



MEDIA RELEASE
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West Australian agricultural pioneers honoured

Three men who have made a difference to rural life and agriculture in Western Australia have been inducted into the Agricultural Hall of Fame.

Established in 1999 under the auspices of The Royal Agricultural Society of Western Australia, the Agricultural Hall of Fame pays tribute to the men and women who have shaped the history and influenced the present and future of agriculture.

This year's inductees are William Padbury (1867 – 1951), Robert Hayes-Thompson (1921 –) and Gregory William (Bill) Henderson (1929 –), bringing the total to 45.

President of The Royal Agricultural Society of WA, Mr Tony Devitt says the Hall of Fame is the perfect opportunity to shine the spotlight on those making a difference in the rural community.

“This year we induct a further three worthy members whose commitment to agriculture, business endeavours and the social welfare of their community can only be praised,” says Mr Devitt.

“These people are beacons of inspiration of what's possible in our industry and rural communities. We salute them and hope others, particularly young people, take inspiration from them.”

Inspired by Canada's Agricultural Hall of Fame, the West Australian Agricultural Hall of Fame was launched in 1999 and now has 45 inductees.

The inductees will be honoured during a lunch at the Royal Agricultural Society of WA. Their portraits will hang in David Buttfield House on the Claremont Showground and will be open to the public during the Smoke Free Perth Royal Show this year.

The Smoke Free Perth Royal Show runs from September 26 to October 3, 2009.

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Robert Hayes-Thompson: 9045 8249

Bill Henderson: 9317 1554

Matthew Padbury (grandson) for William Padbury: 9387 5750

Background on the 2009 inductees of the Agricultural Hall of Fame:

William Padbury had a long and astute liaison between business and farming. An English migrant in 1892, he eventually turned his uncle's Colonial Stores at Guildford into one of the largest stores dealing in merchandise and agricultural produce in the State. He became a major importer-exporter, took control of Peerless Flour Mills and developed farming interests in properties stretching from Three Springs to Dumbleyung. He set up acclaimed studs of cattle, sheep, pigs, horses and poultry with astute breeding and importation programs. President of The RAS in 1913 and a councillor for 51 years, he won eight Governor's Cup wins between 1912 and 1922.

Robert Hayes-Thompson is an outstanding representative of that small band of dedicated people whose contribution to their local agricultural community has significantly enhanced its way of life. A RAS councillor for more than two decades, he has been involved in a wide range of organizations and projects working to improve the medical, social, physical and sporting facilities in the eastern Wheatbelt.

His achievements include: councillor of the Merredin Shire for 11 years and president for six; president of the Kelleberrin RSL for 25 years; member of the Kelleberrin Hospital Board for 28 years; inaugural president and member of the Merredin Hospital board. He has played a key part in such diverse undertakings as developing live theatre in Merredin, initiating major projects for limiting urban salinity, improving water supplies to remote areas and provision of aged-care facilities in Merredin.

Gregory William (Bill) Henderson

Farmers from all over Australia – many of whom don't know the town of Kondinin – are aware of the contribution the Kondinin Group has made to Australia's agriculture. Bill Henderson was the driving force behind the foundation, promotion and development of this influential organisation. He oversaw its transition from a local pasture improvement group in 1968 to a broad-based institution with branches in every state, shrewdly combining science and practical know-how to evaluate and improve farming practices, machinery, tools and ideas for the benefit of farmers.

As an "early adopter" on his own property he has been an innovator and respected mentor who saw in his own success the opportunity to help other farmers develop expertise and knowledge of crop and animal production, machinery performance and management.