



UNION NEWS

October 2012

UNION REVIEW

The review is nearly completed [Your opinion still welcome] June 2012 a petition was circulated to all plants. The purpose of the review *"How can we 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"*.

Meat workers are vulnerable to further income cuts, as meat bosses strive to protect their profits. One company has quite deliberately chosen to breach any agreement reached with the Union. This meat company says *"if you don't like it take us to the Employment Court"*.

This is a slow, tedious, costly, uncertain process.

We need to Organise, have more member meetings and strengthen our delegate structure.

2011/2012 Season

- NZ Lamb kill was down -1.8% (352,936) 18,896,932 slaughtered. North Island (-0.4%) 8,808,734 lambs & South Island (-3.1%) 10,088,198.
- NZ Mutton kill was down -22.5% (977,858) 3,362,372 slaughtered. North Island (-28.1%) 1,557,997 mutton & South Island (-16.9%) 1,804,375.
- NZ Beef kill was down -8.3% (188,983). 2,087,308 slaughtered. NI (-12.2%) 1,495,891 beef & SI (+3.1%) 591,417.
- NZ Calf kill was up +4.3% (69,443) 1,693,550 slaughtered. NI down (-2.1%) 1,069,699 & SI up (+17.5%) 623,851.
- Lamb slaughter weights were up 18.63kg from 18.23kg last season [Cumulative].

Meat Industry Overcapacity - more closures?

Alliance Maitaia have announced the closure of the Mutton/Lamb chains, ending 115 years [Southland Frozen Meat Company - 1897] of processing. Alliance will continue to process Beef. This Maitaia closure follows others in recent times, Burnside, Sockburn, Makarewa, Te Kauwhata, Waipukurau, Oringi and still the meat processing industry continues to struggle. Investors (imported Capital or private debt) have seen many companies come and go over the past few decades, Waitaki-NZR, Challenge Meats, Fortex, Dairy Meats, Lowe Walker, Wallace Meats, to name a few while meat export growth stagnates - many reasons such as dairy industry expansion, sheep/lamb numbers falling, forestry write-offs and continued poor marketing decisions coupled with intense procurement wars at the farm gate.

Meat workers earnings continue to fall because meat companies jostle for the fewer lambs at the farm gate to balance their overcapacity. Meat workers earnings are driven by a piecework payment system, and as lamb numbers fall workers end up with shorter hours in the day, work only 3 or 4 days in the week, laid off for a couple of weeks on more than one occasion in the season or end up with an extremely short season in some cases 6 weeks or less.

Shortly the meat industry is expected to announce end of year results which will shock any investor. AFFCO results will be horrendous due to their desire to initiate a lockout in the season. Over the last decade companies have added to the overcapacity - Rangitikei, Awarua, Wairoa (high capacity), Feilding, Malvern (rebuild), Levin (Rebuild), Dannevirke (rebuild), Hastings (under construction), Gisborne. Further, many plants throughout NZ have increased processing capacity through new shift configurations and sped up the production chains to slaughter more stock in the normal working day.

Can the meat industry sit back and do nothing? - The Red Meat Sector Strategy Report and many other reports - end up in the too hard basket. A Government initiated "Meat Summit" is required.

Little has been gained since the then Freezing Industry was Deregulated in 1979.

NZ Meat Workers Union Financial Accounts 2010 - 11

Members will have noticed headlines such as "Serious Fraud Office - Questions Remain Unanswered - Serious Spending" during the TALLEY AFFCO Lockout. Writers Alan Barber & Rodney Hide have been quite unscrupulous in their reporting, journalistic ethics apparently abandoned.

Persons outside the union wished to "slander & smear" the union with the aim of discrediting and destroying the meat workers union.

Unions became Incorporated in 1991.

Your union accounts have been audited yearly, the NZ Conference has approved these accounts yearly. Each branch of the union has an Annual General Meeting to discuss your accounts followed by meetings at your sub-branch where members have the opportunity to ask questions. This democratic process has worked well since the meat workers union was formed in 1912.

The Union has been working with its Lawyer/

Accountant to arrive at a new format for account presentation with the Incorporated Societies. The NZMWU took the opportunity to obtain a legal opinion of its rules.

The Otago Southland, Aotearoa & Canterbury Branches plus SFF Hawera, Affco Imlay, SFF Takapau, Land Meats & Alliance Dannevirke 2010-11 accounts will appear as one set of accounts. These branches will continue to prepare separate accounts.

Interestingly the National Party of NZ, among several other examples, has supplied the Incorporated Societies comparable sets of accounts as this union, without the same scrutiny.

The General Secretary of the union has not had a single complaint from any union members and Graham Cooke would like to thank all members for their ongoing support & loyalty.