

Preface

It is essential that those involved in the provision of advice to farmers have the necessary professional and technical skills required to investigate and advise on problems of poor pasture and livestock productivity and to determine whether trace element deficiencies are likely to be involved.

To provide a sound basis for this advice the current state of knowledge about the role of trace elements in Victorian grazing enterprises has been reviewed. There was much to review. The Department of Agriculture and Rural Affairs has been conducting programs of field and laboratory research into trace element problems since the 1940s, with relatively more pasture work in earlier decades and more animal work in recent decades.

Development of the review began in 1982 when a Departmental Trace Element Review Committee was appointed and commissioned a discussion paper on the subject. Subsequently, staff from the various sections of the Department involved with trace elements met at workshops at Benalla, Glenormiston and Ellinbank. There, they reviewed details of personal experience, unpublished supplementation trials and other trace element research that had been conducted throughout Victoria. The authors incorporated this information with other Australian and overseas research and experience to produce this publication.

This review provides an important source of information of considerable interest to a wide audience. It will be a reference for Departmental officers conducting their diagnostic, research and extension activities, and also for farmers, private veterinary practitioners, agricultural consultants, drug, chemical and fertiliser companies, stockfeed manufacturers, students, educational institutions and community groups.

Specific registered products are sometimes mentioned as a guide to appropriate treatment. This should not be interpreted as a specific endorsement, as other similar products may also be available and new products are continually being developed.

The review includes an extensive bibliography of both published and unpublished reports on trace element research work conducted in Victoria by the Department, as well as other published papers relevant to Victorian situation.