



We're working for you!

# The NEWSLETTER

Volume

5002

Published by the New Zealand Meatworkers & Related Trades Union (Inc).

## One Union for Meat Workers

After nearly 100 years it is finally starting to look like one Union for New Zealand meat workers is achievable.

Meat Union Aotearoa have made the move to become a Branch of the NZ Meatworkers Union. Initially this was discussed at their Executives during last year and a proposal was forwarded to the November conference of NZ Meatworkers Union, who were unanimous in support of one union for meat workers.

The New Zealand Meatworkers Executive meeting held in March were presented with a report from the general secretary that opened the path for the

new Aotearoa Branch to become a reality. In turn the NZ Executive have proposed a recommendation to the Annual Conference (April 27/28) that a new branch of NZMWU be formed.

Meat Union Aotearoa Executive have also taken the step of recommending to their rank and file that they become a Branch of our Union and disband their existing union.

If all goes to plan, it is intended that the new Branch be formed for the start of the financial year being 1st October 2005.

## NEW MEAT PLANTS

We need them like a hole in the head but they are a reality—new processing plants have been built at Rakaia and Awarua.

At Rakaia, Independent Processing Services (51% CMP) have started operation on the one chain mutton and lamb plant, at this stage all further processing is being done off site.

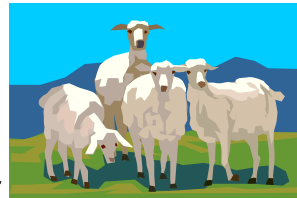
We welcome our new union members at Rakaia, it was good to see the plant starting up with 100% union membership. Although still in the trial stage, the Union will shortly be starting negotiations for a collective employment agreement.

South Pacific Meats (70% AFFCO, 30% Talleys) are in "hiring of staff

"stage for their new

plant at Awarua (between Invercargill and Bluff). We understand some stock will be slaughtered this month (April).

Although we have no members on site at present, Gary Davis and Daryl Carran are keeping a close eye on progress. During a recent visit to Invercargill Dave Eastlake, along with Gary, visited the plant and introduced themselves to the management. More on this plant in future news letters.



WORK DEATH TOLL FOR 2003/04

61

*The running total has been aligned with OSH's business year - 30 June to 1 July.*

*Reprinted by kind permission of SAFEGUARD*

Work death toll so far for 2004/05

35

## From the General Secretary

Following on from the last newsletter, the following are Branch reports from the AMIEU conference.

### South Australia

Daily production in the processing sector

Beef	Sheep	Pigs	Kangaroo	Horse
1550	21200	3100	1500	50
(6 plants)	(7 plants)	(3 plants)	(2 plants)	

Over 200,000 cattle per annum are brought into the State from the territory or other states and surprisingly 280,000 go out of South Australia either live or to other States. South Australian membership stands at 1353 members in 37 sites and represents just 41% of the total workforce of these sites.

Worksites covered are supermarkets, small good factories, domestic / export abattoirs and boning rooms.

### Queensland

This Branch covers 40 major worksites and has a total of 6708 members out of 10,000 employees. The Union fee is \$5.50 per week and sites covered work under all three of the above explained agreements.

During the last 25 years fifteen beef plants have closed plus a further five sheep/beef plants, a total of twenty, affecting 6200 workers. Only one of these plants has re-opened and so far is not covered by a union negotiated agreement (re-opened late July 2004).

### West Australia

The West Australia Branch has a total of 1463 members with a ticket price of \$5.90 per week.

This Branch has been and still is badly affected by live stock exports and is continuing with every effort possible to curb these exports, but unfortunately are making little progress. We are lucky we are several 1000km's away from those markets requiring live product, which unfortunately our West Australian comrades are not.

### New South Wales

Covering 47 worksites including Abattoirs, small goods factories, cold storage, poultry and supermarkets the total membership being 5700 out of 7431 employees. Since 1981 nine export abattoirs have closed plus an-

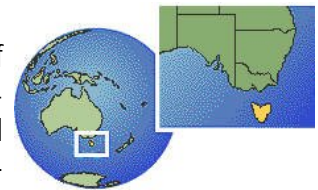
other sixteen plants classed as class 1/2 abattoirs. Sorry I don't know the number of workers affected but can assure you it will be a lot, once again live shipments and drought are the main causes.

### Victoria

Has a membership of 3884 during the busy season again this includes meat plants, small goods and supermarkets making up about sixty six sites serviced. Labour hire Company's are a big problem in most states and particularly in Victoria which also seems to have more than it's fair share of industrial disputes that makes them very reliant on court decisions going the right way for them.

### Tasmania

The smallest Branch of the Council has 554 members from a potential of 822 employees'. Although small this Branch



is very active and produced one of the biggest written and detailed reports that the Council received.

To summarise attending the Federal Council was worthwhile from the point of view that I gained an insight into the Australian Union that I previously did not have. Although they are heavily involved in supermarkets through boning, packing and poultry, the bulk of their high density sites are meat plants similar to ours.

Tom Hannan who was the Federal Secretary and who had been actively involved with the Union for over 40 years retired at completion of Conference and gave an enjoyable recollection of some of his colleagues and enemy's at a function held in his honour. He is to be replaced by Ross Richardson the current Queensland Secretary.

Socially as you would expect we were well looked after and were treated to a five hour boat trip on the Brisbane River during the Conference lay Day.

I will be recommending to Conference that to ensure the bonds we have started to make with the AMIEU continue to strengthen, that we invite a delegation to attend our Annual Conference in April.

- Dave Eastlake



## Changes in the Canterbury Branch

Long standing Canterbury Branch President **ALF HILL** retired at the end of January. Alf, who had previously worked at the Alliance Sockburn site, was initially elected as a Branch Organiser and later as the Branch President. Few may know that Alf served an apprenticeship as a mens hairdresser (barber), he also spent some time in his younger years around the racing stables (something a lot of meat workers tend to do!).

During his time as a Branch Official many

changes took place in the industry, all of which Alf followed closely. In his retirement he intends to make more use of his camper van, assist around the Selwyn Hut community and, of course, keep an eye on those flounders!

The Union wishes Alf and long, happy and healthy retirement.

**John Reid**, who is the current National President and previous Smithfield Secretary, has been elected as the new Branch Organiser, with **Bill Watt** taking over the reins of Branch President.

Look out for some action from the Canterbury Branch in the months ahead!

**LEPTOSPIROSIS**— *No, it hasn't gone away! In fact, Leptospirosis infections appear to be increasing amongst deer processing plants. Essentially everyone who comes within contact of infected urine is at risk. If the disease is not treated, workers can develop kidney damage, liver failure, respiratory distress and even meningitis (inflammation of the membrane around the brain and spinal cord). **MAKE SURE YOUR GP KNOWS YOU ARE A MEATWORKER. EARLY TREATMENT IS ESSENTIAL.***

*Leptospirosis is New Zealand's most common occupationally acquired infectious disease and one of the most common diseases passed from animals to humans.*

### SYMPTOMS:-

High fever, severe headache, chills, muscle aches, vomiting, sensitivity to light



(photophobia), and general 'flu-like symptoms

## MEETING DATES : 2005

### EXECUTIVE MEETING

9 June

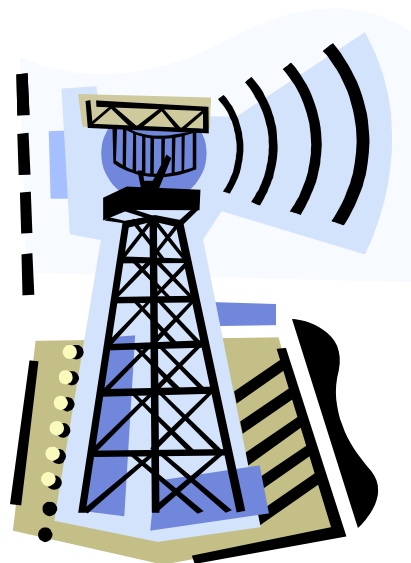
7 September

6 December

### CONFERENCE

27 & 28 April

2 & 3 November



"There is great ability in knowing how to conceal one's ability."

- Francois De la Rochefoucauld

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We're on the web!  
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NZ Meatworkers Union  
- working for you



Comments, articles and/or photographs  
are welcome from members.

Please contact Amanda at the address on the left if  
you wish to contribute to this newsletter.

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through out the year.

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## Odds 'n Ends

**Canterbury Meat Packers** was fined nearly \$20,000 and ordered to pay two workers injured at the mid-Canterbury plant compensation totaling \$5,500. A contract cleaner caught her arm in a rotating offal auger while the other worker (an employee of CMP) hurt his hand on the conveyor belt mechanism of another machine. The cleaning company was also fined in relation to the incident involving the cleaner.

**ALLIANCE GROUP LTD** was convicted on 3 unrelated s.6 charges, fined a total \$52,500, and ordered to pay \$27,000 in reparations to 3 employees injured in separate accidents at the company's Southland meat processing plants. The penalties comprised a \$15,000 fine and \$7,500 in reparations for a worker who lost his thumb in a mechanical pelt stripper, a \$12,500 fine and \$7,500 in reparations for another worker whose hand was crushed in a casing machine, and a \$25,000 fine and \$12,000 in reparations for a worker whose lower leg had to be amputated after it was caught in a bucket conveyor. The three incidents occurred at 2 different plants, over a five-week period in early 2004. A fourth s.6 charge, relating to an incident in which a worker suffered hot water burns, was withdrawn. (Invercargill DC, November 17)

**A TEAM OF SCIENTISTS** is putting together a test case which, if successful, could change the legal status of chronic chemical poisoning. Sufferers of long term disability they believe to be the result of chemical exposure have difficulty getting ACC cover, but Graham Wilson says the group is working on a new approach which may meet ACC's requirement for the application of force in defining an accident.