

## **Obituary**

# **Bill Kain**

Internationally respected agriculturalist Dr William (Bill) Michael Kain died 25 March 2011, aged 71. He was chairing the final session of the International Farmers Conference in Methven when he suddenly collapsed.

Bill Kain was a high-energy leader and a significant achiever. He completed BAgSc, MAgSc (Hons) and PhD degrees at Lincoln University and began his working career as an entomologist at the Ministry of Agriculture in 1965. Sometime later, he became the director of the Levin Horticultural Research Centre and then a director for the Ministry's lower North Island region.



Dr Kain was AgResearch's first chief executive and retired from that position in 1997 to form his own Christchurch-based technology and business development company. He also became director of Lincoln University's Postgraduate and Research School in 2001.

He was a director of several industry organisations, chiefly a trustee of the primary industry Agricultural and Marketing Research and Development Trust (Agmardt) and for the last 3 years its chairman.

In an interview with the *Dominion Post* last year on retiring from Agmardt, Dr Kain expressed his frustration at a 20-year rundown in government investment in science that had undermined the national agricultural productive capacity and was the reason, he believed, for New Zealand slipping down the standings of the world's industrial nations. He was pleased to see that the current government recognised the need to reinvigorate agriculture with further investment and its primary growth partnership scheme. However, he believed more was needed and what we were seeing were '... only stopgap measures rather than moves to ensure an ongoing pull-through of science and technology into the commercial environment.'

Bill Kain was made a Fellow of the New Zealand Institute of Agricultural and Horticultural Science and in 1998 was awarded Lincoln University's prestigious Bledisloe Medal for services to agricultural research.

Dr Kain is survived by his wife, Lesley, three children and six grandchildren.