



MEAT THE STAFF Nick Strickland – Livestock Buyer

Some of the most vital people at Greenhams are the blokes 'on the ground' – the livestock buyers throughout Tasmania who maintain the important personal contact with producers who supply to the meatworks.

The livestock buyer for the north-west coast is Nick Strickland, based at Burnie. Nick started with Greenhams when we first came to Tasmania. "I had been working as a buyer with Blue Ribbon for four or five years until they failed, and Greenhams took over." Nick explains, "Before that I did a dairy farming apprenticeship when I left school, and then was a sharefarmer. So I've been around cattle all my working life."

"Now I look after the area from Boat Harbour to Elizabeth Town."

"The best thing about this job is the people that you meet, and all the places that you get to that you would never expect to see on back roads. These are really good people to form relationships with. You get to see the countryside, and I occasionally get over to King Island – there's really good cattle on the island – they do so well."

Nick says that right at the moment farmers are starting to offload excess stock, because of the mild winter: "We are looking for yearlings, Jap ox, cows and bulls. This has been the driest period on record around our area, so the stock is coming forward a lot quicker now."

"My customers tell me that Greenhams have had a big impact on the state. The quick payment arrangement is the best thing that ever happened here. Quite a few people got caught in the Blue Ribbon debacle. Now there's a lot more security about the transactions."

When Nick isn't working he is spending time on all the jobs and improvements around the 120 acre property where he runs some cows and calves, and grows poppies. "That takes up the holidays and weekends. But I'm on call just about all the time. Then the working week starts again on Sunday night when the phone starts ringing, as blokes start to work

out what they're going to do with stock in the next week. A lot of the time, I go out and see if they're ready to go.

"Farmers need to make sure they get the best prices for their stock. Some customers sell you all their cattle, others you get when the price is right."

The liveweight buying centres in Nick Strickland's area are at Sulphur Creek (Howth), and Deloraine.

"One of the great things about working for Greenhams is that what they say, they stick to."

FAST BROADBAND INTERNET SERVICE NOW AVAILABLE

Mark Riddell from Agsmart Pty Ltd tells us that there is now fast broadband internet service no matter where you live. And a government subsidy is available to make this service very affordable.

Broadband Satellite is a high-speed Internet service that can connect you to the Internet via satellite. This will remove the frustration of a slow dial-up internet connection.

The Commonwealth Government's Broadband Connect Program provides eligible customers in rural and regional Australia with a service subsidised by government grant up to \$3,300, leaving as little to pay as \$29.95 per month for a fast Internet service.

Their preferred provider of satellite broadband services is Australian Private Networks (APN), who offers a choice of plans under the "Activ8me" program.

Features of Activ8me:

- Free Hardware and Installation for customers who qualify for the government grant
- Affordable plans from as little as \$29.95 per month, including 500mb of data
- The base plan features a download speed of 256kbps
- Satellite broadband is constantly connected and is independent of the phone line, so it frees up the telephone
- Two email addresses - one email address for the business and one for personal

The following plans are correct as at 1 July, 2006. Installation and equipment are included in the plan price.

Activ8me Plans	Broadband Connect High Grant for non ADSL, non ISDN areas				
	Plan	Speed	Data Allowance	Monthly Fee	Contract Term
ACTIV8me 500	256/64	500mb	\$29.95	36 Months	\$0
ACTIV8me 1000	384/128	1000mb	\$49.95	36 Months	\$0
ACTIV8me 3000	512/256	3000mb	\$110.95	36 Months	\$0
ACTIV8me 500	256/64	500mb	\$29.95	18 Months	\$200
ACTIV8me 1000	384/128	1000mb	\$49.95	18 Months	\$200
ACTIV8me 3000	512/256	3000mb	\$110.95	18 Months	\$200

* Excess data is charged at 8 cents per MB and billed when accumulated usage exceeds \$10 in any given billing period. Prices include GST.

For more information on this service call 1300 727 995 or visit the website at www.ruralbroadband.com.au



Tasmanian

MEATWORKS MESSENGER

GREENHAM



SEPTEMBER 2006

Welcome to our first Greenham Meatworks Messenger.

I am excited by the prospect of these regular newsletters which will keep you in touch with information about Greenham's Tasmanian operations and news about the meat industry.

I hope that you will find them interesting. Each issue we will be introducing you to some of our suppliers, and members of our staff.

The big news this time is that last month we were able to process the first line of organic cattle through the Smithton abattoir. Our official certification means that valuable export and interstate markets have been opened up for Tasmanian producers.

At the time of writing this column the rainfall situation in the state is mixed. Some parts are quite wet while others are very dry. Over on the mainland, though, the dry weather is really starting to bite. Unless there is widespread rain very soon we expect a lot of stock to come onto the market which in turn will push down prices.

If you have surplus stock to sell, I urge you to get rid of them sooner rather than later to beat what looks like becoming a declining market. Let's hope good rains change that outlook but the signs aren't promising.

And don't forget our very competitive payment structure which means prompt payment and absolutely no deductions from the quoted price.

We need stock right now so give our blokes a call to organise a sale, either liveweight or over-the-hooks:

Elliot Mainwaring	Circular Head	6456 1300 or 0419 131 458
Nick Strickland	Central / N-W	6433 3230 or 0417 335 843
Ian Millen	Central East	6334 4422 or 0408 133 685
Len Thompson	North-East	6353 2211 or 0417 532 446
Michael Ardle	South	0428 134 122
Wayne Oliver		6443 4135 or 0419 358 441
Adam Pretty	Livestock Manager	0419 599 761
Daniel Sinclair		0428 384 484

Peter Greenham Jnr

ORGANIC IS NOW THE GO.



Greenham works manager Darren Moloney, at left, looks over the killing line with members of Tasmanian Organic-Dynamic Producers. PHOTO: Tasmanian Country.

"It means that organic cattle slaughtered at Smithton must be the first stock processed that day and need to be kept segregated from conventionally raised cattle."

Before the Smithton works export-accreditation, many organic beef producers

Our works manager at the meatworks, Darren Moloney, is extremely chuffed about the recent official recognition for processing organic cattle.

The Smithton abattoir was certified by the Tasmanian Organic-Dynamic Producers group, which has an Australian Quarantine and Inspection service accredited national organic export certificate.

Darren said that the high level of quality assurance processes which are already in place at the meatworks made achieving the organic certification a fairly straightforward procedure.

in Tasmania have had to send their cattle into the normal domestic market.

At the moment the Tasmanian Organic-Dynamic Producers group certifies about 40 organic beef producers, and demand for carcasses between 220kg and 260kg is very strong. We are told that producers can expect premiums of as much as \$200 a head.

"Our accreditation will open up valuable markets for these customers", said Darren, "and we will continue to work closely with them to achieve high quality results."

What we've brought to Tasmania:

- **Prompt payment**
We pioneered on-the-spot payment for liveweight sales. Over the hooks sales are paid within two working days.
- **No fees**
There's no commission, we pay the transaction levies, and there's no freight charge for liveweight sales.
- **Liveweight centres**
We've established consistently operating liveweight centres in the right locations - there's one near you.
- **Consistent year round competition**
We buy all year round and provide consistent competition.



SPANNING THE GREENHAM GENERATIONS

Gordon Clements has been around cattle all his life. Even today as he approaches 78, he still owns a dairy farm near Wyuna in Victoria where a share farmer is currently milking 100 cows, soon to increase to 200.

Gordon's connection with Greenham goes back a long way. For a start he remembers carting both dairy cattle and bullocks to the Greenham abattoirs at Newport and Altona in Melbourne's western suburbs some 30 or 40 years ago.

And while he's been selling to Greenham for a long time Gordon's first association with the family goes back even further. As a youngster he worked for Quiney Mawbey & Co at Newmarket in the 1940's where Smithton manager Peter Greenham's (junior) great-grandfather, Harry, was a well-known character at the yards.

"He chewed tobacco and I still remember him spitting it out in the laneways. His son was also called Harry – we called him 'Young Harry'. The old man was usually known as 'HW'. It's great to see the H. W. Greenham name continuing.

"HW used to ride his push bike up to Newmarket Sale Yards from the Melbourne City Abattoirs. They always bought their cattle standing down in the lanes – perhaps they could judge them better that way," Gordon remembered.

Light weight or over the hooks?

Gordon Clements has turned off his fair share of beef cattle over the years, and until recently always sold over the hooks or through the yards.

"We normally take our culls over to Greenham's at Tongala with our own truck. I think Greenham is as good a market as you can get hold of. Recently, we had a few cows to get rid of and it was a bit awkward, so I asked them if they could organise a pickup.

"Their system is very, very good – they weigh them on to the truck and pay you on the spot. But I've never been too sure about liveweight so I asked Graeme Pretty for the results after they were hung up.

"It was very close – I would have got virtually the same money either way. I really don't see any problem now in selling liveweight," Gordon added.

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PROMPT PAYMENT A BIG ADVANTAGE

Prompt payment for his bullocks is an important advantage for Duck Bay, Smithton farmer, Les Porteus.

He is one of the biggest fatteners in Tasmania and farms a total of 4000 acres. The Smithton property covers 1200 acres and the remainder is about half an hour away.

His whole operation is based on buying in stores and turning them off within 12 months, aiming for a dressed weight of 400 kg. 1200 head pass through the property every year.

Greenham saved us

"All my cattle go to Greenham, and have done since they started. Greenham saved us here in the north-west. It's good having a meat works on our doorstep - very convenient and I'm sure it produces better quality meat because there's less transport stress.

"The advantage of getting money upfront is that I can go out and buy replacements straightaway and that makes a difference when you are turning over a lot of stock. I always sell over the hooks and have a cheque within a couple of days.

"And they are good blokes to get on with," he added.

His country varies from very clean to some rough old pasture at Roger River. Pasture renovation is an ongoing exercise and he conserves a lot of hay to maintain numbers year round. He's found silage too expensive.

"I lease out some land for potatoes as a renovation exercise. It gets worked over thoroughly and freshened up."

Finding 1200 stores each year isn't an easy exercise and Les says he "gets them anywhere he can". Some come from off the islands but most are sourced locally. A small amount used to come from the mainland but not any more.

He looks for cattle 12 to 18 months old but sometimes buys calves for new ground.

When he isn't looking after cattle Les is a keen fisherman and has a 20' Swiftcraft that he uses whenever there's any spare time. His son, Troy, who works the farm with him, also uses the boat for diving after crayfish.



GRASS ROOTS FOOTY SPONSORSHIP

Greenham's Grassroots Footy is a program designed to teach skills to 5-12 year olds. This season it has catered for 120 juniors. Works manager, Darren Maloney, says it fits in with the company's policy of helping talented kids.

"We provide support for local under 14, under 17 and under 18 teams, and of course Smithton in the NTFL, but it's the juniors we are really keen on – that's where it all starts. Two of our local kids made it into the State under 16 side this year," he said.



CHASING GOLD AT THE END OF THE RAINBOW.

Mick Odgers from Nabageena has been farming long enough to know a bit about how prices work.

He started with his father and three brothers back in the 60's when they milked two herds totalling 360 cows. Later he established his own operation and has no regrets about a lifetime in the industry.

"It's been a great lifestyle. We were able to put three kids through university and build up an asset over the years.

No point chasing

"I learned early on there's no point in chasing what seemed like higher prices. Whether you are buying or selling somebody's always got a price that seems better but invariably something else comes into play and they all end up being much the same.

"I've found Greenham very reliable. I've even sent off loads of cattle without asking the price - their prices are always competitive. And there have been times when they've quoted me a price and the market's slipped, but they still pay what they quoted. You can't get fairer than that," Mick added.

At the age of 60 Mick has decided to scale back and sell around half his 500 acres but will stay in the beef game. He's currently running 160 head on the remaining 260 acres at Lileah.

He describes Lileah as "very good grass country" but over the years it has grown far more than that. Until this year when he ceased potato production Mick was McCain's longest standing grower having started in 1983. At the end he was producing 1000 tonnes annually.

All his cattle have gone to Smithton since Greenham re-opened the plant. "I really can't remember when I sold a beast anywhere else.

Confidence

"Their payment system has instilled more confidence than anything else. We used to wait three weeks and then often still have to chase after a cheque. And of course there are no deductions - you get used to that and forget what it was like.

"They're strong community supporters, especially with sporting groups. And the Scholarship is a great thing - wonderful to give young people training opportunities."