

CHANCE TO WIN A \$1000 VOUCHER

Greenham is giving some lucky suppliers a sweet surprise this Christmas season with a series of giveaways through to the end of the year.

For the three months through to December 31, the company is giving farmers who sell cows to Greenham one raffle ticket for each animal handed over. Those tickets go into a monthly draw and each month's winner receives a \$1000 Retravisation voucher.

October's winners were Grant and Kylie Miller, who run a herd of 400 cows on 650 acres at Cooma, near Stanhope.

The Millers, Greenham clients for many years, have used part of their prize to buy a camera for their daughter, who is planning a trip to the UK.

Last month's winners were Ray and Lorna Trimby, whose family properties cover 1700 acres between Katunga and Waaia milking 730 cows in two dairies.

Ray and Lorna sell their cows over the scales at Waaia.

One month – and one winner – to go!



CONSUMERS BENEFIT FROM NEW TECHNOLOGY

Greenham Tasmania has scored an Australian first with the release of a range of gourmet sausages that carry a QR (quick response) code on the packaging.

Coles supermarket customers, where the range is being trialled, can scan the code with their smart phones and link directly to a website where they can access recipes, and even find out which Tasmanian farm the beef came from.

Tell us what's on your mind and win \$500 worth of farm supplies

Here's your chance to tell us what you think about the service you get from Greenham. Good or bad, it doesn't matter – we need to know, because if we don't know about problems, we can't fix them.

And even if you don't have any problems – and we hope that is the case – you might be able to suggest improvements.

Everybody who responds will go into a draw for the chance to win a \$500 voucher at a nearby farm supplies store.

Log on to our website and you will find a link to the survey site. We've kept it short, so it won't take long.

CHRISTMAS HOURS

OVER THE HOOKS: Reveal of over the hooks cattle to Tongala will cease on Wednesday 21 December, noon, and resume at 6am Tuesday 3 January 2012.

LIVEWEIGHT BUYING

Thursday 22 December

Tongala – Ronald Schmedje 0409 026 040

Friday 23 December

Tongala – Ronald Schmedje 0409 026 040

Monday 26 December

No Liveweight Scales
Boxing Day Public Holiday

Tuesday 27 December

No Liveweight Scales
Christmas Day Public Holiday

Wednesday 28 December 9am–noon

Tongala – Ronald Schmedje 0409 026 040
Bamawm – Les Mitchell 0409 079 541
Picola/Waaia – David Preddy 0447 533 195

On Farm Buying Liveweight

Peter Shellie 0428 579 087

Gunbower, Cohuna, Leitchville and Kerang

Thomas Mackenzie 0408 500 311

Cohuna and Leitchville

Colin Ibbs 0427 349 648

Thursday 29 December 9am–noon

Tongala – Ronald Schmedje 0409 026 040
Sandmount – Les Mitchell 0409 079 541

Friday 30 December

Tongala – Ronald Schmedje 0409 026 040
Toolamba – Les Mitchell 0409 079 541

Monday 2 January

No Liveweight Scales
New Year's Day Public Holiday

Tuesday 3 January 9am–noon

Bamawm – Les Mitchell 0409 079 541
Tongala – Ronald Schmedje 0409 026 040
Bamawm – Les Mitchell 0409 079 541
Invergordon – Les Mitchell 0409 079 541

Numurkah

Danny McNamara 0417 541 320

Dingee

Rob Plant 5436 8209

Stanhope

Nev Mackrell 0428 570 523

For more information on selling cattle liveweight other than times stated please contact Danny Sinclair on 0428 384 484, or HW Greenham office 5859 0912.

SUPPORTING AWARD FOR AGRIBUSINESS

The staff at Echuca hydroponic producer Gourmet Greens had plenty to smile about at the recent presentation dinner for this year's Powercor Australia Campaspe Murray Business Awards.

They took home the prize of best agribusiness for the region, one of 13 winners announced on the night.

The agribusiness award was sponsored by HW Greenham & Sons, one of 15 sponsors to lend their support to the prestigious event.

The Powercor awards recognise achievements in outstanding customer service and a commitment to quality.



Victorian

MEATWORKS MESSENGER

DECEMBER 2011

GREENHAM



It's always good to see people expanding in the dairy industry in the Goulburn Valley, especially after the huge reduction in herd numbers that occurred during the drought.

The story inside about Kim and John Buchanan not only talks about how they have grown their business, but also about how well they run it. It's great to see local dairy farmers doing the job so well.

Of course the hot topic of conversation at the moment is the recently released draft plan for the Murray Darling Basin. Our part of the world doesn't fare too well with a very significant loss of irrigation capacity.

On one hand we have experts telling us that the world needs to get its act together and produce more food. On the other, this draft plan – if implemented in its present form – would reduce the capacity to produce milk in this country.

IT'S ALL A BIT HARD TO FATHOM

Jennifer Marohasy wrote an interesting article in *The Land* a couple of weeks ago talking about how the plan is based on averages taken over the past 114 years. But, as we know only too well, we live in a highly variable climate. In some years there is water to burn, so to speak, while in others we are desperately short.

The report says that 10,870 GL is the maximum amount of water that can be sustainability extracted from the system. This figure is derived from the average annual inflow of 31,599 GL over that period. The question is in how many years did the basin receive the average, or even near it? Very few, I suspect, which surely begs the further question of how can you possibly come up with an annual fixed figure?

I'm sure there will be a lot more debate yet – it's been going on for 100 years already – but most importantly, I hope good sense prevails and we end up with the best outcome for the Goulburn Valley.

On that note, thank you for your continued support and I wish you and your families a very happy Christmas and a prosperous new year.

Peter Greenham

PROBLEMS PAYING FOR STUDY? THIS COULD BE YOUR ANSWER

The Christmas season is a time when we all look to our plans for the new year – and a time of great opportunity for keen students of the dairy industry.

This is your annual opportunity to stake a claim for a \$10,000 boost to your study plans, with applications now open for the 2012 Greenham Dairy Scholarship.

Granted every year since 2000, this award invites enthusiastic students between the ages of 17 and 45 to put their case for consideration.

Open to anyone wanting to undertake further education in any sector of the dairy industry, the scholarship is available to family, sharefarmers and employees of farmers who have supplied cattle to Tongala this year.

Peter Greenham says ongoing education of the type offered by this scholarship is vital to the industry's future.

"It is aimed at identifying people with the potential to make a significant contribution to the dairy industry, but who may find it difficult without financial support," he says.

The scholarship can be used for formal study, farming-related courses or a recognised training program related to any area that ultimately benefits dairying.

Past winners of the scholarship have gone on to work in large herd veterinary issues, soil and pasture management, business and environmental management, animal sciences, breeding excellence and dairy technology.

This year's winner, Jon Pearce, of Tallygaroopna, has used the money to finance studies in an Advanced Diploma of Agriculture at NCDEA.

"I've nearly completed the advanced diploma now and couldn't have done it without the scholarship," he says.

"My partner and I still plan to buy our own dairy farm, but we'll look at that sometime next year."

The criteria on which scholarship is awarded include how the applicant plans to use the money, how it might contribute to his or her life ambitions, potential benefits to the dairy industry and previous academic, industry or personal achievements.

Applicants will be expected to outline their course expenses, involvements with community organisations and dairy-related work experience.

They will need to provide a number of written references, plus a short essay addressing the judging criteria.

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

Applications close on Tuesday, January 31, 2012, so start working on what you need soon if you're interested.

Scholarship application forms and information sheets are available by phoning Rivergum Marketing on (03) 5445 6100, faxing a request to (03) 5442 5301 or emailing greenham@rivergummarketing.com.au

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





LACK OF FARMING BACKGROUND NO BARRIER TO WINNING EXCELLENCE AWARDS

John and Kim Buchanan have come a long way in five years.

When they packed up the family farm in the Waikato region of New Zealand's North Island to start again in Australia, they brought with them a store of experience and expertise which has seen them flourish in their new surroundings.

Now milking 500 cows on an 800-acre farm at Katamatite, the Buchanans are consistent winners of industry milk quality excellence awards and take considerable pride in what they do.

Of their three children, two remain at home – James, 20, is studying commerce in Melbourne, but Courtney, 18, and Alisha, 14, are still on the farm.

Courtney is keen on showing, breeding her own cattle for such events as Dairy Week and shows in Melbourne, Shepparton, Finley, Echuca and Cobram.

She has been to the Dairy Youth Camp three times and to state finals twice in handlers' competitions in Melbourne.

NOT FROM FARMING STOCK

"John is originally from Auckland and I came from Hawkes Bay," Kim says.

"We're not from farming stock, but have basically been farming all our lives.

That's all John ever wanted to do, while I started in the industry as a herd tester.

"We both did a diploma in agriculture at Massey University in 1983-84, then John went on to manage and share-milk while I went on a two-year trip to Canada and Germany, most of that on an agricultural exchange program.

"When we got together, I was back with the Livestock Improvement Corporation as a district manager with 500 farmer clients, organising herd testing, herd recording and artificial insemination services.



"We came up through the 50/50 share milking system in New Zealand, where you own the cows and machinery, someone else owns the land and you split the cheque.

"John started on his own share-milking 350 cows. We then went from a 500-cow share-milking arrangement to an 800-cow job over 10 years before buying our own farm.

"We owned that for eight years with 180 cows on 120 acres. We operated a feed pad and mixer wagon system and winter-milked in a traditional spring-calving area.

"With the help of a consultant, we maximised per cow production to a very high level for that time in New Zealand."

RIDICULOUS LAND PRICES

Kim says they came to Australia because of land prices in New Zealand and feed opportunities at more realistic prices.

"Land prices were ridiculous – \$20,000 to \$25,000 per acre," she says. "We were ready to expand, but couldn't justify dairying on that – at those prices, you're basically farming for capital gains.

"We came here for a holiday in 2005, spent a day in the car looking at farms and that planted the seed.

"We sold up and came back, deciding to focus on northern Victoria because of the return on investment, land prices and the perceived control you had with irrigation.

"It's been a fairly uphill road. We bought 500 acres with 200 head of milking stock, plus young stock – now, five years later, we own 800 acres and lease another 300, milking 500 cows with 150 retained head of young stock a year.

"We've had three years of winning the somatic cell count awards from *The Weekly Times* and four seasons of maintaining excellence awards from Parmalat for our milk quality and production curve."

RECORDING IMPORTANT

Once all Holsteins, the herd is now mixed and relatively young, with one-fifth Jerseys and another fifth cross and red.

"We are a commercial herd, but still want fully recorded and identified stock," Kim says.

"One of the major differences between Australia and New Zealand is the emphasis on animal information – it's so strong in New Zealand, with about 95 per cent of all animals recorded.

"Every animal on the farm, apart from the bought-in stock – I can tell you who she is, what she's by, when she was born, who she's out of back to three or four generations.

"The other thing that amazes me here is that the whole industry is focused on litres, yet none of us is paid for a litre of milk – we're all paid for a kilo of milk solids.

"Every dairy company expresses its payment in litres and we're told how good a cow is by how many litres she's done."

In the year to last July, the Buchanans produced nearly 250,000kg of milk solids from a little over three million litres, with 4.56% butterfat and 3.55% protein.

SELF SUFFICIENT

The couple go to a full feedlot system of total mixed rations in summer and dry the pastures off to re-establish annuals in the autumn or winter.

"This is the first season we have been prepared to replant some permanent pasture," Kim says.

"We now harvest all our own silages and cereal crops with the aim of being self-sufficient and having control over our own forage base."

They employ flood irrigation using channels and all water is recycled. There are about 450 acres under crop, growing wheat, barley, oats and triticale for use on-farm. Last year's break crop was vetch, but this year has seen peas put in.

"We only buy in the concentrates, such as canola meal, cottonseed meal, pea pollard and citrus pulp," Kim says.

The Buchanans have been quick to take up new technology when it's been in line with their plans.

"In January, we put in an AfiMilk computer system along with ADF clusters," Kim says. "With that, I can milk 500 cows on my own quite happily."

Under the Israeli-made Afi system, the cows all wear pedometers and are monitored for milk volume and conductivity. As clusters are automatically removed from the cow, the ADF teat-sprays them, then washes the liners with an acid sanitiser between cups off and cups on.



THE BUCHANANS GO TO A FULL FEEDLOT SYSTEM OF TOTAL MIXED RATIONS IN SUMMER.

As they go out, they are weighed every day and the pedometers do heat detection and drafting based on activity out in the paddock.

PLENTY OF NEW ZEALAND GENETICS

The farm's breeding program is all AI, with plenty of New Zealand genetics.

"Our current breeding philosophy is to get away from the extreme Holstein," Kim says. "Instead, we're focusing on fertility, protein, udders and feet and legs.

"All yearlings are joined to a double synchrony AI program and then run with bulls.

"We work pretty much on indexes – we'll select better bulls from across all companies if they're in the right price range."

Surplus bobby calves are sold to calf-rearers to prepare for the export market at a week to 10 days, while the unwanted Jersey or crossbred heifers go to return purchasers.

GREENHAM PARTNERSHIP INVALUABLE

Kim says their five-year partnership with Greenham has been an invaluable one.

"When we first moved here, we had to ask people what we could do with culled cows," she says.

"We were put on to Peter Shellie and have had great service from him for years. Through the drought, though, it got harder to get him when he didn't get a load up this way.

"We did use the yards at Shepparton from time to time, but now when I've got one or two I need to go, I just ring Les (Mitchell).

"We cull mainly after they have been pregnancy-tested in February and October, but at other times particular cows have to go. Any Thursday I want, I can get rid of them.

"It's a great service Greenham offers. We get a cheque on the day and you know what you're getting paid. Culled cows are not our main income-earner, but they're a valuable sideline.

"In terms of their efficiency, and being able to trust you'll be paid, there are no problems whatsoever."