should be grown in the upper rather than the Lower S-E, and it was plain that Australian producers had to learn to manage their conventional headers to effectively harvest the crop.

He also warned growers to pay close attention to weed control, for the wrong weed could prevent production of some profitable crops.

cultivators. The move was successful and in 1986, "Hunterfield" was inscribed on the list alongside the well known Australian variety, "Hunter River".

Two controversial topics were raised by members in 1983. One was the subject of "in dirt" advances, which was discussed thoroughly at board level but rejected. The second was that of "interest payments on harvest advances". Debate on this topic continued for some time but eventually the board resolved that no action be taken to introduce such a scheme of payments.

Don Brown, a foundation director of Seedco, retired late in 1983 after nearly twenty years' service. A quotation from the chairman's report to the annual general meeting in December 1983, read as follows: "Don Brown was a foundation director of Seedco and as such has seen many changes over the years. He goes knowing that he has made a significant contribution to the policies of our Co-operative. Thank you Don for a job well done."

A jolt to the export drive was the news in 1983 of the abandonment by the Federal Government of the Export Expansion Grants Scheme. Seedco and its growers had profited considerably from grants under the scheme because of the continued growth in export figures over the years.

On the trading scene, sales were down from \$8.5 million in 1982 to \$7.6 million in 1983 due mainly to a drop in export sales from \$5 million in 1982 to \$2.8 million in 1983. However, despite the drop in turnover a rebate of fifty per cent of handling charges was declared for the year ended 30 September 1983.

Another foundation Director, Gordon Brown announced his retirement in 1984. Gordon was one of the original promoters of the Co-operative and was very influential in getting growers together through the South Australian Seed Producers Association. He was also the first manager of Seedco and had done everything in his power to set the organisation on the road to success. Graham Ramsdale of Bordertown duly accepted the board's invitation to fill the casual vacancy and was re-elected at the annual general meeting in November 1984.

Considerable over production of many varieties of seed took place in the year ended 30 September 1983 as evidenced by the following figures:



Variety	Seedco Production	Est. Seedco annual sales
Woogenellup sub clover	663 tonnes	300 tonnes
Trikkala sub clover	676 tonnes	300 tonnes
Paraponto Medic	343 tonnes	125 tonnes
Sapo Medic	75 tonnes	25 tonnes
Jemalong Medic	425 tonnes	225 tonnes
Cyprus Medic	129 tonnes	50 tonnes
Snail Medic	300 tonnes	130 tonnes
Namoi Vetch	337 tonnes	125 tonnes

A quotation from the Annual Report that year read: "We have sufficient stocks of 'Woogenellup' and 'Trikkala' sub clovers, Snail and Cyprus Medic to cater for Seedco's needs for one year and enough 'Paraponto' medic for at least two years."

Turnover for the year ended 30 September 1984 was \$9.6 million which was an increase of \$2 million over the previous year. The rebate of handling charges of thirty five per cent reflected the reduced income due to the discontinuance of the Export Expansion Grants Scheme.

During 1984, the board gave serious consideration to the future and growth of Seedco. Max Jongebloed was appointed Assistant Manager in July 1984 and Robert Wilson was appointed as Marketing Officer, taking the place of Geoff Cooper who had chosen to return to the Seed Certification Branch of the Department of Agriculture. Concern was expressed at the growing work load in the office and it was resolved to proceed with a plan for introduction of computers at a cost of \$60,000. The warehouse facilities at Woodside were extended very significantly in 1984 and a special Seedco office and stationery store was added to the front section of the store which now measured more than 50,000 square feet.

During the year, Ron Badman successfully completed his third promotional visit to South Africa. His trip was again sponsored jointly by the South African firm, Agricol Seed Co. (Pty) Ltd and Seedco. Over the years the purchases by Agricol Co., had grown substantially and a lot of this trade must be credited to the valuable promotional work done by Ron Badman during his three visits to South Africa.

Two highlights of 1984 were (A) the conclusion of a contract with the West German firm, L.C. Nungesser K.G., for multiplication of their own variety of clover "Nuba" which is the only known privately owned subterranean clover variety in the world today and (B) the negotiation of a large contract

for the supply of annual medic seeds to Iran. Apart from the sale itself, the challenging part of the Iranian contract was the fact that the buyers demanded that the 5000 odd bags of seed be loaded into one of their own bulk wheat carriers. The operation presented many problems but these were overcome, however, by Seedco management and the cargo was loaded into the I.R.I.S.L. vessel at Portland, Victoria.

The matter of promotion of publicly bred cultivars was again raised in many quarters. Seedco initiated a series of advertisements in many rural newspapers and co-operated with the Victorian Department of Agriculture which produced some excellent promotional material on "Trikkala" subterranean clover and the annual medic variety "Paraggio". Later in 1985, the South Australian Department of Agriculture announced that it would also become involved in similar promotion in time for the 1986 seeding season.

The Australian seed trade was shocked with the news during 1984 that Wright Stephenson and Co. (Aust.) Pty Ltd was closing down its Australian operations with the exception of the Sydney office. This came as a big surprise to most of the Australian seed industry and created a lot of speculation as to how the big gap in the trade could be filled.

On Christmas Eve, 1984, Seedco received a Christmas present in the form of a summons over a matter involving alleged breach of contract with Project Shipping Company, Sydney, N.S.W. The claim which was for approximately \$150,000 was eventually rejected in the N.S.W. Supreme Court with costs in favour of the Co-operative.

A major highlight of trading in 1985 was the conclusion of the largest single contract ever negotiated by Seedco. It was made with the Moroccan Government Seed Purchasing Organisation S.O.N.A.C.O.S. and involved a quantity of 764 tonnes of annual medic seeds including a small quantity of subterranean clover seed. Total value \$1,446,000. The sale was concluded in May 1985, during a visit to Morocco by the General Manager. Later in the year, Seedco arranged for two experienced dry land farmers, David Masters and Quinton Rodda, to spend three months in Morocco at seeding time, demonstrating the use of annual legume seeds in the Moroccan ley farming system. Under their guidance some 19,000 hectares were seeded. This farmer assistance continued in 1986.



## LUCERNE SEED "SIRIVER"

*Bred by C.S.I.R.O.,  
Canberra, for  
Australian conditions.*

Superior resistance to spotted aphid, blue green aphid and pea aphid.

Highly winter active, high forage production at least equal to CUF 101 variety, easily established.

Adequate supplies of seed available at reasonable prices.

*Contact your local seed  
merchant for further  
information or*

**SOUTH AUSTRALIAN  
SEEDGROWERS  
CO-OPERATIVE LTD**

138 SOUTH TERRACE, ADELAIDE  
SOUTH AUSTRALIA 5000

**Telex: 82986  
Tel. (08) 51 6675**

National Farm, Thursday  
October 6, 1983.

## Seedco in \$1.5m sale record

THE SA Seedgrowers' Co-operative Ltd (Seedco) is to supply \$1.5m worth of medic seeds to Morocco — the biggest single order gained by the co-operative since it was formed 21 years ago.

Seedco's chairman, Mr Anthony Brookman, said the sale resulted from the large-scale adoption of Australian ley farming techniques in Morocco to raise wheat and animal production.

The 764 tonnes of seed involved in the order will be used to plant 50,000 hectares of land, beginning in September this year.

Mr Brookman said acceptance in Morocco of the need to utilise SA farming systems more widely had been helped by the recent visit there of the SA Minister of Agriculture, Mr Blevins.

The order was finalised by Seedco's general manager, Mr Pat Farnan, during negotiations in Rabat, Morocco, last week.

It culminates marketing efforts which began in 1975. Visits by Seedco personnel every year since 1980 have led to increasing sales of Australian dryland farming seeds to Morocco by the co-operative.

All the seed will be supplied from within the co-op's own stocks. It will be shipped from Port Adelaide in the next six weeks.

Mr Brookman said Seedco's marketing efforts overseas would be much reduced without the support of the Commonwealth Department of Trade and the export grant development schemes available to Australian exporters.

*Extract from The Advertiser,  
28th May, 1985.*

Total sales for the year ended 30 September, 1985 were a record \$12.3 million. A serious bad debt of \$29,000 was incurred late in 1985 with the demise of the Australian seed firm, Hi Test Pty Ltd. The continued growth of Seedco meant more staff which in turn forced another change of office late 1985 to the current spacious premises at 135 South Terrace, Adelaide.

During 1986, considerable effort was put into promotion of "Siriver" lucerne in Argentina where it was seen to be an excellent alternative to "Cuf 101" which variety was being imported in very large quantities by Argentina from U.S.A. An amount of \$US 5000 was made available to the firm Transcereal in Buenos Aires for the promotion of "Siriver" and it was resolved that a leading Seedco lucerne seed grower, Brendon Smart, Keith, visit Argentina for a short term to assist in this promotion. A similar effort was made in Saudi Arabia and Egypt where 'Cuf 101' variety was also the main competitor for "Siriver".

The board, ever conscious of the need for forward planning had given considerable thought to the future staffing requirements of Seedco and resolved in July 1986 that Max



*Seedco board 1985.*

*Left to right, back row: Graham Ramsdale, Geoff Rowett, John Summers, Peter Murphy (secretary), Tom Preece, Clive Bryson. Front row: Ron Badman, Max Davies, Anthony Brookman (chairman), Pat Farnan (general manager), Geoff Treasure.*



Jongebloed, Assistant General Manager would succeed the General Manager, Pat Farnan upon his retirement on 31 December, 1987. The appointment was re-affirmed at the board meeting in January 1987 despite some comments at the annual general meeting in November 1986 that the position be advertised nationally and that all positions on the board be filled in an election.

A major upset at the annual general meeting in November 1986 was the failure of the foundation Chairman, Anthony Brookman to gain re-election to the board. Later at the same meeting Stan Rowett addressed the assembly, praising the dedicated services rendered by Anthony Brookman since his appointment as foundation Chairman. He pointed out that without Mr Brookman's efforts there would be no Co-operative as we know it today and the success the Co-operative had achieved was due in no small measure to the wisdom, experience and breadth of vision of Mr Brookman.



*Seedco chairman, Anthony Brookman, with committee members of Yorke Peninsula Pea Growers Association.*

At the next board meeting on 15 January, 1987 it was resolved that the remarks of Stan Rowett be endorsed. It was also recorded "that as foundation Chairman, Mr Brookman had given outstanding leadership to the board for twenty three years in formulating policy matched with dedicated service". It was further resolved that the board recognise Mr Brookman in a tangible way by holding a dinner in his honour to be attended by all past and present directors. The function was held at the North Adelaide Golf Club and was an outstanding success.

The work of Seedco growers, David Masters, Quinton Rodda, and Ray Elleway who journeyed to Morocco in 1985 and 1986, also Clem Obst who represented Seedco at the Tehran Trade Fair in 1986 and Brendon Smart in Argentina was praised in the Annual Report of 1986.

The year's results were again an all time record with turnover \$15.99 million. Membership was now 440 and rebate of 60 per cent of handling charges was declared. Further good news was the award of a fourth export award to Seedco, a record rarely achieved in Australian industry, let alone, the seed industry. In each of the five years up to 30th June, 1986, Seedco exported to an average of 33 countries. The volume of business to the major buyers varied somewhat and is best illustrated by the following table:

	(\$A '000)				
COUNTRY	1981/82	1982/83	1983/84	1984/85	1985/86
Argentina	63	73	114	298	744
Chile	178	26	68	124	60
Fiji	48	83	84	84	101
Holland	2	84	38	97	170
Hong Kong	11	52	262	148	146
Indonesia	—	11	—	502	459
Iran	—	5	407	—	554
Italy	395	320	193	324	906
Japan	173	143	294	263	275
Libya	898	43	108	51	—
Malaysia	4	9	51	112	206
Morocco	88	95	50	28	1740
Portugal	511	101	14	53	95
Saudi Arabia	—	—	—	40	334
South Africa	702	483	483	172	306
Thailand	103	143	227	176	135
Tunisia	164	42	168	726	328
U.S.A.	96	467	393	306	366
West Germany	867	152	246	300	296



The figures speak for themselves but need some comments:

**(A) Argentina**

Despite internal problems a good market for Australian lucerne and cocksfoot seed.

**(B) Chile**

Very consistent purchaser of subterranean clover and phalaris aquatica seed.

**(C) Fiji**

Consistent buyer of coriander seed.

**(D) Holland**

Reasonable buyer of grass seed and some lucerne.

**(E) Hong Kong**

All sales related to contracts for Asian vegetable seeds.

**(F) Indonesia**

A big buyer of coriander seed.

**(G) Italy**

For many years a traditional buyer of large quantities of "Hunter River" lucerne seed and in recent times, some quantities of "Hunterfield" lucerne seed.

In 1972, Dr Giuseppe Salsano, an agronomist working in the Ministry of Agriculture in Sardinia, Italy, visited Australia to study our dry land farming systems. He spent most of his time in South Australia visiting with the Department of Agriculture, in particular David Ragless and with Seedco management.

Some years later, after his return home and following many trials, he was responsible for the beginning of a dramatic program for improving the pastures in Sardinia using Australian subterranean clover seed varieties.

As a result there was a virtual explosion in demand for subterranean clovers from Sardinia in the eighties, main varieties being Clare and Woogenellup. Seedco was well placed to supply the majority of this seed, much to the satisfaction of its growers.

**(H) Japan**

Most sales in vegetable seed and sprouting radish.

**(I) Libya**

The figures illustrate the downturn in sales due to severe economic and other internal problems.

**(J) Malaysia**

Growing acceptance of Seedco coriander seed is reflected in the growing trade figures.

**(K) Morocco**

A sudden explosion in purchases of annual legumes which is highlighted in another part of this history.

**(L) Portugal**

Steady and important buyer over many years of a range of mediterranean type seeds, particularly subterranean clover. Seedco has been dominant in this market.

**(M) Saudi Arabia**

Seedco has successfully penetrated this market with "Siriver" lucerne against strong competition from U.S.A. All of Seedco's success in this market due to frequent visits by the assistant manager Max Jongebloed.

**(N) South Africa**

One of our very best and consistent customers particularly in the annual medics.

**(O) Thailand**

For some years an important buyer of Asian vegetable seed and coriander seed.

**(P) Tunisia**

Seedco's most consistent customer in North Africa over many years. Majority of purchases, the annual medics, lucerne and seed oats.

**(Q) U.S.A.**

Very satisfactory growth in exports over last five years, mainly in subterranean clover. The figures reflect more aggressive marketing in the area by Seedco management.

**(R) West Germany**

A valuable customer for many many years. A large proportion of sales were made to the firm L.C. Nungesser K.G., Darmstadt.

The good news of the 1986 export award was dampened somewhat, however, by news of the total collapse of the Argentine customer, Transcereal. The amount of debt was approximately \$US 700,000 but the loss to Seedco was \$US 70,000 on account of insurance with E.F.I.C. which covered ninety per cent of the total value of the contracts with Transcereal.



## Legume pasture campaign

Seed producers have launched an energetic campaign to promote the benefits of legume pastures.

United Farmers and Stockowners seed section chairman, Mr. Geoff Treasure, said this week, the industry would be advertising strongly over the next few months.

"Arising from the ruins of a tragic approach to agriculture in the early years of our country, has come the development of what is known throughout the world as the South Australian Farming System," Mr. Treasure said.

"Initially the rotations had been continuous wheat or wheat-fallow, and this mined the goodness from the soils and ruined the structure until they could do nothing more than erode away.



Geoff Treasure:  
"Promoting benefits of legume pastures"

"With the advent of superphosphate and availability of clover and medic seed, pasture years were introduced to the rotation.

"Worn out soils responded in an amazing way as fertility lifted, disease was reduced and structure improved.

"The value of rotating crops that mine the soil with pastures that heal and replenish the soil became well known, and a new era began in our farming history.

"But why is this SA farming system now so hard to find in SA?

"What has caused the tightening of rotations and forsaking the methods that saved our soils and have been so readily accepted overseas?

"Trends toward constant cropping and some bad memories and aphids and other insects have helped cause this — certainly not the price of seed," Mr. Treasure said.

The capacity of SA to produce seed had grown enormously, while prices had hardly changed for more than a decade.

The industry would be promoting the benefits of legume pastures, which included remedies to crop diseases, great increases in fertility and soil structure, marked increases in stocking levels, high value autumn feed and better barley or wheat crops in the years that followed.

"These benefits are available to anyone who is ready to do the job well. Money spent on such programs is money well spent," Mr. Treasure said.

*Extract from Stock Journal, 14th February, 1985.*

Geoffrey L. Treasure was elected in January 1987 as Chairman of Seedco, having held the post of Vice Chairman since 1982, when Stan Rowett retired. He had been a member of the board since 1974 and a former President of the U.F. & S. Seed Section. He is currently a member of the Grains Council of Australia.

An interesting exercise was the feasibility study in 1987 of a counter trade proposal with Morocco. Austrade, Paris was very keen to have the contract cemented with Elders IXL as the principal of an Australian Agricultural Consortium which was to comprise Seedco and a number of other Australian Agri business organisations. Seedco board had agreed to be a partner, subject to satisfactory terms being negotiated with the Moroccan Government. Unfortunately the exercise proved fruitless on account of apathy of the Moroccans.

News of the death of Kurt Eisele, Principal of the West German firm L.C. Nungesser K.G., was announced in mid 1987. The company was one of Seedco's first overseas customers. Kurt Eisele had been a very good friend and

counsellor of the fledgling Co-operative but much more particularly of its management.

The finance manager of Seedco, Bertrand Hansberry retired on 1st July, 1987 having made an outstanding contribution to the Co-operative over a period of 18 years. The board duly placed on record its appreciation of his dedicated services. Malcom Thamm was chosen to fill the vacancy.

The appointment of a technical officer had been in Seedco's plans for many years, but never seriously addressed except for a short period in 1966 when Rex Jettner very competently filled this role for a four month period. However it was now agreed that the appointment of a full time technical officer was long overdue, thus the position was advertised and eventually Greg Flavel, R.D.A., was chosen for the position, commencing his duties in October 1987. The creation of this new post was indeed a step forward.

The turnover for the year ended 30th September, 1987 was slightly below that of the previous year but lower unit prices were a feature of the trading and were reflected in the final figures. A rebate of 30 per cent of handling charges was declared. This was deemed to be satisfactory, particularly in view of the large bad debt incurred through the bankruptcy of the Argentine firm, Transcereal during that financial year.

The withdrawal of Wright Stephenson & Co from a large part of the Australian market gave rise to the increased activities of certain other private operators in eastern states including Combined Rural Traders, Sydney; K. Dooner, Wagga; Norco, Lismore; Primac, Qld; Stephens Pasture Seeds, Ballarat; Sutherland Seeds; West Bros; Rupert Wright and other smaller operators. Also in 1986 Hodder & Tolley Ltd, a subsidiary of Elders IXL, entered the Australian scene. They were well known as a major seed company in New Zealand.

Seedco developed more aggressive marketing plans in Australia in 1986 as a means of addressing the changed situation. These have been very successful and remain so to this day. The markets in the eastern states, particularly in N.S.W. and Queensland and Victoria have always been those of prime importance on the domestic front so the scene for the future is very interesting particularly with the advent of plant varietal rights legislation in 1987.





*Tom Preece (vice chairman), Joan Farnan, Pat Farnan, Geoff Treasure (chairman).*

*On occasion of Farewell Dinner to Pat Farnan, 21 July 1988.*

Two significant staff changes took place in the second half of 1987. The first was the retirement on 1st July, 1987 of Bertrand Hansberry who had rendered outstanding service over a period of 19 years. He was replaced by Malcom Thamm. The second was the retirement of the General Manager Pat Farnan who had held the position for twenty three and a half years. As planned by the board some months previously, Max Jongebloed succeeded as General Manager on 1st January 1988.

To mark the occasion of the retirement of Pat Farnan, a dinner was held in his honour at the Italian Club, Adelaide on 21st July, 1988. It was attended by over 150 persons including members and wives, senior officials of the Department of Agriculture, bankers and local and interstate members of the Australian seed trade not to mention Seedco's London agent, Stan Hitchcock. The dinner was an outstanding success.

The trading results for the year ended 30th September, 1987 was slightly below those of the record year in 1986 mainly on account relatively low unit prices for certain varieties.

The year ended 30th September 1988, fittingly proved to be even better than the record one in 1986 when turnover reached \$16,000,000. So it is indeed pleasing to record that in Seedco's Silver Anniversary year an all time record turnover of \$18,000,000 was achieved consisting of Export \$8,927,000, Domestic \$9,133,000. A big feature of the year was the intense demand for subterranean clovers resulting in a sellers market and very high unit prices. Another record was registered in 1988 when the intake into Seedco lucerne seed pools was a record total of almost 2000 tonnes.

As Seedco enters the second quarter century of its history its future looks very bright. The rural economy of Australia at present is in a very viable condition so in such a healthy economic climate the demand for improved pasture species must remain strong for some time to come.

The impact of plant varietal rights is already being felt in the Australian seed industry. The future is one of many challenges for Seedco but these will be met with the same will and purpose as shown in the past to ensure the continued growth of the Co-operative.



*Max Jongebloed (left) and Pat Farnan on the occasion of succession of Max Jongebloed as General Manager, 1 January 1988.*



## CHAPTER V

### The Libyan Story

On 1st September, 1968, a small group of army officers executed a bloodless coup which resulted in the overthrow of the Libyan monarchy and establishment of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. Colonel Moammar Gadaffi was chosen as President of the new military regime which set up a "Council of Land Reclamation and Reconstruction", entrusted with supervising the programs of the "Agricultural revolution" in five main regions of Libya, one of which was that of Jabel El Akhdar.

The executive authority for Jabel El Akhdar undertook to execute complete programs for agricultural development, land reclamation and reconstruction over a vast area in the region, totalling nearly three million hectares, extending from Benghazi in the west to Tobruk in the east and from 30° latitude in the south to the shores of the Mediterranean in the north.

The authority's programs covered the execution of complete agricultural projects with numerous goals amongst which were the building of new roads, drilling of wells, building of dams, development of livestock breeding and the cultivation of cereals, pastures, vegetables and fruit.

Right from the outset the Libyans determined that they would avail themselves of the experience of developed nations. The Chairman of the Jabel El Akhdar executive authority Bashir Joudeh had already visited Australia on several occasions and was quite familiar with its dryland farming systems.

Seedco first became involved in Libya, when the manager visited the area in 1973 and successfully negotiated a big contract to supply approximately two hundred tons of annual medic seeds and a very large quantity of seed oats to the authority at El Marj.

A separate contract was also concluded at that time. It was for the supply of the services of four dryland farming experts to work with Libyan counterparts for three months from September 1973, supervising the land preparation and seeding

of the seeds using Australian methods of cultivation and planting. The chosen team consisted of Geoff Treasure (Leader), Gordon Brown, Neville Crawford and Geoff Rowett.

As mentioned elsewhere, the vessel *Marco Marulic* which was transporting the large shipment of seeds was extremely late arriving in Benghazi Port. This together with many other frustrating events in the country at that time, seriously threatened the success of the first year of the agricultural program.



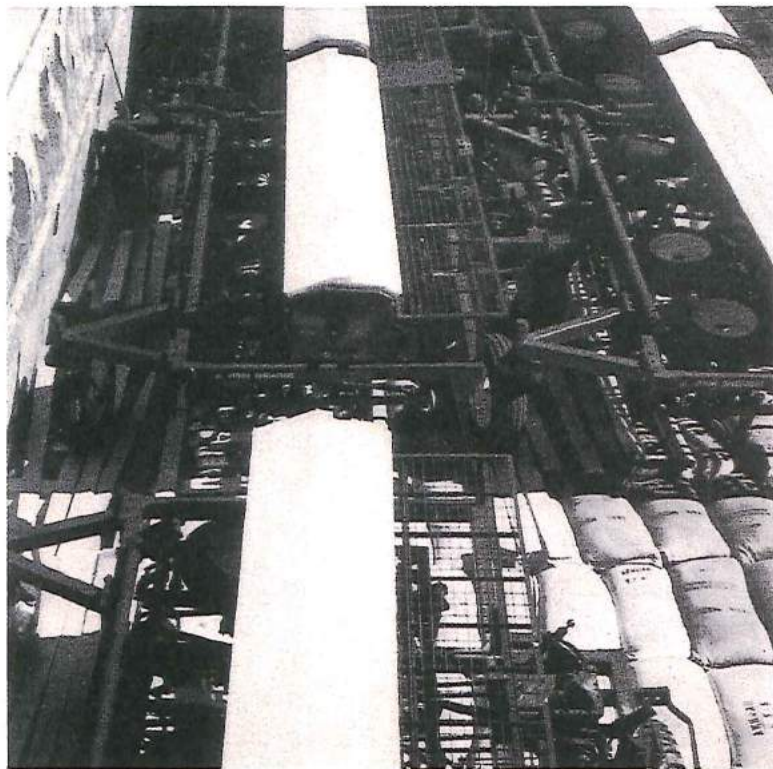
A contract cargo of 5,000 tonnes of SA seed, valued at \$1.4m., left Pt. Adelaide yesterday on the MV *Acritas* for Libya. The contract, negotiated for the fifth successive year by Mr. Pat Farnan, general manager of the SA Seedgrowers Co-operative Ltd., comprised medic, barley, wheat and oat seed. Watching the loading of the seed yesterday are Mr. Anthony Brookman, chairman of directors of the co-operative; Mr. Geoff Treasure, Georgetown, leader of this year's export sale team and of two previous teams; Mr. Nev Sharpe, Two Wells, a new team member; Mr. Farnan; Mr. Clem Obst, Mundulla, and Mr. Kev Schultz, Naracoorte, both team members; and Mr. Max Jongebloed, assistant manager of the co-operative.

From Stock Journal 7/7/77.



Fortunately the Libyan season was very late and favourable. Excellent results at harvest time won the day for the Australian methods. Medic pastures had done well and crops sown on demonstration areas gave as much as three times the yields of adjacent crops seeded under European deep plowing technique. The first thousand hectares sown by the Seedco team later became the South Australian Government Demonstration Farm in 1974 when a team of agricultural advisers staffed the farm. Their contract lasted until 1980.

With the success of the first year came repeat orders for seeds and teams of experts. The four man teams grew to larger teams, all of whom were obliged to learn some basic arabic language and to have a suitable temperament and ability.



*A cargo of Seedco seeds and Shearer machinery in MV Alonso de Ojeda for Libya.*

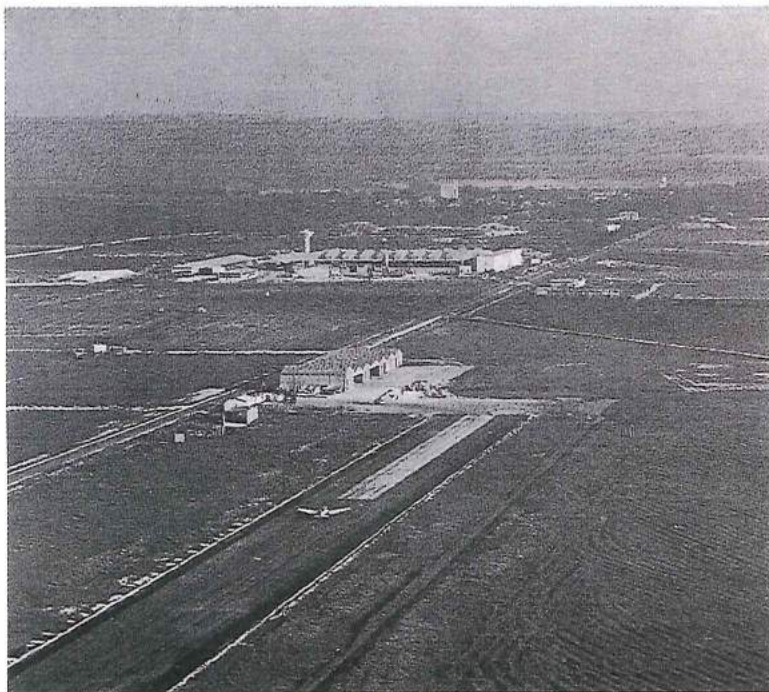


*A large cargo of Medic seed ready for shipment from the showgrounds to Libya.*

Initially the task of the experts was to train the Libyans to sow the crops and explain the basics of the Australian dryland farming system. The better Libyan trainees under the plan were chosen for special favours in return for their co-operation with the project authority and became demonstration farmers for their areas. Bashir Joudeh was depending upon their better yields in crops and improved livestock to encourage the neighbours to follow the same practices and gain the same results.

Problems with language, lack of even fundamental mechanical knowledge, cultural differences and a primitive government administration, all added to the frustrations of the work. Most of the farmers had not seen a seed drill before. They were rather sceptical that the seed sown through these machines would in fact, grow. Despite phosphorous levels as low as one sixth optimal rates, the local adviser for cereals warned against applying superphosphate because it would make the weeds grow. Many farmers who came to the headquarters of the project to take delivery of new tractors and seed drills often became wedged in the gateway of the compound as they were leaving with their equipment.





*Aerial view of H.Q. of Jabel Akhdar, executive authority, El Marj, Libya.*

But positive feedback, friendship and appreciation from the farmers encouraged Seedco men. A belief in the value of teaching self help, kept them in the field accepting the challenges before them. From their side, the Libyans appreciated the on farm practical assistance and related in a friendly responsive way to these farmers from Australia.

By 1980, a world glut of oil meant the flow of petro dollars to the scheme began to falter. The last of the seed orders was written in 1981 which was the year that Seedco assumed responsibility for the "Sidi Hamid Demonstration Farm" which had been vacated by the South Australian Government some eighteen months previously. However due to many deteriorating circumstances, Seedco decided to close down the farm in 1983. Bashir Joudeh's untimely death in 1983 was the final blow to the project which gradually phased out foreign involvement.

When Seedco found a market for two hundred tons of annual medic seed in Libya in 1973, it began an exciting part of Seedco's growth into the export field. The development in this area has been one of the very significant factors which have ensured the success of the Co-operative. It came at a time when Australia was talking of a rural recession and other seed merchants were facing troubles. Seedco was expanding, not retrenching. Interest in the Libyan project from Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco was an influencing factor in increased sales in later years to those countries.

During the period 1973 to 1981, Seedco provided the following teams of farming experts to work the Jabel Akhdar executive authority:

1973	—	FOUR MEN	
1974	—	FOUR	
1975	—	FOUR	
1976	—	FIVE	
1977	—	ELEVEN	
1978	—	TEN	
1979	—	FIFTEEN	
1980	—	EIGHT	
1981	—	TEN	(including the demonstration farm)



*Bashir Joudeh, and Mohammed Salem presenting Libyan farmers with awards.*



## CHAPTER VI

### Seed Processing and Storage

When Seedco was formed in January 1964 the following seed processing sheds were in operation in S.A.:

#### **Adelaide**

M.F. Hodge & Sons Pty Ltd  
Southern Farmers Co-operative Ltd

#### **Mid North**

Booborowie Seeds, Booborowie  
C.S. Rowett & Sons, Marrabel

#### **Upper South East**

G.L. Brown, Kongal  
Keith Seeds, Keith  
Wright Stephenson & Co, Bordertown

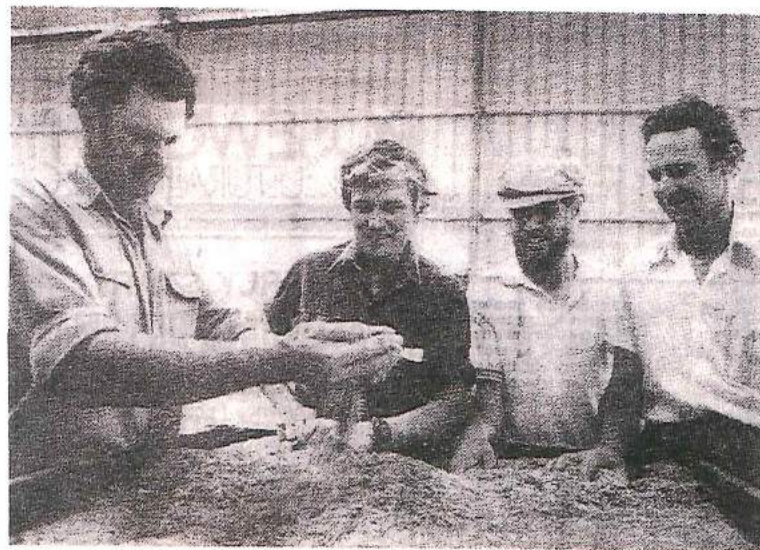
#### **Lower South East**

Wright Stephenson & Co, Naracoorte  
T.D. Stuckey & Co, Rendelsham  
Wright Stephenson & Co, Naracoorte

Only two of these sheds were owned/operated by Seedco members. If the situation had not changed quickly, Seedco would have been very much at the mercy of its competitors and forced into seed processing in order to survive.

However the scene did alter rather dramatically with the emergence of member owned processing sheds at Don Brown's, Keppoch; Geoff Treasure's, Georgetown; Manoora Seeds, Manoora; Tatiara Seeds, Bordertown; Tremalinke Seeds, Naracoorte and Heathville Pty Ltd, Mt Gambier whilst Gordon Brown had updated his facilities at Kongal. All this development made an enormous difference to Seedco's operations giving management the ability to have seed processed according to the demands of the market. The continuing ensuing co-operation from member owned sheds was to prove an important and basic factor in the operations of the Co-operative.

It had always been the practice of Seedco to despatch seed direct from the country processing sheds to domestic customers but this was never a completely satisfactory exercise



*Partners in the Naracoorte seed-cleaning venture, from left, Ken Schultz, Trevor Garwood, Lindsay Badman and Max Davies, look at a sample of demeter fescue which is about to be cleaned and graded.*

thus the concept of a central store which was considered desirable even in the early days was deemed essential as domestic and export trade expanded in the seventies and the eighties. Many sales have been gained interstate, simply because of the ability to deliver promptly and efficiently from Woodside, particularly since 1986 when a new concerted promotional campaign was launched on the Australian market.

Seed storage had always been a problem, despite the co-operation from the sheds. As production expanded, the situation became quite acute until the large shed at Woodside was constructed in 1979. This has proved an excellent move.

It must be recorded here that Ed Wuttke provided an excellent store and service from his shed at Woodside for seven years from 1972 to 1979. Ed Wuttke is renowned for his pioneer involvement in the South Australian seed industry over a very long period and Seedco was very grateful to him for the assistance he rendered during those seven years.



It is interesting to note that along the road to the excellent complex at Woodside, Seedco used the following stores, in or around Adelaide:

South Australian Honey Producers Co-op, Richmond  
1964-67

Brambles Ltd, Mile End Railway Yards, 1968/69

Ringwood Transport, Gepps Cross, 1969/70

Western Transport, Adelaide, 1970/71

Irving Transport, Port Adelaide, 1971

E.H. Wuttke, Woodside, 1972-79

The excellent facilities at Woodside have made an enormous difference to the successful operations of Seedco. The store is owned and operated by Langbein nominees and is leased on long term by Seedco. The shed, of more than 50,000 square feet is capable of housing approximately 5,000 tonnes of legume seed.

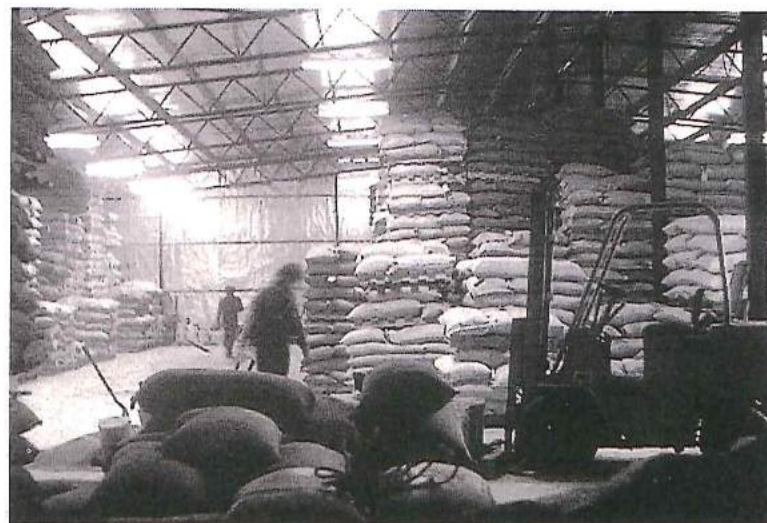
A large percentage of Seedco shipping containers for export are packed at Woodside, whilst the domestic customers both local and interstate receive an excellent distribution service through the shed. Barry Langbein provides all the labour needed to handle the seed and also conducts a retail seed business from the store.



*Seedco store, Woodside 1983.*



*Seedco store and trial area, Woodside.*



*Interior Seedco store, Woodside.*



## CHAPTER VII

### The Woodside Research Farm

In 1976, eight acres on the property of E.H. Wuttke, Woodside, were leased by Seedco as an area for experimental multiplication of foreign seed varieties which had not been grown previously in Australia. It was also intended that the area be used as a demonstration area displaying both to local and overseas visitors, many of the varieties being grown commercially by Seedco members.

Among the first plots sown, were those of "Luna" lucerne, Lupins, Chick Peas, Linseed, Onions, Kale, Coriander, Phacelia, Japanese Radish and certain turf type grasses. The site was under the supervision of a special sub committee comprising C.S. Rowett, R.H. Badman and T.S. Preece, assisted by Seedco management. The seeds were sown by B. Langbein working on a part time basis, as his regular job was

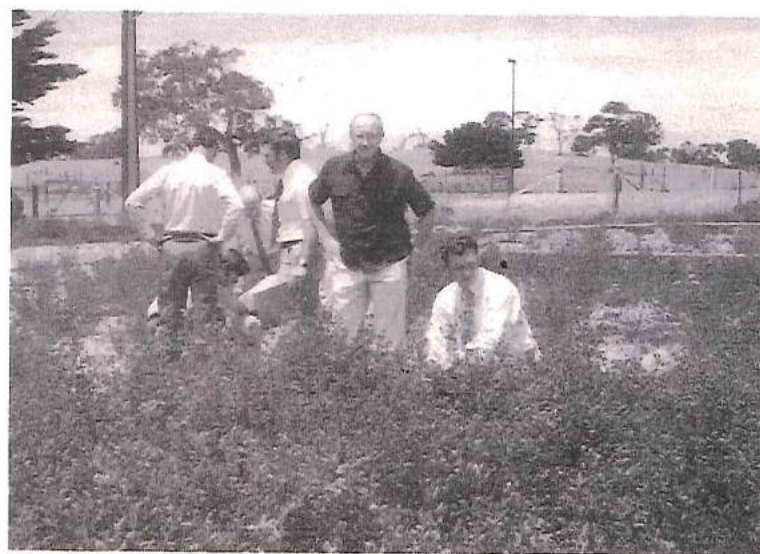


*Ed Wuttke in the field of Basic Luna lucerne on this property at Woodside, 1976.*

storeman in the adjacent seed shed on the Wuttke property. For four years, the sub committee and staff battled on but it was difficult to maintain the area satisfactorily without full time labour. Success was achieved with multiplication of Basic "Luna" lucerne seed and certain Chinese Cabbage varieties which were subsequently grown by Seedco growers.

The operation was moved to an area on the property of Barry Langbein, Woodside, in 1980. Lloyd Blesing was appointed manager with Merv Parham as assistant. Seedco had already taken a long term lease on the new seed shed on the same property and the research area was adjacent to this shed. The combination of storage shed and demonstration farm on the one location proved to be most successful. The property was twenty six acres (10.6 ha). The area leased for research activities was 3.6 acres (1.5 ha).

Seedco board met on the farm in November 1982 to inspect it and were very pleased with the results gained. Small quantities of seed had been successfully multiplied for growers to further re-produce seed on their own properties. Business had resulted from the good impressions by overseas visitors to



*Seedco board and management inspecting field of Basic Luna lucerne, on property of E.H. Wuttke, Woodside 1976.*





*Director Tom Preece in a field of "Nuba" subterranean clover, Woodside 1983.*



*Seedco research farm, Woodside.*

the area. The operation was judged as successful and it was decided to continue the project.

In 1983 the tractor rotary hoe and harvester were sold to Barry Langbein who undertook to do the cultivation work at his cost. Costs were well contained at \$12,250 for 1983 and budget for 1984 was \$18,500 but actual costs only \$11,383. The farm had been visited by many foreigners and was in excellent shape thanks to the efforts of Lloyd Blesing and Merv Parham.

In 1985 it was reported that enough "Tamar" white clover seed had been produced to plant approximately half hectare in the next season and excellent results had been achieved in the multiplication of sugar peas.

Unfortunately Lloyd Blesing was forced to retire in November 1985 and was officially thanked for his services in the 1985 Annual Report. At the same time Tom Preece was praised for his continuing good work in supervising the research area.

A review of the Woodside Experimental Farm was conducted in January 1986 by T.S. Preece, P.A. Farnan and M.C. Jongebloed. It was agreed that up to that time the area had fulfilled its role as a demonstration area of current commercial forage seed varieties for both local and overseas visitors. It had allowed small plots of all crops grown under contract, to be sown for checking and observation. Small scale seed build up had been achieved for varieties such as Linseed,



Sugar Peas, Primrose, White clover and the area had achieved seeding of new seed varieties of all types to be evaluated before embarking on commercial production.

However concern was expressed at the lack of information and experience gained at Woodside not being used to its best, due to a weak link between Woodside and the production fields. Additionally the significance of Woodside would have been much increased if there had been a more positive link between Seedco management, Woodside and the production fields.

The report further recommended that Seedco appoint a full time technical officer to control, supervise and report on Woodside to Seedco.

## CHAPTER VIII

### The Warrabri N.T. Project

The Warrabri N.T. Project was not one of Seedco's success stories, indeed it was a failure. However it did prove one thing, that was the earnest endeavour of Seedco board and management to diversify lucerne seed production under contract to a major international buyer, L.C. Nungesser K.G., Darmstadt, West Germany.

The aim of the project was to import breeders seed of the lucerne variety "Luna" from L.C. Nungesser and seed it under irrigation on the Warrabri Aboriginal Settlement located some four hundred kilometres north of Alice Springs in the Northern Territory.

The location was excellent from a quarantine point of view because of the isolation. The object was to effect a rapid build up of basic seed for further seedings in the South East of South Australia and eventually to produce commercial "Luna" lucerne seed for export to West Germany.



*Staff, Warrabri N.T. farm.*



The project was a joint venture between L.C. Nungesser K.G., and Seedco. Board member Ken Schuster was appointed Executive Director. A considerable number of people were organised to maintain the project including officials of Northern Territory Department of Primary Industry. It was begun in 1973.

Ken Schuster visited Warrabri on a monthly basis, whilst Kurt Eisele, Principal of L.C. Nungesser K.G. visited the site on one occasion. Bee nuclei were brought from Queensland for pollination and an Alice Springs apiarist's services were used to assemble the hives. However despite excellent management and a good flowering the crop failed to yield seed and the project was abandoned in January 1975.

## CHAPTER IX

### A Brief Review of Seed Crops Introduced During the First 25 Years of Seedco's History

When Seedco began its operations in January 1964 the following certified seed crops were being grown by Seedco members.

#### Annual medic

Barrel Medic 173  
Cyprus  
Harbinger

#### Subterranean clover

Bacchus Marsh  
Clare  
Howard  
Mt Barker  
Yarloop  
Woogenellup

#### Perennial grasses

Phalaris tuberosa  
"Australian"

#### Lucernes

African  
Hunter River

#### Other clovers

O'Connors  
Palestine

Since 1964 the following publicly bred varieties have been grown in varying quantities as certified commercial seed crops by Seedco growers:

#### Perennial grasses

Phalaris aquatica

Tall fescue

Cocksfoot

#### Lucernes

#### Variety

Seedmaster  
Sirocco  
Siroso  
Sirolan  
Demeter  
Currie  
Porto

Siro Peruvian  
Paravivo  
Cancreep  
Dupuits  
CUF 101  
Siriver  
Sheffield



#### Annual medics

Wakefield  
Springfield  
Hunterfield  
Trifecta  
Sequel  
Aurora

Borung  
Circle Valley  
Paragosa  
Paraggio  
Parabinga  
Paraponto  
Robinson  
Sava  
Sephi  
Serena  
Sapo  
Tornafeld

#### Other clovers

Balansa  
Red clover  
White clover  
Persian clover

Paradana  
Redquin  
Haifa  
Maral

#### Subterranean clovers

Dalkeith  
Enfield  
Green Range  
Junea  
Karridale  
Larisa  
Meteora  
Nungarin  
Seaton Park  
Trikkala

#### Barley

Galleon

#### Faba Beans

Fiord

Quite naturally the influx of so many new varieties was to prove a challenge to both Seedco growers and management.

Somehow, by virtue of good crop management and aggressive marketing, most of the new crops were catered for with quite a degree of success. Much money and effort was directed towards promotion of the new varieties. Probably the biggest sales figures could be credited to the following varieties:

#### Grasses

Seedmaster Phalaris  
Sirosa Phalaris  
Sirolan Phalaris  
Demeter fescue  
Currie Cocksfoot

#### Lucernes

CUF 101  
Siriver  
Trifecta  
Sequel  
Hunterfield

#### Annual Medics

Paraggio  
Sephi  
Sava  
Serena

#### Subterranean clovers

Trikkala  
Nungarin  
Seaton Park  
Junea

#### Other clovers

Haifa — White  
Paradana — Balansa  
Maral — Persian

#### Barley

Galleon

#### Faba Beans

Fiord

It has been remarkable how quickly seed has been built up by Seedco growers to cater for the demand for all these varieties. Irrigation has played a big part in this activity but the prime factor has been the skills of the growers.

The result of all this expansion has made a big difference to the operations of Seedco when one compares the product list at 15 January, 1964 with that at 30th September, 1988.

Certain of the above listed crops merit mention.

#### (1) Persian clover

The variety "Maral" was introduced from the firm L.C. Nungesser K.G., of West Germany and was first grown for seed by Gordon Brown at Mundulla in 1969 with a yield of



*Ted Higgs B.Ag.Sc., inspecting one of the early crops of Persian clover, in the south east of S.A., in the early seventies.*



approximately 1250 kg/ha. The species was previously known in Australia by the common name "Giant Shaftal" but the "Maral" variety which was of Portuguese origin has now become a permanent crop in Australian agriculture. In the early 70's Seedco secured contracts for 100 tonnes of "Maral" per year for re-export to West Germany. Ultimately, however, low prices in Europe caused production to slow down. Meantime the crop became more acceptable to Australian authorities and the crop is still an important one in S.A. and Vic.

Seedco has turned to production of some private varieties of Persian clover seed in recent years, quantities 60 tonnes per annum, all seed for re-export to Europe.

#### (2) "Haifa" White clover

The variety originated in Israel and was first introduced into Australia by the C.S.I.R.O. in 1954. The first basic seed crop in South Australia was grown on Wrightson farm in 1979/80. In 1981/82 the first commercial seed crops of "Haifa" were grown in the South East of S.A. when 10 tonnes of certified seed was produced. Seedco growers that year were Ron Badman, Leith Davies, Terry Pilgrim and Geoff Treasure.

Since that time demand in Australia for "Haifa" has expanded dramatically and it is now a major seed crop for Seedco growers on irrigation areas. Total S.A. production 1987/88 was 500 tonnes of which Seedco growers produced 400 tonnes of seed.

#### (3) Carrot

Grown in the lower South East of South Australia in the early seventies by Seedco and on increased areas around Koppamurra in 1975 but not successful in that district account hotter finishing climate causing problems with germination. Since 1978 areas solely at Mt Gambier and Millicent with areas reducing. Hybrid carrot seed production never undertaken on account of lack of a technical officer.

#### (4) Chinese Cabbage

First grown in S.A. by Mock Bros, Bordertown under contract with Yates in 1975/76 season. Seedco first became involved in 1976/79 in growing contracts with Henderson Seed Co., Melbourne. This was a start but not a satisfactory one



*An early trial of Egyptian Coriander at Woodside.*

until the early 1980's when Seedco began to obtain its own contracts, dealing direct with overseas buyers. As management skills of the crop improved, production became more consistent. Today the Co-operative has a solid base in open pollinated Chinese Cabbage seed production under contract with Hong Kong, Taiwan and Thailand.

#### (5) Coriander

One of the more recent success stories of Seedco. Coriander seed has been produced for many, many years mainly in China, India, Morocco, Egypt and Rumania. It is used primarily in the spice trade but also in Chinese communities where its common name is "Chinese Parsley" and in other parts of the sub continent, as a herbal medicine.



The first Seedco trials with Coriander were conducted at Woodside Research Farm in 1979 using seed introduced by Max Jongebloed from Chia Kwang Seng R.O.P., Bangkok. In the following year larger seedings were made on the properties of John Summers, Keith and Stan Rowett and Sons, Marrabel. Further success led to the first commercial seed production of 146 tonnes of seed in 1982. By then it was obvious that Coriander would be a viable seed crop for Seedco growers, particularly as an alternative to wheat. As production expanded in the eighties, markets were penetrated in many countries, mainly Asian ones. Currently Seedco produces between 2000/2500 tonnes of Coriander seed per annum. Marketing success has been achieved because of the very high quality of Seedco seed, good packaging plus reliability of supply and shipping. Like all crops there are the usual hazards such as disease, lack of rain, too much rain when the crop is mature which causes discolouring of the seed making it unacceptable to the more fastidious buyers of seed from Egypt which seed has a light straw colour.



*Pat Farnan, general manager Seedco, inspecting a crop of Japanese Radish seed at Cesena, Italy 1982.*

#### **(6) Fenugreek**

Like Coriander, Fenugreek is primarily a spice seed but it is also a legume which is also used in the pharmaceutical industry in the manufacture of the contraceptive pill.

Seedco production commenced about the same time as that of Coriander, but ready markets were difficult to find at prices acceptable to the growers, except within Australia. However the Seedco harvest of 200 tonnes in 1987 led to export markets in Malaysia, U.S.A., Singapore and in 1988 to Europe and it seems there is now a permanent market for a limited quantity of Seedco production each year.

#### **(7) Sundry Asian Vegetable seed crops**

The entry into production of open pollinated Chinese Cabbage seed led to expansion into production of Chinese Radish and Kale seed, also Sugar Peas. All these crops are grown strictly under contract with Asian buyers and will be a permanent part of future Seedco production.

#### **(8) Sprouting Radish**

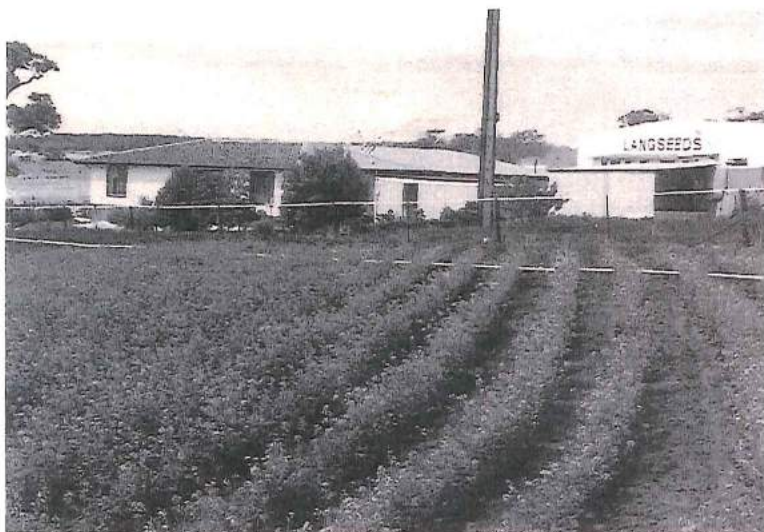
Production for export to Japan started in 1978 but the areas were small and harvest results poor as it was found the pods were too difficult to thrash. By 1983 the future of the crop was at the cross roads when the board agreed with management recommendation to send Tom Preece and Max Jongebloed to U.S.A. in an effort to solve the problem which they did but too late for the boom Japanese market which crashed through over supply in 1984/85.

Nevertheless Seedco persisted with some production contracts but despite improved crop management techniques these failed to produce the quality of seed acceptable to the Japanese sprouting trade which had become extremely finicky with its seeds standards.

#### **(9) Contract lucerne seed crops**

The first contracts for multiplication of lucerne varieties which contained resistance to aphids were negotiated with Wright Stephenson & Co in 1978. The variety was "WL 318". Seedco is still growing the same variety today but production is now very small on account of its poor seed yield, on the average 200 kg/ha. Other U.S. varieties such as "Cimarron", "Southern Special", Northrup King's "Matador" and the





*Seed increase of a new O/P Chinese cabbage variety at Seedco research farm, Woodside.*

Cargill varieties of "Granada" and "Baron" were also grown on contracts but with the same result, good varieties but poor seed yielders.

On paper the above exercises looked to be a sound diversification from the growing of seed of public varieties but this was not the case for apart from one company, it was regrettably impossible to deal with the others due to their policy on pricing.

A tribute must be paid to the following growers who made a consistent commitment to this form of production:

Brian Densley  
Robert Mock  
Tony Campbell  
Rowert Bros  
Brendon Smart

#### (10) **Public aphid resistant varieties of lucerne**

Since the advent of aphids in Australia in 1977, the following aphid resistant varieties of lucerne have been bred and released in Australia:

Variety	Breeder
"Siriver"	Dept Plant Industry, C.S.I.R.O. Canberra
"Hunterfield"	S.A. Dept of Agric. Northfield
"Wakefield"	S.A. Dept of Agric. Northfield
"Sheffield"	S.A. Dept of Agric. Northfield
"Springfield"	S.A. Dept of Agric. Northfield
"Trifecta"	Dept. Primary Industry & C.S.I.R.O. Brisbane
"Sequel"	Dept. Primary Industry & C.S.I.R.O. Brisbane
"Aurora"	N.S.W Dept of Agriculture

The most successful varieties have been "Siriver", "Trifecta", "Sequel" and "Hunterfield" in order of merit whilst "Aurora" is looking promising at this moment. Mention must also be made of the successful introduction of the famous U.S. variety "Cuf 101" which was the first non dormant public variety of aphid resistant lucerne introduced into Australia in the late seventies.

Seedco growers are currently producing large quantities of "Siriver" and important quantities of "Trifecta", "Sequel" and "Hunterfield" and "Cuf 101". The introduction of these varieties presented many marketing challenges for Seedco management but these were taken up successfully as evidenced by the list of inscriptions in foreign countries in another section and subsequent export figures.

Contract seed production will become an even more important facet of Seedco's operations as time goes by. At the end of the 1987/88 financial year with a technical officer on the staff and the gradual impact of plant varietal legislation becoming obvious, Seedco is well placed to cater for the welfare of its growers as it approaches the nineties.

Over the years Seedco has been forced to take steps to inscribe public Australian varieties of seed on overseas lists. These actions were necessary because of the lack of a responsible federal seed authority with the interest or desire to take such steps.

Following is a list of overseas inscriptions effected by Seedco over the years:



1977	West Germany	Demeter Fescue (Failed)
1978	Italy	Hunter River lucerne
1984	Italy	Hunterfield lucerne
1984	Saudi Arabia & Egypt	Siriver lucerne
	Greece	Hunterfield lucerne
	Saudi Arabia	Springfield lucerne
		Siriver lucerne
1985	Argentina	Siriver lucerne
1986	Spain	Trifecta lucerne
		Sequel lucerne
1986	Morocco	Siriver lucerne
1985	Portugal	Sub clovers, Annual Medics
		Oats
1988	Spain	Sub clovers
1988	South Africa	Siriver lucerne
		Trifecta lucerne



*Seedco board, January 1988.*

*Left to right, back row: Peter Murphy (secretary), John Summers, Clive Bryson, Graham Ramsdale, Geoff Rowett, Brendon Smart, Max Davies. Front row: Max Jongebloed (general manager), Ron Badman, Geoff Treasure (chairman), Tom Preece (vice chairman), Pat Farnan (consultant).*

## CHAPTER X

### Some Statistics/Facts of Seedco

#### BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS OF DIRECTORS

Name	Location	Date of Election	Date of Retirement
R.H. Badman	Naracoorte	1964	
A. Brookman	Meadows	1964	1986
D.E. Brown	Keppoch	1964	1983
C.E. Bryson	Keppoch	1983	
M.L. Davies	Naracoorte	1978	
W.R. Jettner	Morgan	1964	1968
A.J. Longbottom	Keppoch	1964	1965
B.J. Longbottom	Keppoch	1965	1978
T.S. Preece	Mt Gambier	1973	
G.R. Ramsdale	Bordertown	1984	
C.S. Rowett	Marrabel	1964	1982
G.R. Rowett	Marrabel	1982	
K.E. Schuster	Naracoorte	1964	1978
B.W. Smart	Keith	1986	
J.W. Summers	Keith	1978	
G.L. Treasure	Georgetown	1968	
G.L. Brown		1964	1984
K.J. Stuckey		1964	1973

#### SEEDCO HISTORY OF EXECUTIVE STAFF

Name	Date of Appointment	Title	Date of Retirement
P.A. Farnan	17th August 1964	Manager	30 June 1988
B.T. Hansberry	7th July 1969	Accountant	30 June 1987
M.C. Jongebloed	9th January 1974	Asst. to Manager	
M.G. Thamm	1st June 1987	Finance Manager	
G.P. Flavel	26th October 1987	Technical Officer	
R.H. Wilson	19th December 1983	Marketing Officer	
R.H. Wilson	1st January 1988	Marketing Manager	
M.C. Jongebloed	1st January 1988	General Manager	

#### Overseas travel by staff

P.A. Farnan	17th August 1964 to 31st December 1987	37 trips
M.C. Jongebloed	1st January 1974 to 30 September 1988	20 trips
R.H. Wilson	1987	1 trip



#### Numerical strength of staff

As at 30 Sept 1964	Number of staff	One
As at 30 Sept 1988	Number of staff	Eleven

#### Seedco Turnover

As at 30 Sept 1964	\$ 250,000
As at 30 Sept 1988	\$18,000,000

#### Seedco membership

As at 30 Sept 1964	57
As at 30 Sept 1964	445

### SEEDCO

#### HISTORY OF REBATES OF HANDLING CHARGES

Seedco has declared a rebate of handling charge in every year since its inception as follows:

Year	Percentage amount of the rebate		
		1975	60
		1976	48
		* 1977	50
1964	67	1978	50
1965	65	1979	55
1966	59	1980	70
1967	55	1981	55
1968	54	1982	55
1969	46	1983	55
1970	17	1984	35
1971	21	1985	45
1972	30	1986	60
1973	43	1987	30
1974	46	1988	60

\* Handling charges raised from 7.5% to 10%

#### AWARDS OF MEMBERS

Ron Badman	Churchill Fellowship	1966
Tom Preece	-	1977
Max Davies	Nuffield Fellowship	1968
Anthony Brookman	A.M.	1979
Pat Farnan	A.M.	1986