

# Hazlett News

A newsletter for clients and  
mates of Hazlett Limited

## Hazlett & Fergus Rural join forces on the East Coast

Two proud, multi-generational, family-owned agribusinesses – Fergus Rural and Hazlett – have come together in the Gisborne region to create a new entity; Fergus Hazlett Limited.

This partnership marks a significant and positive step for farmers across Gisborne, Wairoa, and wider regions, bringing together deep local roots, nationwide capability, and a shared commitment to putting people first. From 1 April, all Fergus Rural staff became part of Fergus Hazlett Limited, ensuring long-standing ties and the continuation of the professional, traditional service that has defined the Fergus Rural name.

Rob Fergus, founder of Fergus Rural, says:

“The Fergus Rural team are one big family and have always believed in backing our region, our people, and our farmers. Joining with Hazlett allows us to maintain everything we stand for while giving our clients access to greater reach, more expertise, and new opportunities. In a practical sense, we expect things to run as they are with no disruption for our loyal clients. You’ll continue to be looked after by the same people you already know and trust. It’s a proud moment for us and an exciting future for the East Coast.”

Melanie Brooks, CEO of Hazlett, adds:

“Hazlett has always been about people, relationships, and doing right by our customers and their wider families. People are, and always will be, the foundation of our growth. The Fergus Rural team are a standout example of the authenticity and character our business is built on, and partnering with them feels like a natural step – our values align, our people complement each other, and together we can deliver even more for our farmers.”

Fergus Hazlett Limited represents more than a new venture – it is an investment in the future of East Coast farming. This initiative strengthens access to specialised services, while opening up pathways to new markets, extended support systems, and innovations that help build resilience and long-term value for customers. Backed by a larger team with an expanded focus, the change brings increased buying and selling power, opening up broader trading channels that drive stronger outcomes in livestock and beyond.

The Hazlett team in the North Island and across New Zealand will work closely with Fergus Hazlett, but our people and operations throughout the country remain the same – Hazlett is not going anywhere.

Together, we look forward to continuing to serve the East Coast community of the North Island with the same genuine care, integrity, and commitment – now with enhanced capability, greater opportunities, and a united focus on being there for the people who place their trust in us – today and into the future.

## Hazlett Photography Competitions

Win a \$200 Prezzy Card and your photo published in the 2027 Hazlett Calendar!

### Life on the Land

Your photo. Your story. Together, we tell the year.



### Plus our Kids Comp

Calling all junior photographers! 

Every photo selected for our 2027 calendar will receive a \$200 Prezzy Card. Competitions open to NZ people with a wider connection to Hazlett. Kids competition is for those between the ages of 5 & 12.

Send your photos to [marketing@hazlett.nz](mailto:marketing@hazlett.nz), along with:

- Your full name ■ Date and location the photo was taken
- Your Hazlett connection (ie. livestock client, insurance client, child of livestock or insurance client)

Refer T&C's and more information at [www.hazlett.nz](http://www.hazlett.nz).

## Canterbury to the World: Leaft Foods' Rubisco First

For a company working at the edge of food science, Leaft Foods has its roots planted firmly in the paddock.

Co-founders Maury Leyland Penno and John Penno – both of whom stepped away from the dairy industry, she in 2016 and he in 2018 – built the business around a simple but ambitious idea: identifying additional opportunities for farmers that stack up economically and contribute positively to environmental goals. That big picture ambition guided their search and ultimately led them toward a protein long discussed globally but never commercially separated at scale: Rubisco.

The pair founded Leaft Foods in 2019. The business now operates from its Rolleston factory and office in Izone Industrial Park, supported by a diverse team ranging from agricultural scientists to engineers, food technologists, brand specialists and marketers. Their farmer suppliers are largely based around the Southbridge area.

At its core, Leaft's system is about taking the whole leaf of a forage crop and separating it into higher value components. Right now, that crop is lucerne, and every part is put to use. The hero of the story is Rubisco, a leaf enzyme that delivers a highly digestible, nutritionally strong protein. But Maury is clear that the remaining components matter just as much. Nothing is wasted. Protein optimised silage goes back to dairy farms, a leaf protein concentrate heads into pet food markets, and their purified Rubisco protein isolate is attracting attention from food manufacturers here and overseas.

Extracting Rubisco protein from the leaf had beaten scientists and manufacturers for decades. What Leaft has achieved is a genuine first, and Maury doesn't hide her pride in that.

"This little New Zealand company here in Rolleston, working with farmers from Southbridge – we're the first company in the world to really do that."

The performance of the protein is part of the appeal. It has an amino acid profile that outshines whey, which is widely considered the benchmark. Its fast absorption in the body has positive implications for both athletic and clinical nutrition.

Food manufacturers aren't the only ones paying attention. Leaft's consumer product, Leaf Blade, is steadily building a following as "elite level fuel" used by high performing athletes locally and internationally, emphasising performance over hype for consumers looking for functionality rather than fads.

For all the innovation, the system still relies on strong agronomy. That's where Hazlett comes in. Leaft's harvest model is essentially a highly managed pasture wedge – the crop is cut at the exact moment it delivers maximum value. Timing, weed control, crop consistency and growth matter immensely. Hazlett Agronomy work closely with Leaft Foods' Monica Schwass and her team to refine that system so that farmers supplying them can hit those targets repeatedly.

The partnership plays a key role. Hazlett supports the setup and management that underpins the operation: optimal growth curves, harvest timing, and the practices that ensure lucerne reaches its potential. It's a technical system, but it still depends on the fundamentals of good farming.

While the science behind the process is complex, the goal remains straightforward – creating premium food ingredients from paddock grown crops, with environmental and economic benefits flowing back to farming communities.

The company's mission, as Maury puts it, is to:

*Left to right: Co-founder Maury Leyland Penno, CEO Ross Milne, and Co-founder John Penno.*

"transform food production systems to create highly nutritious products with a lighter environmental footprint than we do today."

Their next phase is all about scale. Leaf Blade continues to gain momentum as more consumers discover the product, driven in part by a passionate set of repeat users.

For the Rubisco protein isolate, Leaft is working with a range of customers in New Zealand as well as internationally to integrate the ingredient into food production.

While the technology might be globally significant, the model is still anchored in Canterbury paddocks. It's another example of New Zealand farmers contributing to high value food systems – not by replacing livestock or traditional proteins, but by adding an innovative alternative alongside them.

To read more about Leaft Foods, visit [www.leaffoods.com](http://www.leaffoods.com).

### Did you know?

**If you have a rental property and list it for short term stays (such as Airbnb), check that your insurance policy allows for this use. Many standard landlord or house policies do not automatically cover short term letting, and if it's not disclosed, an insurer could decline a claim. A quick check now can save a very expensive surprise later.**

### Why insurance premiums differ

Insurance pricing has changed.

Today, most insurers use risk-based pricing. This means premiums are based on individual risk, not an average across everyone – which is why yours may differ from your neighbours'.

In practical terms, two farms on the same road or two similar businesses in the same town can pay very different premiums. Insurers look closely at things like location, claims history, flood and fire exposure, building materials, how assets are used, and how well risks are managed. In the rural sector, factors like distance to emergency services, machinery storage, and weather exposures can all have a big impact.

This is where a broker can add value, working alongside clients to properly understand their risks, identify practical risk management improvements, and present their business clearly to insurers.



**James Smith**

GM, Hazlett Insurance

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## Never let a good crisis go to waste

On 1st April 2026 we welcomed the addition of Fergus Hazlett to our business.

This partnership brings a suite of services including Livestock, Farm Supervision and Environmental Services delivered across the East Coast region of the North Island. It strengthens our presence in a region that plays a vital role in New Zealand's primary economy and is a partnership built on great people, shared values, local knowledge and a long-term view.

Globally, geopolitical tensions continue to rise, creating uncertainty across markets, supply chains and financial systems. Whilst red meat prices remain buoyant, New Zealand is not immune to these pressures, and we're seeing the flow-on effects in costs, confidence and complexity for our clients; our diesel prices had increased by 91% at the time of writing. History shows that periods of disruption also create opportunity. Winston Churchill once said, "never let a good crisis go to waste", and times like these reward good advice, disciplined decision-making and businesses willing to adapt.

At Hazlett, our focus remains on adding value for our clients through expert advice, helping people manage risk, protect what they've built and position themselves to take advantage of the opportunities that emerge when others hesitate.

In the end, good decisions aren't about predicting the future, but being confidently and thoughtfully prepared for its uncertainty.



**Melanie Brooks**

Chief Executive Officer

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## A Purple Patch

Summer delivered plenty of rain, and the schedules held steady right through.

Now we're into autumn, the early calf sales have started, and they'll be done and dusted by the time this goes to print. They've been strong too - well up on last year and moving in line with the lifts across yearlings, prime and older cattle.

There are a few jitters with the war, but the marketplace itself is stable for now. The dollar is low for the same reason, and it may move a little, but the outlook heading into winter remains positive.

The weather has settled into the autumn pattern - heavy dews, calmer days, along with a decent amount of rain hitting some parts of the country at the time of writing. A bit of growth heading into winter would set things up well, and the ewes should go to the ram in good condition.

Wool has continued to lift, which is great to see. It's a beautiful, natural product the market wants, but has been slow to back. Hopefully the shift continues to build.

Arable farmers, though, have had a tough run with pricing and seasonal pressure, and rising store lamb values haven't helped.

Deer are holding well, and the bull sales aren't far off. Certainly, the good bulls will be well sought after.

Dairy dipped before Christmas, but it's been rising since. Herds moved quickly, slowed for a bit, and now they're moving again.

We really are in a purple patch, and long may this last.



**Ed Marfell**

GM, Hazlett Livestock

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## Looking ahead

This season has certainly thrown everything at us.

Normally we're chasing moisture for some crops, but this year in places we've had far too much. Waterlogging and persistent wind have made establishment and crop management a real challenge.

Despite that, our agronomy team has been using all their experience and problem-solving skills to adapt on the go and continue delivering practical solutions.

With harvest now complete, once again, it's been a very challenging season for arable and cropping farmers. Yields in some crops look to be back on expectations, and we've been preparing for this by putting plans in place early with our supplier network to ensure clients remain well supported and have access to quality products going forward.

We've also been spending time sitting down with our suppliers, having proactive discussions as we do each year, and making sure we're putting our best foot forward for our customers.

Looking ahead, seed and chemical supply may be challenging in some areas. If you have preferred varieties or key products in mind for next season, we strongly encourage forward ordering. This doesn't mean you need to pay upfront, but helps secure supply should allocations come into play.

Over the coming months, the agronomy team will be out with clients planning for the year ahead. These sessions are hugely valuable - a chance to reflect, fine-tune systems, and start getting excited about what's coming next.

We're all hoping for a calmer winter ahead - the wet-weather gear has certainly had a solid run.



**Scott McIlroy**

GM, Hazlett Agronomy

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## Remembering Don



It is with great sadness that we share the news of the passing of our much loved colleague, Don Borlase (Donny).

Donny went to rest at the end of March following a courageous battle with his health. He was an integral part of our South Canterbury Livestock team, and his loss will be felt deeply.

Hailing from the Nelson area, Donny grew up on the family's sheep, beef, and dairy farm. He spent 13 years as a butcher, even though he never cared much for working indoors. When a stock agent role opened in Golden Bay, Donny seized it, spending the next 28 years becoming a recognised dairy expert. Relocating to South Canterbury in the 1990s, he joined PWA in 2002 (which later became Hazlett), marking over 23 years of service. Donny was exceptional - his quick wit, longstanding relationships, passion and professionalism distinguished him throughout his career.

An enthusiastic rugby and league fan, Donny and childhood sweetheart Lindy built a loving family with five children, numerous grandchildren, and a large extended family of foster children. His warmth and generosity touched many lives both inside and outside our organisation.



**STAFF PROFILE**

## Tim Bond

### Livestock Bloke, Bay of Plenty

Darfield was home for Tim growing up, with rural life woven into his childhood through his grandfather's farm and the wider Courtenay district. His parents worked in nursing and civil engineering, but he and his siblings were always close to farming, often spending time helping out. As Tim puts it, "Dad was always pretty quick to farm us out on the weekend for some job that wasn't us being at home."

Those early experiences, paired with family friends who worked as livestock agents, shaped his respect for the industry and planted the seeds for where he would eventually head.

Tim completed most of his schooling at Darfield High before spending his final year at Christchurch Boys', where rugby became a major focus. Knowing further academic study wasn't his path, he took an opportunity to head overseas, spending four years in Japan playing rugby at Tokyo University, followed by another year turning out for Suntory.

Provincial rugby brought him home again, with five or six seasons based around the Bay of Plenty with regular travel across the country. Another playing stint in Japan ended with injury, and returning to New Zealand saw him continue his rugby career through to Waikato.

As his time in rugby drew to a close, Tim began working in the livestock sector, finding familiar values and a strong sense of teamwork that echoed the people he had looked up to as a kid.



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A few years later he joined Hazlett, where he has now spent three years building strong client relationships and enjoying the company's South Island connections - some of which trace back to childhood mates now working in the industry, including several within the Hazlett team.

Home is Lake Okareka, where Tim, his wife, their three children and two dogs make the most of a picturesque setting, a recently acquired boat, and his involvement in the Reporoa rugby community. Family, sport and time outdoors provide a balance he's happy to lean into.

### Need help with cashflow?

Rising costs don't have to slow you down. Our livestock funding offers a flexible way to trade your livestock whilst freeing up capital for other farm expenses.

To find out more contact our Funding team on 03 929 0317, or reach out to your local agent.

**Simple | Flexible | Easy**

### HAT PIC



Marty Amos from our Mid Canterbury livestock team (front left) is pictured here with his group, a crew from all walks of life who come together each year for their annual golf trip - most recently in Ashburton.

A \$250 charity donation is now on its way to Youth Diabetes NZ.

### EVENT SPOTLIGHT



Hazlett Insurance recently opened an office in Westport, and sponsored the handicap trot at the race meet in March - taken out by this beauty, "Buffy Northstains". James Smith & James Richards (Hazlett) are pictured with horse owner Colleen Negus & Troy Scanlon of Mitre 10 Westport - a valued client & key Westport racing sponsor.

## Sales Calendar

### Weekly Sales

Blenheim	Every Second Monday
Coalgate	Each Thursday
Temuka Prime Cattle and Sheep	Each Monday
Temuka Store Cattle	Every Second Thursday

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.

INSURANCE

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FUNDING

PROCUREMENT