About Professor Robert Dickie Watt

The inaugural R.D. Watt Centenary Lecture marks the first lecture delivered to agriculture students at the University of Sydney in March 1911 by Australia’s first Professor of Agriculture, Robert Dickie Watt. The annual lecture is a memorial to the strong vision and leadership of our first Dean, as well as a celebration of one hundred world-changing years of agriculture.

Glasgow-bred Watt commenced duty on 20 February 1910 at the age of 28, setting out to single-handedly design a curriculum that would educate students to become agricultural scientists rather than farm managers. He taught much of the course himself, and in 1920 championed the establishment of an agriculture faculty, of which he became the first Dean.

“Watt developed courses and a strong scientific content which became a characteristic of the Sydney degree”, Professor Les Copeland, ‘75 Years of Agriculture’

About the Guest Speaker

Professor Steve Archer

Steve Archer is a Professor in the School of Natural Resources and the Environment, The University of Arizona, and an American Association for the Advancement of Science Fellow. His areas of expertise include ecology of grasslands, savannas and shrublands, plant-soil-animal interactions, tree-grass dynamics, terrestrial carbon cycle and land cover change.

Topic

Woody Plant Imperialism: New Perspectives And Current Challenges

The balance between woody and graminoid life forms has shifted in recent decades, resulting in widespread tree/shrub proliferation in the world’s grasslands and savannas. Reasons for this, which are varied and the topic of active debate, will be reviewed. This phenomenon has long been recognised as a threat to livestock production; and managing the woody-herbaceous mixture to balance wildlife conservation and livestock production goals is controversial.

Policy and management issues related to grazing land conservation extend well beyond the traditional concerns of wildlife conservation and livestock production to include effects on stream flow and ground water, carbon sequestration, biological diversity and impacts on atmospheric chemistry and the climate system.

This talk will discuss challenges facing the research community in quantifying and monitoring these varied impacts; challenges facing the management community in achieving woody-herbaceous vegetation mixtures in configurations that satisfy competing objectives; and pitfalls facing policy makers that fail to take a wide view.

Event: Lecture and Cocktail Reception
Date: Thursday 10 March 2011
Time: 6pm for 6.45pm (Refreshments available)
Venue: MacLaurin Hall, The University of Sydney
Cost: Free event
RSVP: Essential by March 7 at skaidy.gulbis@sydney.edu.au
Enquiries: (02) 8627 1006 or skaidy.gulbis@sydney.edu.au
More details: http://sydney.edu.au/agriculture