



Ben Lill amongst in-calf heifers sold through HRL.



The Dairy Business is Building

HRL is steadily developing its dairy team, with more of the agents engaging closely with dairying people and rapidly building robust client bases.

The team comprises team leader Jim Hazlett, Marty Amos, Geoff Wright, Nic McMillan, Hayden Ross, Ben Lill, Sam Tod and Rowan Sandford.

The concerted effort into dairying began about three years ago, with canvassing for the standard trading and/or disposal of cull cows, feeder calves and bobby calves. Once the ability to perform is demonstrated, clients have increasingly

been willing to engage the HRL dairy team to oversee their off-farm feed requirements — ranging from simply procuring winter feed, through organising per head/per week contracts for winter grazing to arranging long-term heifer grazing contracts — and supplying service bulls.

“Most of the team are now working into facilitating herd sale and purchase agreements — along with contracts for in-calf heifers and other breeding stock,” says Jim Hazlett.

“We still think we have a great deal of

building to do but it’s fair to say that the results we’re getting so far are seeing all our agents now being engaged a lot more by dairy farmers for their more important requirements. We are all establishing ourselves well in the dairy industry.”

Then there are the important relationships in the other direction, those with other similar agencies in other parts of the country, especially the North Island where “...three or four of us have our own special associations with various dairy agencies in the North Island including New Zealand Farmers Livestock and RD1.” This is really for procurement only, as the HRL dairy team does not typically operate outside Canterbury — although it does occasionally arrange grazing in parts of Otago if that suits the client.

Jim says an important factor in dairy farmers’ confidence has been HRL’s reputation and performance in “... sound, honest business with efficient and accurate office backup.” Quality administrative support is critical in feed contracts because of the amount of detailed paperwork required.

“Of course there is also the additional expertise offered by the wider HRL team with their contacts in the sheep and beef sector — which supplies the off-farm grazing — and also the farm supplies guys. So it’s an integrated all-round service, really, and we’re finding our dairy clients are really appreciating it.”



HRL sponsors the Hawarden-Waikari Volunteer Fire Brigade and their rural firefighting competition every year. For the recent event (pictured), we successfully tapped NZI and Vero for their support too. We have a very high regard for the work these guys do — it’s an essential service to our farming people, performed under very taxing conditions. They need all the help they can get and our support for them is very gratefully received.

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FROM THE GM

We went to a Federated Farmers-organised meeting in Ashburton recently to hear about the Canterbury Land & Water Regional Plan. Very sobering it was. Without going into the detail (it's very easy to find on the Ecan website, although I know most of our farming people will already know how all the ins and outs will affect them), everyone is going to have to work out what their nitrate leaching was in the years 2009–2013, and they will not be permitted to exceed those levels from 2016/17.

This is a very serious development. We've taken our ability to farm the land as we see fit for granted for generations, but now things are changing. And anyone watching *Campbell Live* a few weeks ago when it highlighted what's been happening to Lake Waikare up north — stained blood-red from one side to the other — would agree that things have to change.

We know that most of our farming people are environmentally responsible, but now everyone has to demonstrate they are so in order to continue farming.

We can either bemoan this development, or we can accept that this is the way the world is moving: just about all professional and trade practitioners in town have to have some sort of license to operate, and now farmers will have to as well. In any case, most farmers subscribe to the principle of leaving their land in better condition than when they went onto it; well, one way of looking at this new regulatory scheme is that it's going to help them to ensure that happens. There's no point in worrying about what stock prices are going to do next year if our farming practices are eroding our ability to continue farming!

And I see Pita Alexander in print predicting this will slow down dairy conversions in the South Island — and stop it lowering sheep numbers as well.

What's more, you can be sure that while it's nitrates this time around, there will be other issues to deal with in the future. That's what this is all about — making sure farming has a future that we and our kids and grandkids can continue to enjoy.

On stock prices, we're feeling pretty positive about next season. Sheep and beef prospects are looking brighter. The dairy payout might be back a bit but it's had a good run for the last three years and it will head back up again for sure.

One of the realities of employing good people is that sometimes you lose them. Mark Clyne is leaving us at the end of this month to join our mates at Bayleys Real Estate.

We wish Mark and Tarsha all the very best with this important move — no doubt we will continue to have contact occasionally with Mark in his new role.

Finally, congratulations to Jacinda Stevens and Hayden on the recent birth of Eva.



Ed Marfell
General Manager

A NOTE FROM DH

We are now five years old, and it's very timely to reflect on the privilege we constantly feel to be supported by such a wonderful band of farming people and rural suppliers. We do not take this support for granted — we know we have to continue to earn it.

With this support and some good management (or good luck!) we have grown into a robust livestock team specialising in sheep, beef and dairy, and along the way we have developed energetic divisions in finance, insurance and rural supplies.

The successful execution and evolution of these activities has been entirely dependent on a great bunch of people within HRL and the people out there on the farms that we visit with whom we feel a deep sense of engagement and connection.

Our next five years will no doubt come with the usual challenges that pertain to playing in the agri-sector sandpit. In that environment we will strive to maintain our people focus and our determination to deliver a service to our farming people that enables them to enhance and add value to their businesses.

So while we celebrate and thank our farming people of the past five years, we assure everyone that we will work equally hard to ensure we can look back at the next five years with the same sense of celebration and gratitude.

We take the opportunity to conduct business with our people very seriously and we trust we cut the mustard — all the while having a lot of fun.

David Hazlett
Rural Bloke

HRL teams up with WoNZ

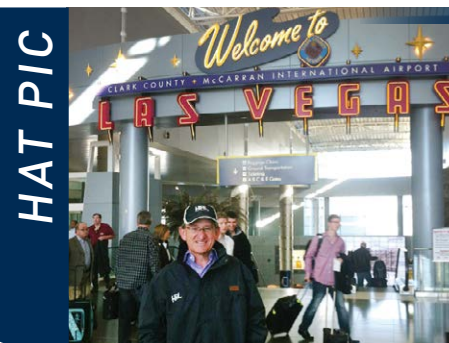
HRL has entered a relationship with woolgrower-owned Wools of New Zealand.



The idea is similar to that entered with Bayleys Real Estate last year: HRL agents will represent WoNZ at the farm level, recommending its direct-to-scour, lamb's wool and Laneve carpet wool contracts where these fit with the business objectives of HRL's farming people.

HRL General Manager Ed Marfell says the reasoning, for what he says is a pilot, is simple: "We like what they're doing. We don't profess to be wool experts but since WoNZ doesn't have its own rep force, it makes sense for them to partner with like-minded businesses who are out visiting farms on a daily basis.

"Besides, lots of our farming mates are already involved with WoNZ!"



Our lawyer Charlie Brown from Rhodes & Co, out there wasting our money in Las Vegas. This month's charity is the HRL Social Fund — in order to get some of his charges back, obviously.



Dairy support reaches into dryland



Andrew ("Ox") joins Mum and Dad for a quick cuppa.

Rakahuri (Maori name for the Ashley River) is a 550-hectare property inside the confluence of the Ashley and Garry Rivers, near Summerhill and roughly equidistant from Rangiora and Oxford.

It is farmed by the Olorenshaw family — parents John and Margaret, and now also son Andrew with whom Canterbury rugby followers will be well familiar. He lives in Rangiora with his partner Mallory and their young son Harrison.

The dryland farm is mostly flat with some typical Canterbury river terracing. It is a mix of heavy and light-medium soils.

The family moved onto it from the Winchmore-Lyndhurst area in 1987 when Andrew was just three. Their Mid-Canterbury farm was in two blocks five miles apart. Increasing traffic on the road between the two border-dyked farms made a less complicated farm seem attractive.

John and Margaret looked at expanding one or other of the blocks into a larger farm but the adjacent land in both cases was tightly held so they had to look farther afield. They sold both blocks with the intention of buying another farm straightaway, but that proved more difficult than expected, says John:

"In the downturn of the late '80s no place of any size or quality was coming on the market. We had a couple of thousand ewes grazing for three or four months over the winter down at Mount Somers, and we were within weeks of having to sell them for lambing."

They came across the Rakahuri opportunity while in Oxford to look at a place at Burnt Hill. The gracious and distinctive 1920s Rakahuri homestead, sometimes known as Okuku Lodge in recent years, had already been subdivided off with 100 acres by the Gallagher family

before the Olorenshaws bought the rest. With good silo storage — and he added more — John ran a mixed cropping operation alongside his 3000 Orari Gorge Romney ewes for years. It's now a Romtex flock and down to 2000 plus replacements to make room for dairy support, although John is holding on to his old header to keep his options open — the odd hundred tonnes of barley can be very handy in a dry year, so they'll keep putting 20–30 hectares of that in. While you wouldn't think so right now, this area can dry out. And that's an indication of how far away from the standard dairy conditions milkers now have to be looking to for support. Mind you, for a long time the Olorenshaws would buy in about 150 four-day-old dairy bull calves and Margaret would rear them as a fattening proposition, but that's a no-no now!

For the last couple of years HRL agent Nic McMillan has organised cows and heifers from Eyreton, Culverden and the West Coast.

Some 300 heifer calves arrive in December; they go through to the end of April when they roll over to a May-to-May contract. The place gets busy when the next December's mob arrives — certainly the few of last year's lambs still at home are sold off.

John would prefer a 12-month, rather than the 15-month stay for these calves, but Nic says it's hard to find dairy farmers who will do that. About 200 in-calf heifers come on around that time as well. And then of course there's all those mothers — 850 cows for six or seven

weeks in the winter, for the first time last year. 120 hectares of kale are grown to keep everything fed over winter. Andrew has also been trying direct-drilled rape and Italian into some of the heavier grass paddocks as a precaution against a dry summer, but this season was anything but dry.

There is a vacant cottage on the farm and the family was looking for an extra hand, which is hardly surprising. Meanwhile Andrew is taking a more prominent management role. He finished his B.Com (Ag) at Lincoln in 2007 and worked as an account manager at Ravensdown until the end of 2010. That was when he started his pro footy year with the Crusaders which interrupted his three-year spell in the Canterbury front row that ended in 2012.

Apart from the 15-month contract issue, the Olorenshaws don't seem to see too many difficulties with this very intensive dairy programme, with its associated drenching, vaxing and pregnancy testing. Everybody pitches in and the stock owners come and help sometimes too. Before heading down this track they invested well in weighing and EID technology in their yards for recording, weight-gain reporting and so on. But for John it's still all down to the basic principle:

"Feed stock well and they'll do well. But you do have to think well ahead because you've got no idea how dry the summer's going to be." Until now, that's meant making plenty of balage but Andrew might introduce more new ideas as well.

A sign of the times is that Andrew sees his "...next big challenge on the horizon ..." being the regulatory one with the high likelihood of having to apply for resource consents to continue this operation.

"That'll involve a lot of sorting through records and establishing our baseline performance. And we'll have to go through all our farm management practices as well, especially in respect of winter grazing."

The family's connection with Mid-Canterbury has not been severed; they remain active members of the Lauriston Farm Improvement Club, with Barry Croucher having been their advisor for around three decades. There's a lot of dairy support experience and expertise in Ashburton County and the Olorenshaws are keen to keep tapping it.



STAFF PROFILE ...

Geoff Wright *Mid-Canterbury livestock agent*

Born and bred on a farm, Geoff worked as a shepherd in

the Dunsandel area until 1981 when he joined PGG in Christchurch. He shifted to Mid-Canterbury a year later. In 1990 he and his wife Jane went overseas for a year, and on their return he was back at PGG in Ashburton, this time servicing the Mayfield area.

Then in 1999 Geoff moved to Canterbury Meat Packers as a lamb drafter. "I was there for three years then I went to PGG Wrightson stud stock just before the merger, and I was there for about three years, too, before going back to CMP as they had a vacancy here in Mid Canterbury." It was in October 2012 that he joined HRL.

He is finding his current role enjoyably challenging — "... it's part of the reason I moved over, really."

"I had no major thoughts of shifting camps but David presented me with the opportunity and I decided to give it a go. One of the things I enjoy is the variety in the work we do — the dairy stock, dairy

support, clearing sales, the saleyards... I particularly enjoy the saleyards, with the weekly camaraderie and banter that we have among the guys penning up the night before and during sale days."

HRL has other attractions, too: "I enjoy the fact that senior management are still at the coalface, and are very approachable not only to staff but also clients. There's also the calibre of the guys I work with ... and the honesty."

He says the firm's approach of going back to basics is what the stock and station industry used to be like 30 years ago when it attracted him in the first place.

Geoff's passion is tournament waterskiing — so the fact that the Wright family has lived at Lake Hood for nearly ten years is no coincidence. Geoff is President of the Canterbury Water Ski Association; their daughter Hannah has represented New Zealand on a number of occasions, so he spends a lot of time driving the boat when she is training. He enjoys spending time around home with Jane, and they try to catch up with son Tom who works in the tourism industry in Queenstown as often as possible. He coaches the Ashburton

College girls' 1st XV, enjoys fishing, shooting of any kind and, as a former rugby and cricket player, watching sport. Jogging has come into the picture as well: he recently completed a half-marathon.

The Blokes' Diary...

June 26 Coalgate

July 03 Coalgate

July 10 Coalgate

July 17 Coalgate

July 24 Coalgate

July 31 Coalgate

August 07 Coalgate

August 14 Coalgate

August 21 Coalgate

August 28 Coalgate

September 04 Coalgate

September 11 Coalgate

September 18 Coalgate

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