

Welcome to [ASK] - Always Seeking Knowledge!
#19 – Who you are is more important than what you do, 21 June, 2005
Written and Published by Bruce Ward, Holistic Results Pty. Limited

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1. Quick [ASK]

It is never easy to stop seeing oneself as a wheat producer, wool grower or cattle breeder, or even at a bigger level, as "a farmer". It is so much easier to remain attached to your past way of life, where people referred to you by what you did - "That's Fred over there. He's a prime lamb producer".

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2. Welcome

There are only a few places available for the trip to Argentina (November 11 to 22 this year), which is filling well. Jim and Daniela Howell have arranged a fantastic itinerary (you will find it at www.scranchtours.com/pampasiten.htm). The plan is to first cover the Pampas, and then fly down to Patagonia, before returning to Buenos Aries to visit the world's largest cattle saleyard complex. The tour will be guided by Alfredo Villegas Oromi, who was a guest speaker at the 999 conference at Orange, NSW. The tour is a mix of cattle and sheep - balanced by considerable leisure time. Highly recommended!

There are still several places available, and we encourage you to check the website shown above, then call Suzie Ward on 02 9929 5568 or 0425 327 577 (mobile). You will be part of a fantastic group of like-minded people, a number of whom are backing up from last years African trip.

The Federal Government is presently paying a significant subsidy to encourage and allow people to obtain 'high speed two-way satellite' internet. That two-way' definition is important. Previously satellite internet has been 'satelite down, phone line up', which has been slow, unreliable and prone to getting out of synch. This new set-up is two way - up and down – to the satelite. The program is called HIBIS, and if eligible, you can expect to pay around \$150 connection cost to have the same internet speeds as city people get with ADSL. No doubt it is the government's cynical attempt at getting support from the bush for the sale of Telstra, but I would be VERY pragmatic about this if I were you, and GRAB it, NOW. You will never get a second chance once Telstra is sold.

It's easy to get totally confused about where the internet is going, but a good rule of thumb is to assume we have hardly seen the start of it. Being a dinosaur and not getting involved will be like

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King Canute announcing he could hold out the tide, or reckoning that the car will never replace the horse - neither attitude was very clever.

Talk to your local computer dealer. Both Telstra www.bigpond.com/internet-plans/broadband/satellite/hibis/ and Optus (Call Optus Broadband Satellite 1300 881 328) have contract options, as do a range of other providers. But get on with it.

The "People in the Landscape" conference held in Armidale, was a great success. Congratulations to Judi Earl, and to Southern New-England Land Care Co-ordinating Committee. A highlight was the attendance of so many people from the US, and their wonderful presentations.

The reason for the US presence was the graduation of the group who began training as Certified Educators back in 2003. Three of that group were Australians, George Gundry, Judi Earl and Jason Virtue. All are now CE's. Congratulations. All told now, 14 people have commenced CE training from Australia and New Zealand. Of these, 12 are now CE's, one remains in training and one person elected not to proceed. It is a great success rate.

Last [ASK] we wrote about the power of holistic financial planning. Over the last few months we have been absolutely delighted at how often people have been able to achieve their targeted profit. In some cases it has required considerable re-vamping of their businesses to get there, but it is being done, and it is likely that, as people make the hard decisions, it will be done more and more.

This issue of [ASK] is focusing on the concept of identifying your self by who you are - people striving, decision by decision, towards their holistic goal, and not seeing themselves as a farmer, a cockie, a wheat, beef or wool producer. There is a huge difference in mental attitude and eventual outcome when you see this difference.

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Over the last couple of years, even under difficult seasonal conditions, and in the case of both wool and venison producers, difficult market conditions as well, the people who have had the most "success" are those who have made the difficult decisions, early. At the Armidale conference (if you were unable to attend, you missed something very special), Charlotte Gundry described the agony of her family making the decision to sell their entire cow-herd last year.

Through deep analysis over several months, it became crystal clear to the entire Gundry family that their business was not to be a "cattle producer" or any similar title, but very simply, that their business was production of their shared holistic goal.

The cattle were simply a tool, and if retained under the seasonal conditions they were experiencing, could quite possibly take out or severely damage all three factors underpinning long term success. The Gundry family risked environmental damage to their land that would take years to recover (there is evidence that it takes at least ten years to fully recover from just one year of severe litter removal), their equity in the herd would be severely compromised if they fed them, leading to financial unsoundness, and all of the above risked severe social disruption, as they spent hours every day slaving over the animals.

Since that time, seasonal conditions have validated the Gundry's original decision. It is still very dry today. It is quite staggering how much of Eastern Australia has had less than 150mm of rain over the last six months or more. Since selling the cattle the Gundry's have been able to

profitably trade some stock. That strategy has allowed them to retain 100% cover over the place, and to conduct a successful financial plan.

Over the last few years many other people have also made the difficult decision to quit their stock early, rather than risk their biological and financial resource base. One family has seriously reduced stock at least twice in the last four years. Not an animal has been fed, and not a patch of soil has been exposed, yet a previously debilitating debt is all but gone. In another case, an entire breeding herd has gone, replaced by a trading operation that is more flexible.

There are increasing numbers of grain producers who are taking a serious look at their businesses, and making choices to downsize or even completely quit cropping. In some cases they are totally restructuring how they do things, so they have greater flexibility to sit out poor markets and seasons.

It is never easy to stop seeing oneself as a wheat producer, wool grower or cattle breeder, or even at a bigger level, as "a farmer". It is so much easier to remain attached to your past way of life, where people referred to you by what you did - "That's Fred over there. He's a prime lamb producer". People say that there is always the little voice in the back of their mind challenging them to stay true to "what you did". The little voice will say to your mind, 'What if you cannot buy them back? What will my mates think? What will the kids at school say to my kids - will they chant slogans saying we have gone broke and are bad managers? Doubt will be overcome by an owned holistic goal, because everything that you do want in life is included in it, and the things you don't want do not even get a mention.

If you have clarity about the life you wish to lead, and how the resource base underpinning you has to be, you will work out even the most difficult of situations in a way that is socially sound, ecologically enhancing and financially rewarding. Don't expect people to turn around and say, "That's Fred over there. He produces his holistic goal, and this year he will use the combined tools of breeding cattle and winter cereal crops to achieve it". It won't happen that way!!

A couple of weeks ago in Christchurch, John King and Alison MacKenzie organised a great little conference to celebrate the arrival of winter! One speaker was Pita Alexander, a Christchurch based accountant who, over the years has had wide exposure to both New Zealand and Australian farmers and agribusiness people. You have probably seen some of his quotes in various magazines and newspapers, some of which are gems of wisdom. In particular, he warned the assembled people to "make sure you never lose the things that money can't buy". You can't buy love or relationships. You can't buy your health. In the end, you will discover that it is the things that money can't buy that are so important in your holistic goal. Give us a call on +61 2 9929 5568 if you have a good story to tell about the benefits of attitude change, and more importantly, give us a call if you are struggling to achieve it.

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4. Update your Diary

There are no scheduled training programs. Bruce is available and will be providing coaching in:

New Zealand -	between July 15 and 23
Hunter Valley and Liverpool Plains -	between July 25 and 28
Western Australia -	between July 29 and August 6

and is available at other times on request, by email blward@holisticresults.com.au or by phone +61 2 9929 556

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5. Notices

There will be a Low Stress Stock Handling school at Willeroo, Tarago (that's near Goulburn, NSW), on June 28 and 29 - only a week away. For further details, please call Charlotte Gundry on Ph: 02 4844 6223 or Mob: 0413 381 500. Prefix with +61 if you are a Kiwi wishing to participate. You may email her at charlottegundry@yahoo.com.au. This program is getting rave reviews, and well worth the money. There are discounts for two or more from the same family.

In the audience at the Armidale conference was an interesting bloke named John Saward. John has a computer software business based in Canberra. Throughout and subsequent to the conference John was busy writing and posting pages to his web site. You might like to see his thoughts and his interviews at www.also.com.au/drupal/?q=holistic. If you are interested, John uses software called Drupal to rapidly produce web pages and low cost web sites.

Rob Scott, who is based at Scone, has recently commenced his business, Farm Easy, which provides hands on management for landowners in the Hunter Valley of NSW. He has a web site www.farmeasy.com.au that you might like to explore. Rob grew up at Scone, has a banking background, and reckons he knows how to tie a figure-8 knot in a bit of 10 gauge wire.

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6. Books and Materials you can use

"Collapse", How societies choose to end or survive
Jared Diamond
ISBN 0 7139 9862 8

Diamond's last book was Guns, Germs and Steel. This book is a sober reflection on the fact that civilisations choose, even unwittingly, to die. The book looks in great depth at modern society in Montana, USA; at past societies on Easter Island, the Anasazi Indians, the Mayans and the Norse of Greenland; and at China, Rawanda and Australia.

Interestingly it was in the very same valley that Diamond writes so despairingly about in Montana that Allan Savory worked in with local families, to restore declining land infested with knapweed, without spending a single cent of the government money that had been ear-marked for rehabilitation of vast areas. In fact, the money was returned to government.

The story of Easter Island is sobering. Perhaps chilling. And it could happen again anywhere in the world, as we now know only too well.

The chapters on Greenland are fascinating, and turned out to be so relevant in the context of the book. Two societies lived there. One, the Inuits (Eskimos), adapted and prospered, whilst the others, based on the Vikings, eventually failed. Diamond argues that they continued to use traditional methods that simply proved inappropriate in that environment.

By far Diamond's greatest angst was directed at the mis-management of Australia. He skilfully analyses our problems, and we would do well to heed his warnings. It simply is not as easy for us, living in the mire, to see things as clearly as an outsider does. Yet, having no understanding of brittleness, and no understanding of the effect of tools in brittle-tending environments, Diamond has drawn the only logical conclusion he could: Australia must be de-stocked and returned to kangaroos etc. I fear he may not be amenable to alternative thinking on this subject.

Having said that, it is a great read in every sense, all 560 pages of it. Diamond gets so close, but still just misses the core of decision-making. He understands that the decisions that people made

and still make continue to create problems, but he cannot yet see what is the basic human decision making process and how it is the root cause of problems.

By the way:

Most books we recommend are available at The Book Connection in Dubbo, NSW Ph: 02 6882 3311 Fax: 02 6882 3311 or email orders@bookconnection.com.au
(Also ask David Pankhurst 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

"Averageis where the worst of the best meet the best of the crap."
-- Pita Alexander

"You have to give up control to gain control."
-- Dr. Ken Evoy

"Have no fear of perfection--you'll never reach it."
--Salvador Dali

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8. Joke

(Verbatim as it was received by us!)

The phone rang. The lady of the house answered.

"Hello?"

"Mrs Ward please."

"Speaking"

"Mrs Ward, this is Dr Jones at the Medical Testing Laboratory. When your doctor sent your husband's samples to the lab, the samples from another Mr Ward were sent as well and we are now uncertain which one is your husband's and frankly the result is either bad or terrible."

"What do you mean?" Mrs Ward asked.

"Well, one Mr Ward has tested positive for Alzheimer's and the other for AIDS. We can't tell which your husband's is."

"That's terrible! Can we do the test over?" questioned Mrs Ward

"Normally, yes. But Medicare won't pay for these expensive tests more than once."

"Well, what am I supposed to do now?"

"The people at Medicare recommend that you drop your husband off in the middle of town. If he finds his way home, don't sleep with him."

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9. New Section - useful web addresses

These are people we (mostly) have trained over the last 11 years. It is fascinating to see the diversity of interest. If you have a site you want like minded people to know about, let us know, and we will add it for you.

In the meantime, check out this lot of diversity!

Who they are	Web address	What you will find
Claire Braund	www.regional.org.au	Great library of rural information
Neville Bryant	www.remarkableexperience.co.nz	Fantastic tour bus, Queenstown, NZ
Tyler Dawley	www.bigbluffranch.com	Small farm direct marketing its products
Mark Dangarfield	www.biotrackaustralia.com.au	Outstanding biological monitoring
Peter Donovan	www.managingwholes.com	Fantastic range of information
Andrew Einspruch	www.laughingowl.com.au	Film maker at Braidwood NSW
Jonathan Forrest	www.boyceca.com	Top notch rural accountants
David Forsythe	www.freechoice.net.au	Nutritional balance of livestock
Gail Guthrie	www.majesticmerino.com	Value adding to wool products
Rob Henderson	www.hcr.cma.nsw.gov.au/kooragang/	Outstanding wetland rehabilitation
Chris Henggeler	www.members.westnet.com.au/satlink/ENVIRONMENTAL%2DLITERACY/	
Barry Hopkinson	www.tuicreek.co.nz	Top line property development
John King	www.succession.co.nz	Excellent holistic resources
Peter Lytton-Hitchins	www.kyabra.com	Merino genetics
Nicholas Mills	www.ripon.co.nz	Organic winery on the shore of Lake Wanaka, NZ
Phillip Panizza	www.shearexpress.com.au	Developing a revolutionary shearing process
John Polglase	www.divstrat.com.au	Web development using XML
Allan Richardson	www.avalonfarm.co.nz	Branding both the farm business and its products
Tom Rowley	www.lakehaweestation.co.nz	Homestay on the shores of Lake Hawea, NZ
David Taylor	www.pooginook.com.au	Wool, genetics and value added products
Peter Turnbull	www.citicoastrealty.com.au	Industrial and commercial real estate
Suzie Ward	www.agri.com.au	Placement agency - agriculture and agribusiness
Tess Wier	www.kiwitech.co.nz	Manufacturers of 'Spider' electric fencing

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This publication is intended as information and not advice. You should test any ideas contained herein towards your own holistic goal.

Regards, and keep well
Bruce Ward