



Tasmanian

GREENHAM

# MEATWORKS MESSENGER



MAY 2011

We were very honoured when the Governor of Tasmania, the Honourable Peter Underwood accepted our invitation to present this year's Greenham Scholarship at a luncheon function in Smithton.

It was great recognition of what we are trying to achieve in assisting to develop future agricultural leaders.

Ashley Hobbins is a very worthy winner and I'm sure she will make her mark in the industry. You can read more about Ashley in the adjacent article.

## "BEST BEEF IN AUSTRALIA"

Thanks to the great grass fed cattle produced by our farming partners in this state, our Cape Grim brand is going from strength to strength. Catering for the Qantas corporate hospitality venue at this year's Melbourne Grand Prix was provided by celebrity chef, Neil Perry. Neil was interviewed during the television broadcast and asked to describe his menu.

He explained that the guests would be dining on Cape Grim Tasmanian grass fed beef which he then went on to describe as "the best beef in Australia". You can see the whole interview at [www.capegrimbeef.com.au](http://www.capegrimbeef.com.au).

More recently, Cape Grim featured on *MasterChef*, and we have also done a deal with the Channel Ten cooking series, *Everyday Gourmet* with Justine Schofield, to use Cape Grim beef exclusively throughout the 65 episodes.

## MORE CATTLE OFF FLINDERS ISLAND

We are buying more cattle off Flinders Island and developing strong relationships with a number of growers, largely with the help of the local Roberts team.

Over the page you can read about Grant Hall and his wife Robyn, and how their pasture improvement program is now turning off top quality MSA grade cattle.

We need the right people on the ground to build partnerships. That's why we have just added a couple of very experienced cattle guys to our team, Daryl Heazlewood and Grant Lethborg.

You can read more about them on the back page.

**Peter Greenham**

GREENHAM TASMANIA MANAGING DIRECTOR,  
PETER GREENHAM (LEFT) WITH  
ASHLEY HOBBS AND THE GOVERNOR.

## PASSION FOR PUSHING AGRICULTURE

Ashley Hobbins is well on the way to her life's dream, thanks to her success in winning the Greenham Tasmania Scholarship for 2011.

Ashley, 20, of Mt Nelson, was formally presented with her \$10,000 cheque at Smithton last month by the Governor of Tasmania, the Honourable Peter Underwood.

Growing up on farming properties at Karoola and Pipers River, Ashley's passion for agriculture was ignited in 2004, when she started at Brooks High School, north of Launceston.

Her animal studies classes unveiled the science of animal husbandry and nutrition and sparked her desire to enter the beef industry.

Throughout her high school years, Ashley pursued all possible opportunities to learn more about the beef industry, volunteering for industry programs, breed society functions, beef-related events and on-farm work experience.

She also completed relevant courses at Brooks High – a VET II Certificate in Agriculture and a Chem Cert Australia Level III Certificate.

Ashley is now a second-year student in the three-year Bachelor of Agriculture course at the University of Tasmania in Hobart, majoring in production systems.

"Winning this scholarship is fantastic," she said. "Now it's so

much easier – I don't have to worry about how I'm going to pay for uni. "I can focus on my studies a lot more."

Ashley plans to train as a teacher once she completes her agriculture course, "to share my passion for agriculture with children".

His Excellency, Mr Underwood, speaking at the presentation, commended Greenham on its ongoing commitment.

"This is a generous program which will make a real difference not only to the scholarship holder, but also to a segment of Tasmania's primary industry," he said.

"This is the eighth year in a row Greenham has awarded this scholarship and that is a considerable continuous investment spread over all aspects of the beef and dairy industries."

Managing director of Greenham Tasmania Peter Greenham said the company had always seen itself as a partner with the state's cattle producers.

"They are the beginning of a supply chain that extends all the way through to the plate," Mr Greenham said.

"While we play an important role in processing and marketing Tasmanian beef, we can't do that without our growers and distributors. We've found the best results come from working together."



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# PASTURE FIRST, PROTEIN SECOND

## PRODUCING TOP CATTLE ON FLINDERS ISLAND



GRANT HALL (LEFT) WORKS CLOSELY WITH LOCAL ROBERTS AGENT, SCOTT WOOD, IN PREPARING SHIPMENTS FOR PROCESSING IN SMITHTON.

Grant and Robyn Hall went searching for a greener grass on the other side of the fence, or in this case Bass Strait, but came back to Tasmania.

Forced by circumstances to sell the family farm in the north-east, the couple looked at properties in the Riverina and in northern New South Wales before settling on their island hideaway.

Grant and Robyn live and work on Flinders Island, having bought the 2500-acre "Four Winds" property about five years ago before adding a further 1000 acres in February last year.

It's not so far from the 1000ha farm they once ran with Grant's late father, Lindsay, and mother Lois about 10km inland from Waterhouse, north of Scottsdale. That was a cow and calf finishing and selling

operation that involved supplying a large number of feeder steers.

It was Lindsay's illness and subsequent move to Bridport that led to what Grant describes as the heart-rending decision to sell the property.

### ALWAYS A FARMER

"Farming was the only thing I ever wanted to do," he says. "I looked for land in Tasmania, but felt beaten back by the tree companies and foreign investors who were paying such high prices."

Grant and Robyn – a former Roberts agent herself with the honour of being the first female livestock agent appointed in Tasmania – visited the mainland looking for farming opportunities. They were impressed with the country around Deniliquin, but when the intricacies of the district's irrigation system were explained, Grant left feeling confused and concerned.

The couple also looked at the New England area of northern New South Wales.

"It was good country, but a long way from home," Grant says.

It was a chance conversation which prompted the Halls to consider Flinders Island and it wasn't long before they found – and bought – "Four Winds".

"The property had potential and, hopefully, we are now realising that," Grant says.

"It was a similar type of farming land to what I had been used to – and, really, just what we were looking for. The layout was good – in fact, the paddock plan was better than anything I could do."

A large dam situated on high ground provides stock water to almost 80% of the property.

### PASTURE DRIVES EVERYTHING

"Pasture improvement was the big need and that's what we have been working on," Grant says.

"That's what drives everything. We're pushing hard and making inroads, but it's a fine line. You have to keep enough country in production to carry the herd, but it's easy to get carried away and create a chemical drought!"

Grant says Flinders Island grows grass as well as anywhere on the south eastern seaboard for eight months of the year, but the summers provide tougher conditions. He often carries a thermometer around and knows that the ground temperature in winter is a moderate 9.5°.

Grant recognised that tackling the pasture improvement needed would be an expensive exercise using traditional



GRANT'S JOHN DEERE 1590 DIRECT DRILL HAS REDUCED COSTS AND ALLOWED FASTER PASTURE IMPROVEMENT.

cultivation methods of ploughing and sowing down, with the 30c premium islanders have to pay for diesel fuel.

Instead, three years ago, he bought a John Deere 1590 direct drill and took on the worst-performing paddocks first, infested as they were with silver grass and brown-top twitch.

### 12 MONTH PROGRAM

His pasture program runs on a 12-month cycle and involves spraying out the paddock three times before final sowing. Typically, he uses the disc opener to plant an aggressive crop such as oats in autumn or millet in spring –

last year, though, he tried sorghum as a trial for eventual silage production and was pleased with the results.

Oats are sown for hay production in spring and the John Deere is then used to plant a summer forage crop – perhaps a brassica or Italian ryegrass.

That is sprayed out the following autumn to break the weed cycle and a pasture mix is sown. He uses fescue on the higher ground and a long-rotation ryegrass on the flats.

Grant was in the process of sowing down 1000 acres for the 12 months when *Meat Worker* visited and expected to finish that job by the end of May.

### AGGRESSIVE ON FERTILISER

His fertiliser use at 'Four Winds' is fairly aggressive: Grant says pH and Olsen P levels were low when he bought the property, but both are now much improved.

He has spread lime sand at two tonnes per acre to improve pH and has been pleasantly surprised at the quick response.

Older pastures receive 250kg per hectare of Impact single super. High-analysis fertiliser (11N:13P:17K), also from Impact, is applied at the same rate to improved paddocks.

Grant sees himself primarily as a grower of grass and fodder – then a producer of protein, “as without good pastures we won't be able to reach our animal production goals”.

He and Robyn run a small Angus stud to meet their own requirements, built around senior sires bought from Lawsons Angus at Yea, in Victoria.

### BUILDING NUMBERS

The Halls' current focus is building numbers and they still do some trading to fill the gap in numbers. They have 950 cows mated this year to calve in July and August, but, in future, plan to have 25% of their calving done in autumn to help with cash flow and to spread their feed requirements.

Grant is after fertility and performance and buys a senior sire every two years.

His aim over the next two to three years is to mate 1300 cows and produce 1200 calves.

He says most farms on the island concentrate on turning off the annual draft at 14 to 15 months for the feedlot.

### ADDING VALUE

“We like to go further and finish our cattle because it adds value,” Grant says. “Freight costs for getting cattle to market are higher for us, so it makes sense to try to get more out of them.”

Grant sent his first load for this selling season to Greenham in December and has been sending two double-decks – usually 84 head – every two or three weeks since.

He is targeting MSA specifications and finding that only three to five on each shipment are failing to make the grade. He believes the extra 10–15 c/kg he gets for MSA-standard beef covers the cost of freight.

Grant credits his Roberts livestock agent, Scott Wood, for his solid involvement in the process.

“We run them in mobs of 200 and Scott keeps all the records – he's the computer man,” Grant says.

“We weigh them and predict production two to three months in advance. Then, four to six days before shipment, we run off the final draft based on weight and condition score.

“They get Prime Mover for 24 hours before loading and we add Cattle Tranz to the water. One way or another, they are set up for transport.

“We find it pays – it's quite a journey. They get loaded and unloaded a couple of times, spend eight or nine hours on the boat, then another three or four hours between Bridport and Smithton.”

### KEEN ON GREENHAM PARTNERSHIP

Grant is keen to continue his partnership with Greenham and “become a niche producer”. He is keen to become part of the Aleph program if the opportunity presents down the track but at this stage wants to make sure he is doing the job right before taking the next step.

“I really value the feedback from Greenham – we need to know what sort of results our breeding program is producing,” he says.

“They are increasing their kill and that confidence gives us confidence. They've shown a commitment to Flinders Island.

“We never talk about money because we get looked after and get the best prices always. We're in this game together – we need them and they need us. It's all about building good relationships.”



A CROP OF WINTER OATS SHOWS EXCELLENT EMERGENCE ONLY A FEW DAYS AFTER SOWING.

# PARTNERSHIPS REQUIRE THE RIGHT PEOPLE

Livestock manager Graeme Pretty believes in building partnerships with farmers.

"It's the best way to work," he says. "Everybody gets a win out of it."

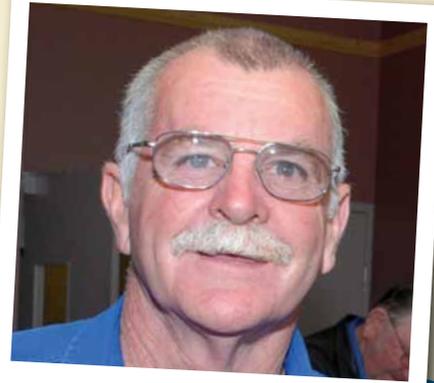
"We get the type and numbers of cattle that we need to support our very successful Tasmanian brands. And our suppliers get the constructive feedback that allows them to produce better cattle, and we also look after them on price."

"But to make this work we need the right blokes on the ground – people who know

their cattle and who get on well with farmers. It's all about communication. Once good relationships are in place it's easy to sort out any problems that might arise."

Graeme says that's why he has appointed a couple of new members to his team.

"We choose carefully and don't just take the first one that comes along. I'm very confident that Daryl and Grant will do a good job."



GRAEME PRETTY

## DARYL HEAZLEWOOD

Daryl Heazlewood has swapped chasing kids for chasing cattle as the latest move in his working life.

Fresh from 12 months at home looking after his two young children, Daryl 44, has just started a new job as a state-wide buyer for Greenham.

Born at Hagley, near Launceston, Daryl began working in saleyards while still at school.

From there, he started doing more saleyards work for local stock agents and then became a buyer for a Longford meat company for 20 years in the Circular Head area.

He switched employers in 2006 when he moved to McCain Foods as a field

officer, checking crops and organising harvests around the state's north-west.

When McCain's discontinued its vegetable processing plant four years later, he and wife Kate decided a year running the household would work for them. Kate is a teacher at the nearby Forest Primary School and son Tom, who is nearly five, started school there this year.

Daughter Olivia, 3, is still at home on the family's 125-acre farm at South Forest.

"When the job at Greenham came up, I jumped at it," Daryl says.

"I enjoy cattle – we have a small Angus stud of about 40 breeders."

Daryl's role with Greenham will see him based at Circular Head, but travelling

across the state checking and buying cattle and organising sales.

"It's very good to be back in this field, but pretty hectic at the moment trying to find numbers," he says.

Daryl is keen on showing cattle – "my own and others", he says.

"I've worked at Royal shows over Southern Australia and have shown my own cattle mainly locally.

"I've had a couple of interbreed champions, at Launceston and Burnie but sent one over the water last year and she placed as junior champion Angus heifer at Canberra Royal."

## GRANT LETHBORG

Grant Lethborg knows Scottsdale like the back of his hand – he was raised there, played football there, farms there and lives there.

And now he works there.

Grant, 48, has recently been appointed as Greenham's buyer in the North East, with a territory stretching from Scottsdale to St Helens.

Born at Scottsdale, Grant went to the local high school and began his working life as a butcher.

"It was a family business," he says. "We had four butcher's shops in the end, plus a slaughterhouse."

From there, he moved into dairy farming in the district, running the 350-acre farm he still owns.

"After that, I moved to Websters Rural as a rural adviser, then to Murray

Goulburn in Victoria, where I managed their shop at Leongatha for five years," Grant says.

He headed back to Tasmania in 2006 and took up the role of state manager for Integrated Packaging, Australia's largest manufacturer of stretch film wrap and stretch wrapping equipment.

"I did a couple of stints there, then joined Greenham about a month ago," Grant says.

"I'm still living on the farm. It's mainly cropping – poppies, onions, potatoes, carrots and pyrethrum. We also have store lambs and fatten a few cattle. We have Angus – about 20 at present."

In his work for Greenham, Grant says he will be mainly buying on-farm and will be on the lookout for stock.

"So far, the job has been really good," he says.



GRANT LETHBORG

In his own time, Grant enjoys a spot of fishing, but reckons that, these days, there's not much time for that.

"I do follow the football, though," he says, having played for years at different clubs around the North East until, at 35, he thought he'd better give the younger blokes a go.