



2009...a Sharemilking Odyssey

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The Road so far

- Started sharemilking in 2009 in Greenpark 400 cows for Michael and Sue Thomas.
- 2012 50/50(550 cows)+ C/M (550 cows). Pete and Ruth Mossman.
- 2014 Increased numbers to 800 50/50 + C/M 800 with 2nd shed at Mossmans.
- 2018 sold bulk of herd; now managing 2x1350 cow units. House in Hanmer & Selwyn + 400 cows for future projects?



What were our drivers

- Security and lifestyle for our young family
- Wealth creation
- Opportunity to be our own boss
- Being in charge of our own destiny
- 'Make the money work for you'



How did we do it

- Increased productivity THROUGH PASTURE HARVESTED
- Simple systems that were repeatable by us and our team
- Recruiting and retaining good staff and getting buy-in on our pasture principals
- Focus on grazing management, pasture renewal and the genetic gain of the herd
- Culverden production went from 390,000 kgs/ms to 675,000kg/ms with less imported feed



Industry opportunities and challenges back then

- 2009 cow prices were low. Many jobs available due to people exiting contracts and sharemilkers were in demand, industry was still expanding.
- Capital constraints and cashflow during the GFC and staff shortages were the biggest issues facing the industry.
- We were focused on operating costs, had the ability to use our people skills to recruit new entrants to the industry and train to a high standard (1st and 2nd place in trainee of the year).



Challenges now

- Cow numbers looking to decrease through regulation.
- Mico-plasma Bovis and restrictions around stock movements.
- Farm Debt high (1% interest rate rise will require the average farmer to find an additional 150k for interest charges).
- Low interest rates have driven an asset bubble, driving lending against capital gain and reducing focus on operating costs.
- Staffing issues and a lack of “human capital” compounded by unfavourable immigration rules.



Opportunities

- Nutrient rules are going to drive an increased focus on pasture driven productivity. This will align the value of a property with its potential for pasture growth while increasing the value of managers who can drive pasture harvest within the confines of nutrient regulations.
- Staff shortages will require specialists in recruitment and retention of staff with high levels of animal husbandry and pasture performance.
- Asset rich cash poor farm owners looking to release funds for lifestyle changes.



Taking advantage of the situation

- Become a top pasture manager, its more than just residuals.
- Learn everything you can about nutrient rules, always aim for next practice rather than compliance.
- Become an employer (and employee) of choice.
- Work on your B rating!
- Make the most of the accommodation you're provided on farm.