



farming people

HRL news

Hazlett Rural Limited

CCSL buys neighbouring block



Canterbury Central Saleyards (CCSL) has taken up the opportunity to purchase a 10-acre block between its Coalgate yards and the main road.

There was no plan to buy the land but it came up for sale. The thinking was that if it were subdivided and developed by someone else it could constrain any future options for the yards.

This comes as HRL has secured the permission it has been seeking to sell at Temuka, which has required perhaps the most significant change in the Coalgate yards' recent history: from 2018, its weekly sale will move from Thursdays to Wednesdays to avoid competing with Temuka's weekly store cattle sale.

CCSL, Canterbury and South Canterbury transport operators tried to persuade colleagues in the industry that moving the Thursday Temuka sale to Wednesdays would be an 'industry good' but were unsuccessful.

CCSL is a 50/50 joint venture between HRL and South Canterbury-based Peter Walsh & Associates. Fortnightly sales started at the rejuvenated but still not refurbished Coalgate yards in April 2009.

As recounted in the first edition of this newsletter back in that year, it is thought livestock sales were conducted on the site as far back as 1875 when the branch railway line off the Malvern line to the Whitecliffs coalfield opened. While Coalgate sales had always been

well supported by local farmers and runholders, the original company of local farmer-shareholders operating the yards always seemed to struggle to maintain the facility.

The old company finally succumbed to receivership in 1952, when a new company, Coalgate Saleyards (1952) Ltd, was incorporated. That firm lasted 53 years, being wound up in April 2005.

The facility is now a modern and well equipped sheep and cattle selling venue whose popularity and support has grown steadily over the ensuing years. HRL GM Ed Marfell believes the yards are now as good as any in the country and he hopes further days of the week can be utilised as Canterbury recovers from droughts and sheep numbers rise again. Developing bobby calf selling facilities is another opportunity seen as holding potential.

"The Coalgate yards are an extremely important part of the HRL business

INSIDE . . .

The Blokes' Diary	2
From the GM	2
A note from DH	2
<i>Client Profile:</i> High Peak Station	3
<i>Staff Profile:</i> Ruth White	4
Hat Pic	4
The Blokes & Blokesses' Directory	4

which is why we've bought that block of land and decided not to compete with another saleyard on the same day.

AgriHQ's LivestockEYE editor, Hawke's Bay-based Suz Bremner is involved in publishing national weekly livestock sales data; she widely attends sales and she agrees on the quality of the Coalgate venue:

"The one thing that has always stood out for me about Coalgate is that it is a forward-moving yard. I always feel when I go there that there's a sense of excitement, a really positive vibe. The people are passionate ... and over the last two years I've noticed the numbers and probably the quality increasing."

"I go to sales all round the country and I've found the interest in Coalgate is quite high. It's a growth saleyard."

Suz says it's possible that social media work by CCSL administrator Nicole Hughes has some bearing on this "... getting it out to the younger generation with her Facebook and other things that she does every week."



At last, a Christmas break without the ravages of recent earthquakes and drought around us. There will be a large number still dealing with the fallout from either or both of those events, but at least we can toast some semblance of normality settling in again.

HRL Directors and Management heartily thank all our farming people for their continued support during the year. It's you that make our business successful — and extremely enjoyable.

We wish everyone a very happy festive season and hope that families are able to gather and celebrate what we have, which is a great deal more than millions of other folks out there have.

All the best for 2018.

The Directors and HRL people.

The Blokes' Diary...

Jan 08	Temuka
Jan 10	Coalgate
Jan 11	Temuka Store Cattle
Jan 15	Temuka
Jan 17	Coalgate
Jan 18	Rakaia Gorge Lamb Sale
Jan 22	Snowdon Station Lamb Sale
Jan 24	Coalgate
Jan 24	Temuka 2th Sale
Jan 25	Temuka Store Cattle
Jan 26	Hawarden Ewe Fair
Jan 29	Castle Ridge Station Lamb Sale
Jan 29	Temuka
Jan 31	Coalgate
Jan 31	Temuka Ewe Fair
Feb 01	Temuka Store Cattle
Feb 05	Temuka
Feb 08	Coalgate
Feb 08	Temuka Store Cattle
Feb 12	Temuka
Feb 14	Coalgate
Feb 15	Temuka Store Cattle
Feb 15	Tekapo Lamb Sale
Feb 16	Sheffield Ewe Fair
Feb 19	Temuka
Feb 21	Coalgate
Feb 22	Temuka Store Cattle
Feb 22	Tekapo Ewe Fair
Feb 26	Temuka
Feb 28	Coalgate
Feb 28	Flock Hill Station Lamb Sale
Mar 01	Temuka Store Cattle
Mar 05	Temuka
Mar 07	Coalgate
Mar 08	Temuka Store Cattle
Mar 12	Temuka
Mar 14	Coalgate

FROM THE GM

The lamb-weaning season is well underway with values well up on last year, reflecting the fact that the schedule is \$1.50 better than it was then. This is not a bonanza, it is where the price of a lamb should be: in three figures all the time. One on-farm lamb sale that we have been involved with for 11 years has averaged over that time \$73 (that excludes the one boom year of 2011). It's \$30 up on that this year and that's where it should have been all along. We are especially pleased that the North Canterbury folks are getting a little joy for a change after their two-year journey to hell and back through drought and earthquakes. A bonus for them was that they have had plenty of grass this year to enable them to present their lambs in top order.

Mutton is having an even better year, with huge demand from the likes of China and contracts maturing but we expect it to ease as lambs start competing for killing space. However, all this bodes well for breeding ewe values at the sales in the new year.

Beef continues to tick along nicely, with the falling exchange rate not unhelpful. We will start to see dairy bull calves coming onto the market soon; there would appear to be significantly more of these reared this year and that's a great thing – it's better for everybody that they are held back and finished than slung on the bobby truck which is a huge waste and, increasingly, a bad look for the industry.

Our finance and procurement business has been bolstered recently with the appointment of Ian Hercus in Central Otago and Garry Mainland working with Focus Genetics in the South Island, while we have Donna Hicks joining them in the office in January. Karen Murphy has meanwhile joined the general admin team and we also have a new livestock trainee, Henry Miller. Additionally, two new Rural Supplies blokes will start with us in South Canterbury in the new year: Colin Scannell and Luke Brice. We welcome these blokes and blokesse aboard.

To add to what David says in his column, this year has been a really disruptive one for us, and that seems set to become the new normal. The whole HRL team has responded magnificently to this rapidly changing scene and I'd like to thank them all for the hard yards they've put in.

The adage that you can't keep doing what you did last year and expect a better outcome is well understood by this bunch and I'm grateful for and impressed with the way they've grasped the nettle.

Ed Marfell General Manager

A NOTE FROM DH

We are constantly being told these days that disruptive businesses are the way of the future: the Ubers and Amazons of this world. The logic is sound if the outcome is to challenge status quo businesses to re-think their business models and, perhaps, disrupt themselves into a more sustainable space.

So where does that leave us food and fibre growers in New Zealand? Exactly where we've always been, that's where. All our farming people have spent their entire farming careers tackling disruption by currency, market and climatic volatility, intensifying regulation around environmental and health & safety issues, and increasing demands from consumers for product safety and production transparency. They have had to keep disrupting the way they do things.

The same can be said of their fathers and grandfathers who always had the first three to deal with, and they had to handle rapid technological and scientific evolution to boot – without, in most cases, the educational advantages the current generation has in that regard.

So I say we ARE disruptive people – bloody good ones. Just look at the massive number of innovations and inventions (disruptions) developed on farms over the years to cope with those headwinds. Jet boats, anyone?

Some would say the next big disruption to confront us is plant-based meat analogues. As I've said here before, I reckon they represent a huge opportunity for us. We are well down the track in terms of environmental transparency and accountability so our story to the (vastly increasing numbers of) affluent of the world who will always prefer 'the real thing' is only going to get more compelling.

Let's just keep on disrupting ... and getting rid of core debt.

David Hazlett Rural Bloke

Client Profile ... High Peak Station

Hoggets on
High Peak

One property, four families & three businesses



Sometimes, the thorny issue of who in the next generation gets the farm might be solved by the property itself. That's the case on High Peak. The 3676-ha property supports separate enterprises for each of three next-generation families.

The Guilds have been on High Peak since James and Colin began farming it in 1973. In 1988 the brothers carved Quartz Hill off it and Colin and Hilary Guild have built that into a very successful farming operation in its own right.

As is well known James and Anna continued developing High Peak into what is regarded today as one of New Zealand's premier agricultural and tourism enterprises. James' massive contribution to the deer industry saw him inducted as a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit in this year's Queens Birthday Honours list.

As well as the sheep, beef and deer operation (around 6000, 480 and 3400 head respectively) James set aside some 1800 hectares of the harder part of the property for trophy hunting. One look at what happens on High Peak today is enough to indicate what a task managing all that must have been. Earlier this decade, Hamish took a deep breath when he and Gemma stepped up to the prospect of taking the whole business on.

Then Simon came home from overseas to pursue the idea of reducing the hunting venture's reliance on intermediaries and building a fully integrated tourism business. Hamish says Simon's return came as almost a relief as "...there was a huge amount of potential tourism could deliver to the farm but it was far more than one person could manage."

Simon and Kate started by taking the guides out of the picture and managing/marketing the High Peak hunting experience themselves. That business

now includes such offers as heli-skiing over the winter; further opportunities to leverage the property for tourism are under investigation, with some baby-steps already undertaken.

It's not hard to see how well Tom Dunbar, with his background as a champion ski adventurer, fitted into all this when he married the third Guild sibling, Amelia. Tom brought with him another passion: beekeeping. Tom and Amelia now have a thriving apiarism business based on High Peak with hives located on various runs up and down the north banks of the Rakaia Gorge, but also ranging as far as Kaikoura and Hanmer Springs for manuka.

While High Peak supports three different enterprises, it is important to note they all work as one. Hamish: "It's all the same business ultimately, and we are constantly helping each other."

That is especially important when it comes to utilising the trophy block: "We do get some very good grazing out there but at certain times of year we get a greater return on that area from tourism. That's something that Simon and I have to manage on a monthly, weekly and sometimes even daily basis at different times of year."

Hamish reviews all this with a sense of relief because "...while High Peak has the scale in terms of size to support three different farming operations its layout on the upper reaches of the Selwyn River does not lend it to further subdivision."

There is room for intensification though. Over the past four or so years, 100 hectares have been put under irrigation.

For the farming operation (that's Hamish), this is set to be a game changer. High Peak has up till recently been strictly a breeding operation focused on clearing as much weaned stock off the run before the colder months set in, although they do put in about 100 hectares of winter feed. High Peak was an inaugural participant in the innovative and now prominent Rakaia Gorge lamb sales; it puts a big yarding into the Coalgate calf sale in late April and it conducts what is believed to be the Southern Hemisphere's largest on-farm weaner deer sale each February where close to 1000 head are sold.

Among the many things Hamish has learned from his father is to "...never fence yourself out of opportunities..." so this focus on destocking in late summer will not necessarily change, but this season's sales proved that they do not have to take the price on the day.

"We're going from seeing ourselves as a straight breeding property to having a few more options. The irrigation has come at a fair old cost but the new flexibility means we can now put store stock up for sale in the knowledge that if the market isn't good enough we can keep them until March."

Readers may remember Hamish and Gemma's young daughter Rosa had a brush with cancer recently, an experience that motivated them to initiate the Dig Deep Give a Sheep campaign for the Child Cancer Foundation.

"We met families going through a huge ordeal, some doing it really hard, like having to take public transport to get their children to the hospital for chemotherapy. Petrol and grocery vouchers go a hell of a long way for those people."

HRL has worked with High Peak in its sheep and cattle business since David Hazlett started out — Craig Miller was a valued contributor in this relationship — and Hamish was anxious that this article expressed "...how much we appreciate what HRL are doing for the fundraiser*."

* You can donate a sheep from any line of lambs, hoggets or ewes you send to any sale at Coalgate. HRL will send the proceeds of that animal to the CCF — no GST or commission will be deducted, just the yard fee. Simply note your intentions on the Animal Status Declaration form down the bottom.

Staff Profile . . .

Ruth White Insurance Support

Ruth brought 25 years of insurance experience with her when she joined Hazlett Insurance Brokers in September 2015.

Originally off a dairy farm at Kaukapakapa just north of Auckland, she has moved around a fair bit over the years, mainly because of her husband Brett's job transfers with his employer of 30 years, Gough Group.

The years following the first Canterbury earthquakes were as difficult for insurance industry workers as they were for clients, Ruth says. "It was a very stressful time, especially for clients of course, but the insurance market changed a lot for us too. What insurers will or will not insure, the rising premiums, the excesses, it's all changed dramatically.

"Even though I've been in insurance for 25 years, it's never been constant. We are now continually having to adapt to new criteria, changing insurer's rules ... and you have to keep relaying that to clients."

It has been extremely stressful for a lot of people in the industry, she says.

Another big change for Ruth has been the shift to HIB, which she is finding somewhat different from her previous places of employment. For starters, David Hazlett rang her when she got the job, welcoming her to the company. "I love the culture here. To me it seems quite a traditional company with real values. They care not just about their employees but also their families.

"I've learned a lot here, too. They give you responsibilities that you wouldn't normally get in other companies. For the last field day I had to organise a mobile sound system and a hot water supply...

"You tend to upskill through that team approach here."



She says she feels privileged to be part of a team with years of insurance industry experience and very strong relationships with insurers: "... a strong and talented team providing a friendly and professional experience for our clients, and that's a positive for everyone."

Ruth and Brett have two kids, Ali who is 13 and 9-year-old John Dee, and in whatever free time she gets Ruth is happiest when spending it with these guys and family friends: "Family is very important to us."

HAT PIC



Sometimes a bloke deserves a new hat. Marty Amos delivered Steven Bruce's recently and they both agreed the \$250 donation should go to the Child Cancer Foundation.



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