

# NEWS LETTER

## WORK INJURY?

*The Union is aware of several instances where the employer is challenging whether or not an injury occurred in the workplace.*

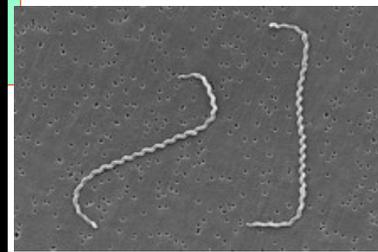
*Workers need to ensure that they report ANY INCIDENT, no matter how trivial it may seem as this greatly enhances your chances of having fewer problems gaining cover and entitlements.*

**REPORT! REPORT!  
REPORT!**

**WORK DEATH  
TOLL for the year  
1 July 2011 -  
June 2012**

(SOURCE—Safeguard  
Magazine)

**21**



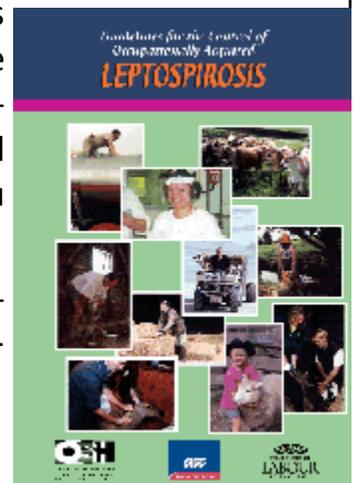
## LEPTOSPIROSIS STUDY ongoing

Massey University is continuing its research into Leptospirosis along with researching faster, accurate diagnostic testing for the disease. In this regard, members in the Hawkes Bay and Waikato areas are asked to participate in the study IF THEY BECOME ILL with Lepto. Medical laboratories and GPs are being approached to recruit any possible cases.

“Lepto” can present like a very bad case of the ‘flu, with headaches, fever and weakness. If you think you may have contracted Lepto, you need to get to your doctor as soon as possible—some people become seriously ill needing hospitalisation. You are most at risk while hosing down yards or other areas, tumbling pig carcasses, removing pelts or hides, taking out bladders, handling gut contents, working with kidneys just to name a few tasks with known risks.

PROTECT yourself from Lepto by wearing your PPE correctly, carefully wash your hands and forearms and keeping cuts and scratches covered. Wash off any urine splashes immediately and report any flu-like symptoms to your doctor and make sure you tell him/her that you are a meat worker and that you should be tested for a zoonotic illness.

The Department of Labour has published Guidelines for the protection of workers from Lepto—available online at [www.dol.govt.nz](http://www.dol.govt.nz).





## General Secretary—*Dave Eastlake*

### 41<sup>st</sup> ANNUAL REPORT OF THE NZ MEATWORKERS AND RELATED TRADES UNION INC. PRESENTED AT THE PALMERSTON NORTH CONFERENCE HELD 20<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup> March 2012

Mr Chairman, Conference delegates, and observer's, I present to you my annual report.

The year under review has not been an easy one for our Union. At the time of last year's annual report our offices in the Canterbury Trade Union Centre were in lockdown after the February earthquake. We were eventually granted 40 minutes access prior to the building being demolished (some months later) and with the demolition went years of records and memorabilia.

Members have suffered also as the last season resulted in the lowest production ever recorded and of course this resulted in low seasonal earnings at a time when the cost of living rose dramatically. Any chance of the working class getting relief from those circumstances went out the window when the National Party was returned to power at the November elections.

October brought with it the lock out of one hundred members at CMP Rangitikei, this lock out was to last until Christmas. We were fortunate that the wider Union movement took up amazing support for the locked out members. Union's loaned us organisers to assist with pickets and food distribution. The Council of Trade Union's conducted fundraising that was to eventually raise over two hundred thousand dollars. CTU President Helen Kelly became fully involved in support of pickets and assisted with organisation and negotiation, while the end result was not exactly as we would have liked the solidarity shown was certainly worthwhile and helped bend the employer to a position we could live with.

The respite between this lock out and the 2012 edition was not to last long. Midway through the negotiation of the AFFCO Collective Agreement the Tally-owned company have locked out to date one thousand of our members. Why? Because they chose to be members of a Union- using the need for flexibility as the prime reason for the lockout is only a front, the lock out is designed to break the Collective Agreement and the conditions included in it and to achieve a non-union workforce. We must support these members and not lose this most important dispute.

Re-negotiation of other agreements during the period has not been easy and gains in wages and conditions have been minimal. With stock numbers at their lowest, this trend will not be easily overcome.

As this will be my last Annual Report I wish to sincerely thank all members, Conference Delegates, and Sub-Branch Officials who have assisted and supported me over the last ten-plus years. I reserve a special thanks to Sherryl and Amanda - not only for putting up with me for so long but for their input and support.

Finally, I wish Graham all the best in his term as General Secretary and to the members "Kia Kaha".

Regards in solidarity,

*Regards, Dave*

**UNITED WE STAND**



**Got problems  
at work with  
ACC, and you're  
a Union mem-  
ber—see your  
plant/on site  
secretary first  
and as soon as  
possible.  
If they can't  
help you, they  
can access the  
CTU Injury  
Advocacy  
Service on  
0800 486  
466  
for expert  
advice and  
assistance.**



## HELP TALLEYS AFFCO WORKERS .COM

### Fact Sheet

2 May 2012

The Meat Workers Union (MWU) has over 1300 workers in AFFCO meat plants located in: Moerewa, Horotiu (near Hamilton), Rangjuru (near Te Puke), Wairoa, Whanganui, and Feilding. It also has a membership in two small leather processing plants in Wiri (Auckland) and Napier.

AFFCO is owned by the Talleys. This is one of the biggest privately owned companies in the country and the Talley family have interests in meat, dairy, fish and horticulture. Combined it employs up to 4500 New Zealand workers. The NBR rich list has the family wealth estimated at \$300 million.

On 24 February this year after only 10 hours of negotiations for a new Collective Agreement, the company gave the MWU notice of an indefinite lockout for 770 of its 1300 members leaving the remaining to continue working. The MWU subsequently issued a number of limited days strike action for those remaining in the plants and these non locked out workers have now been on an indefinite strike in support of those locked out in an effort to renew the collective agreement since 13<sup>th</sup> April. As at 2 May the locked out workers have been locked out for 65 days without pay! Some locked out workers are entitled to an emergency Winz benefit – those on strike are not.

On 1 May in an effort to split the workforce further, Talleys lifted the lock out on 300 workers leaving them subject to the union strike notice and cutting off their access to a benefit. None of the 300 were union delegates or officials and nor did those “unlocked” have seniority in the plants.

We estimate up to 5000 children are impacted by the lockout.

#### What are the issues?

Talleys /AFFCO workers are covered by a core collective agreement with site agreements determining additional terms and conditions. The core pay rates range from \$13.48 to \$15.76 per hour. On top of this workers are paid a rate based on the number of animals killed. If the “tally” for the day is reached, wages range from \$27 to \$31 per hour. The work is seasonal (2 to 11 months per year, with many short days and short weeks even during the season).

To secure wages set by tally, manning levels and tally rates are agreed. The company wants the right to change these unilaterally stating the need to manage the plants according to changing circumstances. The union has agreed they should manage the plant but want provisions in the agreement to continue to secure the large part of wages that are currently determined by tally and manning numbers. They agree that AFFCO should manage but not manipulate! The company is saying it won't use the changes to reduce pay but will not put this in writing.

On 1 and 2 May further mediation took place. After a relatively constructive day on 1 May, the company returned on 2 May with an entirely new collective employment agreement demanding it now be agreed. This agreement removes all seniority and entitlement to reappointment in a new season. It allows the company the right to dismiss union members it determines “incompatible” even if no misconduct has occurred, it removes several regular payments from agreements and makes a number of other significant changes that will reduce pay and employment security significantly.

Seniority is extremely important in seasonal work. It means that between seasons and when work opportunities are reduced during a season (due to declining stock), those with the most service are given preference for work. It removes any “arbitrary” decision making by employers about who they retain etc, and ensures workers are able to raise issues with their employer during the season (e.g. health and safety) without fear that they will be laid off without cause.

Without seniority protection, between seasons workers have no guarantee that they will be re-employed. In the case of AFFCO, the company has expressed a preference for non union members on individual agreements. If it can ignore seniority, it can give work to non union workers and new workers ahead of those longest serving that chose to stay in the union and refuse to sign IEAs. Season to season the company can use the threat of loss of employment to reduce and change conditions of employment at will.

The company has said it wants reduced Union presence in the plant. It is offering workers the ability to return to work if they leave the union and sign an IEA. The company is notoriously anti-union and has de-unionised in many its other businesses. The Meat Workers Union believe this to be a major driver in the companies aggressive approach to this bargaining.

#### Where to from here?

There is further mediation set down for 7 and 8 May in Auckland. There is also a Court hearing booked for 16 May to hear the unions claim that the lock out is not lawful and the employment authority has agreed to facilitation for the parties. The workers are continuing to picket and campaign and organise community support.

The major needs are for support at the protests and pickets and for donations of food and money. To sustain such a large group of workers requires large amounts of regular funds. It costs \$50,000 per week to provide as little as \$40 per member for food – much more is needed.

Economic pressure is also needed. We are calling on AFFCO suppliers to send stock to other companies. We are seeking any support around ensuring this company operates a triple bottom line including being a good employer before it has access to water and other natural resources. We are asking customers to consider other products than those produced by the Talley Group Ltd. We are not encouraging anyone to breach contracts with the company but where there is discretion, we are asking that it be exercised!

There is a website at <http://www.mwu.org.nz/> for more information.



NEW ZEALAND MEATWORKERS UNION

NATIONAL OFFICE,  
TEMPORARILY AT 55 BELFAST ROAD,  
CHRISTCHURCH

**Website:**  
**Nzmeatworkersunion**  
**.co.nz**



## Bits 'n' Pieces/Odds 'n' Sods

- **SAFEGUARD** National Health & Safety Conference is being held 30-31 May 2012 in SKYCITY Convention Centre, Auckland.
- **CTU welcomes Health and Safety Review**  
The Council of Trade Unions has welcomed the review of health and safety announced by the Government today alongside an expanded health and safety inspectorate.  
Helen Kelly, CTU President, says "there is widespread concern about the high rate of accidents and death at work in New Zealand compared with a number of other countries so a review is needed."  
It is simply unacceptable that so many workers in this country end up badly maimed or dead in the course of their work.  
"The review needs to consider issues such as the role of regulation and enforcement, how to establish a strong health and safety culture at work, identification of hazards, health and safety training and many other factors."  
Helen Kelly said the CTU will be an active participant in the review process.  
"There will be some concerns in the union movement about any possibility the review could weaken what is already an

unsatisfactory situation on health and safety in New Zealand workplaces, but it is important that we advocate strongly for improvement."

- **HSE Act—private prosecution**  
The Union took a private prosecution under the health & safety legislation in relation to a Union member who lost the tip of his thumb at SPM Awarua. The Department of Labour decided not to prosecute which meant that the option was there for the Union to do so.  
The Union's prosecution succeeded, and although the penalties are yet to be determined it is worth noting that in this case the DOL should have prosecuted.
- Do you or someone you know have a gambling problem? Call the **Gambling Help Line** \*   
**0800 654 655**
- The minimum wage rates are reviewed every year. As of 1 April 2012 the **adult minimum wage rates (before tax)** that apply for employees aged 16 or over are:  
**\$13.50** an hour, which is  
**\$108.00** for an 8-hour day or  
**\$540.00** for a 40-hour week.