

AUTUMN 2019

Hazlett News

A quarterly newsletter for clients and mates of Hazlett Limited

Hazlett Insurance now in the North Island

Hazlett Insurance Ltd is now complementing the Hazlett livestock and agri-supplies offerings in the North Island.

Heading up the new team are Fielding-based Harry Jones who started with Hazlett Insurance in early September and the very experienced Tony Jensen in Rotorua.

This foray into the North Island is consistent with earlier statements by Hazlett that its growth and direction will be determined by the talents and skills of the people who join the company.

Finding the right insurance cover can be a time consuming and expensive task, and finding that right person to act on your behalf can be just as challenging.

Hazlett Insurance Limited has always been committed to providing the people that make up the heartland of New Zealand's commercial and rural business sector with exceptional service, and the company is confident that Harry and Tony are the right people for the job.

"Between them they have 30-plus years of experience in rural and commercial insurance and are both determined to deliver outstanding customer service, reviewing



▲ The Hazlett Insurance North Island team: Tony Jensen (left) and Harry Jones.

taylor-made insurance programmes and providing a first-class claims settlement service," said Hazlett Insurance Ltd GM Nick Percy.

"Both Harry and Tony represent the talent and skills that we require to deliver our growth strategy moving forward.

"There will be good gains for customers to be made from well-considered insurance decisions and it is our business to help clients make those good decisions.

"This is an exciting time for Hazlett Insurance Limited, with two exciting characters to work with on the ground in the North Island to create great customer experiences for our people and be a trusted, effective and relevant agri-business and commercial insurance broking business across the Hazlett geographic footprint and beyond."

Hazlett Insurance Limited has access to the best underwriters and underwriting agencies in the market with no allegiance to any particular insurers, so its advice is completely independent and tailored to your requirements.

Harry can be contacted 027 462 0029 and hjones@hazlett.nz while Tony is at 021 491 808 and tjensen@hazlett.nz

Our hats

This was taken at a bash late last year for staff, past and present, to unveil the new brand.

The \$250 donation will go to mental health. We are always on the lookout for pics featuring our new hat, so get snapping and claim \$250 for your preferred charity.



Livestock sector in good space

In my 36 years in the livestock industry I haven't often had the opportunity to say the sector is in a good space, but right now that about sums it up.

We've had a season that follows the recent pattern of no pattern at all – a huge spring, a short but hot summer (all one month of it!) when a lot of hay and balage was made, then a little bit of rain on warm soils to set us up for what hopefully will be a great autumn. A little more moisture would see that happen.

There's a slight pause in the lamb schedule – which is always more noticeable when things have been going well – but that is quite normal for this time of year and its current level is not a bad place for it to be sitting, given we're at the bottom of the seasonal price cycle. I don't believe there are the numbers of lambs out there to nudge it lower and perhaps the market agrees with me, with the ewe fairs having been very positive.

The same can be said of the calf market. While it may not reach the highs of last year, there is no reason to think it won't remain in positive territory. That kind of continuity is what we need right now.

The dairy sector has highlighted the volatility that we've become used to, with the signals down before Christmas but now on the up and up again. Things never stay the same! We might see some fallout from the US's trade spat with China, but then with foot and mouth emerging in South Africa, we might well also see China looking to us for more product.

It's good to hear that Beef+Lamb are covering, at its AGM round about now, the work that processors have been doing with the government on moves to deal with any of the possible Brexit scenarios. A lot of doom and gloom has been floating around about possible outcomes, but I believe we can be confident that processors are astute businesspeople and won't have been sitting like possums in the headlights on that score.

We still see too much negative press, too, concerning animal welfare and environment issues in the farming sector. It needs to be understood by the public that bad management in both those fields is not only bad farming but it's also bad for business; 99% of farmers understand this and actively pursue compliance and best practice. Sometimes genuine mistakes are made, but that is the case in all industries yet it's distressing that the 1% of operators who shirk their responsibilities get well over 50% of farming coverage.



Ed Marfell

GM, Hazlett Livestock

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Both islands well set for autumn

An unusually wet start to the summer has seen most of the country with an excess of summer feed.

In the South Island, autumn and winter crops are well established and we would hope that, given a relatively normal autumn, the tonnages of fodder beet and other like crops will see farmers well placed going into winter.

The North Island is poised nicely to move into the autumn with large areas ready to plant into permanent pasture as farmers transition from their short-term summer crops.

The Hazlett group is going through a period of growth and in my short time in the business it has been great to see how closely the whole team works, interacts and understands the needs of its farmer clients; while some companies view the personal relationship approach as old-fashioned it is certainly alive and well across this business.

A warm welcome to those clients who are new to the Hazlett business.



Tom Mowat

GM, Hazlett Agri-Supplies

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Hazlett



STAFF PROFILE

In October 2016, Angus joined the family firm and went to Manawatu to establish a beachhead for the company there.

Angus Hazlett

Funding & Procurement,
Southern North Island

Upon leaving Christchurch Boys High School in 2010, Angus went to Hawkes Bay to a job on a farm, where he played hockey in Napier.

A year later he came back to Canterbury to work for the Wilson brothers at West Melton for eighteen months.

Robin Wilson was of course a Canterbury and New Zealand hockey player, and subsequently coach of both at various times, and Angus says not surprisingly this job was also important to his hockey career. "Robin was a huge part of my hockey and I really enjoyed my time with them."

"I wanted to stay with them but I'd made the Under 21 New Zealand team which was due to go to India, so I went to Lincoln for a year where I could better prepare for that."

But the line of work the Hazlett family excels in was what Angus really wanted to do so, so he joined Rural Livestock in South Canterbury. He stayed there a year before coming up to cover the Rangiora/Oxford district for that company. He recalls his time with Rural Livestock with pleasure: "...they were very good to me, a great company to work for."

Then in October 2016, he joined the family firm and went to Manawatu to establish a beachhead for the company there.

This wasn't always necessarily going to happen:

"I wanted to do my own thing. I wanted a challenge. But my partner Vic (Parsons, a fitness trainer from Cheviot) and I wanted a change as we'd been in Canterbury most of our lives.

There was always the idea that at some stage I would be involved with the family firm somehow – but I didn't think it would be that soon."

They are based in Fielding where Angus found it "bloody tough" breaking into the market at the start, but there are plenty of people in that area who will say that Angus was like a fox terrier and never gave up.

"The rewards for that hard work are starting to come in now. But having said that, I got a lot of help from a number of farmers up here that I will always be grateful for."

He continued playing hockey for Canterbury in his first year in Feilding, during which time he played his fiftieth game for his home province, but now he plays for Central Districts in the top-level National League.



◀ The Lewis family (left to right) – Archer, Cam, Addison, Catherine and Charlie.

CLIENT PROFILE

Lewis Farms, Horowhenua

Cam Lewis is the fourth generation of the Lewis family to farm Dunoon, a small former dairy farm at Poroutawhao, about halfway between Levin and Foxton.

These days, though, Dunoon is the epicentre of a comprehensively diverse agriculture and horticulture operation. Cam, applying six years of experience earlier on as a rural banker, sees this spreading of risk as critical to ongoing farming success.

With the demise of the old dairy operation, Cam's grandfather Campbell converted to sheep and beef. Then Cam's father Geoff took over in 1986, diversifying into bulls and asparagus, with the latter being the dominant enterprise, and expanding the property holdings along the way.

Today, after 38 years of production the operation sells 500 tonnes of Tendertips-branded asparagus annually for local and export markets, picked off, currently, 104 hectares.

When Cam came home from the office about a dozen years ago, he was looking closely at how well the dairy industry was looking and so today Lewis Farms milks 900 cows across two units, both within a five-minute drive of the home farm (now referred to in the business as 'the packhouse' as the asparagus packhouse occupies the site of the old dairy shed).

A more recent offshoot of that is an intensified beef operation where Angus blood is being put across the dairy units' heifers, with all progeny to be taken through to finishing. "We don't see a future for the bobby calf business in the New Zealand dairy industry. We need to do it a different way, so we've just leased two beef farms to take them all through to finishing."

None of the additional land is more than a 30-minute drive from the packhouse.

A critical issue in a business like this is that of staffing. The Lewis family have always had a close employer/employee relationship with the Horowhenua Samoan community – and their communities in Samoa as well – for asparagus harvesting. Thus they welcomed the Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) scheme that came into effect in 2007 allowing the horticulture and viticulture industries to recruit workers from overseas for seasonal work when there are not enough New Zealand workers.

"We were one of the original pilots of the scheme before it was adopted nationwide. Last year we brought 32 staff out and they are the core of our asparagus harvesting team. It's not overstating the case to say that our asparagus business would not survive without them."

In order to provide a longer work opportunity for some of their local workers (and to better utilise a packing shed that was sitting idle for much of the year, and indeed to make the small home farm profitable on its own account) the Lewis family have, just 12 months ago, diversified into strawberries: they have about a hectare of 15 tunnel houses producing fruit hydroponically.

If all goes according to plan, the workers who previously had only September to December on the asparagus can now move onto strawberries which can occupy them until the end of May.

If all goes according to Hoyle, the workers who previously had only September to December on the asparagus can now move onto strawberries which can occupy them until the end of May.

"We are so peaky in our labour on asparagus. We get up to 150 staff for the 100-day asparagus harvest (all still done by hand), up from about six for the rest of the year. The strawberries mean we have a core team of about 30 across the asparagus, strawberries and the cows."

The packhouse shop is already value-adding by selling strawberry ice cream along with its established offering that includes own-branded Manuka honey, barista coffee and so on. Cam's wife Catherine looks after this part of the business, but her very active role in the enterprise also sees her overseeing compliance and social media marketing, while also working as executive director of Horowhenua Taste Trail (celebrating food excellence in the Horowhenua: www.tastetrail.co.nz) of which Lewis Farms is a founding producer.

The scale of the business now enables the company to employ full-time specialists – operations managers, tractor driver, engineer, agronomist and so forth. Geoff Lewis is still playing a very active role as well. He takes part in all major decision-making while day-to-day his main role now is around HR where he spends a lot of time mentoring the staff and ensuring a good team culture is maintained.

Geoff has a passion for automation in the packhouse, too, and is currently overseeing a technology upgrade.

For many years Cam has valued the support of Mike McLean, now Hazlett Agri-Supplies bloke in the Horowhenua: "Although we have an agronomist for our horticulture business, Mike supplies agronomy support for pasture renewal and summer fodder cropping – which we do a lot of, mainly around chicory – in our dairy and beef businesses. Mike's an absolute genius when it comes to that stuff. He's a very important part of our business."

When we spoke to Cam for this article, he, Catherine, their daughter Addison, 5, and their two boys Archer, 3, and Charlie, 1, were enjoying a holiday in Golden Bay and no doubt well deserving of it.

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The Quarterly Yarn

The very favourable season discussed by Ed and the consequent buoyant market for breeding stock are telling. Farmers who are prepared to pay these good prices would not have done so had they not seen the opportunity to make a few more dollars on those animals in the months and years ahead.

They should also be looking ahead at their debt levels. In setting out their priorities in their diaries they need to be making sure that DEBT REDUCTION features very high on the list. If that cannot be accommodated in these favourable times, when can it?

One feels, though, for the summer traders who have the screws tightening on them. But then again the past two seasons have been good to them; this only reiterates the need to take the long view and not feel too beaten up by the volatility that has become a fact of our farming lives.

It's good to see fine wool people enjoying good competition again. Let's hope those prices are sustainable, in the face of all those global market threats that Ed mentions. They may mean yet more volatility in the short term but long-term the prospects are bright and the long view is what we need to be taking. And did I say that taking the long-term view means getting debt down to easier levels?



David Hazlett

Rural Bloke

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The Bloke's Diary

Upcoming Sales

Coalgate Weekly Sale	Each Thursday
Temuka Prime Cattle & Sheep Sales	Each Monday
Temuka Store Cattle Sales	Each Thursday

For all sale dates, please visit hazlett.nz/whats-on

Special Sales

March 28	Cheviot Southern Calf Sale
March 29	Cheviot Northern Calf Sale
April 03	Temuka Eastern Section Calf Sale
April 04	Coalgate Calf Sale
	Ross Calf Sale
April 05	Culverden Second Calf Sale
	Temuka Mackenzie Section Calf Sale
April 10	Temuka Western Section Calf Sale
	Temuka Store Cattle
April 11	Whataroa Calf Sale
April 12	Culverden Third Calf Sale
	Temuka Store Cattle Sale
April 17	Temuka Fairlie Section Calf Sale
April 24	Coalgate High Country Calf Sale
April 26	Culverden Fourth Calf Sale
May 02	Temuka In-calf Sale
May 09	Coalgate In-calf Sale
May 16	Temuka Store Cattle Sale
May 30	Temuka Store Cattle Sale
June 13	Temuka Store Cattle Sale
June 27	Temuka Store Cattle Sale

On-Farm Sales

April 01	Castle Ridge Station Calf Sale
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