

A WELL OILED MACHINE

At first glance the boning room at Smithton gives an impression of organised chaos. But pause a while and look more closely, and what you see is a well oiled machine that keeps on breaking records for daily production.

That doesn't happen without a dedicated and highly skilled workforce, and an efficient design that reflects the Greenham family's long experience in the industry.

Around 90 staff work in the relatively confined space and although they are clearly busy, there's an underlying sense of calm.

"We can make it work at the lower number but you really have to be on the ball. We can accommodate up to 96 but it works really well with 88 - the place just hums," he said.

The whole operation is computer-controlled. Graeme sits at a desk close to the centre of action constantly scanning his laptop to ensure everything is moving as it should.

A complex system of conveyors delivers the many different cuts swiftly to their right locations where they are expertly dealt with. The result is a steady stream of carefully packed boxes flowing to the freezer ready for distribution to markets all over the world.

When Meatworks Messenger paid a visit production manager Graeme Dunstan explained they were operating with a minimum complement of 83 that particular day.



GRAEME DUNSTAN AT HIS COMMAND POST.

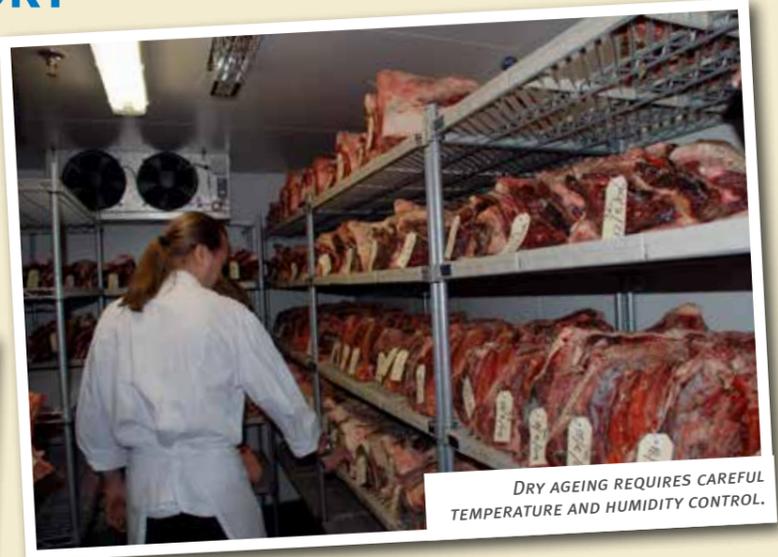


PETER GREENHAM CAREFULLY CHECKS A PACK OF CAPE GRIM BEEF.

THE DRY AGEING STORY

Ordering Cape Grim always guarantees a great steak. But Neil Perry, of Rockpool Restaurant fame, goes a step further and dry ages our premium product for up to 35 days. The result is a steak to die for!

Dry ageing is a simple process but you need the right facilities. The key is temperature and humidity control, with humidity being critical. If humidity is too high, the beef becomes mouldy and spoils - too low and it becomes dry and leathery.



DRY AGEING REQUIRES CAREFUL TEMPERATURE AND HUMIDITY CONTROL.



CAPE GRIM BEEF IS SELECTED EACH WEEK FOR DISPATCH TO ROCKPOOL RESTAURANTS IN MELBOURNE SYDNEY AND PERTH WHERE IT IS DRY AGED FOR UP TO 35 DAYS.

At the end of the ageing process it has a grey, rather uninviting exterior appearance, but slice it open and the interior is a succulent, juicy pink. Shrinkage over the 35 days concentrates the flavours. This is one of the reasons why dry aged steak is expensive. Apart from the cost of the facilities and storage, the yield is reduced.

So, if you are over on the mainland do yourself a favour and try a dry aged steak at Rockpool. It really is a treat.



Tasmanian

MEATWORKS MESSENGER

DECEMBER 2012

GREENHAM



PLANT UPGRADE DRIVES THROUGHPUT

The year is ending on a drier note that we all would have liked but cattle are still generally coming through in very good condition. That's helping us to meet demand for our premium Cape Grim product which is kicking big goals for the reputation of Tasmanian grass fed beef.

The big investment we made in plant expansion over the last couple of years is paying off with record daily throughputs in recent weeks. The new boning room really is state of the art and very efficient. We are not only processing more cattle, but also turning out a better product. You can read more about the boning room on the back page.

ALEPH VISIT

We've just hosted a visit by representatives of the Japanese Aleph restaurant chain, one of our very important customers. They visited both Flinders Island and Circular Head, and were very keen to talk to producers. Aleph prides itself on knowing where all its beef comes from and maintaining strong connections with the growers.

That meshes with our philosophy of maintaining relationships from one end of the supply chain to the other, and ensuring that information flows in both directions. Success comes from everybody working together to ensure the consumer gets what they want.

SPREADING THE WORD

We are currently updating our marketing material and have just conducted a major video and photo shoot. It freshened up some other existing resources and will also give us some classy new material that we can use in our promotions.

SCHOLARSHIP

You'll notice that we have increased the value of our annual Scholarship to \$12,000. If you have anybody in your circle who would be eligible, please encourage them to apply. It makes a big difference to the cost of education and training. We are particularly keen to help those who might otherwise struggle to achieve their goals.

Thank you for your great support again in 2012, and I wish you and your families a very happy and safe Christmas.

Peter Greenham

SCHOLARSHIP BOOSTED TO \$12,000

Applications are now open for the Greenham Tasmania Scholarship for 2013 - and there's extra incentive this year to give it a go.

With the winner's cheque boosted by \$2000 to \$12,000, there's more reason than ever to prepare an application and do it well.

This award has been offered every year since 2003 to help enthusiastic Tasmanians undertake formal study towards a career in the dairy or beef industries.

It is open to people aged 17-45 years who are immediate family, sharefarmers or employees of farmers who have sold cattle to the company's Smithton meat processing plant any time this year.

The number of cattle sold is not important.

The winner will be expected to undertake the course or study during 2013 and must complete it. The scholarship may also be used to finish a course already begun or for study which will take more than one year to complete.

Managing director Peter Greenham said the scholarship was aimed at encouraging future leaders of the cattle industry.

"Ongoing education of this type is crucial to the future sustainability and development of the dairy and beef industries," Mr Greenham said.

"It is highly gratifying to us that our company can help young people in forging careers in these industries."

Past scholarship winners have been involved in agribusiness, soil and pasture management and agricultural sciences.

This year's winner, Tahlia Ling of Forest, has used her \$10,000 prize to fund veterinary science studies at Charles Sturt University at Wagga Wagga.

"I'm very thankful to Greenham for helping me study so far from home," Tahlia said.

Growing up on Bothwell Farm in Circular Head, Tahlia assisted with all aspects of farm production on the family beef cattle property.



TAHLIA LING, WINNER OF THE 2012 DAIRY SCHOLARSHIP

"I am passionate about good farming practices and I want to ensure that members of my rural community can receive quality veterinary service from someone who shares their values and experiences," Tahlia said.

The winner in 2011, Ashley Hobbins, of Burnie, is in the final year of her Bachelor of Agriculture course at the University of Tasmania and is now looking to gain her Masters of Teaching.

Her ambition is to teach agricultural science in high schools.

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

Applications close on Tuesday, January 31, 2013.

Application forms and information sheets are available by phoning Rivergum Marketing on (03) 5439 3403 or e-mailing

greenham@rivergummarketing.com.au

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

CHRISTMAS TRADING HOURS

OVER THE HOOKS: The final day for delivery of over the hooks cattle is Thursday, December 20, resuming on Wednesday, January 2, 2013.
LIVEWEIGHT SCALES: All live weight scales will operate normally except for public holidays.

Prompt payment always at Greenham

Tel: 6452 2701 www.greenham.com.au



FLINDERS ISLAND - MARKARNA GRAZING COMPANY STRIVES FOR EFFICIENCY

Darren Grace, manager of the Markarna Grazing Company on Flinders Island, was a busy man when Meatworks Messenger paid a visit at the end of November.

Silage making was in full swing, cattle were being readied for sale and the annual stock take was imminent. Preparations were also under way for a visit by representatives of the Japanese Aleph restaurant chain.

But the former Roberts agent - clearly enjoying his new challenge - was more than happy to take time out to show us around and share the Markarna story.

"The Victorian-based owners have a clear vision and it's exciting to be part of it. They want to make Markarna a standout property representing all that's good about Tasmanian agriculture," he said.

Unlike most farmland on Flinders Island Markarna wasn't part of the post World War II soldier settlement scheme. Instead, it was sold later as uncleared land and developed separately. In recent years four adjoining former soldier settlement blocks have been added to create a 12,800 ha spread that now stretches over 10 km across the island.

About 60% is cleared and a further 1200 ha is currently being brought into production.

Markarna hosts 5000 Angus breeders and 7000 first cross ewes. When you add on the followers, it's little wonder that an annual formal stock take is necessary.

Darren says that steers are destined for the Tasmanian feedlot as long as they meet specifications. All heifers and non-spec steers go into Greenham's Aleph program which Markarna joined about a year ago.

"We'll start selling the Aleph cattle in February or March, but we've already sold about 1200 head to Greenham over the last 12 months. We sent off 110 heifers two weeks back.

"Greenham have built a great business in Tasmania and are really leaders in Australia. They put a story with their product and back it up every time.

"It will be exciting to have the Aleph visitors here so they can see where the cattle come from and meet the people at the beginning of the supply chain.

"The owners of Markarna Grazing Company believe we have the capacity to produce the best beef in the world here. It will be a great opportunity to better understand what the Japanese market is looking for.

"Flinders is a good environment for beef production. We get about 32 inches annually and it's pretty reliable. The winters are mild with not much frost - we can still grow a bit of grass through the tighter periods," Darren said.

All pastures are improved and mostly consist of a fescue base with clover. Some are based on rye but also include clover. "We're trying some PG 150 rye and that's looking good so far. We've also tried plantain but the Cape Barren geese knock it about too much.

"We soil tested every paddock last year and the variations were quite incredible. Some didn't need anything, others were crying out for only lime or only fertiliser, and then there were various combinations.

"That led to a big liming program and we put out 2500 tonnes but fortunately have our own pit on the property. Trace elements

are also important, mainly copper and manganese. We'll spread 700 tonnes of fertiliser this year and put copper with all of it," Darren explained.

Innovation and forward thinking is evident as you drive around the property. Silage making was in full swing using a New Holland large square baler but instead of wrapping the bales in plastic film, they were being tightly stacked, five wide and four high, in a carefully prepared pit before being covered with a layer of heavy duty plastic and half a metre of soil.

The sides had been cut exactly vertical with a grader, and a 32 tonne excavator stood above to jam the bales firmly into position.

"We'll pit 1000 tonnes this season and we've already wrapped about 200 rounds.

We did 5000 rounds of hay and silage last year but that only works out at one per cow," Darren said. "It doesn't go far if feed turns short."



OPERATORS CONSOLE FOR THE HYDRAULIC CRUSH AND DRAFTING GATES.

Another example of innovation is the newly constructed cattle handling facility which features a state-of-the-art weighing system and fully automated hydraulic drafting gates.

"We weighed, scanned and drafted 370 in an hour with two men the other day. We use a Gallagher TSI system that records everything," Darren explained.

"Every treatment and management operation is entered into the computer. Then when the animal goes past the scanner, you can see its whole history from birth.



MARKARNA PARK MANAGER, DARREN GRACE. THE PROPERTY WILL SELL ITS FIRST CATTLE INTO GREENHAM'S ALEPH PROGRAM EARLY NEXT YEAR.

"That's what Aleph want, whole life tracking of every animal. They can tell their customers where every animal consumed in their restaurants comes from.

"We're paying for the electronic tags - we might as well use all the information they can provide."

Darren says the new crush and drafting system will pay for itself in two years just on labour savings alone.

Markarna is also trialling a Gallagher auto drafter for sheep. "With the grid systems now there are penalties for being both below and above the weight. We ran off 400 lambs the other day and they all met the grid - didn't miss with even a single one."

The lamb operation is based on Border Leicester Merino cross ewes and White Suffolk rams. Darren says they are trialling Dorsets and it's now very easy to make comparisons with the new electronic sheep handler.

A series of five solar pumps with automatic sun tracking capability keep Markarna's livestock well watered. There are some bores but a handful of big dams provide the main storage. The floating pumps push water up to storage tanks on higher ground to gravity feed troughs. This provides a reserve supply for cloudy periods when the pumps stop working.



ALL FUNCTIONS ON THE CRUSH AND THE DRAFTING GATES ARE HYDRAULICALLY OPERATED.

Fourteen employees make up the specialist teams that keep Markarna's wheels turning. Four look after livestock activities while a further four concentrate on machinery. Fencing, yard building and welding keep another three busy and the property also employs two trainees.

"We have to look to the future and make sure we have people coming on," Darren says. A cleaner who also handles painting and other odd jobs rounds out the team.

Current carrying capacity on Markarna is 13.5 to 14 DSE. Darren expects 17 DSE will be achievable as grazing management improves and new country comes online. "Every extra DSE makes a big difference on an operation of this scale," he says.



STREAMLINED SILAGE MAKING. LARGE SQUARES ARE PACKED TIGHTLY INTO THE PIT AND COVERED WITH PLASTIC AND 500 MM OF SOIL.