

Welcome to [ASK] - Always Seeking Knowledge!
#17 - Marketing: from a different perspective, 26 September, 2004
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1. Quick [ASK]

Need I tell you, there is a seasonal change on in the next few weeks. Those now in a growing season only have days left to grow their feed for the entire summer. Stick to the Golden Rule, 'Fast growth, fast moves; slow growth, slow moves'. Then prepare a complete closed plan. No arguments! Those coming out of a closed plan, do an Open Plan, now.

To assist you with the maths, you might like to visit our web site www.holisticresults.com.au Under the Downloads button you will find an Excel Sheet that will do all the calculations for you. You have to create the written plan, and keep it up to date. Remember that if you don't have a written plan you are rotationally grazing. The price of that could be your farm.

There are three sheets in the model. An Open Plan sheet based on 1 to 10 assessment in Column 1, a Closed Plan based on your physical, in-field ADH assessment (you choose measure :dse days/Ha, SU days/ha etc) in Column 1, or a Closed Plan based on 1 to 10 assessment in Column 1. Use this if you do not have an in-field assessment.

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2. Welcome

There was an interesting item written by Graham Sait, that was published in a recent issue of 'ACRES Australia'. Sait, who is an authority on biological farming techniques, is based in Queensland. In the article he was discussing a situation he observed during a farm visit in the USA. The farmer concerned was experiencing a decreasing response to steadily higher and higher application rates of Roundup© chemical.

The professional advice the farmer had received from a number of sources was that he should continue to apply a still higher rate of chemical, until it became effective. Sait observed that, "These guys think farmers are morons - they have this 'more on' theory!"

The underlying problem? The water was excessively alkaline. Sait was able to advise the farmer to add vinegar to the tank mix. The result was a marked decrease in pH, and this action massively increased the effectiveness of the chemical. In fact this simple technique reduced the volume of chemical required by more than 90%. Hopefully farmers will reject the moron approach sooner than later!

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3. Marketing: from a different perspective

Last month, in Christchurch the NZ people turned on a spectacular 2 day seminar. It began with one of the largest snowstorms in Christchurch for many years - the place looked like a European postcard. And then it got even better!

In particular, I want to talk about the presentation made by Brent Rawstron, owner of Rosendale Wines, whose vineyard is located on the outskirts of the city. Nothing if not a marketer, Brent made a number of points that I want to pass on.

Firstly, he told us how we must be sure we know what our target market is, BEFORE we produce a product. Then, he said, we must produce for that market.

He told us how some 20 years ago he had identified a market for a single, select cut of premium meat that could be sold at very high prices through a specialist outlet he located in Germany. Since that time he has been meeting that market every month. The amazing thing is that from every carcass he produces, he sends only 18kg of meat to Germany. The rest of

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each body is sold conventionally, but the premium on the 18kgs is so good it effectively doubles the profit per carcass.

Think about that. He has identified a single cut, sells it to a single market, and in turn has provided outstanding service over a long period of time. It is a true relationship. If it were to ever fall over, he does not have an entire supply chain of meat that he has to sell. The 'commodity' meat people look after that for him, a low stress option, one would expect.

In the USA I know of organic milk producers selling their milk to the local co-operative. They then buy back only the milk they need for their own direct marketing purposes. The rest is sold in the commodity market. That seems like a low stress option as well.

Last week we came across another interesting marketing technique. As you would be aware, it is illegal to sell whole milk for human consumption without first pasteurising it, a process deemed by many as damaging to the vitality of the milk, but declared by authorities as necessary for human health! There are some people who remember unpasteurised milk from the house cow, or milk straight from the dairy vat, who would like to keep that experience. In recent times some Holistic Management practitioners have vainly tried to provide the experience, but with no lasting success. You may have read their story in "IMPACT".

Now we have come across a southern Queensland family who are selling their milk as "Bath Milk". They make express claims that it is not sold for human consumption, although they stress it is produced in 'hygienic conditions'. Technically it is illegal to sell the product in Queensland as Bath Milk or as any other form or name of milk. It is unpasteurised, and therefore illegal! However, Section 92 of the Australian Constitution allows free trade across state borders. It is not illegal to sell Bath Milk in NSW! Now, there's a twist the founding fathers probably hadn't considered.

There are some excellent marketing things happening at the moment. David and Joan Cook in WA are having increasing success with their 'Dandaragan Organic Beef' brand, whilst one NZ farmer is on track to make the value attached to his brand greater than the value of the land on which his production is based.

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4. Update your Diary

Introduction to Holistic Management

NZ - February 15, 2005 - Heriot Community Centre
WA - February 22, 2005 - Wellstead Hall

Holistic Financial Planning

NZ - March 15, 2005 - Heriot Community Centre
WA - March 22, 2005 - Wellstead Hall

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5. Notices

Property for Lease

A property of 1,600 acres will become available for lease early in the New Year, in the Cootamundra area of NSW. The owners are a city resident couple with a rural background. They have not yet done the Holistic Management course, but are in the slot to do so. If anyone is interested in talking to them, drop me a note, and I will give you a phone number.

Dinosaurs and Liquorice Allsorts

Dr. Christine Jones has initiated a new competition entitled:
"Dinosaurs and Liquorice Allsorts: an inspirational insight into regenerative land management".

Christine writes:

As farming methods and lifestyles become more and more technologically oriented, less and less 'dinosaur' carbon is being recycled. Carbon is the basic building block for almost everything. Community awareness has improved, but sadly, this precious resource continues to be lost through inappropriate land management and poor waste management. The organic matter content of our soils has declined to such an extent that they no longer function effectively for agricultural, horticultural or amenity purposes.

The aim of the 'Dinosaurs and Liquorice Allsorts' project is to collect pearls of wisdom from around the globe which amuse, inspire and educate, while helping people to think differently about the environment. The concept was born when a landholder said "I agree about soil being a living

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thing. My soil orgasms don't like it when I use chemicals".

And the liquorice allsorts?? Soil is ideally a vibrant mixture of all sorts of delicious things. A jumble of brightly coloured liquorice allsorts will make an eye-catching and symbolic cover design for the collected works.

A range of prizes are offered including special awards for stories and illustrations from school-age entrants. The theme "Amazing what carbon can do" includes, but is not limited to, soil biology, biodiversity, perennial groundcover, grazing management, dryland salinity, conservation farming, catchment management, alley farming, agroforestry - and last but by no means least - people!! The project will be publicised among as many farming, school and community groups as possible.

Ultimately, the intention is to promote awareness of what WE can do to address the carbon imbalance, particularly in our soils. Enquiries regarding additional sponsorship are welcome.

This is an opportunity for people in all walks of life to record some of their wonderfully lateral ideas - in verse, prose, artwork, cartoon - or as music - with the deadly serious aim of helping others see the folly of dysfunctional land management practices.

An entry form is available by downloading from www.holisticresults.com.au. Choose the "Downloads" button and select Dinosaurus and Liquorice. The "Amazing what carbon can do" sample verse was inspired by the DEC 'City to Soil' recycling project.

Winners will be announced at a gala event in late November, and selected works collated and published, with author's permission.

Entries close 28 October.

Christine Jones
September 2004

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6. Books and Materials you can use

"Selling the Invisible"
Harry Beckwith
ISBN 1-58799-066-0

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I have talked about this book before, but it is always worth a re-visit. Beckwith writes about the difficulty the seller of a service has compared to the seller of a product. He argues that in 2005, 80% of all trade will be a service.

A product, he says, is tangible. You can see it and touch it. A service on the other hand is intangible, it does not even exist when you buy it. If you go to a hairdresser, you cannot see, touch or try out a haircut before you buy it. You order it and then you get it. Unlike a car, you cannot hear the 'hum' of a good tax return being prepared, smell a good divorce lawyer, or try on a dry cleaner to see if it flatters you! It is all intangible. You hope for the best. You are concerned and nervous, and have given your power to someone else. Buying meat is a bit like that, isn't it. You hope for the best.

Beckwith argues that we use - and are constantly exposed to and purchasing services that were sold to us using product marketing concepts, part of what he terms the 'old economy'. The process and concept is flawed, as it leaves customers always concerned. That, says Beckwith, "is where your marketing must start: with a clear understanding of that worried soul." That is the 'new economy'.

By treating even physical commodities as a product, old economy product marketers typically have two choices in the market place if they want to keep their customers: either reduce cost to the customer or add value to the product.

Adding value to the product is most often done as a service. For example, take computer software. The core product is a spinning disk, a product containing some code that works. The service is all the bits that keep you working, such as documentation, toll-free numbers, upgrades, etc. You are actually buying a service. New economy marketers focus on relationships, and strangely enough, on simplicity. When things get complicated, people tend to walk away. Brent Rawstron knows that. One product, beautifully serviced and supported.

By the way:

You can get this book from The Book Connection in Dubbo, NSW
Ph: 02 6882 3311 Fax: 02 6882 3311 or email
orders@bookconnection.com.au

(Also ask them about their Mail Order Catalogue - it is terrific)

or

Scorpio Books in Christchurch, NZ
Ph: 03 379 2882 Fax: 03 379 2886 or email scorpbk@ihug.co.nz

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7. Quotes that mean something

"You have to say no to the old ways before you can begin to find the new yes you need."

-- Betty Friedan

"Nature gives you the face you have at 20; it is up to you to merit the face you have at 50."

-- Gabrielle (Coco) Chanel

"Constant kindness can accomplish much. As the sun makes ice melt, kindness causes misunderstanding, mistrust and hostility to evaporate."

--Dr. Albert Schweitzer

"Do one thing every day that scares you."

--Eleanor Roosevelt.

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8. Joke

King Ozymandias of Assyria was running low on cash after years of war with the Hittites. His last great possession was the Star of the Euphrates, the most valuable diamond in the ancient world. Desperate, he went to Croesus, the pawnbroker, to ask for a loan. Croesus said, "I'll give you 100,000 dinars for it."

"But I paid a million dinars for it," the King protested. "Don't you know who I am? I am the King!"

Croesus replied, "When you wish to pawn a Star... it makes no difference who you are!"

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Regards, and keep well
Bruce Ward