



# Weddel's World

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER  
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W. & R. FLETCHER (N.Z.) LTD

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★ WESTFIELD  
★ TOMOANA  
★ KAITI - in conjunction with  
Gibson's Sheeplanners  
Freasing Co. Ltd.



## Motiti's cattle barge in

*Sea barges and speed boats are not usually considered necessary farm equipment, but the Wills brothers of Motiti Island in the Bay of Plenty would literally be stranded without them.*

The island lies four miles off Tauranga's coast, and is a picturesque setting in which to farm the 1500 or so head of cattle, including 600 breeding cows.

But the only way to get stock to and from the mainland is by barge, about 35 head at a time.

Westfield's livestock buyers are spared that experience by use of a small boat, which Don Wills runs like a family car from the island. His brother and partner, Vernon Wills, is involved in running the

farm, but is first a horticultural farmer in the Tauranga district.

The Motiti farm has a history of more than 20 years' supplying Westfield and is one of four farms on the island. The Works is also supplied by three islands in the Hauraki Gulf: Motutapu, Motuihi and Waiheke.



*The Motiti farm has a history of more than 20 years' supplying Westfield . . .*

# Duties move prompts scrutiny

From next year, Japan will lift all duties on imported wet blue hides and skins, possibly causing a major change in the structure of its hide and leather industry.

It is still too soon to make predictions on the effects this will have on Japanese tanners, but these would be far-reaching, particularly as many tanners of lighter hides have special wet blue requirements which New Zealand producers may not be able to duplicate. Therefore, Japan's wet blue intake may be restricted initially to certain grades only, such as the heavier types of hides and possibly calfskins.

Wet blues are semi-processed hides, which have been under a tariff penalty until now, and both W&R Fletcher and Weddel and Co Ltd in Osaka, who handle New Zealand's hide and leather exports, will be watching the situation closely.

Leather, wool and casings production for the Japanese market was the subject of discussions during a visit to New Zealand by Mr Kenji Hara of Weddel Osaka, who last visited five years ago.

He said there is a continuing emphasis on hides and skins, as demand from Japanese tanners increases.

Japan takes between 50 and 60 percent of New Zealand's annual wet salted hide production, mainly in light cow and ox hides, which are used for soft gloving and garment leather, not only for domestic use, but also exported to Taiwan, Hong Kong, Korea and the United States.

Mr Hara said, tanners could handle a lot more than they do. However, there is a shortage of supply at present because of reduced kills. This has forced prices up making finished leather quite expensive. Although this has created some buyer resistance, New Zealand's product possesses a very good name and is well-received.

Regarding other products, demand is continuing to increase dramatically for both wool and casings.

Although Japan does not use a lot of greasy wool, it is a large buyer of scoured wool, including slipe. This year W&R Fletcher sold the

same amount of wool to Japan in the first six months as it usually sells there annually.

The company is also working keenly towards increasing shipments of lamb casings to meet an increasing demand. Mr Hara said W&R Fletcher could increase the volume of shipments of all products to Japan provided there was a regular, continuous supply.



Mr Kenji Hara of Weddel Osaka recently visited New Zealand. Pictured from left to right are: Mr Hara; W&R Fletcher Casings Manager, Mr Laurie Edwards; Assistant Manager Wool, Mr Roger Paton; and By-Products Manager, Mr Harry Beauchamp.

## Concerted effort made to improve sheepmeats

*Special requirements in processing and the greater production abilities of some markets has led W&R Fletcher to evaluate attitudes towards sheepmeat production.*

Production Control Officer at Head Office, Mr Denis McClenaghan said the company, along with the industry as a whole, is making a concerted effort to improve the value of sheepmeats, replac-

ing the old line: "They'll buy it because they need it," with a positive attitude, catering to specific needs.

The processing and final packaging stages must ensure the end product is distinctly New Zealand-produced and attractive to customers in a multi-choice retail situation.

"We are also moving back to the basics of door knocking for trade. Our salesmen now realise that in supplying

directly to consumers via large supermarkets, they are no longer in the bulk business.

"Each outlet, as a competitive identity, is looking for a sales edge, which means specialist packaging right down to the inclusion of prices on labels.

"They want minimal labour costs and a product with good eye appeal to make it sell," Mr McClenaghan explained.

He said the only way these specialist requirements can be fully understood and met, is through the personal approach.

"We are now in a situation where, within the next 12 months, vacuum-packed products will be the norm. Any plants without the packaging facilities to provide this will be left well behind.

"We now accept that special requirements coming out of buying nations' eating habits or religious ideals, are important considerations in processing. We have also begun to face a new marketing challenge after some of our buyers have become greater producers and marketers of sheepmeats than ourselves.

"However, if we continue to develop our operations, we should be able to retain our portion sales in this new, more competitive era," Mr McClenaghan concluded.

### OUT WITH OLD . . .



Shrink-wrapped oyster cut shoulder

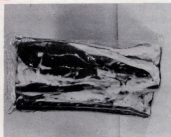


Shrink-wrapped loin

### . . . IN WITH NEW



Vacuum-packed oyster cut shoulder



Vacuum-packed shortloin



## STAFF CHANGES

*It's new hats and in most cases, towns and cities, for a number of staff members in the W&R Fletcher Group, as a series of promotions and transfers take effect.*

*Mr Alan Parker, from Works Manager, Tomoana, to General Manager, Westfield.*

*Mr Robin Reid, from Works Manager, Westfield, to Works Manager, Tomoana.*

*Mr Percy Lambly, from Assistant Works Manager, to Works Manager at Westfield.*

*Mr Laurie Craven, from Slaughter Floor Supervisor, to Assistant Works Manager of beef and boning at Westfield.*

*Mr Len Hamilton, from Cost Department Manager, Wel-*

*lington, to Assistant to the General Manager at Westfield.*

*Mr Denis McClenaghan, from Production Officer, Wellington, to By-Products Supervisor, Tomoana.*

*Mr Graham Clark, from Production Control Officer, Westfield, to Production Officer, Wellington.*

*Mr Scott Weir, from By-Products Department, Wellington, to Production Control Officer, Westfield.*

*And at New Zealand Light Leathers:*

*Mr Neil Dickson, on secondment to Gomshall in the UK.*

*Mr Jim Broadhead, from Union Industries, Mazamet, France, to Technical Manager, Hastings Tannery.*



*A picture of the sailing ship "Turakina", which carried the first shipment of meat from the Tomoana Freezing Works to Britain in 1884, was presented to Nelsons (NZ) Ltd during recent centenary celebrations.*

*Manager of P&O New Zealand, Mr Ian Hopson (right), is pictured making the presentation to Nelson's Shipping Manager, Mr Tom Hughes. The "Turakina" was owned by the New Zealand Shipping Company Ltd, which was later taken over by the P&O line.*

*Photo: Hawkes Bay Herald-Tribune.*

## London years change outlook

*Two years with Union International in London has given Neil Bridgland a "very different outlook" on the meat marketing industry.*

Now Assistant Works Manager By-Products at Westfield, he has just returned to New Zealand after a stint in the Overseas Department of Weddel & Co., London.

The trip to London was sponsored by the company as part of a special pro-

gramme which allows employees from Australia and New Zealand to learn the marketing and management side of the industry in the UK.

Working in the Overseas Department was, Neil said, "an immensely interesting experience"; covering as it does not just Australasia, but the Pacific, Far East and North America, and Neil's two years in London included work excursions to Europe and Saudi Arabia.

"The overseas experience gave me a far greater appre-

ciation of the way the company is run, particularly an awareness of the commercial aspects of the business," Neil said.

"I learned very quickly that there are two ways to process animals — profitably and unprofitably — and obviously, I now look at the job here in a totally different way.

"Perhaps the most telling impact of the trip, personally on me, was just how insignificant New Zealand is in the eyes of the world. I think we're inclined here, to believe that without our lamb, the world would fall apart. I found that, however, to be a fallacy!"

Neil and his wife, Robyn, went to the UK with a five-month old son, Craig, and returned with a brother for him, Nathan. Robyn had been in London before, when she did a post-graduate course in pediatrics there. For her, the trip was a chance to renew old acquaintances.

The couple bought a VW Combie Camper and managed to see a large slice of Europe in between Neil's work commitments.

The London posting was of tremendous satisfaction to Neil, who joined the company at Westfield more than 19 years ago, when he began his career tying neck strings on lambs.



W&R Fletcher has always supported A&P Shows. Wherever there are Fletcher buyers, they will be found behind the scenes penning up stock, stewarding and judging.

Derek McCartney (pictured above), the longest serving member of the buying staff and a member of the Gisborne team, has attained the distinction of President of the Poverty Bay A&P Association, after serving 17 years at committee level.

Derek commenced work with the company in the Tomoana office in 1944, moved to Gisborne in 1949, spent a year in the Waikato before being moved to Tolaga Bay when Borthwicks closed their Tokomaru Bay Works, covering the extensive area from Tolaga Bay to Lotton Point.

For the last 24 years he has resided and worked in the Gisborne district. He farms a small Murray Grey stud.



*The New Zealand Post Office soccer team may have regretted its challenge issued recently to W&R Fletcher's social team, when it was beaten soundly three goals to nil.*

*All Stars captain, Stuart Clark, a London trainee on secondment in Wellington said the team handled itself well and that he was pleasantly surprised at the high standard of social soccer in New Zealand.*

*Pictured are (back row from left to right): Peter Johnston; Tony Wiseman; Neville Slight; Stuart Clark; Jeff Larsen; Nick Papatoumas. Front row (left to right): Mark Ridden; Vicki How; Andrea Jones; Eric Van Kampen; Andrew McNab.*