



The quad bikes at Woolnorth station are specially-equipped to handle the constant moving of electric fencing in the techno grazing cell system.

HI-TECH BULLS MAKE THE MOST OF PASTURE

The 2 1/2 year old Friesian bulls from Woolnorth station which are processed at the Smithton works come to us in superb condition, due to the unique 'techno beef grazing system' is in place there.

Under this interesting feeding system, the property is divided into lanes and each lane into grazing cells with electric fencing, identified by white marker posts. Small permanent troughs provide water for each cell. The cell-grazing system is very precisely laid out using GPS plotting. The pasture within the cells is carefully managed, and regularly measured to match the grass growth with rotation grazing time.

Techno grazing modifies the behaviour of stock to utilise pastures more efficiently.

The staff at Woolnorth use specially fitted-out quad bikes to install and roll up the fencing as the cattle are moved from cell to cell. A rollbar arrangement out front allows them to drive straight over the electric fencing.

The bull calves purchased for Woolnorth are nearly all Tasmanian and are taken onto the property when they reach 100kg, entering the techno grazing programme at 300kg.

The cattle are run in mobs of about 20 and, at a stocking rate of four bulls per hectare. Growth rates average 800g to 900g per day. When processed at Smithton, they dress out at 270 kg – 320 kg.

Woolnorth have found that the techno grazing system has paid real dividends through the increased utilisation of pasture, and therefore productivity per hectare. The system is designed to carry a high stocking rate through the non-growing periods and to harvest the spring surplus which is the easiest and cheapest grass to produce and turn into beef.



The cattle at Woolnorth are cell grazed with the 'techno' system. The difference between the eaten-out pasture and the fresh area is clear in this photo.

DON'T BE BULLIED!

There has been pressure recently for farmers to formally sign up to the 'Livestock Production Assurance' program. Many are doing so but perhaps not properly understanding the system. We notice many are answering 'no' to the question about on farm QA on their NVD's.

Far from having no QA, most dairy farmers already have milk processor related QA programs through the dairy companies that are far more stringent than LPA requirements.

As far as we are concerned, although LPA is fine we don't insist on LPA declarations. What we do ask, is that where you have an on farm quality assurance program for your dairy (or any other QA program) please put that number on your NVD. We will continue to issue free NVD's.

Legislation by stealth.

The states used to give properties a chemical residue classification. Livestock producers would be aware of restrictions placed on properties because of residues left in soils and fodder. For example, tobacco farms are nearly always unsuitable for running livestock.

This activity appears to have ceased. Yet our regulations say all livestock should be sourced from properties that are LPA-approved.

Originally, farmers were issued with a PIC and a book of 10 NVD's. When they bought a replacement book for \$25 they were automatically put on the LPA provisional list.

Easy new QA

LPA can be a real imposition on lifestyle farmers, and others may have a moral objection to the compulsory nature of the program. Don't worry because we are considering our own QA program which will be simple for you to operate but still meet our regulatory requirements.

We will keep you informed on progress on this issue.

Contact Details:

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Tasmanian

MEATWORKS MESSENGER

JANUARY 2007

GREENHAM



Welcome to our first newsletter of 2007.

I am sure we are all hoping this year will be better and that we don't see another one like 2007 for a long, long time!

The Weather Bureau's summary of the year in Tasmania doesn't paint a pretty picture, but that won't come as a surprise to anybody.

On the positive side, most climatologists seem to be predicting a weakening of El Nino and a return to more normal rainfall conditions. Let's hope they are right.

Market outlook

Korea and Japan are continuing to be good markets for us. US beef is now allowed back in these markets but the Americans don't seem to be making much headway which is good news for us.

Our information is that housewives are still wary of the US product. Further, American exporters have had problems with bone chips and more recently, chemical residues. They seem to have the job in front of them.

But we certainly aren't complacent. I have mentioned in the past that we are working hard in these markets to consolidate our position and establish Tasmanian beef as a premium product, one that's recognised as superior to other Australian grass fed beef.

Those efforts will continue strongly through 2007.

Cattle wanted – prompt payment

All activity seems to slow down during the Christmas holiday period and it's no different with us, but we are back in full swing and looking for cattle. So give your local Greenham guy a call. We'll buy them liveweight and pay you cash on the spot, or put them over the hooks and send you a cheque within a couple of days.

Scholarship

Don't forget that January 31 is the cut-off date for our Greenham Scholarship applications. Inside you can read about what last year's winner, Kurt de Jonge, has done with his \$10,000.

Peter Greenham Jnr

OUR SCHOLARSHIP IS ON AGAIN.



may not necessarily have the resources to realise their ambitions. It's a very satisfying way to give something back to the farming families who have supported the company since its establishment in this state."

Applicants can use the scholarship to undertake

Our Greenham Tasmania Scholarship is again available to encourage enthusiastic people to secure a future in the Australian dairy and beef industries.

This annual award provides a stimulating opportunity to undertake further education related to the beef and dairy sectors, and has been very well received by our customers since its launch in 2003. It is available to applicants between 17 and 45 years of age, to apply for \$10,000 to help them undertake formal study or a recognised training programme.

It is open to our customers who supply cattle to the company's Smithton meat processing plant, their immediate family, sharefarmers and employees.

"The aim is to encourage Tasmanians to better prepare themselves for a rewarding future either on the land or in an associated industry," says our Tasmanian Manager, Peter Greenham. "We are a vital part of the Tasmanian community, and ongoing education of the type offered by this scheme is crucial to the future sustainability and development of the industry here.

"It's important that we inspire and help people who are willing to make a commitment to farm industries but

farming-related courses, or studies related to any sector of industry that ultimately benefits the dairy or beef industries. Previous winners of the Tasmania Scholarship have been keen to expand their studies in agribusiness, soil and pasture management, and ag sciences.

Applications close on January 31, 2007, and entries will be judged on a range of criteria including:

- how the applicant will use the money to improve their skills and knowledge
- how important the scholarship is for them to be able to realise their ambitions
- potential benefits to the dairy industry or farm enterprise
- previous academic, industry and/or personal achievements

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

Tips for applicants, further information and application forms can also be downloaded from www.greenham.com.au

HERE COME DE JUDGES!

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

Mark Smith is the Executive Officer of DairyTas and the Regional Coordinator for Dairying for Tomorrow.

The former role involves project management and coordination of funding for industry programs, the support and activity for farmers with farm productivity, environmental management, and other issues around farm management.

The Dairying for Tomorrow role involves working on environmental management issues and representing dairy industry interests in the natural resource management area with government and industry.

Mark has a passion for the growth and development of Tasmania's dairy industry assisting farmers with resources to better manage their farm businesses into the future.

Paul Saward has been a representative for the region on the TFGA Meat Council for the last 10 years including three years as chairman. He also represented the state on the Cattle Council of Australia in 2004.

Paul grew up on the family dairy farm and completed his schooling at Smithton High. He helped develop the farm with additional land and more cows, and started the move into beef production. Paul became an enthusiastic member of the Circular Head Beef Producers Group and soon took on the chairman's role.

Paul enjoys the opportunity of meeting people and gaining more knowledge to help develop the industry.

Susan Wigg is Assistant Principal of Smithton High School and has been heavily involved with the development of students from local farming families. She has a passion for education and is keen to continually nurture the relationship between schools and the agricultural industry.

Susan is the Leading Learning Project Officer for the Circular Head Cluster. Last year was her first time as a Greenham scholarship judge. She enjoyed the experience immensely and is looking forward to the role again this year.

Roger Tyshing is the Tasmanian Education and Training Adviser for Rural Skills Australia, a national organisation which supports training in agriculture and horticulture. In this role Roger provides advice, assistance and training to apprenticeships centres, job network members and registered training organisations.

Rural Skills Australia also provides information and advice to industry on training reforms and packages and supports rural training in schools.

Roger has been the state co-ordinator for the DrumMuster program. He completed a project developing career resources for Year 10 students, including advice about agriculture career pathways, and was a member of the Tasmanian Rural Youth advisory committee, managing the 'Cultivating Futures' project.

Collectively, the four judges offer a huge compendium of knowledge, skill and experience.

2006 SCHOLARSHIP WINNER.

Kurt de Jonge is working as a project officer for an agricultural consultancy company and says "I'm loving it, I couldn't ask for anything better!"

The young farmer with a passion for soils and land management won the 2006 Greenham Tasmania Scholarship, has now completed his studies, and will graduate as a Bachelor of Natural Environment and Wilderness Studies with Honours, during 2007.

Kurt studied at the University of Tasmania and says the scholarship was invaluable in taking away the worry of having to find the money for accommodation, books and the costs of the course. "It really took the pressure off Mum and Dad."

He prepared a thesis on "The effects of stock on compaction of irrigated and non-irrigated red ferrosol soils" as part of his studies, mainly visiting dairy farms on the northwest coast.

Even before he had published his thesis, Kurt was offered a job with Serve-Ag, based in Devonport. He is now working on a sustainable agriculture project, in conjunction with the national LandCare body helping six grower groups develop management tools and providing them with the motivation to institute sustainable practices.

"This involves a lot of the topics that we covered in the course", says Kurt, "and gives me real hands-on experience. I believe the future of many of our agricultural and wilderness resources depends on our understanding of how to look after the soil."

When originally awarded the scholarship Kurt said, "I am looking forward to completing my studies and getting into a job in some area of soil or land management where I can get my hands dirty."

2007 Greenham Tasmania Scholarship applications close on January 31, 2007.



2006 scholarship winner, Kurt de Jonge, proudly displays the award and cheque which helped him on his way to graduation.

GREENHAM PAVING THE PATH FOR EDUCATION.

In a first for the state, Greenham Tasmania is sponsoring Smithton High School in its Pathway Science Project. This project is a partnership between the school, university and industry, working together to form a new 'Pathways' program.

Van Diemens Land Company has opened its Smithton property, 'Woolnorth', so that the students can take part in a scientific monitoring and testing program. With the assistance of the UTAS School of Agriculture they will compile a report based on their findings, which will be presented to the management of Woolnorth.

The project will become a regular, ongoing program which will see students going out to Woolnorth each year to take part in the monitoring and testing. This project may branch off into other pathways for more in-depth analyses of other science base projects that could assist local industry. It is a great opportunity for Smithton High School and local industry combining and working together providing a pathway to science.



Researcher Anthony Poke from Smithton High gathers water samples at Woolnorth

It is the first time that a major local industry has provided financial assistance to state secondary students on a school-based project.



Brittany Marthick, Jessica Monson and Khalia Abblitt from Smithton High School take pasture measurements at Woolnorth

We believe that by supporting a project about agriculture with in the school, students can see the relevance of their studies and the future opportunities in the industry.

Livestock Manager, Adam Pretty, said, "This project has lots of merit. Our company believes that assisting a school based project, students may see more pathways in agriculture and farming. This will have great benefits for our community. Our sponsorship assists Smithton High School and students to give sustainability to the project. We believe our local kids need to see a local company supporting them."

Last year Smithton High School's Woolnorth Science Pathways Project received a Learning Together Educational Excellence state award.

MEAT THE STAFF

Ian Millen – Livestock Buyer.



Fifty-one years in the livestock business in Tasmania has to be some sort of record - a record set by our livestock buyer in the central east, Ian Millen.

Ian was born and raised in Launceston, where he still lives. He joined J C Huttons (the smallgoods people) as soon as he left school, and within six months had become a trainee livestock buyer.

He has been buying livestock ever since. As Ian says, "It's very different now to back in those days. When I started, I was buying all types of stock - sheep, lambs, cattle and pigs. Now it's just cattle. But the biggest change is in the way we buy.

"We used to offer a price per head for stock, now it's all based on liveweight. A lot of farmers don't have a real good idea about what cattle will weigh. So this takes out the guesswork and they really appreciate that."

After 27 years, Huttons was taken over by Blue Ribbon and Ian did their buying for the next 19 or so years, until Greenham's picked up the baton at the Smithton plant.

Ian says there was a real change for the better in attitudes on both sides of the fence. "After the Blue Ribbon debacle it was nice to work for a company that pays promptly. When suppliers were told that they would get a cheque on the spot, they couldn't believe it. It was unheard of at that time. It was pretty appealing, and made for a good relationship with our suppliers."

"Quite a few people had been caught out and this new company gave them confidence. I haven't actually lost many suppliers; they don't blame me for what happened."

Ian attends the Meander livestock buying centre each Monday and the Ringarooma centre on a Wednesday, and says that farmers are very confident with the service that Greenham Tasmania offers. "Quite often they don't come in themselves - they just send the cattle in by carrier, and know that the cheque will arrive in the mail in the next few days."

"I spend quite a bit of time on farm with my customers helping them sort out the appropriate stock to send off, on a dressed-weight basis. They'll give me a call to come out and have a look at the cattle for them."

Ian's farmer customers certainly have a lot of experience that they can depend on.