



"Werner Lang's family back in Switzerland can't believe the size of herds here."

GREENHAMS HELP IN CALLING AUSTRALIA HOME.

Werner Lang came to Australia from his native Switzerland 25 years ago and started dairy farming here with 90 cows on 120 acres (50 ha) just a few kilometres out of Tatura.

"My parents were dairy farmers at home, but because I wasn't the oldest son, I wasn't able to take up farming. Even though they have huge farm subsidies, the government there looks after the landowner, not prospective farm buyers, so I had to look elsewhere if I wanted to follow my heart and milk cows for a living."

Canada was too cold for Werner, who hated the cold in Switzerland; Brazil's economy was too unstable, and so he came to Australia. "The country has been really good to us," he says. "My family only ran about 30 cows, which is pretty typical in Switzerland, so they can't believe the numbers we have here!"

At the moment the Langs run 900 cows between two properties totalling 1200 acres.

They have two milking sheds; the 50 cow rotary on the home property milks 600 cows, the 20 double-up machines

on the property over the road handle the other 300. Werner's son is coming come soon to take over the other property, and their intention is to increase that herd to 600 cows as well. At that stage they will need to extend to shed to 30 units.

Werner doesn't believe in high-tech gear, so he doesn't go in for automatic cup removers or electronic ID. He prefers to have a very hands-on style with his cows. He employs workers to help at the milking, and contractors look after haymaking and silage.

"The most important thing is feeding and milking the cows," says Werner, "and I prefer to do that myself. We grow a lot of maize for silage, using a centre pivot, and we buy in pellets. We're not high feeders, about 900 kgs to a tonne per cow, per year.

"We put a lot of effort into our irrigated pastures, and we are also to use wastewater from the Tatura Wastewater Treatment plant just up the road."

Werner sends about 40 cast-for-age cows to Greenhams each year, a couple at a time all year round. "We try to support local business, and Greenhams is a very important part of the Goulburn district.

"The receival point in Tatura is very handy for us. I originally started taking them to Tongala when Greenham first set up, 14 years ago, but now it is a lot more convenient.

"We still sell some through the yards to give the local agent a go – we watch the prices carefully.

"Getting a cheque straight away on the day is handy, although with a business like ours it doesn't make a real lot of difference to the cash flow.

"It's important for us to keep dealing with Greenhams; if a cow gets poorly we can get it off straight away, instead of having to wait for the markets.

"Their involvement in the local community is very good. In particular, the scholarships that they run are important in supporting young people in farming areas. We have enough trouble keeping young people in the area. Too often they are looking for different jobs off the farm to keep up the lifestyle they think they need."

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.

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 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



JANUARY 2007

MEATWORKS MESSENGER

GREENHAM



Welcome to our first newsletter of 2007. I certainly hope it's an improvement on 2006 - a reasonable expectation surely? We must be due for something better.

It's been encouraging to hear that climatologists seem united in predicting good autumn rains. Their timings vary but the underlying message is positive. Assoc. Prof. Andrew Vizard from Melbourne University has also done an analysis of historical rainfall data which predicts drought breaking rains by July at the latest and probably earlier.

Let's hope they are right!

Thanks for your cooperation

We have really appreciated your cooperation during the past few months while our plant has been at capacity. When we have gone over capacity we've had to make public announcements asking for pre-bookings so that we could handle all cattle in an orderly fashion.

You have been quick to respond and very understanding. Thank you.

Staff changes

January 1 saw some staff changes at Tongala with the introduction of an Executive Management Team made up of Paul Birchill (Quality Assurance), Don MacDonald (Plant Engineer), Darren Maloney (Operations Manager) and Graeme Pretty (Livestock Controller). Together they have equal responsibility for running the plant.

Graeme is still your main contact for cattle sales.

Over the hooks kill times

We have heard comment that OTH cattle can spend lengthy periods in the holding paddocks between delivery and kill, leading to concerns about possible weight losses.

I assure you that OTH cattle are processed within 24 hours of delivery. The only isolated exception might be at peak times when afternoon deliveries mightn't go on the line until the second morning.

Those of you who drive past the plant regularly may see cattle in the paddocks for several days but these are always stock we have bought liveweight or from the yards. They are our cattle and any weight loss is at our cost.

Peter Greenham

OUR DAIRY SCHOLARSHIP IS ON AGAIN.



dairy industry and for more mature students to make an impact. It can also help current farmers to continue in the business with new skills and confidence.

"It is a way for us to give something back to the many farming families who have been loyal suppliers to the company,

particularly during difficult times."

Our Greenham Dairy Scholarship is again available to encourage enthusiastic people to secure a future in the dairy industry.

This stimulating annual award has been very well received by our customers since its launch in 2000.

It is available to applicants between 17 and 45 years of age, providing an opportunity for people across a broad age range to apply for \$10,000 to help them undertake formal study or a recognised training program pertaining to the industry.

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

As Graeme Pretty says, "It emphasises the company's enduring commitment to people of the district and the future of the Australian dairy industry.

"We are proud to play an integral part in this community, and ongoing education of the type offered by this scheme is crucial to the future sustainability and development of the dairy industry. The scholarship is a way of encouraging young people to consider a future in the Australian

Applicants can use the scholarship to undertake farming-related courses, or studies related to any other sector of industry that ultimately benefits dairying.

The Greenham Scholarship is awarded 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

Applications close on January 31, 2007. Application forms and information sheets are available by phoning Rivergum Marketing on (03) 5445 6103, faxing a request to (03) 5442 5301 or emailing to greenham@rivergummarketing.com.au

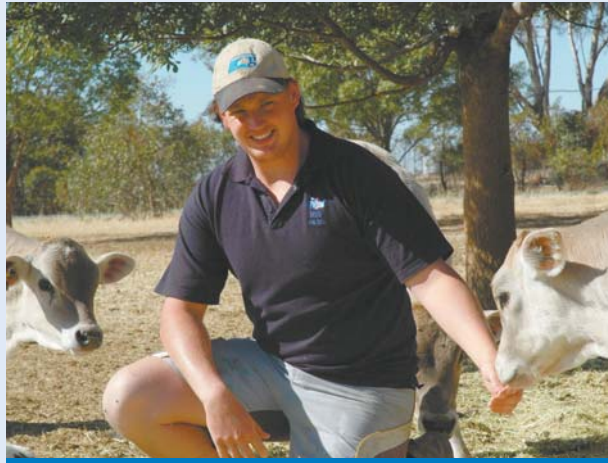
Tips for applicants, further information and application forms can also be downloaded from www.greenham.com.au

Tel.5859 0912 After hours: Graeme Pretty 0418 505 347

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2005 Scholarship winner, Ben Govett, is putting his farm management studies to good use on the family farm at Dingee.

2005 WINNER PUTS STUDY TO GOOD USE.

Ben Govett is back on the family farm at Dingee after finishing his studies at Melbourne University.

Ben was the winner of the 2005 Greenham Dairy Scholarship and the award money was very welcome in completing his Bachelor of Animal Sciences and Management degree.

He finished his exams in the week before we called into see him and says that, not surprisingly, a couple of them were the hardest he has ever had to sit.

"It was a good course," says Ben. "I definitely enjoyed the experience. I changed some of the subjects I was doing for the last eighteen months, so that I ended up with half agriculture, and half animal sciences. I was a little worried about the relevance of pure animal sciences with what I wanted to do in dairying. This way I studied more about animal production, cropping and pastures."

Ben's aim was to gain knowledge and experience that he could put into practice on his parents' farm and help to make a good career in dairying. Now that he's back at Dingee he is keen to take on a substantial management role.

"I would like to continue with extra education if the opportunity arises and sometime in the near future I would also like to take a six-month working tour of stud farms in America," he said.

The scholarship money was used to assist with the accommodation costs at International House in Melbourne. "I was a bit undecided at the time, and the award helped me make up my mind about exactly what I wanted to do. It was a terrific help. It meant that I didn't have to continually worry about how Mum and Dad would find the money, and it wasn't so critical to look for part-time work, which may have put pressure on the studying side." Even so, Ben worked part-time as a sports tutor for primary school-age students.

He believes that he now has more of an understanding about the financial side of animal production and is keen to continue improving the genetic side of the herd. "It's been successful in the past, and I want to build on that."

"Most of my goals are centred on the successful running of a farm. Farming is in the family. My grandfather was a dryland farmer, and my father took over our farm when he was 15."

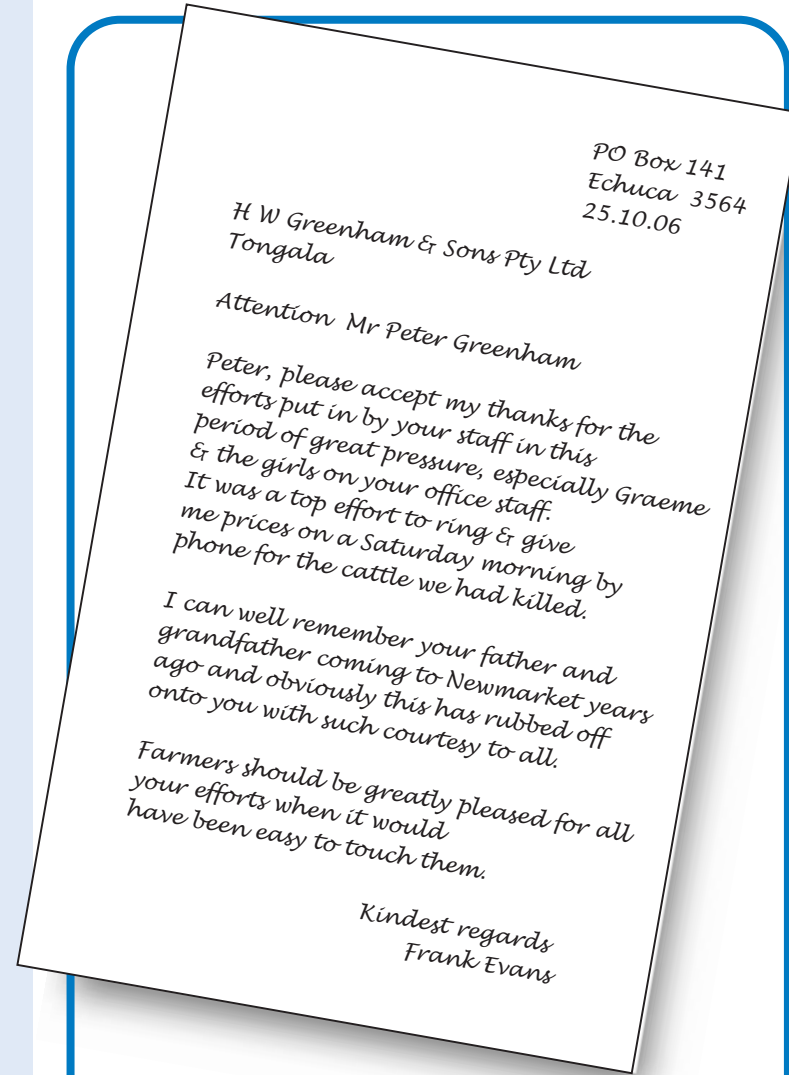
The Govett farm, Tandara Brown Swiss and Holsteins, has been going for 25 years and Ben's father, Bill, originally set up a Jersey stud, before switching over to Swiss Brown and Holsteins.

They are currently milking 200 cows, on a 40 stand rotary shed, on about 450 ha with 60 of those under irrigation.

Ben says the mix at the moment is 65% Brown Swiss, and the rest Holsteins. "My aim is to get closer to 50/50. Things are pretty tough at the moment – not just the lack of rain, but all the other issues that stem from that; the high price of feed, low water allocation – we're just in the process of putting our last lot of water on, and then we just have to see it out until the rains come. Once we get through the tough times at the moment, I'd like to build up to 250 milkers.

"I believe education and experience are the keys to being successful in Australia's volatile dairy industry," Ben said. "I wanted to learn to better manage and understand all aspects of farming, from the soil to the markets."

"If dairy farmers are to survive in the future they need to be able to manage their land, stock and assets in order to stay profitable."



Frank Evans was a Newmarket auctioneer for many years, and has been sending cattle to Greenhams for about forty years. Now aged 75, Frank sent this latest lot of cattle from a property near Moama, N SW, which he runs with his son Chris.

TURNING COWS INTO BOOKS.

At Greenhams we're doing our bit to help the children at Katandra West Primary School learn to read.

School Principal, Paula Ryan, told us that as part of the 'Early Years Literacy Programme' the 96 students devote two hours each morning to reading and writing. Many of the books for the programme are purchased by the school with money received through a special sponsorship arrangement with Greenham's.

For every cow sold by local farmers through the Invergordon liveweight selling centre, one dollar goes to the school's funds. This arrangement has been in place for over 10 years and the Katandra West school has benefited significantly over the years. The centre is operated by George Trew, and is located on Invergordon Road, off Centre Road. It is open to receive cattle each Tuesday from 9am until noon.

Support for the local community is an integral part of the H W Greenham & Sons operation, with each of the sixteen liveweight selling centres regularly contributing funds to local organisations.

"It is great to have these extra funds," says Paula Ryan. "About 30% of the children at the school have farming parents, and we really appreciate the boost to our fundraising."



Young Sam shows off his reading skills to Katandra West primary School Principal, Paula Ryan, with a little help from Greenhams.



MEAT THE STAFF Bernie Tinning.

Bernadette Tinning, better known as Bernie, is the voice on the other end of the phone, so familiar to local farmers, agents and truckies when they call about sending or bringing stock to the meatworks.

Bernie is the Assistant Livestock Controller at Tongala and that means she is in control of the paperwork regarding every animal killed at the plant. Importantly she needs to ensure that everything is true and correct to facilitate lifetime traceability of the stock.

"I talk to the farmers when they are checking prices and booking in the animals before they send them," explains Bernie, "and I finish with them when the beast makes it to the box in the freezer!"

"Graeme (Pretty) and Peter Greenham set the prices on a Friday and I convey that to the farmers and agents, and usually give advice about filling out the documentation. Sometimes the requirements regarding grazing, feeding and breeding need a bit of clarification, and I help with that. At the moment with the over-abundance of stock coming in, I'm flat out controlling the bookings."

Bernie grew up on a dairy farm just down the road from where the Tongala plant is now, and still lives in the town. She believes that she is the only staff member "born and bred in this town".

"On the dairy farm where I grew up, I was one of eleven children. We all got in and helped – just the typical farm upbringing. We milked the cows every day, before and after school, and in school holidays you did all the farm jobs that you couldn't fit in the rest of the time."

She was with a local bank for 13 years before working in retail in Echuca, and then, with the Echuca Racing Club, she organised staffing on race days.

She kept up the race days work after joining Greenham's as a receptionist in 2000, but says she never saw a horse race because of her focus on the 'behind the scenes' tasks.

After a couple of years at the Tongala plant Bernie took 12 months off to live in Colorado, USA, while her schoolteacher husband, Pete, worked on an exchange programme.

Six months after she had resumed her receptionist job, Adam Pretty moved to the Greenham operation in Tasmania, and Bernie took over his role as assistant livestock controller.

As she got more involved in the processing of stock, she wanted to find out more about bovine diseases and the background of cattle – both ante- and post-mortem – so she took on a Meat Inspector's Course about 18 months ago. Bernie has now passed, and is qualified to work in a domestic abattoir, not that she plans to in the near future.

She says the experience has really helped her in her job: "When I started here I didn't really want to go up to the killing floor. It was OK to see the cattle in the pens but not any further than that. Now I'm quite comfortable with the whole process."

Life is pretty busy outside work; Bernie and Pete have three children, and have recently become grandparents. She plays netball in the winter, and the family goes camping at Christmas, and Bernie is used to the day to day hectic family life.

"We're glad that our kids have been able to go to Pete's parents' farm and get a taste of that same farm experience."

In a normal day at the Tongala plant, Bernie talks to 20 to 30 farmers, five to 10 agents, plus sub-contractor buyers and liveweight scales operators. "When I started this job, every call went to Graeme Pretty, being a man's world, but now I believe that farmers, buyers and agents are happy talking to me to answer their questions, which means I can take a lot of calls. I'm there as a back-up to Graeme to take the load off, because his phone never stops. At least when I go home mine does. I believe we work as a good team which is reflected in keeping our suppliers happy."