

PRODUCER DAYS A HIT

Our annual series of producer information days attracted over 300 breeders and fatteners from across the state. This year, there was a distinct focus on new technologies like that of farm management tools, AgLive and Gallagher systems as well as the Greenham Pathways to Market program. Producers also received market updates about Australian beef production and the

expected future trends from MLA whist Macquarie Franklin offered practical formulas for getting the most out of grass production across regions. Peter Greenham remarked, "It was great to see such a large attendance of our producers. It's beneficial bringing them away from the farm to swap information and get updated on industry developments and even new technologies."



Ben Thomas from MLA addresses the Scottsdale crowd



NEVER EVER & GAP GUIDES

Are you on the Never Ever or GAP programs and haven't got a copy of the guides? Please contact the office on 03 6452 2701 and ask for a copy to be sent out in the mail. For more information about our natural programs please email: kkay@greenham.com.au or call 0409 330 795



Troy Porteous impresses the gallery as he hits off at the 1st.

GOLF DAY A WINNER

The annual Greenham golf day at 'Royal' Stanley was held on 1st April. Circular Head producer Troy Porteous lead the charge and was one of the best performers in the trying conditions. Thanks to our Greenham staff who helped out on the day.



AUTUMN 2017

Tasmanian

MEATWORKS MESSENGER

GREENHAM



FROM WESTBURY TO COPENHAGEN, OUR GREENHAM SCHOLARSHIP WINNER

DEPUTY PREMIER PRESENTS AWARD

We wish to thank Jeremy Rockliff for joining us at Agritas to award the 2017 Greenham Scholarship. The winner, Josh Brown, is currently studying in Copenhagen and looks to have a bright future indeed. You can read about his background and what he intends to do with the funds in the adjacent story.

AUTUMN BREAK ON CUE

The falls have been decent across most areas and temperatures haven't dropped too much yet. Cold weather is around the corner so it's important to maintain your supplemental feeding to maximize MSA scores.

WINTER CONTRACTS

Pricing for winter forward contracts has been released but we only have limited positions available. Please return your paperwork as soon as possible to guarantee your booking.

PRODUCER DAYS DRAW THE CROWDS

It was pleasing to talk to such large numbers of producers across our six producer days back in February. Thanks to all for coming along. We will also be at Red Meat Updates at The Tramsheds in Launceston on Friday July 28th and sponsoring the lunch section.

Peter Greenham

Josh Brown of Westbury is eyeing the big picture and his hope to be a specialist operator in the agricultural industry has received an enormous boost by winning of the \$12,000 Greenham Tasmania Agritas Scholarship.

Appearing via video link from his study base in Copenhagen, Josh addressed the group at Agritas and gave thanks to Greenham, the judges and of course his supportive parents.

The third generation to be raised on the 500 acre family operation, Josh has already completed a double degree in Commerce and Arts and is currently undertaking a Master's Degree in Science with a major in Agricultural Economics at Copenhagen University.

It was while he did a short study exchange in Denmark during his undergraduate course, that his interest in continuing his studies to the next level was piqued.

"During my first trip, I was studying trade economics and politics and encountered a range of different production systems and structures and was very keen to know more, but on a macro level," says Josh.

"The developments in 'Ag' happen in a very different way to the way they happen in Australia. It's much more centralized – with things like dairy, eggs and crops – there is one co-op that tends to have monopoly or monopsony rights to buying and they control 100% of the revenues but they also drive innovation and technological advances."

The scholarship applications were assessed by a panel of four independent judges from the industry and education sectors, all agreeing that Josh was stand out.

Roger Tyshing of AgComm says "You can tell that Josh is really keyed into wider issues in agriculture and being exposed to those EU based systems will set him up with great knowledge to bring back."

"We need future leaders in agriculture that will take Tasmania to the next level, Josh is that type of character," Tyshing adds.



Josh (via video link), Michael and Jenny Brown receive the award from Deputy Premier Rockliff.

Josh plans to use the funds to intern in a public or private agricultural consultancy or in one of the cooperatives, ARLA or ROYAL Danish.

"It would be an unpaid internship so the opportunity to do this and be supported by the scholarship funds will go a long way to build my skills and knowledge," Josh adds.

"Ultimately I view some of the things happening in European agriculture as a bit of window on the future of Australia and perhaps more centralized frameworks of production and remittance."

Managing Director, Peter Greenham said the company's desire was to encourage future leaders in agriculture.

"Tasmania's agricultural sector is going from strength to strength and the skills and knowledge that Josh will bring to the table will be invaluable as generational change happens," Peter said.

Do you know someone that could be a great Greenham scholarship applicant? Tell them to check out www.greenham.com.au/scholarship_tasmania for application details. For more information contact Trevor Fleming – 03 9644 6514

QLD BUTCHERS IN CIRCULAR HEAD

Back in March we received another group of top butchers where they toured the factory and tasted the produce at Stanley's Bond Store.

Australian Wholesale Meats' Terry Siddins said the experience provided insight into the behind the scenes work of the brand.

"We search for the best meat we can buy," he said. "Having seen the planning that goes in – an insight into what goes into the product – farmers are proud of what they do and that resonates."

Did you know that Queensland is the nation's main purchaser of Cape Grim Beef? They favour Tasmania's climate for producing desirable flavour and texture year round. The local product just can't offer the same consistency.

With thanks to Josh Perry Gourmet Meats and Richard Nicholls, Marrawah for their time.





HARD YARDS START TO PAY ON FLINDERS

“You’ve never heard anything like it,” says David Bellinger as we move through a crop of Sorghum. Only a few metres into the paddock, a mob of 200 Angus heifers runs in a great wave of black through the chin-high crop. The whooshing noise of them rushing through is certainly incredible and quite unlike the calm grazing picture Meatworks Messenger sees in other parts of the state.

In mid-February, we had the opportunity to visit the property of David and Pauline Bellinger on Flinders Island. Greenham buyer Daryl Heazlewood sets the scene as we make our way from Lady Barron to the property, east of Emita.

“What David’s doing is really great. He’s slowly transformed ground that was never particularly fertile or productive into a place that people throughout the island are looking at as a benchmark.”

We venture into the middle of the 104 acre sorghum crop to get a sense of it all. David explains that where are standing

was previously covered in bracken fern and silver grass.

“Firstly, we had to get our soil balance right. The magnesium is naturally low on the island but I’ve been bringing in Magnesite from Queensland which only costs \$350 ton to get it onto the island. Previously we brought dolomite in from Smithton but there’s not enough magnesium in it,” says David.

According to David, he only needs one ton of Magnesite to achieve the same effect of seven tons of dolomite. “We also needed to be getting our magnesium and calcium ratios right and the trace elements like potassium in order as well.”

“The guarantee of getting a successful crop in the past has been a struggle but we’ve been getting good results every time recently using the extra fertility from the calcium and magnesium,” David adds.

Why choose the sorghum in these paddocks?, we asked. “Well, it’s a good forage crop and produces a heap of feed during these warmer months. We can graze

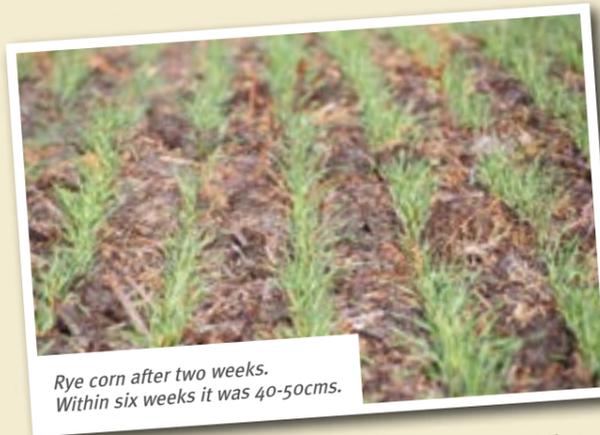


“It’s going to change, this island is going to change big-time.”

it, cut some silage or make hay if we need to but look at the size of it!” exclaims David.

The sorghum crop went in at 15kg/ha on 14th December and was already chest and head high by mid-Feb. Interestingly, David put a sorghum crop in the previous season around two months earlier but didn’t see any growth until December and finally managed to graze it three times at shoulder height in early 2016.

“This time, its flying and I should have started to graze it about a fortnight earlier but now I know we can get this sort of response, next year, we will come at it from a different angle and plan it a bit better.”



Rye corn after two weeks. Within six weeks it was 40-50cms.

“You just have to learn how to manage it – how to graze it effectively. It’s a continual learning process – you just never stop,” he quips.

The island is also subjected to a fair amount of maritime wind, and David has also worked towards reducing soil erosion, especially in the summer months by planting 15kg/ha of rye corn amongst the sorghum. Worried about certain paddocks ‘blowing’ and losing topsoil – even the ones with an established crop – the two work well in concert.

“On the drier banks, the rye corn is doing well whilst the sorghum hasn’t really come on as much but without the rye corn we would have lost that top bank over there and lost the guts out of these other sections,” as David points to his newer sections of ground.

Greenham buyer Daryl Heazlewood was enthused about the heifers, “I was only here two weeks ago and these cattle are cranking,” he said.

“I’m expecting weight gain in the vicinity of 1.3kg per day with the sorghum so the plan is to shoot them home and weigh them,” David adds.

David and Pauline have acquired four more parcels of land in a series of acquisitions since buying the home block in 1998. Overall the property now totals 1150Ha of grazing land with 950 producing cows, 700 calves, and this year a further 500 steers and heifers for fattening.

“Typically we wouldn’t hold any steers and would have sold them in October or November but because we are down in cow numbers, I needed to value add as much as possible and get us through the next twelve months,” David explains.

“We’re going to be playing catch up for the next few years,” David says as he recalls the dry season during 2015/2016 that saw many farmers across Flinders

Island actively sell down cattle at the same time as having to carting in hay to keep their remaining numbers in feed.

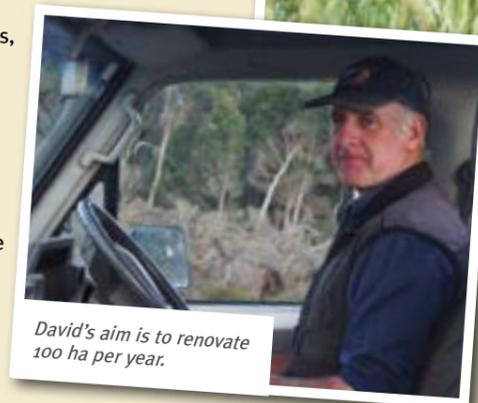
“It wasn’t the worst outcome, we were fortunate that the price of cattle was still holding up and we didn’t get stung on two fronts but we still had to sell 400 cows which really set us back.”

David adds, “luckily we got that rain at the end of January 2016 otherwise we may have lost another 400-500 cows and that would have been devastating.”

Diversification however, has been the key to building both capacity and business resilience for the Bellingers. They turned their hand at growing various vegetables in the past and have now applied the knowledge to growing grass as well.

“Most people see grass as grass and not as a crop,” says David. “If you want it to do well, you have to feed it and you have to also know what it needs and what it doesn’t need but it is hard, if you have a lot of land – fertilizer is not cheap.”

Typical of the area, the older paddocks had a mixture of brown top and silver grass and David explains he will have spray it out and re-plant it four times before finally sewing it down to permanent pasture of Cocksfoot and Lucerne. He says he will have spent \$1,700ha on Super and trace elements to get a good base ready as well as installing game proof fencing in the areas next to scrub.



David’s aim is to renovate 100 ha per year.

“We’ve made some mistakes of course – I was hoping we could direct drill into the older type country but there were too many toxic weeds and you really need to work the ground a bit more,” he explains.

David has also invested in a driller so is able to do 300ha of contracting work around the island helping others renovate parcels of country as well as aiming to renovate 100ha of his own land annually.

“It’s gonna be a big ask and take a bit to get my head around. I’m going to need to have 300ha in the renovating phase to achieve the 100ha per year and although my energy might be a bit lower, a decent tractor and discs allows me to get more things done through the day. We don’t have to bust our guts and still get a fair bit done.”

“With the lift in cattle prices as David notes, farmers on Flinders have been able to invest more in their operations and make their land more productive.”

David will turn off five hundred fats this year which is more than normal but the season has allowed the operation to value add a few more to heavier weights and inclusion into the GAP program. “With the crops that are in, a bit more rain and the amount of feed we have, finishing them won’t be an issue.”

Selling to Greenham since they took over from Blue Ribbon, David explains, “I like what they’re doing. It’s all about good marketing and being able to supply a consistent product



In other years, his store cattle would normally find homes in the north west of Tasmania.

and the Greenham brands seem to be doing that.”

As we inspect some of the steers, David expresses his pride, “It’s been an amazing journey. We basically came here with virtually nothing eighteen years ago and it’s been great to see what we have achieved with the country.

“I guess I’m a bit one-eyed – I love the farm but now it’s beginning to pay.”