



MEAT THE STAFF: BRETT SCOBLE

Shift Supervisor, Brett Scoble, reckons that deciding to work at Greenham was one of the best decisions he has ever made.

"We moved up from Pearcedale near Cranbourne when I was about 12, and after leaving school I started working on a local dairy farm, but soon realised it wasn't for me.

"I was playing footy and a lot of my mates were working here at the Tongala plant and suggested I give it a go. I wasn't too excited about the prospect. I had the typical view of abattoirs - lots of blood and guts, and a rough working environment. I really couldn't see that I would enjoy the work or even fit in.

"But I gave it a go reluctantly and soon found it was the exact opposite of what I expected - a completely different environment. It turned out to be a great career move.

"I learnt all the different jobs and improved my skills, and then got into boning and went on to become a leading hand. One thing about working here is that there's plenty of help and lots of training available. The company really makes sure everybody is up to speed and keeps on improving.

Brett Scoble, reckons that deciding to work at Greenham was one of his best decisions.

"I then went on to a supervisor's position and am now a shift supervisor responsible for about 120 employees," Brett said.

"I also do a lot of work on recruitment," he added. "We talk to schools explaining what the work is about, the opportunities in the meat industry and the benefits of working locally. Lots of local kids have put themselves through uni this way."

Brett is married to Karisha and they have three children. Kaitlyn and Kasey are in primary school while Dylan is still at kinder.

The family lives on five acres just out of town with what Brett describes as a 'menagerie'. "We have turkeys, chooks and ducks, as well as a few calves and sheep. Then there are couple of no good racehorses that just keep me poor, but it's all good for the kids," he laughed. "It's a great environment and I feel really fortunate we have been able to put down roots here."

Brett has finished with football and now plays tennis but describes himself as "not much good". And when he really wants to relax, it's out with the fishing rod and up to the river.

LIVESTOCK CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR TRADING HOURS

Reception of over the hooks cattle to Tongala will cease on Tuesday 23rd December and resume at 7am Monday 5 January 2009.

TONGALA

Every day except public holidays
9.00 am till noon
Geoff Crilly - 58590912

MONDAY 22ND DECEMBER 9.00 am till noon

Waaia
Corey Wheeler - 0428 585 205
Stanhope
Neville Mackrell - 0428 570 523
Bamawm
Les Mitchell - 0409 079 541

TUESDAY 23RD DECEMBER 9.00 am till noon

Invergordon
Les Mitchell - 0409 079 541

WEDNESDAY 24TH DECEMBER - No liveweight scales

THURSDAY 25TH & FRIDAY 26TH DECEMBER

Public Holiday
No liveweight scales

MONDAY 29TH DECEMBER 9.00 am till noon

Waaia
Corey Wheeler - 0428 585 205
Stanhope
Neville Mackrell - 0428 570 523
Bamawm
Les Mitchell - 0409 079 541

TUESDAY 30TH DECEMBER 9.00 am till noon

Invergordon
Les Mitchell - 0409 079 541

WEDNESDAY 31ST DECEMBER No liveweight scales

THURSDAY 1ST JANUARY No liveweight scales

FRIDAY 2ND JANUARY 2009 9.00am till noon

Toolamba
Les Mitchell - 0409 079 541

On Farm buying liveweight - Peter Shellie - 0428 579 087

Gunbower, Cohuna, Leitchville & Kerang

Thomas MacKenzie - 0408 500 311

Cohuna & Leitchville - Colin Ibbs - 0427 349 648

Numurkah - Danny McNamara - 0417 541 320

Please note: For more information on selling cattle liveweight other than times stated - please contact Adam Pretty on 0419 599 761, Bruce Child on 0428 579 884 or H W Greenham office - 5859 0912



Christmas greetings from all the team at Greenham. We hope you and your families enjoy a very happy Christmas and a prosperous 2009.

RCM/GRV32511



DECEMBER 2008

MEATWORKS MESSENGER

GREENHAM



The latter part of 2008 has been something of a wild ride. Winter rainfall was reasonable and provided grounds for optimism, but of course, spring just died in the proverbial. Then we had the best rains of the year in November, arguably a bit too late but very welcome nevertheless.

While the weather was showing a mind of its own, the dollar started bouncing around like a rubber ball with fluctuations never before seen in the 25 years since it was floated.

In the meantime the world went into financial meltdown!

Fortunately, a little stability seems to be returning. The dollar appears to have settled in the low to mid 60s, and we are very thankful for that. At least it has cushioned the fall in commodity prices - which meat hasn't escaped.

None of us know where all this is going but many of the financial writers are now saying there is a slight whiff of optimism in the air. There's still plenty of bad news about but also some suggestion that we are at, or close to, the bottom of the cycle. They also say there is a lag in financial statistics which means things have been crook for longer than we realised.

Perhaps we can also expect economies to start improving before we see it in the official figures. Let's hope so.

Overall, I believe agriculture is in a fairly sound position because food production worldwide is falling behind population growth. Many rich countries lacking in agricultural land are making large-scale acquisitions in places like Africa and South America to ensure future supplies. That suggests Australian farmers will have a continuing major role in providing food and fibre.

The importance of building strong relationships really becomes evident in tough times. We have built strong linkages to our customers in the US, just as we have built strong connections directly with you, our suppliers. These relationships are proving to be of great benefit at the moment. Processors who have always chased flashes in the pan are learning some hard lessons.

Thank you for your continuing support. I hope that you and your families have a very happy Christmas and that we all experience a return to prosperity in 2009.

Peter Greenham



OUR GREENHAM DAIRY SCHOLARSHIP IS ON AGAIN

Applications are open for our 2009 Greenham Dairy Scholarship for motivated people who are keen to build a career in the dairy industry.

The award has been going since 2000 and provides the opportunity for students across a broad age range to undertake further education related to any sector of the dairy industry.

Open to anyone between the ages of 17 and 45, the scholarship gives students the chance to apply for \$10,000 to help them undertake formal study or a recognised training program relating to the industry.

It is open to family, sharefarmers and employees of farmers who supply cattle to our Tongala plant.

We believe that our company plays an important part in the Victorian dairy community, and ongoing education of the type offered by the scholarship is vital to the industry's future. This scholarship reflects our long-standing commitment to both the district and the Australian dairy industry.

The scholarship encourages people to consider a future in the Australian dairy industry and allows for more mature students to make an impact. It can potentially help current farmers to continue in the business with new skills and confidence.

Applicants can use the scholarship to undertake farming-related courses, or studies related to any other sector of industry that ultimately benefits dairying. Tips for applicants, further information and application forms can be downloaded from www.greenham.com.au

Past winners of the Greenham Dairy Scholarship have pursued their interests in large herd veterinary issues, soil and pasture management, business and environmental management, animal sciences, breeding excellence and dairy technology.

The 2008 winner Clancy Burn who, with her husband, Mike, runs a large scale dairy operation milking 2200 cows, said on presentation of her

Continued next page.

Continued from front...

award, "The skills and knowledge I will gain from a business degree may be the difference in whether our business succeeds and continues to grow, or withers and maybe fails. I am committed to the dairy industry and feel really excited that I can help shape what the industry may look like in years to come."

The Scholarship is awarded on a range of criteria including:

- How the applicant will use the money to improve their skills and knowledge
- The scholarship's importance in helping them realise their ambitions
- Potential benefits to the dairy industry or farm enterprise and
- Previous academic, industry and/or personal achievements.

The winner will be selected by an independent panel, comprising representatives from education, community and the dairy industry.

Applications close on Friday, January 30, 2009.

Greenham Dairy Scholarship application forms and information sheets are available online at www.greenham.com.au or by phoning Jenny Andrews at Rivergum Marketing on (03) 5445 6103, faxing a request to (03) 5442 5301 or e-mailing to greenham@rivergummarketing.com.au



2008 Scholarship winner, Clancy Burn.



**Cattle to sell and no spare time?
Call 0428 579 087 and
Peter Shellie will come to you!**



Our new employment video shows working conditions in the plant. It also includes interviews with several employees talking about how the reality of working at Greenham is completely different from their negative perceptions beforehand.

TELLING THE EMPLOYMENT STORY

A business is only as good as its staff and we are proud of the team we have here at Tongala. They are dedicated and loyal, and many have been with us for a long time.

But there is the inevitable turnover and we are always on the lookout for new staff. Local schools are a hunting ground because students often choose to work with us during their gap year. They earn very good money which sets them up for their university education, and then there is the ongoing opportunity of a casual work while they are home on holidays.

However, we always face a barrier of misperception about what it's like to work in an abattoir. The common view seems to be one of blood and guts everywhere, rough working conditions and workers that transfer directly from Barwon Prison!

Nothing could be further from the truth, but how do you get the message across? A few months ago plant manager, Darren Maloney, came up with the idea of producing a video that could be taken out to schools to provide an accurate picture of our working environment.

Several of our staff were interviewed on camera and told the story of how working at our plant was nothing like they had imagined. Some were university students who come back at every opportunity for casual work, and others were senior staff who have built careers and established themselves in the local community as they worked their way up the ladder. The video also shows working conditions inside the plant.

Feedback has been very positive and we look forward to changing community perceptions over time.



YAMBUNA COUPLE KEEP THEIR COWS HAPPY

Paul and Francene Seaton run 200 cross-breed cows on their property on Curr Road, Yambuna, just north of Tongala. Paul grew up on the farm, when it was 200 acres with an all Jersey herd. Since he took over from his father it has expanded to 330 acres, and in the mid-1980s Paul reckoned that it was time to move away from the Jerseys, to look for better production and temperament from cross-breeding.

Paul and Francene were married just three years ago. Paul took on her four children, but gained a milker! Francene now does most of the milking on the eight unit double-up herringbone shed with automatic cup removers. It takes her about 2 1/2 hours in the morning and two hours in the afternoon. A pretty good effort, seeing that she had no previous dairy experience.

"I'm really enjoying dairy farming these days," says Paul. "The cows are nice and quiet, and I'm getting more time to do other things around the farm to set it up properly."

They are gradually lasering and re-fencing the property throughout. At the moment they only irrigate 50 acres, but eventually all the paddocks will be able to be irrigated. They buy in the hay they need and graze all the paddocks. Paul says that in five years the farmworks will be completed, and they can step back then and decide what they want to do with it.

It is a self-replacing herd; they milk all year round and calve four times a year.

Paul looks after the rearing of about 50 calves each year.

"My job is to feed them; Francene's is to milk them."

The Seatons send about 50 culled cows each year to Greenham's.

"We always have sent the cows to Greenham's - they looked after us through the drought, they could have given us very little for them, but they did the right thing by us."

Francene says that the main reason for culling cows is temperament and the occasional mastitis problem. "Anything that's a bit grumpy goes on the truck."

Paul admits that he is 'a bit sappy' with the cows. "I sell them over the hooks - If they've been good to us during their working life,



Francene and Paul Seaton show off Francene's favourite milker, Molly.

I don't want them hanging around in the sale yards. It's not a monetary thing.

"Peter Shellie comes and picks them up if we have a big mob, otherwise I take them to the plant myself, sometimes it's once a week.

"Greenhams are very good to deal with; it just takes a phone call if there are any problems. And we never ask for a quote."

All joining with the herd is by AI - they don't have a mop-up bull on the place. "When we are selecting the bulls, we look for ease of calving and milking speed. It comes down to the lifestyle that you want. We have included some Reds in the most recent joining.

"If the cows are happy, we're happy."



NEW LIVEWEIGHT SELLING SCALES AT MERNDA AND YARRA VALLEY

Farmers on Melbourne's northern fringe now have another option for selling their cattle with the opening of live weight scales at the Mernda saleyards, and in the Yarra Valley at 701 Maroondah Highway, Coldstream.

Our new service is operated jointly with Andrew Wilson Livestock. There are no curfews - cattle are weighed as they come in and payment is made on the spot. There are no deductions for levies either. Farmers are paid the full price per kilogram.

Andrew Wilson is excited about the development. He says it is an ideal system especially for small producers. "They can just bring their cattle in during our opening hours and walk away with a cheque.

"And subject to some conditions, we can organise a free pick up within 25 km of both locations."

Our Mernda scales open every Tuesday from 9 am until midday, while Yarra Valley operates on Thursdays also from 9 am until noon.

This isn't our first association with the 100-year-old Mernda yards. Peter Greenham remembers buying stock there are many years ago when the company operated an abattoir in Melbourne

For more information contact Andrew Wilson on 9717 1998 or 0458 315 927.