



farming people

# HRL news

Hazlett Rural Limited

## HRL Business Consultancy

**In response to a growing demand from clients HRL now offers a business advice service.**

It is aimed at families who have found their rapidly evolving and increasingly complex farming businesses more and more of a challenge to keep on top of. The increasing size of farms, which often means more staff, and the wide range of farming options available, have required some farmers to review their planning and management practices.

The pay-for service is represented by Peter Engel who joined HRL earlier this year as Finance GM. Peter is a highly experienced farm business bloke.

His background of over 25 years in the rural servicing sector, including seven years in national general manager roles, equips him well to work with HRL clients to ensure their ownership and finances are appropriately structured, to help develop business plans and to adopt the management practices required to keep the business on track.

"For larger operations this can involve looking at governance and reporting to ensure the interests of all stakeholders are catered for," he says.

Peter will welcome your call (numbers on back page) for a confidential no-obligation chat about the service.

## Think ahead!

**The HRL Rural Supplies service has been going six months now and it's enjoying great support from clients.**

Rob and Mark want to remind everyone to think ahead ...

**NAIT:** make sure you have everything in place to get the best from the system, from EID tags through readers to electronic scales. The scheme is only a little over six months away!

**Seed:** It's a good growthy season. Make sure you get the best from it and you're ready to drill in February.

**Animal Health:** It's also a good season for fly, and with those great stock prices it's even more rewarding to keep the sheep clean.

**Water:** Now's also a good time to check your stock watering system. We can sort it all — everything from the fittings to the pumps.

**Spraying:** With stock values where they should be, it's also time to think about tidying up those gorse corners and gullies. We can do you a great deal on brushweed herbicide.

**Building?** We can do sheds, yards, animal handling equipment, you name it.

**Rob Sharkie 027 462 0126 or Mark Clyne 027 462 0127**

## Season's Greetings

HRL Directors and team members wish everyone — clients, mates, supporters — a very happy and safe festive season, and trust that everyone gets at least a little time to relax and enjoy the company of family and friends. We look forward to working with you all again in the New Year, and share your hope that all this grass keeps growing well into 2012!



## Insurance top of mind

**Never in Canterbury's history, probably, has insurance been such a topic of conversation.**

For HRL Insurance manager Sean Lysaght the primary lesson of the earthquakes has been the importance of regular policy servicing and reviews.

"I have two clients who, during reviews six months before the February earthquake, accepted our advice to extend their cover to items not previously covered. In both cases those items were damaged in the earthquake.

"The earthquakes have highlighted the importance of rural people using the expertise of a rural insurance specialist.

"A good policy is worth its weight in gold at the moment, which highlights the value of a good broker. There are brokers out there who had dropped the ball in terms of servicing their clients and some of those clients now have big problems."

Sean says he has a small number of commercial clients who were well covered and now have claims in process.

"Those claims are proceeding well."

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## Xmas office hours

**The HRL office will close at midday on Friday, December 23, 2011 and reopen on Wednesday, January 4, 2012.**

## CLIENT PROFILE: John and Hilary Grigg, Haldon Pastures



“An interesting year ...”

**Haldon Pastures is the base of what was Samuel Bealey’s Haldon Run that took in a large slice of the plains area between the Rakaia and Selwyn Rivers down to the main road. The original part of the homestead was built in 1880.**

John Grigg’s grandfather, Gilbert, younger twin grandson of Longbeach legend John Grigg, bought it in 1925 and it has remained in the family since.

Today Haldon Pastures is an 844-hectare mixed cropping farm. Some 500 hectares are irrigated by six pivots ranging in size from 160 hectares (2) down to 30. John has consents for more irrigation but as the dry gaps on the farm diminish in size, the smaller pivots required become seriously more expensive on a per hectare basis.

As a dry-land farm, it used to run the traditional Corriedale ewe flock, along with a mob of Merino wethers. The ewe flock is now Borderdale, and over the last decade or so has reduced in size from 4000 to 1200. Gradual expansion of the irrigation programme also saw the demise of the Merinos, and a move to winter dairy support.

John has committed to dairy support more than most, providing his client of ten years with an optimum “semi Techno” wintering platform, complete with trough risers every hectare so that water travels with the cows, and they don’t have to trample back and forth to access their water, and breaks can be back-fenced. This block, watered by one of the two largest pivots, takes in light and heavy country and the client can alternate between the two according to

ground conditions. (John has a similar set-up under his other big pivot where he grows kale.)

A decent set of yards makes up the dairy support package so that, among other tasks, springer cows can be sorted out and taken off as the client wishes.

This a slightly different arrangement from the usual winter grazing deal: John provides the platform and the feed, but the client does everything else with the 2000-2500 cows he brings on.

John used to fatten lambs on this block in the summer, but with reducing sheep numbers, he now makes silage off it.

Then there’s 270 hectares of crop: wheat, barley, peas, ryegrass, clovers, radish, pak choi and carrots, with some ground leased out for spuds each year. For crop security John built a large drying shed in 2004 with two drive-on floors, each of 60m<sup>2</sup>. He typically dries about 160 tonnes of ryegrass seed.

Everything is done by John and two full-timers, so it’s a pretty busy place — but not half as busy as it’s been since September 4, 2010.

“We had ground stretch here. The fault line is virtually under us, although we’re not sure exactly where. We had posts that moved into the path of a pivot. The ground movement was a bit over half a metre.

### John Grigg and the nearly fixed homestead.

“You can’t see any cracks in the ground because it was quite wet here in September. But it stretched.”

Space here doesn’t permit us to traverse the full impact of that quake on this farm; suffice to say they lost five silos, two diesel tanks, an historic woolshed and possibly one house. The drying shed and assorted water tanks suffered varying degrees of damage, too. And two of the four wells on the farm are a worry.

“One well went from 90 litres per second down to 50. We’ve had that redeveloped and it’s come back to 65.

“There’s another one that, though it’s pretty good and it pumped last year, its drawdown has gone from 20 to 30 metres. I’m hoping it’ll come back without having to redevelop it. If it doesn’t, we’re looking at a quarter of a million dollar problem, with a new well, pump and all the piping.”

The Griggs still count themselves lucky — a neighbour can’t redevelop a well because the pump is jammed in at the bottom.

Apart from the issue with the wells, the farm has continued functioning more or less normally (if two to three weeks behind) and the cropping season went well enough, although John estimates the quake has cost him personally between three and four months of labour and administrative man-hours.

What happened to the imposing 642m<sup>2</sup> homestead is another story in itself. Started in 1880, it had two major Samuel Hurst Seager-designed additions in 1910-12 and 1919 respectively.

The Griggs had nearly completed a six-year programme of renovation, doing much of the work themselves, when the quake struck.

“I had just a floor to lay in the hall and one bathroom to finish off.”

It’s taken three builders nigh-on 12 months to repair it.

“It’s been an interesting year to say the least. We learned not to get stressed about the small stuff. We basically had to keep dealing with the priorities, and just keep problem-solving...”

## A note from DH

**You can't help but feel a little elated at the way the season's going and what a great reward it is for our Farming People who have had more than their fair share of tough seasons over the past decade or so.**

I know many of you are working hard to make some of this extra income stick to the farm because you know it won't always be like this.

This is exactly what HRL has been doing in the last year or two. In our case it's been building new services into our offer — to provide our Farming People with better quality whole-farm support, but also to proof our own business against those inevitable times when the gloss comes off stock prices. We'll need a broader-based business to sustain our core livestock service when the going gets tough.

We are positioning ourselves to be able to stay with our Farming People through thick and thin — and to do so transparently so that we're seen to be sharing both the good times and the not so flash.

**David Hazlett** (*Rural Bloke*)

**This only looks like an elephant. It is in reality Brad Mackenzie who holidayed in Thailand earlier this year with partner Alice Duncan.**

**Seriously, Nok Yoon is a 41-year-old grandmother of her herd, and Brad reports that while they were aboard she behaved as if she owned the jungle.**

**Brad and Alice are keen to donate this quarter's \$250 to the Cystic Fibrosis Association.**



## FROM THE GM

It's very seldom that we can make the observations about the pastoral farming environment that we can at present. We've had a proper spring, for a change, and what a cracker it continues to be. It's a long time since we've had such a good one.

It's great to see the lamb schedule strong, store lambs in demand and even mutton prices where they are. Beef may not be, comparatively, as strong right now but the indicators are better than they are for sheepmeat (which is starting to meet consumer resistance) so, with the dollar under pressure, things are looking good.

The outlook for the ewe fairs in the New Year is strong, and we trust everyone is able to make the most of this veritable bounty of grass and regular rainfall.

I'm pleased to advise that we will have a new livestock trainee starting with us in the New Year. We welcome Ben Lill, who will work under the guidance of Craig Miller and Phil Manera. It's very satisfying that HRL is already able to make this kind of contribution to the industry, to be in a position to give a promising young bloke the great start in the livestock business that the rest of us were given as youngsters.



I'll use this space, too, to thank the whole HRL team for the sterling work they've put in this year, and hope they enjoy their breaks as well.

**Ed Marfell**

## THE BLOKES' DIARY ...

<b>January 5th</b>	<i>Coalgate</i>	All Sheep & Prime Cattle
<b>January 12th</b>	<i>Coalgate</i>	All Stock
<b>January 18th</b>	<i>Coalgate</i>	All Sheep & Prime Cattle
<b>January 19th</b>	<i>Rakaia Gorge</i>	On Farm Lamb Sale
<b>January 26th</b>	<i>Coalgate</i>	All Stock
<b>January 27th</b>	<i>Hawarden</i>	Ewe Fair
<b>February 2nd</b>	<i>Coalgate</i>	All Sheep & Prime Cattle
<b>February 9th</b>	<i>Coalgate</i>	All Stock
<b>February 13th</b>	<i>Coalgate</i>	Perendale Ewe Sale
<b>February 14th</b>	<i>Little River</i>	Ewe Fair
<b>February 16th</b>	<i>Coalgate</i>	All Sheep & Prime Cattle
<b>February 17th</b>	<i>Sheffield</i>	Ewe Fair
<b>February 23rd</b>	<i>Coalgate</i>	All Stock
<b>March 1st</b>	<i>Coalgate</i>	All Sheep & Prime Cattle
<b>March 1st</b>	<i>Cheviot</i>	Beltana Farming Cattle Sale
<b>March 8th</b>	<i>Coalgate</i>	All Stock
<b>March 15th</b>	<i>Coalgate</i>	All Sheep & Prime Cattle
<b>March 22nd</b>	<i>Coalgate</i>	All Stock
<b>March 29th</b>	<i>Coalgate</i>	All Sheep & Prime Cattle
<b>March 30th</b>	<i>Culverden</i>	1st Calf Sale

# Jim Hazlett

**Denis Hazlett's work took him and his young family from Southland to postings, over the years, in Otago, Manawatu and South Canterbury.**

**Jim remembers tagging along with Dad whenever he was allowed, and so he spent a lot of his boyhood time on farms, and he did farm work during school holidays.**

When he first left school in South Canterbury he did a short stint on Orari Gorge Station before heading off to Australia in 1987, spending most of his time there as a jackaroo near Goulburn in NSW.

Then it was a year (1988) as a shepherd on Robbie and Bruce Deans' Kilmarnock in Cheviot followed by the two-year Lincoln Farm Management Diploma course.

Corina entered the picture somewhere in there, and when Jim graduated they headed off on 18 months' OE around Europe, Africa and UK. Jim picked up a bit of farm work in places along the way.

Upon their return he did another year of casual farm work in North Canterbury before taking a permanent job on Greta Paddocks.

In 1995 "... we were very lucky to team up with an equity partner from Auckland ..." to purchase Hillview. This property is now 500 ha and the Auckland partner

has been bought out. This is still where Jim, Corina, Francesca (16), Lilly (14) and Lachlan (9) call home — although the girls are now away at school in town, and Corina works as an art teacher in the prison system in Christchurch three days a week.

The road to working as a stock agent started for Jim while he was working the farm: in 2005 brother David asked him to take on bobby calf procurement for Taylor Preston in Wellington.

"I'd been born into the stock and station industry but never actually worked in it as such, so that was my introduction."

That project ran its course after about three years but Jim really enjoyed it, and it made him amenable to a later approach from David to have a go as a stock agent.

He did a year as a part-time commission agent but since August of this year he's been on the full-time payroll; a manager now runs the farm.



"It's been a huge learning curve. There's a lot of fine detail that I didn't have any idea about, but I'm really enjoying it. I love being part of a team and the structure that goes with that, I love being out on the road meeting clients, and the challenge of winning new clients by offering a service they want to come back for.

"I've learned you've got to be pretty thick-skinned, too, but that's all part of the challenge."

His work has concentrated on dairy to date, but now he is spreading his wings into sheep and beef.

"I really appreciate the opportunity to do this. And the support from all the other agents in the team has been amazing."



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