



HRL news

Hazlett Rural Limited

New merchandise service



HRL has recruited two vastly experienced rural merchandising specialists to operate a highly personalised and timely rural supplies service throughout Canterbury, Marlborough, Tasman and the West Coast.

Rob Sharkie and Mark Clyne will already be well known to many clients. They will operate on the road, co-ordinating the sourcing and delivery of goods direct to farmers' properties.

Rob says the aim is to add value to client businesses by providing correct advice and timely deliveries of the core farm inputs:

- Seed & Grain
- Agricultural Chemicals
- Animal Health Products
- Fencing Materials
- Fertiliser
- Water Reticulation Requirements
- Animal Handling Products
- Stock Food

"We want to be part of our clients' businesses, their decision-making and procurement processes, so that they are assured of having everything to hand when they need it.

"We'll be up their driveways, always working ahead of the marketplace.

"We'll have no stores of our own but we have excellent relationships with suppliers and we are confident clients

will find this service a step up from their current arrangements.

"We will always aim to be competitive while focusing on service, productivity and profitability."

The above list is not exhaustive, says Rob: "We'll supply whatever they need. I've even supplied vehicles in the past. We'll do whatever the clients want."

Between them, Rob and Mark bring some fifty years of rural supplies experience to this new business.

Rob joined the industry in Motueka in the 1980s; in 1994 he became CRT's regional manager up there and then Marlborough before moving back to Wrightson in 1999, then a shift to Canterbury where until recently he worked in a number of senior management roles — but he never left his boots at home; he continued to service a base of clients personally all the way through.

Mark's career has been similar, starting with PGG in 1990 in Blenheim and then serving mostly in Canterbury. Mark, too, has maintained a client base through the years including the last five years when he held down more management-related roles.



Peter Engel

Also... HRL Finance!

HRL clients can now access two livestock financing packages to fund trading and finishing stock.

One package is available to finance trading or finishing stock for up to six months, while the other, a weight gain package, will see HRL continuing to own stock, with clients paid for the liveweight gain achieved over a specified period. These packages, designed for user-friendliness, will apply to both sheep and cattle.

Heading up this service is recently appointed Finance General Manager Peter Engel, a 21-year veteran of rural finance management in PGG and its

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successors. He says these facilities are already finding ready takers.

"With livestock being so expensive at present — and with overdraft extensions not so easy to obtain from the banks — HRL felt it had developed to the point where it could offer this as another way of supporting its clients' businesses."

The weight gain package runs in association with Alliance Group which has four plants around the South Island beyond the big three in its home province of Southland, as well two in the North Island.

Peter says these finance facilities do not extend to seasonal financing, "... but we might help out with animal health and cartage."

He intends to represent these products out in the field personally and looks forward to meeting the company's clients — or catching up again with the good number he already knows!

This is only half of Peter's new role in HRL. He has been enlisted also to support Ed Marfell in the management of the company: "... generally giving Ed the support he needs to grow the rapidly expanding business."



This month's winning HRL hat pic...

Tom Ferguson, Baldoon; winner of the Musterer's race at the 2011 Malvern Collie Cub trials.

The \$250 donation goes to the Red Cross Earthquake Fund.

FROM THE GM

Our deep sympathies go out to the families who suffered serious personal or property losses in the February 22 earthquake.

Nobody in Canterbury, it seems, has been completely untouched by the disaster. Our thanks, too, go out to the many clients who contributed to the Agents' Quake Fund. This was most heartening.

Everyone would like to see the aftershocks cease — and none more so than Sean Lysaght so the insurance companies relax and start writing new business again!

The last word on this subject goes to Nelson Mandela: "The greatest glory in living lies not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall."

The front page this time heralds some important new appointments for us. I would like to add my personal welcome to Peter, Rob and Mark to the fold.

Their individual experience and expertise are substantial and will undoubtedly make a significant contribution to the ongoing growth and success of HRL. Rob and Mark will strengthen, for example, the quality of our representation of our range of Forage Pride seeds.

Highlighting our growth to date is our prospective move to larger premises not far away at 585 Wairakei Road. We have found this location, with its proximity to Johns Road, very convenient for staff and clients alike and we are pleased to be able to remain in the neighbourhood. We were to have moved around about now but the new premises are temporarily occupied by our CBD-evacuated solicitors, Rhodes & Co, and it might be a month or so before we move.

On the farm, it's great to see the wool price rising by 50% this season. We just hope it's sustainable and that there is yet more value to be added! At present the other markets are also at unprecedented highs for the time of year. With sheep and cattle numbers on farm being down, the time-honoured market arbiters, supply and demand, are reigning supreme.



Ed Marfell

THE BLOKES' DIARY ...

April 1st	<i>Culverden</i>	Calf Sale
April 6th	<i>Coalgate</i>	Sheep & Adult Cattle
April 7th	<i>Cheviot</i>	Steer Calf Sale
April 8th	<i>Cheviot</i>	Heifer Calf Sale
April 14th	<i>Coalgate</i>	Sheep & Prime Cattle
April 14th	<i>High Peak & Quartz Hill</i>	Deer Sale
April 15th	<i>Culverden</i>	2nd Calf Sale
April 21st	<i>Coalgate</i>	Sheep & Calf Sale
April 28th	<i>Coalgate</i>	Sheep & Calf Sale
April 29th	<i>Culverden</i>	3rd Calf Sale
May 6th	<i>Coalgate</i>	Sheep and Calf Sale
May 12th	<i>Coalgate</i>	Sheep & Calf Sale
May 19th	<i>Coalgate</i>	All Stock
May 26th	<i>Coalgate</i>	Sheep & Prime Cattle
June 2nd	<i>Coalgate</i>	All Stock
June 9th	<i>Coalgate</i>	Sheep & Prime Cattle
June 16th	<i>Coalgate</i>	All Stock
June 23rd	<i>Coalgate</i>	Sheep & Prime Cattle
June 30th	<i>Coalgate</i>	All Stock



CLIENT PROFILE:

Stew & Jess Gunn, Brooksdale, Springfield



Simple system to meet financial targets

When Stew Gunn, manager of the 4500-hectare Brooksdale near Springfield, heard David Hazlett was going out on his own he determined he would support the fledgling business.

His only misgiving was severing a long relationship with Craig Miller that started back about sixteen years ago when Stew was at Quartz Hill.

"David told me 'Oh, I don't think he'll mind too much.' I soon found out why!"

Craig, of course, joined HRL not long afterward.

Brooksdale is about two thirds pastoral lease; it has 600 hectares of flats with the rest being rolling to steep, rising to 1600 metres. It presents the peculiar management challenge of having 24 kilometres of State Highway running through it — organising stock movements around that is only part of the challenge; there are also chronic problems with animals of the two-legged strain.

Gorse and broom are also a never-ending battle on this farm.

Stew and Jess Gunn have been running it since 2002 when the Milliken family sold it to overseas buyers. They are helped by Murray Harford and his partner Diane Soper. That's the entire staff.

Stew works to a stringent financial performance brief from his supervisors; this is behind the minimal staff numbers,

but how he runs the stock to rise to his challenge is also interesting.

The key is a simple sheep system that can be handled by just two full-timers.

It goes like this: there is no main flock breeding. The 4500 Perendale ewes have all been bought in as ewe lambs from Mt Linton, about 1200 each year. The whole flock is mated to Suffolk/Texel terminal sires bought from the Wilson Brothers at West Melton.

The incoming ewe lambs are mated with the farm's own ram lambs of the same age. At tailing, they select about 200 ram lambs on smallness of head and shoulders and leave them entire. These are later culled down to about 40 that are used for this purpose after which they are grown out and sold, still entire.

This mating produces jolly good lambs, too, says Stew.

"They went really well this last year. There were a few of them that were 48 kilos at weaning; they were bigger than the hoggets, which make very good mums."

No replacements are kept from the main lambing.

The cattle operation, important for utilising the higher areas of the lease, is a bit more conventional. 300 Angus cows and about 70 heifers are mated to a mix of Angus bulls from Mt Linton, Floridale and Woodbank, selected on 600-day weight.

Stew and Jess Gunn: well pleased with their HRL-staged on farm lamb sale.

The cows are wintered on the flats with kale that's had swedes drilled into it. This drilling is done in the same line as the intended feed breaks; it's a hassle drilling the short rows, says Stew, but the payback comes in winter as the feed break lines are already marked out.

This crop is also a component of a pasture renewal programme that sees about 60 hectares put into this, and also a rape/Italian mix for wintering the hoggets. The paddocks are used this way for two years, and then they go into Italian for another two years before being returned to permanent pasture. They have renewed 450 hectares this way so far.

For cashflow, the farm also takes 400 dairy cows in the winter for about ten weeks. They share the kale with the beef cattle.

An innovation this year was an on-farm lamb sale in the middle of February when 5614 lambs on the place were quit at an average of \$97. A good year to do this, of course, but Stew was also nervous that the unrest in the Middle East could send shockwaves through the international meat demand situation.

"The sale was a great success. HRL did an extremely good job. All the agents arrived with buying orders, and they all stood up on the day and bought," Stew says.

He was enjoying the way this freed up the farm. Three weeks later he had the ewes all sorted into aged mobs and had brought the cattle down off the hill. They were all "looking a picture."

He will definitely be lobbying the farm supervisors to repeat the exercise.

"It certainly suits the farm the way we're running it."

Working with HRL is also suiting Stew.

"I've had absolutely no issue with them since I started working with them ... except that they beat us at cricket which we've been never been allowed to forget."

Ed Marfell: General Manager (whose turn had to come)

Marlborough-born and bred, Ed first joined PGG as a livestock junior in Blenheim under the management of Frank O'Reilly in 1983.

A couple of years later he was drafted into the staff of the Ryans Road farm where he gained the nickname Horse (a reference to the old TV programme, Mr Ed).

In 1986 Ed went out on the road in South Canterbury before moving to Little River to take up the role that many people associate Ed with, PGG agent on the Peninsula. Ed says he enjoyed the role immensely:

"It was most enjoyable. It's a great part of the country. And the people were so welcoming. You'd go down onto farms in some of those bays, having stopped off at their mailbox, and you'd be the first person the family had seen in days."

Then in 2000 he was called into the Blenheim Road office as Christchurch branch livestock manager and, subsequently, other management roles.

At one stage, the person holding the parallel position in Wrightson was David Hazlett. Fierce competitors they were, but Ed says: "...it never interfered with our personal friendship which dates back to working at Ryans Road together."

Now they are both wearing the same tie, Ed says the two complement each other.

"We probably balance one another. David's a visionary type, always coming up with new ideas and approaches. You don't want to stifle a person like that but he needs to be supported by someone who can sort through these ideas and look at which of them are worth following up. That's how I fit in. I'm a detail man. If I pick something up, I like to see it through and complete it."

Ed looks with undisguised satisfaction at the HRL operation: "We've now got a very good spread of services to the extent that we can offer the farmer a comprehensive package."

"The key to this business, though, is the people. If you've got the right people in place — and I believe we have — and those people have the right relationships with the clients, you won't be beaten."

"Our biggest asset is our people. And the number of clients who have followed our blokes into HRL says it all."

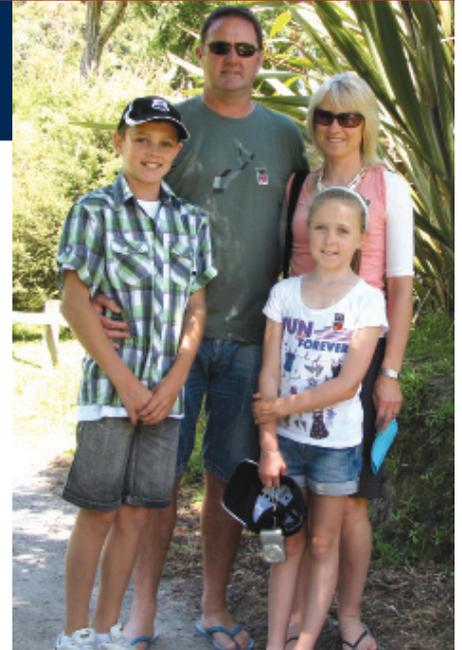
"I see my job as working to provide the environment that's going to bring out the best in those people."

Ed married Pip, also a Marlburian, in 1989.

"Pip's been a tremendous support to me for the past 27 years. And, as an accountant, she made a great contribution to setting up HRL's accounting and budgeting systems from the outset until quite recently. And when we changed software systems last year, she stepped up again."

They have two children, Ollie (12) and Kate (9). Ed has enjoyed coaching Ollie's rugby grades for the past few years and the couple also fit Kate's hockey into their schedule. The family lives on a lifestyle block just outside the south side of Christchurch where they run a few sheep that the kids are able to help out with.

"We like the peace and quiet. But I don't know why they're called lifestyle blocks. I reckon they're more of a commitment block."



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