



HRL teams up with ATS

HRL has formed a strategic alliance with the Ashburton Trading Society.

This will give the 2,500 ATS members the opportunity to put their livestock business through HRL.

HRL general manager Ed Marfell says the arrangement arose from discussions that explored potential links between ATS and HRL's new merchandise division.

"ATS offers many services to its members but none in the way of livestock, and it became clear during those discussions that there was a real opportunity for both parties in the livestock servicing requirements of ATS members.

"We have not had a strong presence in Mid Canterbury up till now, and ATS is an obvious partner for us in that very important district. They are great people and have a very similar culture to ours — a strong focus on personal servicing of their members' needs, and on doing the job properly."

ATS was formed in 1963 by a group of Mid Canterbury farmers looking to lower their input costs. It negotiates discounts with suppliers of a very wide range of products and services, and is actively engaged in importing generic agricultural chemicals and animal health products.

It has stores in Ashburton, Rakaia and Methven.

Under the alliance with HRL, ATS will encourage its members to use HRL and will involve the company in its various marketing and promotional activities but actual transactions between HRL and individual ATS members will occur

seamlessly between the two parties, with the ATS admin involvement remaining in the background.

ATS chief executive Neal Shaw says the arrangement provides ATS members with the opportunity to, effectively, put their livestock business through ATS.

"We're saying to our members that we've done due diligence on this business and we are satisfied they are a highly credible livestock service supplier.

"We are very happy to work alongside HRL and provide them with structured access to 2,500 Mid Canterbury farmers."

He said the arrangement also fits with the ATS philosophy of not wanting to own businesses that supply its members.

New HRL bloke for Mid Canterbury

To deliver the personal service in Mid Canterbury that HRL has a strong reputation for in points north and further south, David Hazlett is shifting his day-to-day attention to the district, and a new bloke has been recruited.

Marty Amos will already be known to a good many people in the district, having come off a Wakanui farm. He, Rachel and their three young sons have moved back to Ashburton and he started in his new role on July 4th.

Ed says Marty is the ideal bloke for the role. He has 20 years experience in the business and has worked in both dairy and sheep and beef in various places, with his longest stints having been Manawatu, Oxford and, most recently, Mosgiel.



Marty Amos

Marty says he is delighted to have joined HRL, and he adds that the reason he has been enlisted is the icing on the cake:

"Ever since I can remember, ATS has been a liked, trusted and respected member of the Mid Canterbury farming family and I've been really looking forward to working with them."

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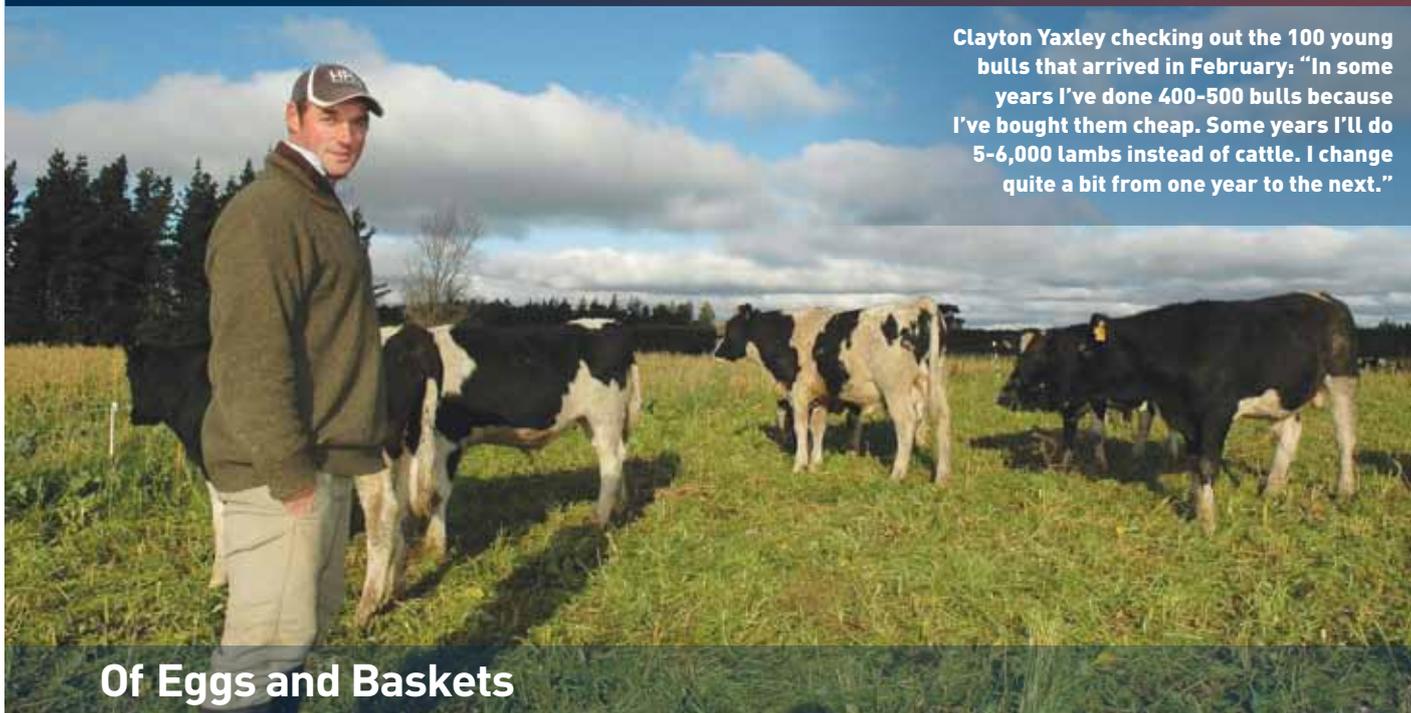
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CLIENT PROFILE: Clayton Yaxley, Springfield



Clayton Yaxley checking out the 100 young bulls that arrived in February: "In some years I've done 400-500 bulls because I've bought them cheap. Some years I'll do 5-6,000 lambs instead of cattle. I change quite a bit from one year to the next."

Of Eggs and Baskets

Clayton Yaxley runs a diversified farming operation on the age-old rationale of not having all one's eggs in one basket. But it got so diversified that this year he is curtailing the cereals to just barley to simplify things.

"Looking after one crop is far better. You're concentrating on just one so you can do it well. If you're trying to keep a lot of different crops going, especially with everything else that's going on at that time of year, something is going to get whacked somewhere."

Any failure in cropping is unaffordable today, he says.

A third generation Springfielder, Clayton farms 380 hectares of flat land, of which he and Lisa own 220, the rest being leased. The couple have two young sons, Jordan, 5, and Cameron, 2.

This is a mixed farm, but not in the traditional Canterbury way. It does mix livestock with cereals but very little animal breeding is undertaken. Clayton takes on lambs and bulls for fattening as well as dairy stock for grazing.

He has had about 2000 lambs since February, most of which he hopes will have gone to the works by mid-September. Some have gone already at very good money.

These lambs are funded through HRL's new finance facilities. Clayton sees value in using this service — even though he pays a little more in interest than

the bank would charge — because it is simple to access and because it provides HRL with an incentive to ensure he gets quality stock for it.

"Craig (Miller) has been my stock agent since I was 18 and I trust him. I know he'll get me good stock so that we both do well out of it."

Of these lambs, 500 females are a current exception to the no-breeding policy. They are Mount Linton progeny and Clayton felt that the option of selling them as in-lamb hoggets in the spring could be handy. The sires are Snowdon Perendale.

This winter he has grazed 600 head of dairy stock: 300 heifers arrived in mid-April and stayed for six weeks and then the same number of cows came to stay until calving. HRL finds these, too, another arrangement that Clayton enjoys for its simplicity.

"I don't have to do anything except show them where the paddocks are. They came in and took care of it all for me. I just do the work after the animals arrive. It's so simple — and it is a process that I know can get real complicated; it has for me in the past.

"This year, it was the simplest it's ever been. All I had to do was organise the feed assessment."

Then there are 100 rising-two-year-old bulls, which also arrived in February. These numbers vary from year to year, of course.

"In some years I've done 400-500 bulls because I've bought them cheap. Some years I'll do 5-6,000 lambs instead of cattle. I change quite a bit from one year to the next."

Feed is always the ultimate arbiter: the farm is in a good rainfall area but Clayton stays awake to the fact that he doesn't have the security that irrigation would provide.

To carry stock through the winter some 120 hectares of greenfeed are grown. This year it is oats, and rape and grass. Then he grows 10 hectares of oats and peas for baleage, most of which he sells, but not all, in case he needs a backstop for the cattle, although they also get all the crop straw.

The cropping side comprises two separate enterprises, potatoes and the more traditional cereals, peas and grass seed. For years, Clayton has grown about 140 hectares of a mix of the latter, but this year it's all feed barley.

"Barley is easy to grow, it doesn't take a



FROM THE GM

lot out of the ground, it goes off early in the season, it seems to be pretty easy to sell and I can use all the straw with the cows.”

The potato enterprise, on the other hand, is being positioned for expansion, with a 1000-tonne cool-store built on the home farm just over three years ago. The plan is to expand the potato acreage and use the cool-store to maximise opportunities in higher value markets.

They currently grow some 700 tonnes a year, about half of that being table Rockets for export and half Nadines for seed. To achieve this production, they usually lease an extra ten hectares somewhere around the district, which Clayton says is a good money-spinner for the farmer and good for the ground.

His vastly experienced potato grower Dad, Bob, runs this operation and was on the forklift feeding the grader when we called in.

The spuds employ four seasonal staff in addition to the one permanent man Clayton has helping him year-round.



This month's winning HRL hat pic...

This fine figure of an athlete is none other than our esteemed Chairman, Stephen Rennie, competing in the recent Christchurch half marathon. Management wants it known that the only item of sponsored clothing is the hat, there being no connection whatsoever between HRL and any groups of boys in prime condition.

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

THE BLOKES' DIARY ...

July 14th	<i>Coalgate</i>	All Stock
July 21st	<i>Coalgate</i>	Sheep & Prime Cattle Only
July 28th	<i>Coalgate</i>	All Stock
August 4th	<i>Coalgate</i>	Sheep & Prime Cattle Only
August 11th	<i>Coalgate</i>	All Stock
August 18th	<i>Coalgate</i>	Sheep & Prime Cattle Only
August 25th	<i>Coalgate</i>	All Stock
September 1st	<i>Coalgate</i>	Sheep & Prime Cattle Only
September 8th	<i>Coalgate</i>	All Stock
September 15th	<i>Coalgate</i>	Sheep & Prime Cattle Only

Winter was finally arriving as we went to press, which sets us wondering whether we are experiencing a mild winter or a late winter. The former would be wonderful, but we can't lose sight of the possibility of the latter, with lambing and calving just around the corner.

We've had some good growth because of the mild conditions but, again, how long the feed on hand will need to last is a moot point.

Market prospects for the new season are good, so everyone will want plenty of new feet on the farm to capitalise on that — scanings, while they're OK, don't seem as good as the level of available feed in recent months would tend to suggest.

The high dollar has impacted on beef but a shortage of lambs has kept prices up. High-ish livestock values generally have seen firm demand for our new finance facilities, which is pleasing in that it shows we have introduced a new service which was clearly needed.

The ATS development reported on the front page is an exciting step for HRL, not least because it brings Marty, Rachel and the boys into the team. Mid Canterbury is quite a special region, requiring specially qualified people to service it properly, and I couldn't imagine any person more suited to the role than Marty.

Also on the staff front, Jim and Corina Hazlett have appointed a farm manager so Jim can work for HRL full-time in his Amuri servicing role. Another very welcome step!

Our thoughts are still with those whose lives continue to be disrupted by earthquake damage. The quakes have impacted on our insurance business, too, with no new cover available for those parts of Central Canterbury hit in the first one, although Sean reports good levels of business activity elsewhere.

The merchandise boys have hit the ground running as well, and they will welcome your call for a yarn about planning your input needs for the coming season.

Ed Marfell



STAFF PROFILE ...

Paul Whittaker

North Otago/dairy bloke

Paul is another of what are supposed to be part-timers with HRL, but the term is proving somewhat elastic.

Since 2007 Paul and partner Michelle (plus daughter Molly who's nearly seven) have farmed a 230-hectare unit at Five Forks, about 40 minutes inland from Oamaru. A hint of how many daylight hours Paul gets to spend on it lies in the fact he's just put four new spotlights on the tractor he uses for feeding out.

Paul's HRL connection goes back to when he was at university in Christchurch: he supported himself by working at the Canterbury saleyards for Wrightson, where David Hazlett was also working at the time.

Subsequently, he did a stint as a livestock agent in Waimate for PGG, starting in 2000. Then he and Michelle returned to Paul's home turf, Hawkes Bay, where they managed a sheep and beef farm out east of Havelock North for three years.

Paul is HRL's mainly-dairy bloke, and why that is says a lot about what's happened in the rural scene in recent decades. His career to date hardly marks him out as a milking man, but dairying is touching more and more non-dairy

farmers every year. Paul and Michelle are a case in point. They run just about

all cattle on their place, and roughly half are dairy grazers. They have been taking 350 dairy heifers and/or grazers on for the same client for the past four years.

"It's consistent cash-flow and the bank loves it."

They also have 45 Hereford cows, and usually about 200 fatteners on the go.

Paul joined HRL in the middle of last year, at a time when his district had been knocked around by drought.

The way irrigation schemes have allowed dairying to expand into non-traditional regions like North Otago has changed the range of opportunities for all farmers in those areas. Paul has, for example, a strong group of sheep and beef clients running dairy bulls. He says integration of dairy with other sectors in these ways benefits both sides, and he sees promoting that as an important part of his HRL role.

He says in HRL he found a culture where all members of the team are very protective of their clients. "It's very client-focused. If there's a cock-up



This is how Paul relaxes

for example, someone will take it on personally and follow it through. And if I'm buying stock off, say, Travis, he will be very competitive, trying to get the best money he can for his client. We work hard to make something work and keep everyone happy, rather than just clipping the ticket on the way through."

Mixing his two occupations is "... a bit of a juggle..." and to escape the pressure of that, he relaxes ... by training for the Coast-to-Coast!

He has competed in the event three times. He did the two-day event in 2008 and 2009 and then trained for the one-day competition in 2010 but that was shortened because of bad weather. But he was back at it this year and completed the course in an "acceptable" 13 hours 37 minutes.

Will he keep doing it?

"Might do. It's a fairly good distraction. And you meet a bunch of bloody good like-minded people. A bit similar to the ethos in HRL, really."

HRL

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THE BLOKES

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