



farming people



# HRL news

Hazlett Rural Limited

**Top right: Alister Brown**  
**Below right: Spruced up sheep yards**

## Coalgate spruced up

The regular HRL sale programme has settled into weekly Thursday sales for sheep from late October until the end of July, with cattle offered every alternate week. This season there have been three calf-only days on top.



The sheep yards have been substantially upgraded — there are now five loading ramps including a special one for car trailers. All dodgy rails have been replaced and all races re-metalled with more cubic yards than Ed Marfell cares to think about.

There are now three sheep-drafting races, two being three-way and one five-way. They are separately located so all three can be in use at the same time. Some of the larger pens have been subdivided such that there are now about 250 pens in total.

One day in February a weekly sale clashed with a ewe fair, but the yards coped admirably with around 12,000 sheep.

Feedback from prime sheep buyers has



been extremely positive, with favourable comments, especially, about the cleanliness of the stock after their day or so in these yards.

Looking after the sheep yards for HRL is local Coalgate farmer and contractor

Alister Brown. The state of the yards now is a credit to all concerned — as indeed are the cattle pens which now feature new planked walkways on top of the rails, with excellent steps and guardrails, enabling a clumsy photographer to make his way around a calf sale with ease!



David Hazlett winds up the tempo at the second High Country Calf Sale in May, which capped off a successful calf-selling season for HRL.

### THE BLOKES' DIARY ...

<b>June 17</b>	<i>Coalgate</i>	All Stock
<b>June 24</b>	<i>Coalgate</i>	Sheep only
<b>July 1</b>	<i>Coalgate</i>	All Stock
<b>July 8</b>	<i>Coalgate</i>	Sheep only
<b>July 15</b>	<i>Coalgate</i>	All Stock
<b>July 22</b>	<i>Coalgate</i>	Sheep only
<b>July 29</b>	<i>Coalgate</i>	All Stock
<b>Aug 12</b>	<i>Coalgate</i>	All Stock
<b>Aug 26</b>	<i>Coalgate</i>	All Stock



Welcome to Hazlett Rural Limited, a sustainable rural services business. Simple as that, we're all about farming people. That means we're committed to providing the people that make up the heartland of New Zealand's rural sector with top-of-the-line services and service. It also means that we are focused on the growth of those people and their farms, businesses and families.

It's the long term view. We take care of you and you'll take care of us. The rest, we take care of last.



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## Blockes online!

The HRL website has just gone live. Designed to provide easy access to all essential info, the site is expected to expand later as future needs are identified. For now, though, there's plenty up there.

### You can:

- Peruse yardings of upcoming sales
- Read the blockes' profiles
- See who specialises in what classes of stock
- Download our calendar, an account application form, an animal status declaration form... even another copy of this newsletter!

Check us out at [www.hazlettrural.co.nz](http://www.hazlettrural.co.nz)

The ever-present danger of spouting forth in print is that events will prove you wrong. So it has been since the last newsletter when I predicted a bumper calf-selling season. Those bonnie weather conditions I was enthusing about did not continue and now the South Island is very dry, almost everywhere (well, they were anyway). However, from a buyer's perspective, calf values would probably have looked a bit more realistic!

The prime market continues to show an underlying strength, however. There is a shortage of good prime animals as many farmers went ahead and slaughtered early. Those who have seen their way clear to take on stores over recent months will see a good return on that investment.

Yet again I have the pleasure of welcoming new rural blockes. Paul Whittaker gives us a beach-head in the all-important North Otago region. His recruitment, and consequent regional expansion, follows the pattern that we have mentioned before — a rural bloke became available whom we could plainly see fits the mould of the HRL agent: experienced, committed to client service and of course a jolly good bloke. We also welcome Jacinda Stevens to the office; she is engaged full-time in processing our burgeoning livestock business and we're confident she will fit in well.

We have received some responses for our call for pics for the 2011 calendar, but we'd like more please — a bit of friendly competition for the monthly spots wouldn't go amiss.

**Ed Marfell**



Lynda Hill, wife of our accountant, Rick Hill, on the Great Wall of China. China? Hmm. She has asked that this month's \$250 donation go to the Salvation Army.

## Underinsurance common

**The woolshed's just burned down. No problem, it's insured. But how would you feel about having to contribute another \$150,000 to the insured value so it can be rebuilt to the same size?**

HRL Insurance bloke Sean Lysaght says he's coming across lots of cases of underinsurance among farm clients. "It's all down to infrequent insurance reviews. People go through the process of

insuring all their important buildings, and then just keep paying the annual premium when the renewal notice comes in. Meanwhile the cost of replacement keeps going up.

"That's why we have a policy of reviewing clients' insurances every year, to keep abreast of these rises."

Annual reviews also take care of the opposite problem, which Sean calls

"premium wastage" — where the value of insured vehicles, for example, declines each year so the client ends up paying an unnecessarily high premium.

"Annual reviews ensure that clients continue to derive maximum insurance value for their premium expenditure." Underinsurance and premium wastage are the trends Sean has found the most noticeable in an "extremely busy" first quarter in his new role.



## CLIENT PROFILE:

## Brookdale, Parnassus

### Winning combination: Good breeding, good feeding



**Mark (left) and Greg Spencer with Jon Waghorn. The Spencers are holding the Kathleen Rutherford Memorial trophy for the top-priced pen of 10 steer calves (\$775) at the Cheviot calf sale in early April.**

**Ed's brief for this profile was characteristically direct: "Mark and Greg Spencer sold 90 steer calves at Cheviot last week with a 263kg average and a highest price of \$775 so they must be doing something right."**

Mark and Greg farm 1200 hectares at Parnassus in two blocks: Brookdale, the home property and a small finishing block of close to 200 hectares just across the other side of the Leader River.

They run 230 Angus cows, 5500 Romney ewes, 1600 hoggets and another 150 cattle — replacements and fatteners.

The smaller block, which they bought around 1990, belonged to the late Ken Page who had an Angus stud, Anstey Angus. Left behind after the dispersal of that herd were about 50 of the older cows.

"We just took those over and they provided the base for our present Angus herd," says Greg, who looks after the livestock in this operation; Mark is the machinery man.

As many will know, Brookdale was traditionally a Shorthorn property.

"Our father, Earl, was a big shorthorn man. There was a Shorthorn stud on Brookdale when he came here. Eventually they fell out of favour a wee bit, and when we took Anstey over, the basis was there for an Angus herd.

"They were older animals but they were very good cows and they lasted for a fair bit longer, too."

Earl died in 2002 and his preference for the Shorthorns meant that his sons stuck with them up until about 2000.

"Then we progressively, with the help of people like (HRL bloke) Jon Waghorn, became more and more convinced that the black cattle had a bigger future. Initially we went to Te Mania for bulls and then in the last three years we've gone to John Murray at Woodbank just north of Kaikoura".

Greg says they were drawn by the hardiness of Angus cows "... and the versatility of black cattle in general."

This farm goes from all river flats on the small farm, which is bounded by the Waiau and the Leader rivers, up to heavy flats and rolling downs to steeper hill country.

"When we decided to go and have a look at Woodbank, we were surprised by the quality of the bulls on offer — very fleshy, very quiet, very durable bulls that can get around the hills. They had everything we thought we wanted for our cows."

It's not that Te Mania doesn't produce good bulls, Greg says: "They do and they deserve the premium they get for their bulls."

Woodbank bulls just seemed to suit the Spencer brothers better, and Jon Waghorn says the truth of that was in the Cheviot saleyards in April: "The heaviest were 343 kilos. They were beautiful calves, a real credit to them. They were probably the best calves in the sale. The cull heifers they sold at Cheviot weighed 300 kilos so that gives you a bit of an idea. They're good-carcassed animals, and they've got plenty of meat on them."

But Greg Spencer says Jon can take some credit, too: "Jon's played a big part in the bull selection, and we've bought in a few heifers, too. He's played a big part in turning the herd around."

When Jon joined HRL: "We didn't change companies, so much as we just went with Jon. We just showed a bit of loyalty to the man that's put a lot of work into our herd."

So what are the Spencers looking for when they're picking bulls?

- Temperament
- Because they sell calves, the 200-day growth rate is important
- EBV for positive fat, so they'll do well on the hill
- They have to look right — good conformation, good carcass and a good back end
- Structural soundness in the feet for longevity
- The milking ability of the dam.

But Greg Spencer also subscribes to the old adage that it's all about feeding as well as breeding.

"You can't do it without feed. Lifting fertiliser applications over the last ten years has given us significant increases in feed production through the critical autumn and spring periods."

They have also been regrassing around 250 hectares a year.

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## farming people

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"I remember one time years ago at Cheviot when our calves weren't that flash, I overheard someone say 'Oh, these are just off hard hill country' and I thought to myself that's the last time anyone's going to call Brookdale hard hill country!"

"The better bull selection has helped, but the cows are well fed — they're not pampered at all but the feed's always there at the right time for them. We lock up a 400-acre block on the hill for the cows at calving time and they always go onto good tucker, and they milk well right from the start and we calve reasonably early."

The smaller mob at Anstey are run as a separate herd altogether, under the management of Neil and Jody Cleaver: "They just graze in the Leader riverbed. There's about 100 hectares of that and there's never any stress down there, but it's only a small mob of about 50 cows."

Even though both herds have C10 status, MAF advised the brothers when they bought the extra block to keep them apart just in case.

"There's just the river between the two places, it works a treat. Neil plays a big part in it; he's a good man. He's been here about 14 years now."

### STAFF PROFILE:

### Brad Mackenzie

**Brad was at a crossroads in his career when David Hazlett invited him in early 2009 to become HRL's first official staff member.**

The St Bede's old boy, with a Dip Ag from Lincoln in his bag, spent 18 months with PGG in the middle of this decade in the traditional office junior role, but doing enough out on the road to gather up a few clients.

Then he took a year's OE taking in UK, Europe and North America, and crewing for a month on a catamaran from the East Africa coast up through the Red Sea into Sudan.

Back in Canterbury in 2007 he joined PGW for about 18 months, latterly being posted to Mayfield.

Then he decided to further his business education and resigned. He was enrolling in CPIT's New Zealand Diploma of Business course — two years of full-time study — when David rang him. Assured that HRL could accommodate his study aspirations, Brad became an HRL bloke, in a role which is a cross between operating as a livestock agent (he has a stable of clients of his own) and waging the paper war in the office.

He is doing the business course part-time which will take him about three years.

Brad's an accomplished footy player, turning out for the Darfield seniors in the backs since 2005. His name has featured in a number of Ellesmere and Canterbury Country rep teams over the years. In the summer time, you'll find Brad out in his boat enjoying the full

### Brad's a busy bloke



**Brad on the rampage for Ellesmere against North Canterbury last year, which was won by Ellesmere.**

range of watersports, playing a bit of tennis and, occasionally, helping cricket teams out.

"I'm thankful for the opportunities that being with HRL have created particularly towards further developing my business knowledge. When you're busy, it is motivating to know you have the support of the team behind you."

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