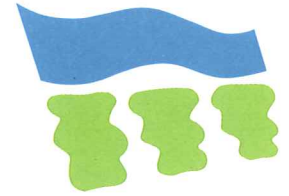


# Newsletter

Mayfield  
Hinds  
Irrigation  
Limited



September 2009

## AGM

Another well attended AGM was held recently with about 70 present. To have around 50% of shareholders present, with no elections or resolutions, and at a busy time of year, is very encouraging for your Board.

Although there were few questions or comments there was genuine interest in Board activities. While the Board's undertakings will not suit every shareholder, as directors, we are legally bound to serve the best interest of your Company. We certainly have huge opportunities to take this scheme into the future with improved reliability, flexibility and security for our businesses – exactly the same principals that our forebears formed our scheme upon. The old adage that "You don't get progress without change" aptly applies.

We gave a summary of the steps the Board has taken to review scheme storage, improving the scheme's distribution efficiency, opportunities for pressure piping and potential for scheme growth. Enhancing existing reliability for shareholders is the yardstick used for scheme developments. The case for storage has actually increased with the trend to more efficient irrigation methods, the desire to improve irrigation reliability, and especially with pressure piping.

As reported the reports to assist the Board with scheme developments from Beca and Aqualinc are still in draft form. Once they have been finalized we aim to present to shareholders in early October to seek comment and progress developments.

Our guests, Graeme Sutton and Chris Coughlan, reported on INZ activities. They are clearly closer to the coal face of regulatory and political views on water. We were warned not to be complacent about our water resource, we must grasp our opportunities, accept and engineer change based on our conditions. The alternative is for the regulators to enforce change on their terms.

Ben Curry (RDR COE) gave us the latest update on RDR activities and explained the issues with the BAFF, race sealing and other RDR shutdown maintenance tasks.

The budget for the ensuing year was approved, and subsequently the scheme charge was set at \$50 per hectare.

*David Keeley*

## Irrigation Season Commencement

Having experienced a mild Spring to date we are anticipating an early demand for water to kickstart spring sown crops and pasture. We would suggest that farmers consider carefully factors such as soil temperature and soil moisture levels before rushing to turn irrigation systems on just because the neighbour is!

The following is a reminder of the procedure for ordering water. We ask that you advise staff who are to be in charge of irrigation to make themselves fully aware of the scheme irrigation policies and procedures:

- Check your races! Prior to water being delivered, visually inspect all culverts and races for any debris that may obstruct or upset the operation of your system. We would also appreciate being advised of any potential issues in scheme races so that racemen can attend to them prior to water being switched on.
- Water may be ordered by contacting a raceman, normally no less than 2 days in advance of when you require water. Clearly water may not be available within 2 days but the racemen will do their best to roster the water to you as soon as possible. Due to the nature of a canal system it is not always possible to deliver single

or reduced flows to irrigators when few or no other farmers are requiring water in your area.

- In periods of high demand or restriction, the racemen will dictate the availability of water on a rostered basis.
- When irrigation water is no longer required a minimum of 12 hrs notice is required before a flow can be shut off. As the scheme operates a canal delivery system, there are delays in the time it takes to stop or reallocate water away from your turnout.
- Our racemen are there to help deliver water fairly to all users. Turnouts are set and controlled by racemen. In a number of instances the assistance of farmers in opening or closing turnouts is called upon where it is mutually beneficial for the racemen and farmers. This assistance is greatly appreciated.
- Historically however we have had a number of users who choose to flaunt the rules by either tampering with set gates or taking water outside of agreed times. This is not tolerated, our racemen are extremely vigilant and strong penalties are applied to any users who choose to flaunt the rules.

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PTO

## Irrigation Tips

With the new season about to commence there are a number of things that can be done to set your farm irrigation system up for a flying start! The following are some suggestions which we would encourage all irrigators to think about before switching on your precious irrigation systems:

- Check pumps, motors and switchboards for birds nests, frayed wires, corrosion or leaks. Oil levels should be topped up if necessary and drive shafts greased. Buildup of combustible material or moisture may lead to short circuits or fire and costly repairs.
- Scheme and on farm irrigation races should be checked for debris, blocked culverts or buildup of silt, which may restrict or slow the delivery of water to your paddocks. Any known leakage points should be attended to with sandbags or soil lining. Pay particular attention to the first 50m of race immediately below your turnout, as this often can prevent your full allocation from being delivered from the race.
- Check the integrity of your irrigator. This could be as simple as a walk along the machine checking gear oil levels, fence walkers, tyre pressures, rotators for blockages and silt traps / end guns are free from debris for correct operation.
- Check your fences! Irrigation repair companies make a lot of money from repairing gear boxes for wire entanglement. The correct strain, springs on wires, spacing of fence posts and

sleeving at wire crossing points reduces the risk of wires being caught up in irrigator treads.

- The operating efficiency can be further reviewed by undertaking 'bucket tests' to measure the Distribution Uniformity or 'evenness' of your spray applications. Programmed and actual application rates may vary significantly for various reasons, potentially affecting your production. Irrigation specialists offer a service for a thorough review of your system should you suspect there is a problem
- Check the level of sills on borderdykes and spray or excavate off sills, checking the levels are still set correctly to achieve evenness of watering.
- Check for the correct operation of automated control equipment including spray irrigator time clocks, pressure switches, borderdykes dam clocks.

I intend reporting on various 'Irrigation Tips' in our newsletters. If you have any questions, good ideas or recommendations that would improve the scheme operation or help your fellow farmers out, please phone me on 3078389 / 0275070580 or email your ideas to [hamish@mhis.co.nz](mailto:hamish@mhis.co.nz).

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## Stock in Scheme

Recently we have reviewed and updated the storage pond sign off form based on feedback and experience from farmers, racemen and contractors. Most ponds within the scheme have been well constructed and are not proving problematic to either farmers or the scheme. However there have also been a large number of ponds that have not performed through typically poor planning, not adhering to scheme policy with regard to location and interference with scheme operation, poor workmanship, timing of construction works and incorrect setting of levels.

In addition we have created a scheme 'Race Realignment' form outlining the requirements for any modifications to scheme races. This includes changing or addition of structures in, over, or under scheme races or any requirement to shift a scheme race.

We are in regular liaison with the main contractors in the district and they are aware of the requirements of these forms. But ultimately the farmer is responsible for ensuring that the storage pond construction or race modifications do not interfere with Scheme operation.

If you are planning an on farm storage pond or require a modification in any way to a scheme asset, remember to contact MHIL management before commencing any work. Regular communication with your racemen during the construction work will help to identify any potential problems in advance of construction works. Plan and implement the works as per the requirements of the Storage Pond Sign Off and Race Realignment forms, which are available on the website [www.mhis.co.nz](http://www.mhis.co.nz) or on request.

Neither of these forms should be viewed as a 'compliance burden', but rather a set of rules that when adhered to in conjunction with good construction practice and the engineer's design, will result in a successful storage / race installation. Shareholders must understand that we cannot deliver water into ponds when the pond operation affects the scheme operation and subsequently other shareholders.

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## Monitoring

In conjunction with the scheme growth strategies we are always looking at ways to improve the scheme operation and efficiency. To continue to improve the fair distribution of water, we are planning to measure all turnouts throughout the early part of the season to confirm that the water delivered is in fact what shareholders are contracted for.

This will assist with better management of flows and help determine where any leakages or losses may be occurring. We are also investigating the installation of telemetry equipment at the turnouts to the main laterals for the purpose of having a better understanding and early notification of fluctuations in flows.

## Effluent Application

We would like to remind all farmers to observe the regulations with regards to effluent disposal via irrigators. Each shareholder should refer closely to their individual consent conditions which typically states that effluent should not be discharged within 20m of any waterway, within 30m of a boundary, road or well used for drinking water. It is also not permitted to be sprayed onto or contaminate MHIL scheme assets.

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## E-mail Addresses

Most farmers in the scheme are on our email distribution list, which we encourage. If you are not presently on the list or have not received any email correspondence to date, please let me know so that you can be added. While newsletters and other information will continue to be sent by post, some news 'briefs' and information on share trades will be distributed by email for efficiency / convenience.



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## Turbines

After some years in the gestation a turbine agreement has been developed for those privileged to have the right to generate power from the scheme. We unfortunately are not able to approve all turbine requests and therefore for those who have or are being approved there will be an annual fee and a licence agreement required. This agreement will enable the farmer to proceed with confidence and also provides the scheme with sufficient protection to enable it to carry out enhancements and development of the scheme in the future.

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## Direct Takes & Small Ponds

The scheme have for a number of years been endeavouring to tidy up the direct take and small ponds within the scheme and have granted exemptions to people on a one yearly basis to give them the opportunity to improve their systems. We will however be insisting that these takes be monitored in order that we can determine the amount of water being taken through this delivery.