

## BOOK REVIEW

'Livestock Management in the Arid Zone' by Victor Squires (Publishers: Inkata Press, Melbourne) 1981.  
Recommended price \$35.00.

The book is an ambitious attempt to cover a very wide range of topics related to animal production in the arid zone of Australia and to serve the interests of a wide variety of people including students, producers, extension workers and scientists. It will, no doubt, provide interesting reading, not only for those for whom it was designed, but also for those with more general interests in the arid lands of Australia.

For producers and extension workers, the most informative sections of the book are those which relate to the location of watering points and to the structure of stockyards and associated facilities. The sections on general behaviour, diet selection, reproduction, growth and general management of cattle in the arid zone are rather superficial as are those which discuss the behaviour, fertility, nutrition, growth, and wool production of sheep. The sections on mixed grazing, feral animals, wildlife, and exotic diseases which form part four of the book are appropriate and interesting and serve as reminders of the complexity of livestock management in the region.

The careful reader might however be disappointed in some aspects of the book which, after all, promises to fill an important gap in Australian agricultural

literature. The 'arid zone' for example, is not well-defined despite a chapter devoted to the subject, and that of 'rangelands' is equally elusive. A number of other imperfections also detract from the overall quality of the book. The expression used to describe lamb marking percentage (p. 163) is misleading, as is the statement relating to vitamin A deficiency in grazing livestock (p. 62). Equally unhelpful is the use of the Elliot (1957) formula which relates to flock replacement calculations. It is also a pity that on occasion, the source of material is not acknowledged. This will particularly disadvantage students who frequently need to refer to original documents.

The book is well-illustrated, with a pleasing balance of text, tables and figures, though some readers will find it a little difficult to interpret some of the illustrations. It is, nonetheless, highly readable and represents a collation of a large volume of material not readily available to the lay reader. It is likely the book will find a ready market but it is probable that the greater number will not be those for whom the book was designed.

*M.K. Hill*