

# Hazlett News

A newsletter for clients and mates of Hazlett Limited

## 25t seed to cyclone-hit in quick time

It was a matter of only a few days after Cyclone Gabrielle hammered Hawkes Bay and East Coast farmers that Hazlett clients started ringing the office asking how they could help.

They wanted to help in a practical farmer-to-farmer kind of way. Seed for Slips got underway, although that name turns out to be something of a misnomer: it was quickly established, as the photos here indicate, it wasn't so much slips as flats that needed remediation most urgently if the affected farmers were going to get their stock through winter.

As Tom Mowat, Hazlett's North Island GM comments, Seed for Silt might have been more appropriate.

Anyhow, Hazlett phones were ringing off the hook and it was obvious that pasture seed to repair silt-laden flats was required in very short order.

Tom was determined that any old floor sweepings wouldn't cut the mustard. He got onto one of the company's major seed suppliers and they set about making up a decent ryegrass/white clover mix over a weekend, while Tom and his team worked on how to pull strings to get the seed to Hastings and Gisborne – all transport resources were fully committed to other emergency freight.

The seed was supplied at a very substantial discount, substantial here meaning a mere fraction of the normal price.

And we need to acknowledge that it was not just South Island farmers offering help. The most substantial donation came from the Bay of Plenty. To say that the Hazlett team are grateful to all contributors would be understating the case by a country mile.

Most clients will have seen the emails suggesting donations of \$120 + GST, the normal price of a 25kg bag of seed. The storm raged from the 12th to the 16th of February. Seed for Slips was a thing by the 24th. The second email on the 3rd of March advised 25 tonnes of seed had been despatched the previous day, 15 to Hawkes Bay and 10 to Gisborne, just on two weeks after the storm first hit.

And if the company was grateful, the recipients of the seed were far more so. Farmers like Tim Jefferd of Tolaga Bay, which was badly whacked.

ABOVE: **New pasture that was established on a silt-damaged plain in Tolaga Bay.** BELOW: **Tim Jefferd's images tell the sad story.**



Tim runs two farms about ten minutes apart in conjunction with his parents Bruce and Nicki Jefferd. The farms are each in different river systems but both got hit.

"We had the rivers burst their banks on both of our farms across what we'd call alluvial silt-loam flats – our finishing flats. It deposited silt across our paddocks that were already in pasture or brassica crops and then along with that silt was a bit of slash from forestry upstream that caused fences to be wiped out. Besides pasture, we lost sweetcorn and maize crops and also some livestock."

Around 150 ha were under water. "Not all of it was silted over but half of it needed resowing. We were pretty lucky in that we didn't have too much in the way of slips; we had culverts blown out and slumps on tracks but most of our damage was on flat land."

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"Hazlett let me know that they had donations from growers down in Canterbury and that they had seed available for sowing into slips and silt-affected areas. The good thing was the price per kilo.

"It was readily available which made a big difference - it meant we didn't have to wait around. As soon as the ground had dried off we were able to scratch the seed in. Winter was coming but we got it on while conditions were still good which made a big difference. We got most of it on in the last ten days of March, lucky to be able to get onto it with tractors.

"Everything struck well. The silt generally has a really high pH but pretty low in nitrogen and Olsen Ps so you need to feed it with nitrogen and phosphate; everything had a starter fertiliser. Some of those paddocks have been pretty useful - it got us out of a hole and allowed us to trade more lambs than we otherwise would have been able to and feed the stock that we had on farm."

Some paddocks were under half a metre of silt and others only six inches deep. "Where it's shallow it's worth trying to plough or deep-rip to try to bring up some topsoil, which we did in some areas, but where it's deep there's no point really. We just lightly scuffed it with the drill and got a good strike."

He says the silt has good structure so you start from scratch in terms of building organic matter, micro-organisms and worm life, which is just a case of feeding the nutrient required, "... and once you've got animals grazing in it you start the whole cycle."

The fact everyone moved fast was the key: "It was on hand quick - the Hazlett guys delivered it on-farm, and it was seriously good value for money."

## Take control of cashflow

Unfortunately, the cashflow issues that I discussed in the last newsletter are continuing to be problematic for a lot of farmers that I talk to.

Overdraft balances are high, compounded by interest rates that are close to 12% in some instances. The good news is that interest rates look like they are close to their peak, and there will be relief coming although not likely to be of benefit to us until calendar year 2024.

The revenue line does look a little soft particularly for sheepmeat compared to last year and this will impact profitability. This will add a layer of stress for some of our farmers.

A couple of things that I've always found useful at times like this: firstly, control the things that you can. Just be aware that some things are within your control (like spending decisions) and some things are outside your influence (commodity prices). Secondly make a plan - get it down on paper and discuss it with your advisors/family.

You won't necessarily love everything in the plan but it's a lot better to have visibility over what's in front of you than not; that way you are back in control.



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## Groundhog Day

The sheep and beef markets have slipped again quite unexpectedly just as they did last November. This is at a time when most markets traditionally start to climb. It's across the board but predominantly in the lamb and mutton markets.

Just as in November, it came out of the blue; nobody suggested it might be on the horizon. Unfortunately for our farmers, the lack of any substantial reason - people are blaming all kinds of factors but who would know? - means there is also no telling when things will pick up again.

It's the increase in sheep numbers in Australia; it's China's economy having slowed in their emergence from covid shutdowns. One could speculate that just as we have more or less returned to 'normal' post-covid, so too will China which is, after all, our largest trading partner.

The only positive thing to say about the drop is that this is a quiet time of year in the selling calendar as people who have carried stock this far into the winter are not going to sell them when spring is just around the corner. So we have to hope this latest blip is short-lived and that things will have picked up by the time selling gets back into full swing around the beginning of November.



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## New Insurance GM

We are delighted to announce James Smith has officially assumed the role of General Manager - Insurance at Hazlett Insurance. James stepped into this position on July 1st, taking over from Peter Engel who is now supporting the insurance team in an advisory and compliance capacity.



We take pride in promoting talent from within our organisation, with James having served as a senior insurance broker with us for the past two and a half years.

James is focused on upholding our high standards of service for Hazlett Insurance clients, along with equipping his team with the tools to best navigate the volatility in the insurance market.

Our insurance team now consists of 12 dedicated professionals, focusing primarily on commercial, rural and domestic insurance.

## Hold onto your hats

Every year seems to come up with a new curve-ball. It is what it is – and as we've discussed before, there's not too much to complain about, living here in New Zealand.

We continue to get these weird and wild weather bombs. Very frustrating, challenging and at times heart-breaking for all of our mates in those areas that continue to get smashed by these unusual weather events, with unfortunately the prediction of a looming El Niño.

Also to add to our challenges, the continued global chaos of our protein that we beautifully produce is throwing its normal extremes at us. Enough of the negative talk. Events and challenges of these levels have been lived through before. We need only to look back at the late '80s and learn from those years and continue to hone our skills for what lies ahead.

Communication ... look out for and look after each other ... drop down a gear and go for it. Everything will be alright.

**Honk if you're hurting.**



**David Hazlett**

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### HAT PIC



Clients of Hazlett, Warwick and Cece James, and Richard and Anna Hill, visiting their kids who are working on seeding in Australia. They would like the \$250 charity donation to go to the Child Cancer Foundation NZ.

### CLIENT PROFILE

## Nairn Electrical Rural Canterbury

Nairn Electrical is a client of Hazlett Insurance and have been operating in rural Canterbury since 1975. For the last 20 years, Senior Insurance Broker Croydon Roberts has looked after their insurance needs.

The company was started by the Nairn brothers of Leeston. Gary Roxburgh joined in 1980 and became a partner in 1986. Major growth started in the mid '90s with the company providing quality irrigation and dairy installs as well as installing municipal pumping controls.

Steve West started his apprenticeship in 1993, as did Dave McCartin in 1996, then Brad Beswick and Eden Partridge a year later. All four remain with the company. Most of the current team of 45 have been with the company for 10 years or more enabling Nairn to offer its customers substantial knowledge, experience and service.



**Steve West accepted the Bronze Award at the Master Electricians' Excellence Awards for projects under \$1m in October last year.**

In the mid 2000s Nairns grew into North Canterbury, acquiring Ray Dyer Electrical in Rangiora. Jonathan Hawkes started his apprenticeship in 1984 with Ray Dyer and is still with Nairn today.

A few years after the company ventured north Simon Francis joined the North Canterbury team.

Today, the company is owned by Gary Roxburgh, Steve West, Brad Beswick, and Simon Francis. Steve West is general manager. He went overseas in 1999 for four years, working in installation and maintenance of IT networks and infrastructure in London, New York and Frankfurt. He came back in 2003 to take on the role of general manager and he bought into the company in 2012. His experience in industrial, commercial and municipal electrical projects is extensive – installation and implementation of numerous projects across the irrigation and dairying industry, as well as water supplies and sewerage systems for the Selwyn District Council.



## Simon Shortland

Agri-Supplies, Gisborne

Simon is doing a job that he really loves, even in the testing times he and his colleagues are now facing.

Never having had any formal training in the industry, he has worked his way up the agri-servicing ladder. He was born in Whangarei, but received his education in Wellington and the Wairarapa. He left school as soon as he could and went out pressing wool for a while before taking an engineering/driving course at Linton Army Camp. While there he met his partner Tracey who hails from Gisborne where her father managed Patemaru Station.

After graduating from the army course, he took his new skills and his new partner back up north to Kaitia where the pair lived and worked. They went to Gisborne every summer holidays; after doing that for a number of years, Simon decided to find seasonal work there. Having found a field job with Watties, and then in a woolstore over winter, and some roading work (with all the licenses he earned at Linton), he "never went home". He was called back into the woolstore and a few years later was offered a job driving sprayers with Cedenco, which he did for 5-6 years.

This gave him experience in process cropping which led to an offer from LeaderBrand to drive their sprayers, but very soon found himself managing the machinery aspects of that company's entire harvesting programme. After about seven years, the Williams & Kettle-Wrightson-PGG mergers took place, and from that company came an offer as rural supplies rep. He'd never sold anything in his life and relished the opportunity to try something new. He stayed with that company for ten years in total, rising to key account management.

But, not yet forty years old, he decided he was too young to sit behind a desk and took the opportunity to go back on the road "...to learn more" with another rural supplies company who were hiring field reps. That again led to key account management and exposure to agronomy, specifically in forage crops and maize. By this time he had accumulated a solid book of his own clients.

When Hazlett spread its footprint into the North Island in early 2018, Simon recognised a great opportunity to add value for his clients who he saw were getting busier and needing greater support in the field. "There was definitely a need for us to be out there; we can definitely add that value. It's a lot of money that they spend on crops and we want to make sure that they get it all back. There has to be the right planning and the right decisions. That's what we're there for."

Simon still has the same client base "...if not a little bigger ..." and loves the relationships: "...going to their kids' birthday parties and new woolshed openings."



Of course, Simon has been in the hot seat since Cyclone Gabrielle came barrelling though in early February this year, and was very closely involved in the Seed for Slips programme covered on the front page.

"I had one property that lost 800ha in two days. We replanted the paddocks that had the least amount of damage. They moved stock off and we managed to fly on about 300ha as quick as we could both in Gisborne and Wairoa. We used Cedenco tractor drivers who couldn't get to Hawkes Bay to try and get some of the ground turned over for fast-growing hybrid and Italian-type grasses so we could get some growth for them this season." He says the main current objective was to do "the best of the worst", leaving the "worst of the worst" until January when conditions should be a lot friendlier.

"We took a lot of advice from Bola veterans who said the ground they did do straight away worked really well as opposed to what they left alone."

His main concern for the industry going forward is that there are not enough young people coming through to pick up the baton, as he can see several years of hard work to mop up the devastation he has seen firsthand. And which is still being wreaked on the region by recurring rainstorms. He reckons the region had half a metre of rain in June alone. The day we spoke to him in late June, he had just got back from hard-hit Ruatoria (normally a ninety-minute drive, but took three and a half hours in the wake of Gabrielle) and said he encountered slips on the way home that were not there on the way up.

But: "I wouldn't change my job at all. I love it. That's why I wanted to get out of key accounts and back on the road. More enjoyment, more contact with farmers, I love it. They treat you like you're family. This is definitely a relationship business."

## The Blokes' Diary

### Weekly Sales

Blenheim	Every Second Monday
Coalgate	Each Thursday
Temuka Prime Cattle and 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](http://www.hazlett.nz/whats-on) for up-to-date information.

**Hazlett**  
People Together

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