HARD LABOUR PAYS OFF FOR MANNUS PRODUCERS

Mannus is a prison farm at Tumbarumba, NSW, where minor and not-so-minor criminals wind up, some near the end of their term, if considered “low risk”.

What is so good about Mannus is that it lies in a beautiful “high country” valley, covering 1620 hectares, mostly top, red-soil in 965 mm rainfall country.

If you think it sounds too good to be true, bear in mind that winters tend to be cold and there’s a couple of roll-calls every day which you’d be expected to attend.

To be fair, Mannus is changing or at least the farm is. It’s now expected to generate high returns, and it’s here that livestock officers Ron Fagg and Gary Wilson are playing leading roles.

Both are local cattlemen who run their own small farms nearby and openly admit they’ve been lucky to score well-paid, secure jobs at Mannus and who are determined to do the best job possible in terms of running the livestock section as efficiently as possible.

When they joined the staff three years ago they were frustrated by institutionalised inefficiency and low returns of the farm.

They perceived ingrained attitude that because Mannus “was only a prison farm there was no need to try and make a profit”.

Running their own small farms after hours they found it frustrating to return to the prison farm and all its faults the next day, where their shift ran from 7am to 8pm.

Twelve months ago Mannus Governor, Col Kelaher, in conjunction with the Corrective Services Industries, called for a business direction and marketing plan.

Mr Fagg and Mr Wilson jumped at the chance. Their skill and enthusiasm has been inspiring to 40 of the 150 inmates, whom they are training in the latest techniques and farm practices.

The existing 600-breeder Poll Hereford herd has had an almighty clean-out: 250 females have been culled and all 40 bulls have gone to the meatworks.

They kept 350 cows as a platform from which to breed a much higher-performing Hereford female herd, which will act as the base for a simple crossbreeding program.

Mannus livestock officers Ron Fagg (left), Gary Wilson (right) and inmate Phil Helmers

Mr Fagg and Mr Wilson decided to introduce high-performing Hereford genetics to give the herd a much needed boost of hybrid vigour.

For Mr Fagg and Mr Wilson, the task of turning the operation around has added a new challenge to their lives.

“We wanted to bring the Mannus herd up to at least what we’ve been able to achieve with our own herds,” Mr Fagg said.

“We’ve been getting 160 cents/kg for our own steers in Wagga, which has been way out of the realm of cattle off Mannus.”

Deciding to swing over to Herefords for hybrid vigour and to add growth and fleshing the two men chose the two AI bulls on their proven performance and excellent figures. “We didn’t select them on marketing hype,” Mr Fagg said.

“They were old enough to have plenty of proven progeny on the ground to have three or four generations of top background breeding.

There’s no doubt we will be able to improve the job. But it will take us at least three years until we are breeding from cattle that we’ve selected to really know where we are going.

Mr Fagg said the program so far hadn’t cost anything because the bulls were sold on a rising marketing and cover bulls had been well bought.

Mr Fagg and Mr Wilson plan to keep the base cow herd at 350 Herefords. This herd will be self-replacing once a reasonable standard of quality is attained.
In the early 1950's a young Brisbane lad secured a Saturday morning job sweeping the floor in a local furniture factory at Sherwood.

It was one of several such jobs he had found, the others involving weighing potatoes for the grocer, helping on an ice run in the mornings and delivering newspapers in the afternoon.

But it was the "working with timber" position that appealed most and after completing his schooling, he was taken on permanently as an apprentice wood machinist, buoyed with a determination to succeed in both his trade and the business he knew he would one day establish.

That was 1953, and Charlie Henry had started in a branch of the timber industry which today - 40 years later - acknowledges him as one of its most successful operators in the wholesale timber merchandising area.

Charlie remained in the "hands-on" side of the industry until 1976 when he set up his company, Charlie Henry Timbers Pty Ltd.

"The catalyst to creating Charlie Henry Timbers was a seminar I attended in the early 1970's, Australian Management in Society - Predictions for the next 10 years," he said. "It got me thinking about where I would be in the next 10 years; whether I would be still with the multinational companies or was there something else?"

"It came to the 'something else' and the result was the founding of Charlie Henry Timbers, wholesale timber agents".

The firm began with a "pay as you go" philosophy, involving what Charlie calls "putting something aside for the rainy days". It is a tenet which has seen the firm consolidate its firm business base through tough economic times.

"It has worked for us," Charlie said. "We have never had to go borrowing heavily from our banks as many businesses did in the 1980's. The result is we are a successful and flourishing company with a top line credit rating from all our various suppliers."

It was in the credit area that Charlie Henry made his first impact. Early bad debts saw his company become one of the first in Australia to insure debts. Allied to tight credit management, credit insurance has maintained a good cash flow - the lifeblood of any successful business operation.

Charlie was also involved in getting major wholesaling companies into a credit information sharing system. "But carrying credit is a vital part of the business and we still insure the risk. It's costly, but it enables us to pay our accounts in 30 days, every time."

Another innovation was his setting up a "strategic alliance" with sawmills from which he buys much of his timber.

"Charlie Henry Timbers has provided market outlets backed by other services to provide security and safety."

"We provide product development, marketing, credit management, warehousing, transfer and distribution facilities which let those firms get on with their major jobs, production."

And of course, the alliance ensures the safety of credit for those small supplies who, with Charlie Henry liaising between the mill and timber machining contractors, can supply a particular component for a client. In fact, that was the basis of the company's establishment in 1976.

Charlie Henry Timbers sells panelling, flooring and mouldings in various species of pine as well as speciality lines such as poplar, Jarrah, Tasmanian oak and rainforest timbers from selected mills in all Australian states and New Zealand. A major milestone for the company was the setting up of a transhipment terminal at Slacks Creek in 1991 to provide a quicker service to customers.

Charlie bases his success in the industry on "personality" factor. "I've now got 40 years in the business behind me, but when Charlie Henry timbers was launched, I had been 23 years in the trade," he said.

"That was a good headstart as a lot of people knew me - not like a big corporation where staff turnover is a problem. Our customers know we are dependable and provide continuity of operation with low staff turnover."

Looking back over those 40 years, Charlie sees improvement communications as perhaps the major advance in the business world. "Fax machines and mobile telephones mean instant reaction to a client's order, not like the days when written communication was by letter over a period of days."

He also paid tribute to his staff as "the best brains in the industry working with us". "They're a devoted team of involvers," he said.
Map Editing Pilot Project At Bathurst Correctional Centre Well On Track

Discussions with NSW Surveyor General, Mr. Don Grant have resulted in a pilot project being set up at Bathurst Correctional Centre to perform computerised map editing.

An area was made available within the Correctional Centre for the project and a Hewlett Packard computer and software was installed by the Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM). Geoff Foreman, Overseer Electronics, attended a special training course in map editing at the Land Information Centre, Bathurst.

Selected inmates underwent a computer awareness course arranged by the education officers at the Bathurst Correctional Centre which provided them with the basic computer skills needed to undertake a further training course in map editing.

Since starting in December 1993, the project has exceeded expectations in the way the inmates have carried out their map editing functions. Patrick Downes from the Land Information Centre said that the inmates accuracy and speed is equal to that provided by the private sector.

Following the successful conclusion to the pilot project, it is planned to fully establish a Map Editing Business Unit at Bathurst Correctional Centre.

Their training will be further enhanced with the expected establishment of a TAFE course in cartography and map editing at Bathurst Correctional Centre.

GJ Jowsey & Associates Celebrate Their First Year With CSI

Great Christmas Brain Teaser, Competition - Winners announced....

A special thanks to all of our readers who battled with the brain teaser featured in our Dec/Jun newsletter.

While none of your entries matched all of the answers, the two winners with a near perfect score were: Dave Clapson, Executive Assistant to the Deputy Commissioner and Paul Fleming and Team at the Mannus Correctional Centre.

Here are the answers:
1. Two peas in a pod
2. Broken heart
3. Roll over and lay down
4. Scrambled eggs
5. This thing is bigger than both of us
6. Scattered cloud
7. He's in a rut
8. He's beside himself
9. Round of applause
10. Joy between you and me
11. Reading between the lines
12. Life after death
13. Backwards glance
14. Home on the range
15. An inside job
16. Frame up
17. Square meal
18. Stranger in paradise
19. That's it
20. Thank you

G.J. Jowsey & Associates who are responsible, under contract, for the sale and marketing of Cortex textile products, recently celebrated their first years association with CSI.

The highlights for the first year included market penetration interstate and the development of new products such as laundry bags, hospital ward blankets and dish cloths. Graham Jowsey said that he was very excited about the new developments in the pipeline for the coming year, including high tech barrier fabrics, theatre boots and incontinence products.
New Customer Liaison Officer At Your Service

Maria Llamas recently joined CSI as the new Customer Liaison Officer.

Maria has a strong background in customer liaison and administration and has worked in the banking and financial sector for over twelve years.

Maria's interests include playing tennis, ceramics, bushwaking and travel. Maria is currently undertaking tertiary studies at Granville TAFE.

For customer assistance, placing of orders and delivery information please give Maria a call on (02) 644 4966.

General Manager of Adelaide’s Central Linen Service, visits CSI

David Suter, General Manager, Central Linen Service, Adelaide visited the CSI Corporate Office late last month. He spent time with Cortex personnel assessing textile products and held discussions with Graham Jowsey from GJ Jowsey & Associates on a number of issues including the potential for increasing Cortex sales in South Australia over coming months.

Quote of the Month

"Leave everything a little better than you found it."