

Hazlett News

A newsletter for clients and mates of Hazlett Limited

Your industry needs you

An innovative scheme to prepare young people for a farming career needs support in the South Island. Specifically it is looking for farmers to host trainees.

Hazlett strongly supports this worthy project and suggests clients consider if they could become involved.

Growing Future Farmers (GFF) Charitable Trust is different from other on-farm training schemes. It recruits suitable young people from any background and places them on farms for practical experience. The farmer provides accommodation and 'sponsors' the student on farm for four days per week.

The program runs for two years, during which time GFF supports the students, providing formal study and key skills courses predominately on their one day a week away from the farm - Fridays in the case of first-year trainees - with fellow students in their local cluster. They are encouraged to go home for the weekends, and they get a fortnight's break during the year as well as a school-length Christmas holiday.

Host farmers are also required to provide first-year students with a six-week-old heading pup in February, and a six-week-old Huntaway pup in August. Students are not allowed to have other older dogs in year 1 and their pup training is led by a regional dog trialist, just one of the skills courses organised for the Friday training day.

Throughout the two-year programme, local GFF liaison managers provide pastoral support and oversight of the students' progress and wellbeing.

Following a successful pre-pilot programme started in 2017, a regional pilot was run in 2020 with 10 students in two regions,



John Jackson

who are currently doing their second year; meanwhile in 2021 50 first-years were placed in seven regions throughout New Zealand.

GFF chair John Jackson, himself a farmer in the Waikato, says the scheme aims to address a longstanding concern by providing a clear and identifiable pathway for young adults to get a start in the sheep, beef and deer industries.

He says the GFF model is scalable and can thus make a significant difference to the recruitment issue nationally and currently only the number of farmers wishing to become involved limits it.

The trust is targeting 72 first year student opportunities for 2022, in seven regions in the North Island and five in the South Island - it is currently recruiting for clusters in Marlborough, North Canterbury, Mid-Canterbury, Kurow and Winton. By 2024 GFF is aiming for 98 first year placements.

Hazlett sees GFF, being a model developed by the industry for the industry, as an excellent approach to the recruitment and training issue, and highly commends it to all farming people who may be in a position to help.

If you think you or your organisation would like to be part of Growing Future Farmers go to: www.growingfuturefarmers.co.nz



Season's Greetings!

We trust that by the time December 25th comes around, the grass will still be growing so everyone has a good reason to sit down and celebrate.

Hazlett's people heartily thank everyone for their continued support during the year. We're all in this together and it's you, our clients, that make our business successful, satisfying and enjoyable.

We wish everyone a very happy festive season and hope that families and whanau are able to gather and celebrate what is, when you look at what's going on in the rest of the world, a life of bounty.



Containers & shipping big issues for processors

We're not always able to enter the festive season with things on a high, but this year we can do that, always knowing of course that when things are going well there's only one way they can go. We're coming off a record high on lamb, near enough to the same for mutton, and similar for beef as well.

The demand driving this will likely remain the same, but more stock coming forward from now on will no doubt dampen things a little – although it must be said that the droughts of recent times are still affecting the numbers of animals being offered.

Overlaying all that, though, are the constraints the industry is labouring under. A consistent theme in all the meat companies' reporting lately is shortages of shipping containers. Uncertainty around shipping arrivals both at the New Zealand and destination ends is another; shipping schedules currently are suffering frequent disruption.

Also, covid has interfered with the availability of overseas workers upon whom the companies are increasingly reliant. The processors have other logistics issues as well, but shipping and container availability are front of mind for them.

So while things might be looking good, they are never perfect ...

A great development for us this year has been the welcoming of PWA staff to our team. I'm delighted with the depth of leadership and experience we now have throughout the whole of the South Island: a very impressive team of blokes. Also pleasing is the current strength and quality of our complement of young blokes – it's now up to us older fellers to ensure we support and encourage them, and share our experience with them as much as we can.

We all wish our clients a happy festive season.



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Inattention to safety can be costly

Worksafe is currently looking more closely at farmers.

Consequently we are seeing large increases in claims under Statutory Liability policies. The fines cannot be insured against but the reparation and legal costs can be and are often very substantial:

A farm worker dying from a quad-bike rollover resulted in \$367,000 of fines and reparations due to inadequate servicing of the bike; a similar accident resulted in \$360,000 of fines and reparations as the farm worker had not been trained and instructed on how to check and maintain tyre pressure; and another had a similar outcome due to a faulty seat belt. Legal fees in such cases could also run into six figures.

The four key things Worksafe says farmers should consider to avoid on farm accidents are:

- Minimising staff fatigue
- Using seatbelts on all vehicles would reduce farm vehicle deaths by 50%
- Put a crush protection device on your quad
- Don't assume new staff know how to work with large animals.

The days of being able to rely on employee experience and judgement are gone and an employer must be able to show all practical steps have been taken to minimise risk.



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Ag-chem supply constraints on horizon

A potential issue facing the farming and wider community as we move into summer is supply chain: the availability and increased cost of everything from vehicles to building supplies.

The agri-supplies sector is not immune from these pressures; the area most impacted is agri-chemicals. Demand for agri-chem around the world is very high because of covid-related supply-chain backlogs, and prices are increasing as well (but hopefully only for the short term.)

Most of the world is reliant on China in some part for mining for agri-chem raw materials/ ingredients, as well as for their manufacture. Reportedly, China is operating at about 30% of normal production in this sector.

We are working hard to secure product for the autumn season and aim to have enough in stock for our clients. Unfortunately price is well out of our control; we will endeavour to purchase at the best terms we can but it looks likely that there will be some significant rises across the board. Please speak with one of the Agri-supplies blokes if you have any concerns or would like to lock in your autumn chemical requirements.

Thank you for your business. Here's wishing you a propitious season.



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Peter Walsh and Martie Gregory-Hunt (our local Chathams Livestock Bloke) are standing on the ruins of missionary and whaling settlements at Mission Bay, at the northeast of Chatham Island.

The \$250 donation will go to the Chatham Islands Museum.



HAT PIC

CLIENT PROFILE

Ian & Jess Knowles Drought-proofing in the North Canterbury hills

Ian and Jess farm Glenmark Springs, an 820-hectare block on Glenmark Drive in the Waipara Valley district. They co-own part of the farm and lease the remainder from Ian's family. The couple have a three-year-old son Victor.

It's rolling to steep country, with Mt Donald at 500 metres in the centre of the farm, so it's a mainly sheep operation, typically carrying 4000 Romney-Texel breeding ewes plus a thousand hoggets.

They breed rams for their own use and Ian likes to 'mix and mingle' up to about eight different terminal sire options, always looking for what will work better. "To keep things interesting ..." as he put it.

They have taken part in the Hazlett Glenmark Drive Lamb Sale over the past four years, maximizing the opportunity to reduce numbers before the farm's "weak spot," the summer dry, which Ian says has generally worked really well for them. But last autumn's drought meant the pair decided to cut their ewe numbers in half and so this year they are setting about finishing the 3000 lambs. Feed is in abundance at present.

They also graze a couple of hundred carry-over dairy cows for a local dairy farmer.

To get through the winter Ian and Jess grow about 30ha of fodder beet and Raphno (a cross of radish and kale). Ian describes the operation as "high stocking/low cost" and avoids conserving feed. "I try to stay off the tractor..." They only buy in feed in times of drought.

While the cropping is kept simple, with just one species at a time, they mix up their pasture species quite a bit "...with the overall goal of having something that will still be there next year."

Studiously avoiding ryegrass as it doesn't persist in their conditions, Ian uses cocksfoot, phalaris, tall fescues, sub-clovers - anything that will handle the summer dry better - and he currently has about 100ha of chicory and clovers. There is some lucerne but it doesn't fit with their usual policy of selling lambs early; sub-clover works better for them. Plantain has been one of the rising stars coming out of the dry in this environment too.

The Knowles' have a fairly longstanding relationship with Hazlett, in particular with Tim Rutherford, whom Ian regards highly for his accessibility and willingness to put in extra effort to move animals. "He'd make a round peg fit a square hole if you asked him to."

Ian and Jess have done a lot of development since they began farming in 2015. There's been an intensive programme of splitting most paddocks on the farm in two, creating laneways, water systems and so on. The annual Hazlett Surplus Goods Sale is a must-do on the farm's calendar which Ian finds invaluable for smaller items like fencing wire, gate hardware and so on.

The Knowles are also insurance clients and welcome the growth in the Hazlett business, appreciating the services available.

And now the recently arrived but well experienced North Canterbury Agri-Supplies bloke Paul Bowater has built a key agronomic role for himself on the farm: "Being a one-man band, we're fairly time-limited and it's hard for me to get around all the crops.

**Ian, Victor and
Jess Knowles.**

Getting everything done on time is a critical thing for us. Paul has been a real breath of fresh air as he gets out and crawls around with a spade, finding all the bugs and weeds that I could miss as I drive around."

Paul walks the paddocks weekly and is already deeply involved in decision-making around such matters as species choice: "He's been excellent, adding a lot of value to our business."

The Elephant in the Room

Have you ever seen it like this before? Prices good, the grass green ... but hang on!

There is an elephant in the room. And it is working hard to get in the way of the hard-won product of our winter and (late) spring labours, throwing every logistical nightmare you can think of at our exporting companies. Specifically, in the form of shipping logistics.

We must take our hats off to our processors. They are operating in uncharted waters; while maintaining the mojo of their good people coming to work every day, they are struggling with erratic shipping schedules to map out the freight of our product to the other side of the world as quickly as possible, all the while trading in exchange rates that are changing every day, indeed every hour.

There is literally no simple answer for what is happening in front of us. There is no doubting that our protein is meeting with great demand, so good communication and patience will be required from all of us as this coming season unfolds.

That aside, enjoy the season with its plentiful grass - it's a good time not to panic!

In my limited experience of life I've never found the top of the market and I've never ever found the bottom.



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STAFF PROFILE



Henry Miller

Mid-Canterbury
Livestock Bloke

Henry grew up on the family farm in Motukarara. He went to Lincoln High School for five years, then tried university briefly but preferred to be out working in the farming industry that he had developed a strong interest in. Along with general farm work for a year, he helped out penning up at Coalgate on Wednesday nights, a job his uncle the late Craig Miller set up for him.

Then a trainee opportunity at Hazlett came up; that was four years ago.

He is now based in Mid-Canterbury; he has bought a house in Ashburton but is in no hurry to stock it with a family. He went there with a sheep and beef brief but inevitably gets involved in some dairy business as well. On top of his Ashburton County territory, he occasionally works in his old home areas of Motukarara and Tai Tapu where he has a few clients.

Henry sees his mission as "... building up my own business...", mixing that with working in with the other Hazlett blokes locally. He particularly enjoys all the interactions with the different people he meets "...young and old, from all sorts of backgrounds."

He is now playing premier rugby for Methven. His website profile says he has "... a strong passion for the outdoors, hunting, fishing and camping where I spend a lot of time with friends and family," but diving has lately become a major preoccupation – a bit of spear fishing, gathering crays and paua, with "... a bit of bubble-blowing as well."

The Bloke's Diary

Weekly Sales

Blenheim	Each Monday
Coalgate	Each Thursday
Temuka Prime Cattle & Sheep	Each Monday
Temuka Store Cattle	Each Thursday
Charlton	Each Thursday
Lorneville	Each Tuesday

For all sale dates including special sales, please refer to our calendar or visit www.hazlett.nz/whats-on for up-to-date information.

What goes up must come down

The steam train of strong commodity prices continues to roll on across almost all the primary sector and so it continues to be a great time to be a farmer.

The challenge for us all in these times though is to make sure we don't get too carried away with the hype. Now is the time for considered decisions to be made. In my old banking days, it was often said of interest rates: "The bell never rings when they are at the bottom," (allowing farmers to lock into the lowest interest rate) and of course the opposite is true: it won't ring at the top either.

Commodity prices can (and will) come off at some point. There is plenty of cash in the system for most farmers which is fantastic; however surpluses can cause complacency or even unnecessary risk-taking. It might seem counter-intuitive to some that taking less risk at the top of a commodity cycle might be a better strategy than betting the house on continuing strong prices.

Finally as we head into Christmas, make the most of the opportunities in front of you. Enjoy plenty of time with your family and friends. Travel safely and take care.



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