



# HRL news

Hazlett Rural Limited

## Strategic alliance with New Zealand's biggest red meat gene pool

**HRL has formed a strategic alliance with Focus Genetics, gaining exclusive sales rights to that company's genetics in the South Island.**

Focus is owned by Landcorp and it leverages the massive quantum of performance records accumulated over many years by New Zealand's largest red meat farmer. With 10,000 recorded ewes, 2500 recorded cows and 2000 hinds, it's also the largest single breeder in the country.

HRL has recruited Invercargill-based Garry Mainland, formerly of Focus Genetics, to represent the Focus products.

HRL also recently appointed a Business Development Manager, Ian Hercus who is based in Wanaka and who formerly worked for Landcorp. He describes this as "... a classic win-win business opportunity with each party benefiting from what the other brings to the table."

"We're supporting a substantial breeding programme that has considerable integrity, and that's very important."

But he also envisages various opportunities will arise for HRL's farming people from other than just access to premium genetics. The linkages and connections that can arise from such an alliance should also be productive.

Involvement in the breeding, rearing and finishing of bobby calves is one area that needs developing – a "purpose-built dairy bull" is just one example of a specialised animal that can be bred with genetics from the Focus stable.

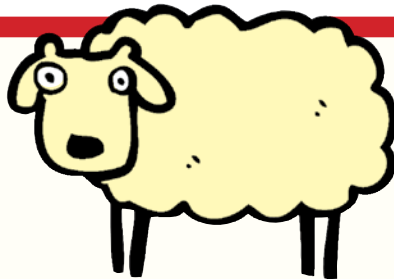


Ian Hercus



Garry Mainland

## Still Digging Deep ...



The 'Dig Deep, Give a Sheep' Child Cancer Foundation appeal inspired by Hamish and Gemma Guild of High Peak Station has kept on rolling in marvellous fashion but more donations are always welcome.

You can donate a sheep from any next line of lambs, hoggets or ewes you send to any sale at Coalgate. The sale proceeds of that animal go to the CCF – no GST or commission will be deducted, just the yard fee.

We've made it as easy as possible: simply note your intentions on the Animal Status Declaration form down the bottom with the reference.

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## FROM THE GM

**So... at the end of October we were as soggy as, by mid-December we were crying out for rain, and now we have plenty of moisture and nearly-autumnal weather that's making the grass grow like Billy-o. Let's hope these mild conditions persist for a while to give us a decent platform for winter.**

All this comes at a time of buoyancy in our major markets: beef has remained consistently strong, mutton values are at historic highs, lamb continues its roll in the mid-sixes and dairy is on the way back so long as the mycoplasma bovis issue is contained, controlled and eradicated.

So we have to ask ourselves: is this the new normal or are we in the middle of a bubble that could burst anytime? We had a bubble burst in 2012, and of course dairy people have had a huge fright in the years since.

I think there's grounds for believing that the New Zealand story and more specifically such things as antibiotic-free labeling, freedom from GMOs and, as a young Nuffield scholar put it to me recently, "free-range grass-fed" may be having something to do with it. The thing to remember is that we are not trying to sell our product to people who know little, and care even less, about where their tucker comes from or how it is produced. Our customers are discerning and comparatively well-off people who do care about such things. Maintaining their positive perceptions of how we go about producing their food and fibre must remain a very important aspect of our marketing thrust.

If that's the case we should be talking these things up as much as we can at every opportunity. The other side of that coin is that we should be wary of doing anything that might impact on the public's perception of our farming practices. It only takes one negative story in the media (however wrong-headed it might be, which they often are) to stir all kinds of trouble that we don't need. We have to talk ourselves up, but we also have to walk the talk.

I'm pleased to report a baby boom in HRL. Susan Lai has just had a baby girl, named Melody, while Catherine Wilson and two of our livestock reps' wives are due in April. So... one on the ground and three to come, you might say. This has meant calling for maternity leave reinforcements in the Finance & Procurement front-office so Justin Burton has come to the rescue full-time from Heartland Bank.

Our new Rural Supplies blokes in South Canterbury, Colin Scannell and Luke Brice,

## A NOTE FROM DH

**I have mentioned the demon volatility here before but I never cease to be gobsmacked at how our farming people cope with it, along with the weather and their markets. Every day, everything's up and down like a jack-in-the-box, and they have to juggle that with their own wellbeing and the day-to-day human challenges that we all face.**

Nevertheless, they find the energy to listen to new ideas, try new things and draw sometimes-hard lessons from the occasional – but inevitable – failures. Farming is not for the faint-hearted and I don't think they take time out often enough to salute themselves for hanging in there valiantly, succeeding, and providing for their loved ones.

Indeed, farming in New Zealand seems to be flowering anew. It is very heartening to see small rural communities around the countryside benefiting from the increased employment on, particularly but not only, dairy farms. We may not see the local footy clubs ever fielding the number of teams that they used to in the golden years of yore but at least we do see some school rolls rising and renewed vibrancy in local communities.

I thought of this again when I read Pita Alexander's excellent point in the paper the other day about the world requiring 70% more food in the next 30 years: it's farmers who are going to have to produce it – the same farmers who are facing all that volatility, and increasing bureaucratic intervention and control. While farmers respect sensible environmental regulation – they are conservationists themselves, remember – the regulators would do well to be wary of killing the goose that's laying the golden eggs.

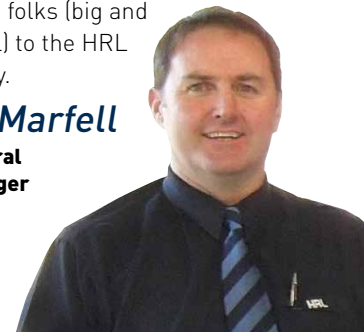
So I say to all farming people: keep on keeping on! Kiwi farmers are renowned throughout the world for their 'get it done' attitude. One of the big challenges now would have to be to draw the urban people closer to what we do so they understand better.

**David Hazlett** Rural Bloke

are now up and running, and next month we have Yvonne Evans joining us as Company Accountant/IT Manager. Yvonne comes to us from the phenomenally successful Fergburger enterprise in Queenstown. We warmly welcome all these folks (big and small) to the HRL family.

**Ed Marfell**

**General  
Manager**



**HRL**  
Hazlett Rural Limited

## The Blokes' Diary

**COALGATE Weekly Sale each Thursday**

**TEMUKA Prime Cattle & Sheep Sale each Monday**

**TEMUKA Store Cattle Sales each Thursday - except when calf sales fall in April**

**For all sale dates please visit [www.hazlett.nz/whats-on/](http://www.hazlett.nz/whats-on/)**

### COALGATE

<b>April 5th</b>	Weekly Sale & 1st Calf Sale
<b>April 19th</b>	Weekly Sale & 2nd Calf Sale
<b>April 26th</b>	Weekly Sale & High Country Calf Sale
<b>May 10th</b>	Weekly Sale & In Calf Sale

### ON-FARM SALES

<b>April 3rd</b>	Castle Ridge Calf Sale
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### TEMUKA SPECIAL CATTLE SALES

<b>April 4th</b>	Eastern Section Calf Sale
<b>April 6th</b>	Mackenzie Section Calf Sale
<b>April 11th</b>	Western Section Calf Sale
<b>April 18th</b>	Fairlie Section Calf Sale
<b>April 20th</b>	Geraldine Section Calf Sale
<b>May 3rd</b>	In Calf Beef Sale

### CANTERBURY CALF SALES

<b>March 23rd</b>	Culverden 1st Calf Sale
<b>March 28th</b>	Cheviot North Calf Sale
<b>March 29th</b>	Cheviot South Calf Sale
<b>April 6th</b>	Culverden 2nd Calf Sale
<b>April 20th</b>	Culverden 3rd Calf Sale
<b>April 27th</b>	Culverden 4th Calf Sale



## Client Profile ...

### Mike Davis, BMH Farming Ltd, Ashburton.

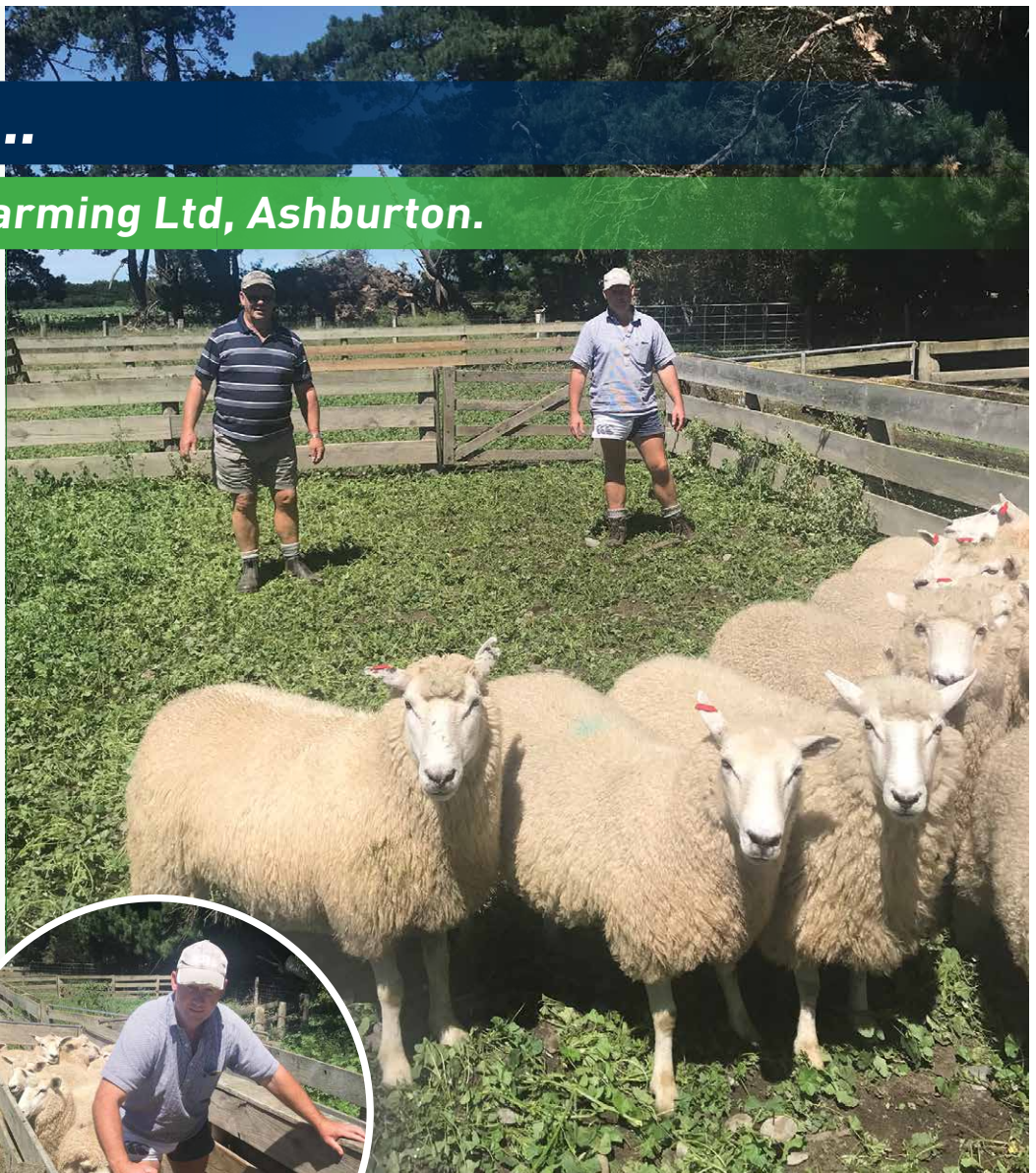
**Mike farms on his own account 300 hectares of dryland owned by Bill Forsyth at Ealing in Mid Canterbury. There is an unusual story in how this came to be.**

Around 1970 Mike's father John went to work for Bill when the latter's farm was some 500 hectares, in two blocks separated by the Ealing Montalto Road. John set about managing the 300-ha side of the farm, running a Border Corriedale terminal sire flock, while Bill ran the base Corriedales on his side of the road. Some barley and pea cropping was done on both sides.

Mike came along with a big itch for farming and went to Lincoln in 1990 (John took a break from the farm around that time to go mussel farming in Marlborough but was back about four years later). Mike then went off to the University of Minnesota on an exchange scheme for two years of study and farming work. On his return to the Forsyth property he took up working for Bill, across the road from his Dad, on the 200 hectare part of the farm. These two blocks, it should be said, were essentially run as one operation, just managed separately day to day.

After three or four years, Mike persuaded Bill to allow him to fence part of John's side of the farm for deer. Within a few years 90 hectares were thus fenced. Mike stocked it himself, with Bill's help, and began share-farming the deer. A few more years later, Mike and John swapped jobs so that Mike took over the block that included his deer block. Wanting to expand his own operation, Mike leased a further 100 hectares of the block, buying some of Bill's sheep to stock it, while continuing to manage the 100-odd hectare balance for Bill. This lasted another few years, until Mike extended his lease to include that remaining 100 hectares, arriving at the current situation whereby Mike leases the entire 300 hectares.

John, meanwhile, was approaching retirement so Bill progressively sold the 200 hectares for dairying developments. John and his wife Joyce now live at Lake Hood, while Mike, his three children (Britney, 21; Madi, 19; and Hayden 16) and his partner Zahra live on their own



**Above: John (left) and Mike Davis with a line of Romney-cross two-tooths, the tail of last year's trading lambs, that fetched \$171 at a ewe fair.**



**Left: Mike in the drafting race.**

eight-hectare block near Ashburton. Now-Christchurch-resident Bill keeps the house on the farm for his occasional visits.

The deer have been gone for ten years now, with local dairy conversions offering Mike a much better option for his unirrigated land. They had been growing a lot of turnips over the years so kale became an obvious choice – "you can get good yields if you get your timing right". Fodderbeet now forms part of the programme as well, some 55ha. There are still 150ha of kale, and 50 hectares of barley over the summer which is followed by either Italian or oats for greenfeed.

That order of crop is roughly the rotation, which includes only about 15ha of permanent pasture. Mike doesn't own any capital stock at all nowadays; it's all dairy support and lamb trading, with 4500 of the latter passing through the

farm last season while some 2300 dairy cows were grazed from, as usual, the beginning of May until the end of July.

It's not hard to see how HRL fits into the mix, with all that stock to organise every season. Mike values the contribution Geoff Wright and his team make to the enterprise: "I like the fact that it's a one-stop shop. We do all our financing through them as well. They understand what I'm doing, it's their game. It just all happens. And I've known Geoff for most of my farming career."

Mike also pays tribute to Bill Forsyth: "I'm very lucky in that Bill has allowed me to do what I want to do and he's interested in what I do. It's the next-best thing to owning my own farm."

Mike employs a part-timer and, just to complete the circle, John Davis now works for his son Mike as his "chief tractor driver"!



## Staff Profile...

### Jo Manson Finance & Procurement Admin

**Jo hails from Oamaru and joined the finance industry in Dunedin upon leaving school. She worked in a trading bank for ten years and, apart from taking nearly ten years out to raise her and Greg's two children, she has worked in finance ever since.**

Before the kids arrived, Jo and Greg took off in 1999 for a three-year OE; while in London Jo worked in Coutts, the Queen's bank and in Citibank. The couple spent six months travelling through the Middle East, Europe, Russia and Africa before returning home.

At that point Jo went to work for PGG under then-finance manager Peter Engel for two years before leaving to start the family. Caleb is now 14 and Brooke is 11. When Brooke started school Peter, who joined HRL in 2011, invited Jo to join the company's emerging finance business.

That was 2012. Now six years later, Jo is executive assistant to David Hazlett in his Finance & Procurement role. That part of the business has grown to such an extent that Jo has a team of seven supporting her with the back-office work: "It's quite a paper-intensive business. We are trying to introduce more technology to reduce that but it's also quite a unique business and there are no off-the-shelf products to apply to it."

As anyone who knows David Hazlett will appreciate, there's always something new or different to implement.

The work draws heavily on Jo's banking experience but "... it's different from anything I've ever done before."

She doesn't spend all her time behind a desk anymore – she gets out to see F&P clients, explaining all the paperwork they receive and all aspects of what the business offers. She also works closely with the HRL livestock blokes and, increasingly, processing company reps as well. Jo says an increasing amount of business is coming in from the latter as the reputation of the business grows: "Nobody is offering farming

people exactly what we offer."

Manson family life revolves heavily around the childrens' sport; Caleb excels in football ("I'm not allowed to call it soccer ...") and cricket, and they spend a fair amount of time following him around the country, while Brooke is into tennis.

## HAT PIC



**We met Blair Benefield at the top of the Crown Range. He is skateboarding the length of New Zealand to raise funds to combat depression with his Ride Against Depression (RAD). He is an Afghanistan veteran, and his interesting story can be found at [givealittle.co.nz/fundraiser/ride-against-depression-rad](http://givealittle.co.nz/fundraiser/ride-against-depression-rad). Naturally, this quarter's donation of \$250 has gone to his cause.**



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