

DECEMBER 2012



**KEEP  
OUR  
ASSETS**

**WE ALL NEED A  
LIVING WAGE**

# UNION NEWS

**YOUR UNION IS WORKING HARD AT NEGOTIATING IMPROVED COLLECTIVE EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENTS [CEA] - IMPROVING WAGES & WORKING CONDITIONS**

Workers that choose to sign Individual Employment Agreements [IEA] undermine the superior CEA's. All NZ workers are free to join a union, it is illegal for a Boss to **Bully** you out of your job because you join. The NZ Meat Workers Union wants to encourage all meat workers to join the Union and you join the CEA.

*"Join the Union*

*Join the Collective Employment Agreement"*



## **New Season Outlook for the 2012 - 13**

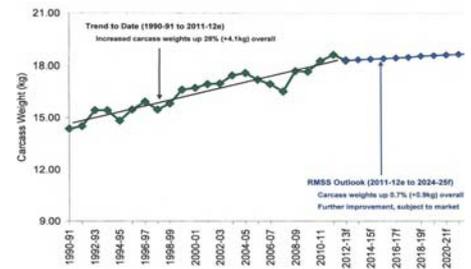
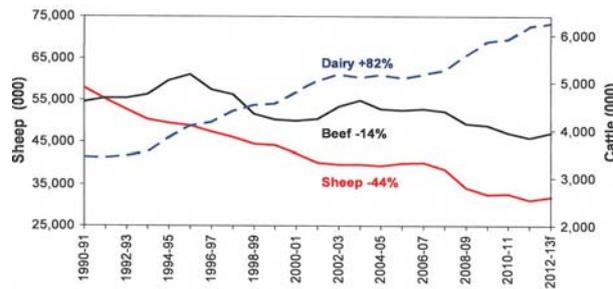
As the gap between the rich and the poor grows in NZ and poverty increases, more and more New Zealanders don't get paid enough to meet their needs, enjoy their lives and participate in society. All over the world communities are uniting to address poverty and inequality through living wage campaigns. The Living Wage Aotearoa NZ campaign brings together community and unions around a common goal of achieving a living wage as a necessary step in reducing inequality and poverty in our society. Currently the Minimum wage is \$13.50 /hour (40 x 13.50 = \$540 p.w.). The NZ Council of Trade Unions is seeking to increase the minimum wage to \$15.00 from 1 April 2013 and move to the 66% benchmark in April 2014 (\$18.12). At many plants around NZ, meat workers receive a minimum weekly payment that is around \$480 weekly - too low! Meat workers once had a job that could deliver good earnings seasonally. Today "churn" or turnover is at record levels as some meat workers vote with their feet and choose more secure employment.

Sheep & Beef farmers have done very well in recent years, unfortunately this prosperous period for farmers has not flowed onto meat workers. The price war at the farm gate increases farmers profits. In the 2008 season farmers generated a profit before tax of \$10,092, they are budgeting for slight

September year	Farm Profit before Tax	Minimum Wage	Average Hourly earnings ord time	Inflation
2008	\$ 10,092.00	\$12.00	\$24.06	5.1%
2009	\$ 56,300.00 458%	\$12.50 4.2%	\$25.19 4.7%	1.7%
2010	\$ 66,555.00 18.2%	\$12.75 2%	\$25.45 1%	1.5%
2011	\$114,200.00 71.6%	\$13.00 2%	\$26.21 3%	4.6%
2012	\$146,000.00 27.8%	\$13.50 3.85%	\$27.27 4%	0.8%

decrease in the 2013 season from the high of \$146,000 in the 2012 season. When you compare this jump in profits, to workers on the minimum wage, average ordinary time earnings, workers are barely keeping ahead of inflation. Meat workers are far worse off for a number of reasons. Meat bosses tell their employees they want wage

cuts (productivity gains) so that they can pay more for lambs/beef at the farm gate, followed by wage negotiations that barely keep pace with inflation, on top of this meat workers have short days, short weeks & shorter seasons. The life of meat working families is becoming more "precarious". Despite this the bulk of meat workers continue to be loyal to their meat employers returning every season, making themselves available everyday and do the overtime if it is available. The two graphs below show NZ Sheep and Cattle numbers from 1990 to 2013 (dairy cows jumping) & export lamb carcass weights increasing every year since 1990.



## **UNION REVIEW HAS BEEN COMPLETED MARCH 2013 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING-DELIBERATE**

Peter Conway, Secretary of the NZ Council of Trade Unions and Carol Beaumont presented a PowerPoint summary of the review to the NZ Conference in early November. This was reasonably well received considering the Review had only just been completed a week earlier.

The NZ Executive has given the Review further deliberation with the intention of coming to the NZ Conference in March with some recommendations that can be acted upon immediately, subject to a majority vote of Conference delegates.

Overall the Review has focused on how we can improve the way the national office, branch office's, sub-branch office's handle industrial disputes and our capacity to organize current and future meat workers. The Executive is of the view that we will have further "Lockouts" in the meat industry as Employer's strive to pull back the ability of meat workers to organize better terms & conditions of employment for its membership. One "Rotten Boss" can impact on everyone.

