

Hard week of talks leads to brighter future

This special 'extra' edition of Weddel's World has been prepared to inform company employees of major steps that have been taken at the Westfield Works in an effort to improve the company's competitive position.

Spur toward a whole new look

UPGRADING THE Westfield works to meet EEC requirements was just the spur the works needed for a whole new look. It provided the opportunity to upgrade not only the mutton chains but also to revamp various other areas.

UPGRADED

A new and more efficient dressing system was introduced along with the new mutton chains. Mechanical pelting machines were installed, and upgrading has continued in the beef and boning departments.

The old wooden cold stores now have their walls sheathed and floors overlaid with modern synthetic materials. Even Prime Minister and Westfield 'old boy' David Lange would not recognise it from the dark dungeon he remembers working in.

Many departments are enjoying new
cont. overleaf

NO-ONE SAID it would be easy. And nobody won a famous victory. But after more than 60 hours of intensive and frank discussions the Westfield works stay open and have a real chance of a prosperous future.

That's the picture that emerges at the end of the talks that resulted in the introduction of new productivity agreements at Westfield.

In a marathon session over the entire weekend of December 1-2 nobody on either side could have enjoyed the tense atmosphere. Agreement was reached because everyone was determined that a satisfactory solution could be found.

That it was done without animosity is a credit to both union and management representatives.

Why were the new agreements so vital?

Previous agreements had evolved over many years (some in fact were only made verbally) and had become so complex that often disputes arose from different interpretations.

The new agreements are comprehensive, but simple and avoid



Westfield General Manager Alan Parker ambiguities. A full works meeting of the union on Monday December 3 fully endorsed the decisions. The new plans are expected to be in operation in the second week in December.

Discussions centred on three major areas – the mutton floor, offal department and the freezers.

That there have been difficulties is not surprising. Any plant that employs a workforce as large as Westfield will not always be free of problems. Some of the departments are so big that in any other works they would rate as complete factories.



The freezer department at Westfield.

RADICAL NEW MARKETS

'The fact that they have been overcome shows a will on both sides to arrive at a settlement'

Enormous changes since 1916!

THE PLANT was first built in 1916 but, with virtually none of the original buildings remaining, it has faced many changes — although perhaps not as dramatic as those that are now required to meet the radically new international meat marketing scene.

'Everyone has had to cope with an enormous amount of change in a short space of time,' says general manager Alan Parker.

'There were very extensive problems which at times looked absolutely impossible. The fact that they have been overcome shows a will on both sides to arrive at a settlement. Many other plants could not have made such changes and thus would probably have closed.'

Westfield works EEC upgrade

from page 1

amenities as well as improvements to their production areas.

The timing of the renovations has been fortunate for Westfield. The past decade of research and development has seen new techniques developed and new equipment designed for the New Zealand freezing industry. Westfield has taken advantage of this new technology in its recent rebuilding programme.

FULL LICENCE

Following the November visit to EEC officials, their recommendation for a full licence has now been confirmed by Brussels.

Already the improvements can be seen throughout the works. The new efficiency agreements will also give the opportunity for the offal department to be more productive, saving products that were previously wasted but which are now expected to find a market.

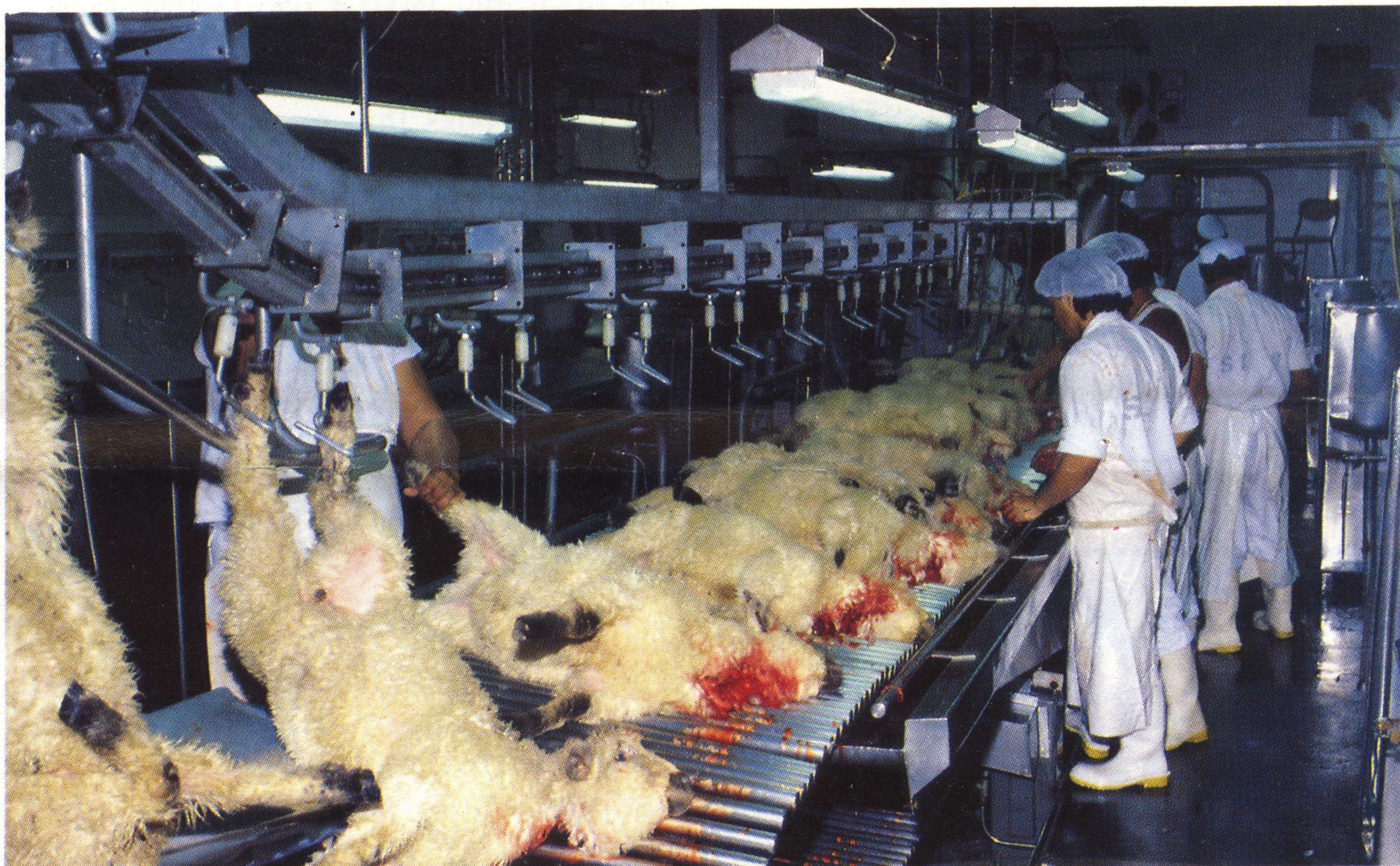
'Modernisation improves the capability of the company to meet the changing scene. If we are efficient and have flexible capability it means the New Zealand meat industry as a whole can achieve the various demands of the growing number of overseas clients.'

Among the latest changes and new

technology is the introduction of a Boroughs 1855 computer to streamline administration.

The rendering department will soon receive more technology. More improvements are planned.

The future for Westfield looks bright.



Investment in new mutton chains to meet EEC standard regulations are just part of the 'new look' Westfield plant.

New system works — less congestion

THE CHANGE to the old mutton chains is dramatic. Under the old ring chain system the carcasses-with-skin moved too close according to the EEC to carcasses-without-skin.

REALIGNMENT

The new building downstairs housing the sticking area allowed for realignment upstairs of the dressing system to all straight chains. These new chains rolled

into use in the new season. As with all new equipment there were initial teething problems but these are diminishing each day. The new system works!

The face lift to the chains has provided a lighter, more pleasant environment and far less congestion. Operators have shown their skill and flexibility in adapting to the new technology and particular credit is due to the engineers and maintenance staff who did such a tremendous job in getting it all ready by the appointed time.