

A Cover Story



Robinson Raincoats



AN INFORMAL HISTORY OF
LAMB COVERS

JIM RYAN, ARROWTOWN, NOVEMBER 2018

Have penned this brief history of Farmland Products Ltd and the Lamdry and then the Robinson Raicoats lamb cover projects so that our family, friends and descendants can have some understanding of what we got up to.

It has been very special to meet up with Brent and Ann-Maree Robinson and hear of their stories of picking up the project from 2010.

There were many unforeseen challenges and a sincere thank you for those that helped get this project over the line.

Apologies for any omissions, inaccuracies and typos but the stories and events are what happened and they are not in any set chronological order. Also have gone off topic a few times!

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It was a dark and stormy night (isn't that how all exciting stories start?!) at Boggyburn in September 1974 and Irene and I had gone to spend the night with Bill and Elaine Wells and after a very enjoyable meal Bill declared that he had to "do another round" (a round meaning go around the lambing ewes).

It was bucketing down and being a good ex farmer agreed that perhaps should go out there with him. Well any lamb choosing to be born in these atrocious weather conditions was quite simply going to die. Bill meanwhile had pinched some chicken bags one time when he had called to see me at the factory! He started to put these on any new born lambs he could find in the darkness.

The next morning we found many dead lambs but those with the chicken bags on were prancing round just fine. Bill showed me how he made a slit in the bag to go over the lambs head and likewise for the legs.

Ok now here was something that needed to be thought about. Somehow couldn't get out of my mind that to commercialise this the covers should be in tear off rolls. Managed to secure a small roll of the plastic that they extruded for chicken bags and rolled this out on the lounge floor and started drawing design options. After many days and options came up with a layout that thought could work.

By this time the main lambing season has passed but somewhere found some new born lambs and tried on the makeshift covers. Had simply used a stapler to close the neck opening and cut round holes for the legs. They weren't pretty but was sure when the covers were made professionally they would be fine.

While in Christchurch called at UEB packaging and explained what wanted them to make. Not hearing from them for sometime contacted them to see how they were going with the pricing. "Sorry but we have no way of making them" they said. In a slight panic approached other plastic bag manufacturers only to get the same response. Gulp - that's the end of that then.



The ringer washing machine rollers

so that they stopped after they had measured out the exact length of a cover. It included a sprag clutch (a unit that only turned one way). Then a modified drill press that held 2 drills that came down via an air ram with fast spinning hole saws to cut the leg holes. Also attached was a curved bar with small surgical knives (perforator) that created the tear off line. This clever little unit was

THE MONTH DOWN SOUTH

by 'Nor'wester'

I had an interesting letter this morning from Jim Ryan of Invercargill as a sequel to a remark of mine about lamb losses being minimized if we could get hold of cheap, disposable lamb covers. He and a friend have spent the last six months developing this very thing.

He sent me one and it looks ideal.

If I had had these covers last lambing in the two bad snow storms. I'd have saved upward of 100 lambs. Personally I think they could be a breakthrough.

N.Z. FARMER February 13, 1975

Can't quite recall the chain of events but did tell mate Tosh about the stalemate that had reached and by the end of the evening (and ok a few whiskeys) we had made up our minds to have a crack and see if could make a machine to manufacture them ourselves. On reflection if had known how darn difficult plastic film is to cut and work with would probably have never started! Obviously 2 rubber rollers were needed to pull the plastic and the first place to find those is a 1950s era wringer washing machine. We started with a metal frame made out of light slotted steel and mounted the 2 rollers somehow and had a mechanism

built by Ken Ward (one of Tosh's guys at H & J Smith Electrical). He painstakingly attached surgical knives to the unit then added a spring system to separate the plastic once the cycle was complete. Between this and the front hole saw was a small heat unit that welded the plastic to form the collar of the cover. Once this was all completed the drill press lifted up and the next cover moved into place. At the end was a magnetic spindle where a cardboard core



was placed and 50 or 100 covers at time were wound

onto it. The spindle turned via rotating magnets so that it would stop while the previous cover was made. This spindle was actually a very smart piece of engineering thanks to Gough Brothers Engineering. It had to keep the plastic at just the right tension, adjust speed as the covers wound



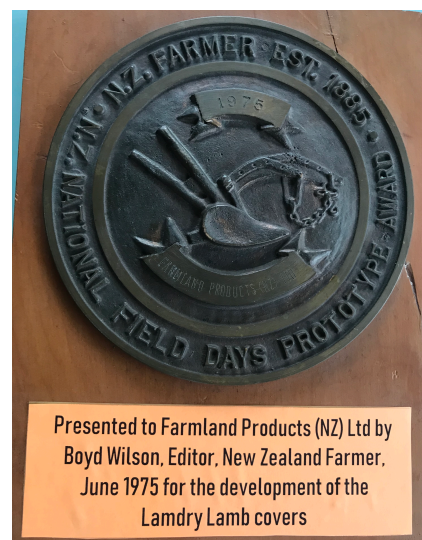
onto it then stop while a cover was made. Some considerable time was taken to get it adjusted just right and it is quite incredible that many millions of covers later it still appears to work perfectly. The whole machine however was very fragile and very very temperamental but we made covers! Pneumatics were an important part and Tosh and I travelled to a 2 day course at the Auckland University. This helped immensely and also a few years afterwards when we developed the Rotomatic poultry processing machine.

All of this was happening in early winter 1975 and the lambing season was fast approaching. Bill and I had formed Farmland Products (NZ) Ltd to run everything under. We had John Wright Promotions prepare packaging and advertising material plus a TV advert. There was considerable interest in the farming community and a character who wrote in the New Zealand Farmer under the byline of NorthWester gave them a great write up.

We both headed to the 1975 Field Days in Hamilton and have no idea where or how but someone had managed to track down a ewe with a very young lamb for this early July event. They created considerable interest and caught the eye of the judges for the innovation award. It was a great

pleasure and pride to receive this prestigious award and even more so as it was presented by Boyd Wilson the editor of the NZ Farmer and a good friend from Otautau Jaycee days when he was the Department of Agriculture representative for Western Southland.

On the Saturday it started to rain so we headed north towards Auckland and the rain got heavier and heavier. We stopped about noon at a small pub and there was quite a crowd of rugby fans there on their way to Eden



Park to see the All Blacks play Scotland. Overheard one guy say that they were pulling the pin due to the atrocious conditions and

anyone could have his 2 tickets. I grabbed them and then Bill and we roared north and screeched into Tom and Pam's at 27 Southern Cross Road and politely asked if he would drop us off at Eden Park. Tom had just settled back and was watching the build up on TV. Don't think he was too



thrilled but we got there just as the game started. Our seats were in the open and it was impossible to try and stay dry despite our good farm wet weather gear. The ground was about 25% water but we did catch a brilliant Brian Williams try as he slid through about 10 metres of water right in front of us. During half time there was a poor drenched soul walking up and down waving his hands frantically and yelling "does anyone know me, does anyone know where I am from". About 10 minutes before full time I said to Bill let's get out of here and we did manage to grab a taxi but for some reason he would only take us down town. He dropped 2 totally drenched individuals at the Railway Hotel and recall that mine host made us stay well away from the main bar.

The next day a real coincidence happened while we were with Tom and Pam and they had a few people in from the Remuera Bridge Club (Tom was President) for drinks. It was very apparent that

there was no way our creaky Dr Seuss like apparatus was going to be able to match potential sales. Tom mentioned about the lamb cover project and having to build our own machine. One of the guys was Morris Reynolds, CEO of UEB and was totally intrigued that his staff had said that they couldn't make them. Morris asked if I could be at Head Office at 8.30 the next morning. Sure thing, and I fronted up to this big conference room with about 12 engineers. Gulp! Right Jim Ryan tell these guys how you make lamb covers! They were fascinated and their head engineer said ok and thanks, we think we can do something.

Meanwhile we had arranged distribution through A.J. Palmer a nationwide farm wholesaler. Tom was the CEO and Brian Taylor their Invercargill manager. Their initial orders staggered us a little. Tom said that our payment in one month was the largest they had ever made to a single supplier. At the same time other farm supply equipment manufacturers were in contact with us to see if they could help with arranging distribution through their existing international agents. Things were moving just a little bit too quickly and we had yet to fully prepare patents. Bill Howie from A.J. Park and Sons in Wellington was on the case though. He was great to deal with and soon had provisional patents in place in the

14 The Southland Times, Friday, February 14, 1975.

Southlanders' 'Tear-off' Covers for New Lambs

Two Southlanders have come up with a simple and effective solution to the perennial problem of keeping newborn lambs alive during snaps of cold and wet weather.

In fact they are so confident they formed a company: Farm-land Products Ltd, devoted solely to manufacturing their brainwave. The two partners are farmer Bill Wells, Centre Bush, and businessman Jim Ryan.

Mr Ryan gives credit for the idea to his partner who came into his food processing factory one day and purloined some plastic packing material.

Like most sheep farmers Mr Wells had experienced the inevitable seasonal losses when newborn lambs died as a result of exposure to late storms. The main cause of death was, of course, that the lambs became wet and lost body heat.

He considered that if the lambs could be kept dry then two thirds of the battle had been won. Other farmers used lamb covers on occasions, but usually they were so cumbersome that it was virtually impossible to cover all lambs in time to save them.

He reckoned that friend Jim Ryan's packing material could be just the thing he was looking for ... so he pinched some.

Scorning traditional methods of string or elastic band fastenings—he was looking for a quick method—he experimented with a semi-permanent cover

with holes through which the lambs legs could be poked at the first sign of bad weather.

Hardest Part

At this stage Mr Wells was going through quite a lot of his friend's packing material, searching for the ideal shape and size of the cover. Like all ideas, simple as they may be, the practical application of them is the hardest part.

So Mr Ryan came in to the act and between them they spent many hours with scissors and endless sheets of packing material. It was obvious that for it to be a success the covers would have to be uniform in size and yet be a snug fit. So there were limiting factors to contend with, no strings, holes in the right place, a product that would be quick and easy to put on the lamb, and yet durable enough to last until it was no longer necessary. All this plus the cost factor.

Eventually they came up with the right combination and in one night, in its first seasons use, Mr Wells lost only 10 lambs while a neighbour lost over a hundred.

It was a success; the system was patented, a company was formed and they went into production. The covers come in rolls of a hundred. All you do is charge around the paddock with your roll, tear off a cover as you would a plastic bag and shove it over the unprotected lamb in a matter of seconds.

LA and the boys from the country arrive. Jump in a “taxi” only to discover after 30 minutes or that there is no meter! Never mind we got to the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel ok. This is a very famous old Hollywood joint and right opposite the Chinese Theatre. Bill was totally unimpressed though



he saw San Francisco Fire Department on them. He glanced out the window to the street far below and we then headed to the nearest bar.

The next day was 5th September 1975 and we were heading to New York about mid afternoon but the US President Gerald Ford was due to make an appearance in Union Square. We joined the large crowd but check in time was looming and we had to leave. We had just missed one of US history's most dramatic events. Somewhere beside us in the crowd had been Squeaky Fromme and she had a gun. Fortunately the Secret Service got to her. We boarded our flight and beside us Air Force One was being hastily prepared for a quick getaway. Our driver (sorry pilot) tuned the PA system to the control tower so that we could all hear the frantic exchange with the aeroplane and their passenger who thought he was more important than us! That was fine. They tore off back to Washington and we



eventually
headed east
too. Except
our driver had
forgotten to turn off the audio feed from the control tower to our
PA. After about 10 minutes from takeoff we heard him frantically
calling the tower asking for directions. “Hell we forgot about
you” was the reply. We signalled for the drinks trolley.
After all that it was after midnight before we got to our very very
run down hotel in Lexington Avenue, New York. No lift if recall
and it was dingy and dark and screams could be heard from the
street. Off to adjoining rooms and after a while thought should go
back and check on Bill. Knocked on his door. No reply. Knocked
again and said it was me. A lot of scraping and heaving and
eventually he opened the door a fraction before letting me in. He

ear-off pack **Newborn lambs staying alive in Mono covers**



A simple but highly effective polythene cover produced by UEB's Mono, Auckland, flexible packaging branch, has saved many thousands of newborn lambs on New Zealand farms this year.

Two Scotchlanders designed the cover and formed a company, Farmland Products Ltd, to market it. Already, they see a potential of millions of the covers and they have already sold more than 1.3 million of them.

Miro produces the cover, called a Larder, in teat-off rolls of 100 which go into a carton from UEB's Christchurch carton branch. Farmers can roll it out from the carton at lambing time, can tear off a cover and place it over a lamb in a matter of seconds.

The two partners in Farmland are Mr Bill Wells, a farmer, at Centre

Bush, near Invercargill, and Mr Jim Ryan, once a farmer but now a businessman operating an Invercargill stock processing factory.

"It is not so much the cold, but continual wetness and wind which kills newborn lambs," Mr Ryan told UEB News. "About five million lambs die each year in the following week or two every lambing season so



Mr Ryan gives credit for the idea to his partner who came into his factory one day and helped himself to some polystyrene packing material.

Seasonal

Mr Ryan became interested in the idea and he and Mr Wells spent many hours with scissors and sheets of polythene film. The cover had to be uniform in size but a snug fit. It had to have holes in the right place, no strings and be quick and easy to put on the lamb, yet durable and inexpensive. The Laundry, which is now

Australia

Mr Ryan said Laundry covers were now being distributed to all schools.

Zealand and interest was being shown in them in Australia.

had piled every bit of furniture he could against the door. There were stains of unknown origin down the wallpaper. The window was cracked and didn't close properly. The bed sunk in the middle. Welcome to New York.

It was off to the New Zealand Embassy the next morning. They had been updated from the LA office about progress so there was not much more they could do except to invite us back that evening to a cocktail function for forgotten what. We had a big day exploring New York and managed somehow to get the underground back to our dive of a hotel to dress up as best we could for the Embassy function. In my total misguided mind I thought we should walk and it was lucky we survived. It was just on dark as we headed up the seedy Lexington Avenue and soon we were surrounded by very professional "ladies". They became quite upset when we spurned their advances and initially we thought it quite funny. That quickly changed when out of the gloom emerged their heavies. They stopped us and accused us of being undercover police. They patted us down for guns. On reflection it was probably only our strange accents that saved our hides. We did manage to flag down a taxi and when we got to the Embassy we told of our experience. "You where where?" We were then given a right telling off by I think the boss himself. We hung round for a short while, enjoying the free drinks and nibbles but then got a cab down to Times Square. I paid the driver and turned round to find Bill talking to two heavily armed police. He was just asking them where the New York pie cart was!

The next morning it was off to JFK and onto London. A much better Marble Arch area hotel and we headed to bed. I woke to the clank of thought milk bottles. Had totally no idea of the time so rang reception. 5.30 they said. I digested that and rang them back and asked if it was morning or evening. Evening it was. Dug Bill out of his room and said that we were going to the pub. "Before

breakfast?" he said. Shut up and follow me. Right across the road was a typical London pub filled with bowler hatted gentlemen with umbrellas and brief cases. We ordered 2 beers and both nearly choked at the luke warm substance. We stuck with it a very slowly got used to it.

The first thing we did the next day was get on a double decker and sat right at the front up top and did the rounds of central London to try and get our bearings. It took a few try's on the underground before eventually started to get the hang of it.

Thanks to the recommendations of the likes of Bill (now Sir) Gallagher of electric fence fame we had a great contact with Alfred Cox Surgical the large UK farm goods wholesaler. We caught a train down to Croydon to be met by their CEO Gerry Ilam. He gave us a tour of their warehouse and then to a great little country pub for a long lunch. Gerry was a great fellow and a deal was sealed and we did business with them for the next ten years or so. He shouted us a trip up to somewhere (forgotten where) in middle England to a real country show. This gave us a great insight

"LAMDRI"
TEAR OFF LAMB COVERS

Everyone talks about the life a farmer has at lambing time. Only a farmer really knows the reality of it. A farmer came up with the "lamdry" idea.

ITS CONVENIENT, ITS ECONOMICAL, ITS FAST AND IT WORKS.

IN ROLLS OF A HUNDRED

TURN OVER TO READ AGRICULTURAL REPORTERS COMMENTS

into British sheep farming and we had an enthusiastic response after showing farmers the covers. Well that was the UK work done and dusted so we really got stuck into being tourists in London. One evening we were going to a show and after emerging from the tube Bill insisted he needed a beer - right now and dived into the first bar he saw. Leaning on the bar I glanced round at the all male patrons and realised that it was probably not the right sort of bar for either of us. I gently explained this to Bill and he gulped down his beer and dashed for the door. On the way I grabbed his hand. He violently disengaged and once outside berated me for letting him go into a place like that!

And so to France. We had a great trip to Paris first by train to Dover then the ferry and a fast train to Gare de Nord. The toilets were a bit "Continental" in that they emptied direct onto the track. It was quite a social journey and recall pulling Bill's leg that the big ponds we passed is where they grew all the frogs legs.

Paris - a new language and currency and plumbing. It was quite a battle getting to grips with all that and then there were all the Africanians selling their wares in the street alongside the beggars. Bill being the softhearted old sod he was started giving to them and had to reel him in. Didn't get much help from the NZ Embassy but in the end Alfred Cox Surgical had agents in Europe. Did the normal touristy things and headed to Athens. Climbed over the Acropolis then visited the NZ Embassy but they didn't think there was much prospect. Off then to Tehran and a bit of a culture shock. It was right at the end of Mohammad Reza Pahlavis reign as the Shah and you could feel the tension in the air. We booked into the Hilton and felt quite secure and the next morning took a taxi to a very heavily fortified NZ Consulate. Again we got growled at! You should have contacted us and we would have come and got you they said. They took us to a potential agent in some odd very solid vehicle and the driver had a conspicuous bulge under his jacket. They dropped off back at the Hilton and then came to take us to the airport the next day. Tehran airport had been extensively damaged by a heavy snow fall but we found a comfortable bar and I ordered toast and caviar. One of us was not too impressed with the topping especially after he found out what it really was but as there was no marmite he gradually nibbled away at the toast washing it down with a local beer.



At Bangkok there was some hold up with our connecting flight to Singapore and Bill was at this stage totally sick of hanging around and said he was going to sort it. Off he went and came back very soon after. Tried to get a rental he said. I explained that it was probably 2000 plus km and even with a Sherman tank or a D8 bulldozer if we made it we would be likened to Dr Livingston! Singapore was fun and the outdoor markets and bars and eating very special. We did manage a pink cocktail at Raffles but we found it quite difficult to relieve ourselves from the back of a rickshaw that wouldn't stop! No joy in selling lamb covers. Off then to Perth and by this time all we wanted to do was get home. Can't recall what business we did there except Bill brought a very nice stereo unit. Then to Sydney and Kings Cross was where our hotel was. I think we slept most of the time before thankfully getting on our flight to Auckland. Our dramas however were not yet over. Bill did not declare the stereo and a very tenacious customs officer needed I think \$300. We were out of cash and he

wouldn't take a credit card. Gulp. Ok so rang brother Tom and he rushed out to the airport with cash and met us in the domestic terminal where we were minutes away from catching our flight south. The customs officer had followed us until he was paid!

It was two very tired guys that were pleased to see the families at Invercargill and probably have a break from each other. The bad news was that in 7 days time Elaine and Irene and Bill and I were due to leave for Australia for the Orange Field days. This had been arranged long before we had hastily taken off on the world trip. It was a very very busy week. First I had to catch up on everything at tautau. There was some patching up to do too with Lamdry. Totally unbeknownst to us UEB had changed the thickness of the film from 35 micron to 50 micron and the covers were not breaking off the lambs as they grew and were instead cutting into their legs. You would have thought that farmers would have made some attempts to remove them. Fortunately the then Radio New Zealand agriculture front person was a mate. John Gordon and I were in the same group at Lincoln and he had been trying to contact me while we were overseas. Off air I explained the issue but he still gave quite a firm interview which was great. Fortunately by now lambing for 1975 was nearly finished and the issue died away but it did enable us to prepare for the next season. So back on an airplane. The girls were delighted but Bill and I were totally unenthusiastic about it.



A couple of nights in Sydney. One day we had a very pleasant lunch at Bondi Beach and that night we were balancing up the cash float that we had and to our horror found that none of us had paid for the lunch. It was too late to go back and about 5 years after Irene and I tried to find the place but either it had gone or we were mistaken about where it was. We are always relieved that we have never been stopped at Australian Departure!

Anyway the next day and a rental to Bathurst the closest accommodation we could get to the Orange fieldays. The New Zealand Trade people had managed to track down a ewe with a couple of

lambs for our display. They actually created quite a lot of interest with their white Lamdry covers. Again like our close encounter with a major political event in San Francisco the previous month we were unwittingly right on the front line of Australian political history.

The 1975 Australian constitutional crisis, also known simply as the Dismissal, has been described as the greatest political and constitutional crisis in Australian history. It culminated on 11 November 1975 with the dismissal from office of the Prime Minister, Gough Whitlam of the Australian Labor Party (ALP), by Governor-General Sir John Kerr, who then commissioned the Leader of the Opposition, Malcolm Fraser of the Liberal Party, as caretaker Prime Minister.

Ok how do we fit into all this?! ABC TV were filming live from the field days and were actually at our display. I was standing next to the Director who had head phones on and was in live contact with his Producer in Canberra. Suddenly he jumped up and down screaming "he's gone, he's gone". This was about 10 minutes before it became public that Whitlam had been sacked. Well we started telling everybody and we had these graziers shaking our hand and thumping us on the back! Then I



thought, hell our New Zealand High Commissioner is here. Found him the New Zealand marque talking with a group of people. Gad what to do?! Eventually I interrupted and pulled him to one side and told him the news. He went totally pale - paused for a moment then signalled for his chauffeur and bolted for their car. There was a spray of gravel and dust as they roared back to Canberra. Think it was moments after this that one of the Trade guys introduced us to a guy who had shown some interest in wholesaling our covers. Dave Mullen must have wondered what these hyped up kiwis were all about! If I recall Dave, Bill and I proceeded to the bar in the New Zealand marque to calm down a little! At that stage little did Dave know what events would unfold over the next 40+



years. Anyway we struck a deal with Rural Sales and Marketing so a very satisfying visit.

Fast forward one year and Bill offered to go back to Orange as a guest of Dave and Rural Sales and join them at staying their Orange hotel. This had been secured years before and the annual booking was the envy of many other exhibitors through not having to travel vast distances every day. Now I am not even going to try and tabulate the events that occurred one evening at the hotel as have been dished up so many versions! What is not disputed however is that they

were kicked out and told never to return. Apparently Bill's breeding was questioned every morning and evening for years as the Rural Sales team had to endure a daily long drive to distant accomodation at Bathurst.

Irene and I headed for our first visit to Surfers Paradise and the Sands apartments right on the beech. After that we caught up with Elaine and Bill in Melbourne. Have forgotten the fine details but we were all pre booked into quite an upmarket hotel, the Old Melbourne at 5 Flemington Road. We were the first to arrive and found that the rate was about \$150 (remember this was 1975). After some "discussion" I think we got it down to \$120. Going back to our room we thought stuff this and went and checked into the Victoria Hotel right downtown for about \$75. We left a note at reception to give to Elaine and Bill when they arrived but they didn't pass it on. It took about 2 days for us to track them down. They had been paying the \$150 and were not impressed at all! The joys of travel. On our last night we treated ourselves to a very nice meal at the Hilton on all the "savings" we had made! Actually it was not that expensive and must say that it still sits as one of the nicest meals out that have ever had.

On arriving home we brought a colour Philips K9 TV each on the company and put them down as advertising in the books. Think the statue of limitations will let us off any IRD investigation 42 years after this minor financial misdemeanour!

Eventually we tracked down a second hand plastic bag manufacturing machine which gave us a good base to make a more reliable functional unit. These machines had a few different homes. The

pre cooking room at tautau was the first base and for a time it was in our garage at home and then out to Wallacetown to Tosh's.



The round off cuts from the leg holes were difficult to deal with. Eventually we purchased a very large vacuum cleaner and mounted this below the hole saws. It was effective but the noise was off putting! To this day those small round off cuts will be still found at 166 Catherine Street, Invercargill and 22 Cumnock Street, Wallacetown. Future archaeologists will be scratching their heads about where they came from!

Tosh thought that somehow we should spray something on the covers that had a meat aroma and that way hopefully the sheep dogs would tear a pack to pieces and more would have to be purchased.... Eventually the machine was moved to a specially built room at tautau. Before this however we had a huge argument with the Southland District Council. The Export Institute had run a number of stories about Southland entities who had built up export markets and while we asked them not to mention the machine was in the garage of 22 Cumnock Street, but somehow it got published. One Alan Haig who lived on the other side of town complained to Council that he was having interference on his TV and this obviously was where it was originating from! Council told us to cease at once. We had just had a huge order from Jerry Islam at Alfred Cox Surgical in the UK and poor Rayna was working hard to get it completed. Think we did stop. Asked Alan Haig if the interference on his TV had stopped. No! Very politely called at Council and saw the planning head and explained about the order and Haig. Things got a little heated and he brought in the Council CEO. Still no joy so that's when we moved to tautau.



We found a very good engineer in Christchurch who added the ability to print numbers onto the covers. It was quite a complex job and it did work but was a damn messy job with the ink. We pulled the pin on it after a couple of years and think that Rayna and then Alan Martin were most pleased that we did!

Meanwhile sales were still progressing well both in New Zealand and Britain. News reached us via our agents however that a competitor was in the market and they eventually sent us a pack. It was clearly in breach of our trade mark and this was totally confirmed by Bill Howie our Patent Attorney at A.J.Park in Wellington. He fired off a very threatening letter to them. They did come right back and conceded that they were "perhaps" infringing and could we meet to discuss options. It turns out that the guy behind this was a Dan Cherrington. More about him latter. Dan had married Sandy Story from Wyndham. He agreed to meet and even offered us a bed at the farm. Brian Talboys was a great family friend and in 1975 he was Minister of

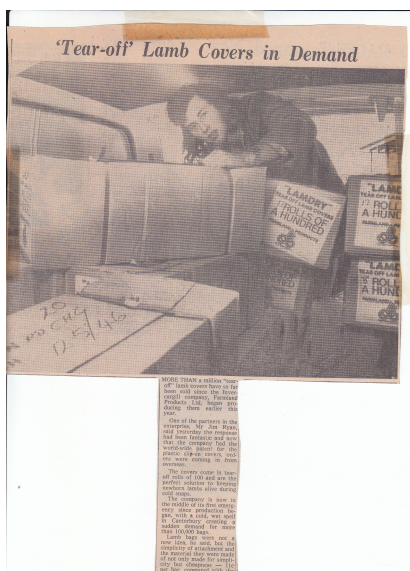
Overseas Trade and during a visit to Britain was bemused to read a story in a major paper about the lamb covers.

By now it was 1978 and had been considering a European expedition to test the waters for the Rotomatic plucking machine that had developed. Irene and I planned quite an extensive itinerary covering chicken and Lamdry business with a small amount of recreation tossed in. Looking at where we went and who we caught up with now it's no wonder we arrived home needing a holiday! Irene's Mum held the home fort and did a fantastic job.

After Hawaii, LA, San Francisco, Winnipeg, New York and Washington it was the time that the Ryans had to take to the road

American style. We picked up a Chev Impala and thankfully we didn't have any turns to make for the first three miles and after that it wasn't really too bad after all. It takes a little while to get used to sitting on the other side of the car and driving but the important thing is to remember to keep on the correct side of the road - especially when making turns. The highways are very well numbered and in no time we found ourselves on the correct route to Barboursville. We passed many historic monuments associated with the Federal Wars

and it was interesting to stop and read the inscriptions on these. This is really a very beautiful part of America and it is unfortunate that more New Zealanders do not have the opportunity to visit this area. We arrived in Barboursville about midday and were greeted with a very warm welcome from Bill and Stella Hess of Sheepman Supply Limited. Barboursville we are told, has a population of about 500 but I would suspect that on the latest census polls, there would be about 450 of those now absent. It was a really delightful small town - America style and is like something you would see in a TV show. Bill has about 300 acres and runs sheep of course - these he uses mainly for experimental purposes - for the various Universities in the U.S.A. which are doing experiments on Blue Batiy Disease. He also sells quite a considerable number of studs. It was interesting to see his wintering shed and go out in the fields and talk with his two men who were



that day making Alfalfa Hay. While we were there, there were two farmers who arrived from just

over the hills in Kentucky (600 miles away) to pick up two stud rams. I had taken quite a number of sheep -farming aids from New Zealand to show Bill. That night, Bill and Stella came and joined us at the Ramada Inn, Charlottesville for an enjoyable evening. Bill at the time was Vice-President of the American Sheep Producers Council and was due to be Chairman after October. This Council works very closely with the New Zealand and Australian Meat Boards and Devco. They were very concerned at about the quality of the



New Zealand Lamb that is reaching the customer. It is very badly coloured and while they appreciate that the quality is first-class when it leaves New Zealand, there does appear to be deteriorating during the distribution cycle. They are trying to promote lamb (there is less than 1lb eaten per head of population compared with 3lb of mushrooms!), and anything like poor quality can only detract from the product as a whole. We sorted a North American agency but no great numbers were ever sold.

It was on to Atlanta via a very dodgy Piedmont Airways who managed to loose all our luggage. Then to Houston, London and after a weekend of playing tourists we caught a train to Coulsdon South where we were met by Jerry Irlam of Alfred Cox, our European Agents for the lamb covers. Jerry is a very straight forward guy and was really a pleasure to meet him again and find out all the happenings in this part of the world. It was interesting to hear some of the free publicity that has been given - apparently BBC in their Prime Time News Spot ran a five-minute story. The other television stations also ran various items. Jerry drove us around some of the magnificent Surrey countryside with gentle rolling hills and winding country lanes - a really delightful area considering it is so close to London. We caught the commuter train back to London and got caught up in the mad rush of the underground rail system - it is a really remarkable transportation method for the number of people that it moves so rapidly.

After that down to Southampton (where it was more chicken stuff), Dorchester and then we struck gold! I always recall St. Ives as a picturesque fishing village that has appeared on countless calendars and post cards about Britain and it always seemed a little unreal. We pulled into town about 4.30 pm and parked the car and

started a hunt for a bed for the night. The first hotel we came to appeared to be very nice but we decided to have a look around town for something else - after enquiring on prices and looking at one or two rooms, we decided to go back to the first hotel and booked into the Pedn Olva (<https://www.pednolva.co.uk/>). Little did we know that we had a room that is regarded as having one of the

best views in the world. From where we were we looked out across the harbour to the light-house, the fishing boats tied up, the houses jammed in tight right on the narrow cobblestone street, and the fishermen sitting attending to their nets. The rocky foreshore was at least six feet from our window and the sound of the waves and sea gulls was almost unreal. We headed to the lounge for a drink before the evening meal and were joined by another New Zealand couple who are working in Britain for a short time. He has the job as the New Zealand High Commissioner in London and Sir Douglas and Lady Carter were on a six day vacation at this Hotel in St. Ives! It was mighty catching up with them and I think they were equally as pleased to see us as we were delighted to meet up with them. Doug had actually been to brother Bruce's Bayswater farm. Doug and Sonny were a great couple and it was interesting to hear of their experiences and happenings as New Zealand's representatives in this part of the world - this is not the place to repeat any of those stories but they are certainly leading an interesting and varied life

THE FARMER AWARD FOR MANUFACTURER'S PROTOTYPE AT NATIONAL FIELD DAYS

Lamb covers at 11c each

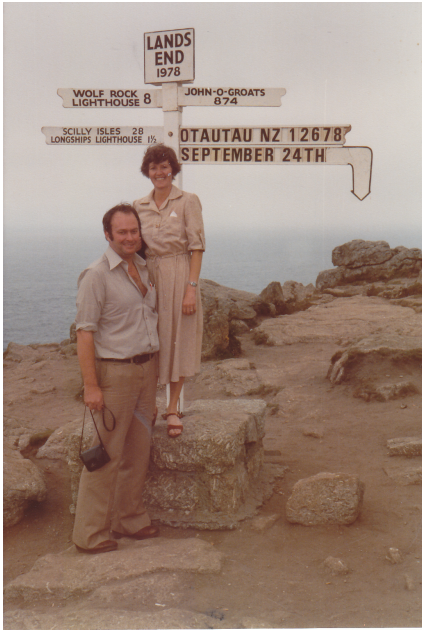
Something like five million lambs die at birth and in the following week or two in New Zealand each year.

The number that could be saved from death by exposure to the weather is enormous. The farmer who uses these covers will find that his lambs are protected from the weather and that they are healthy and strong when they are weaned.

The covers are made of a special material which is strong and durable. They are easy to use and can be put on or taken off in a few minutes. They are also very cheap at only 11c each.

The covers are made by Farmland Products (NZ) Ltd. of Invercargill, and are available in all parts of the country.

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style. They have asked us if we will be present at New Zealand House in London on 13 October when there is an official welcoming party for some New Zealand Rugby Players who we believe are coming over to Britain for a visit! After a very pleasant meal we departed and explored the town at night and as there was a festival in progress there were a lot of happenings. It was almost like Capping with pranks and hilarity ringing up and down the narrow streets. Sunday morning, and we were just about to leave our Hotel room when Doug and Sonny came down and we spent the next three or four hours wandering the cobble stone courtyards and street that are such a feature of this beautiful area. After a morning tea of Cornish cream and scones we bid farewell to the Carters and headed up to the Leach Potteries. Unfortunately, being Sunday, they were closed but Irene was still very keen to see where these famous works are situated. A very winding narrow road took us over heath and mist covered hills to Lands End. This was the country in which the Poldark television series was filmed and one wouldn't have

been surprised to see him appear over a hill top as the countryside was exactly as it was shown in the series. Lands End was predictably very crowded and after the traditional photo at the signpost, we headed back east towards Plymouth, driving a different route through gentle green rolling countryside. After driving through some very narrow winding hedge lined roads, we arrived at Dan and Sandy Cherrington's farm about 5.30 pm. At this stage should perhaps mention a little about his history. Dan is the son of John Cherrington who is perhaps one of the most colourful characters in British agriculture. He is the farming editor of the Times Newspaper and writes articles for many farming publications including the New Zealand Farmer. Dan is the host of the BBC Television farming program and is equally as well known in British agriculture circles. He runs an Agriculture Advisory Service as well as a farm wholesaling business. His farm is about 500 acres and is a mixed cropping enterprise. We had a walk around that evening and it was interesting to see some of his ideas in practice. One that is under trial is under-sowing barley with parsley - the straw has been baled off and the parsley is about 3 inches high and at that stage was doing very well - it will be interesting to know how it pans out. Another trial was aerial sowing of turnips into barley, about one month before harvest but this turned out to be a howling failure - much to the amusement of



neighbouring farmers. Dan is quite a colourful character and is a great enthusiast for New Zealand - he worked on Ozzie Fellows farm at Thornbury in 1962 and during his last visit to New Zealand in 1974, he stayed with Kerry Dunlop and also Bernard Pinnie. He was handling quite a few New Zealand products including the Gallagher electric fence and some Stafix products from Invercargill. We had a solid mornings discussion on Monday regarding royalty payments for his Lamac covers for the next season and future sales. We have come to an arrangement that will be negotiated each year and he fully concedes that he has been contravening our British patent and presented me with a cheque for £3000 for payment for last season's royalties. I feel the

arrangement we have come to in so far as we are concerned is excellent as it leaves room for

negotiating as each season approaches and we certainly do hold the whip hand. In the afternoon, Irene and I had a five mile walk along the cliff face and the view up the English coast and across the Channel was superb. It was interesting to inspect their grain handling facilities and discuss their methods for storage and drying. It is not uncommon to harvest grain up to 30 per cent moisture and - for it to be stored at this percentage - they use a variety of methods including additives which are put in while the grain is being augured. Most of the grain is shifted by a pneumatic system and this is found far more efficient than having many small augers.

On the next morning we bid farewell to the Cherrington family and drove the ten miles in morning rush traffic to Plymouth. We had time for a quick look at the Bowling Green where Sir Francis Drake made his famous statement - the locals tell us you can't even see where the enemy ships were supposed to be from the Bowling Green! A couple of phone calls to London to check with the trade people on progress and we boarded the Brittany Ferry for the journey to Roscoff. We departed at 10 am and were supposed to arrive about 4.30 pm but unfortunately one engine broke down and it was nearly 9.30 p.m. before we eventually arrived. We had grabbed a cabin and were fortunate to catch up on some much needed rest. It is rather unnerving to arrive in a foreign country with no basic understanding of the language, no currency and no hotel bookings. Roscoff was about as busy as Drummond is on a Friday night but we did manage to catch a taxi with another English couple who were able to converse with the taxi driver and we were fortunate to obtain a hotel. Roscoff is a little like St. Ives with narrow winding streets and fine old stone buildings and the inevitable church in the centre of the village. At 10 am the next morning we caught a shuttle rail car to Morlaix to catch the Paris train. We had been advised to travel First Class and we were very thankful that we did as there was standing room only in the rest of the train so we were able to travel in relative comfort. The journey across France took most of the day and it was very beautiful country side that went through a lot of market gardens in the Brittany part of France, carrying on through dairying areas. As we neared Paris the journey took us through places such as St. Brieu, Rennes, Laval, Le Mans, Chartres and on to Paris.

After Paris we had quite extensive chicken business in Holland and after that we took the overnight ferry from the Hook of Holland to Hull. Eventually we found ourselves in York on a Sunday. This is a very beautiful city and the remains of the old Roman Wall are a dominant feature. We wanted to catch the BBC 1 Farming Program at 1pm so that we could see how Dan Cherrington performs. We pulled into a small corner pub and ordered a couple of halves of lager and very politely asked the proprietor if we could turn on his television for a short while. This brought a howl of protest from the locals - the Sunday session is a very sacred event - but we eventually won the day. There was

CHERRINGTON AGRICULTURAL LTD.

Tel No. Plymouth 64422
Telex No. 45547

Brentor Road,
St. Jude's,
PLYMOUTH PL4 9PS

Your Ref:
Our Ref: DJC/JJH

23rd January, 1978.

Bill - Copy for your information - I didn't think we would hear from him again!

J. Ryan, Esq.,
Farmland Products (NZ) Ltd.,
PO Box 662,
Invercargill,
New Zealand.

Dear Jim,

Thank you for your letter of 12th December.

I apologise for being dilatory in replying; however we have been very busy and Christmas in the middle did not help.

I can see no reason why we cannot come to an agreement but like yourself I think this would be best done in the Spring when you come to Europe. I have considered carefully your suggestion of our contributing towards your expenditure on patent and we would prefer that this should be linked to a more comprehensive agreement on marketing between Lammacs and Lambdry covers.

Could you let me know if you will definitely be here in the Spring as I certainly would like a detailed agreement well in advance of next season.

Meanwhile we will definitely guarantee you payment of \$3000 to be paid at the end of the current season. Perhaps you would also inform me how you wish this payment to be made. I would suggest in sterling into an external account which we could open on your behalf. This would avoid exchange control restrictions on your moving the money.

Let us hope we see you soon, and we can spend some time just looking at farming here.

Yours sincerely,

John Cherrington
John Cherrington,
Managing Director.

Directors: D. J. Cherrington, B.Sc., M. Thomas, D. L. Cullum, D. J. Burridge
Reg. Office: 58 North Road East, Plymouth Reg. No. 1319512 V.A.T. No. 291 48 2212

quite a bit of banter backward and forwards with the protestors and they turned out to be a mixed mob - an Irishman, a Scotchman and a Yorkshireman. They were calling us uncouth Colonials and we were countering with lazy poms etc – it was all on. After ten minutes, the Yorkshireman, Bob Allen disappeared and then came back and informed us that he had booked dinner for us. We had a very enjoyable session with these three characters and were then escorted to Bob's home for a full Sunday roast dinner!! Bob was in Commercial Advertising and his wife Wendy, was an Airline Hostess and we had a most enjoyable afternoon with them - eventually managing to depart about 4.30 in the afternoon and point the car north towards Scotland.

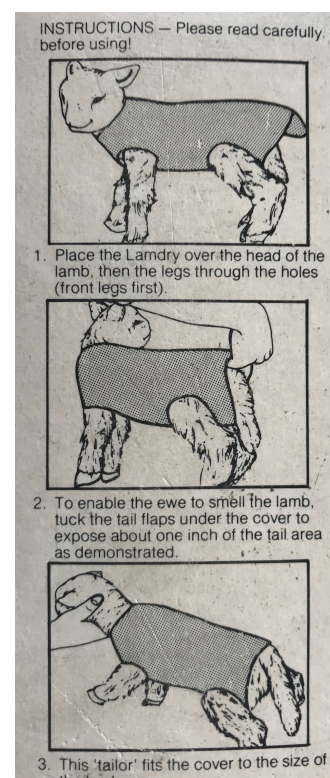


That's about all the Lamdry business in the UK but must finish this segment with the All Blacks encounter!

On arriving back at our London Leicester Square hotel there was quite a lot of mail but one item stood out. It was a heavily embossed envelope with a very formal invitation to join Sir Douglas and Lady Carter welcoming the 1978 All Blacks to the UK.

At 5 o'clock the next day we scrubbed up as best we could and presented ourselves at New Zealand House. There was some pompous guy decked out in tails

and all the gear introducing people as they came through the door to Sir Douglas and Lady Carter and Russell Thomas (AB's manager) and Graham Mourie (captain). Both Doug and Sonny looked very tired as they had been down at the Conservative Party Conference that afternoon listening to Maggy Thatcher and they just made it back in time for this function. Brian McKechnie and Leister Rutledge nearly did a bit when they saw us – couldn't believe their eyes! We didn't know that McKechnie had made the team so it was great to have the two Southlanders there. There were about 300 people present and a lot of the Welsh and English rugby officials were also there. The ABs all looked a little apprehensive at what was going on as this was their first official function and dare say the first of many yet to come. It was great to talk to so many of them. Leicester recorded quite a lengthy message for his wife on my tape and was able to give it to her the next week when we got home. I think Leicester was a little bit home-sick already and was very pleased to see someone from Southland. We "chaperoned" about 6 of the big brutes around some of our favourite local pubs - and none of us paid for a drink! We got held up the next day at Heathrow for about 6 hours and there must have been an Indian Curry farmers



convention somewhere because there were heaps of them. Drama when we got to Hong Kong airport as they tried to make us have Yellow Fever inoculations (that's where you can get quite crook after a few days). We flatly refused and after a few hours of "negotiations" they reluctantly let us in. We were only there for 2 nights.

Eventually we headed home and the guy at immigration at Auckland airport joked with us that Invercargill airport was under water. It was! At Dunedin airport however there was a great site with Sue and Ag there to drive us home. A very emotional welcome home and Irene's Mum had done a fantastic job looking after the 3 boys.

Just 3 years afterwards another European expedition. The Southland branch of the Export Institute had organised a Trade Mission and my principal reason for being part of it was to promote the small poultry processing unit - the Rotomatic that had developed. Rex Austin the Southland MP and under secretary for Agriculture was our leader and provided some good shortcuts to some very helpful contacts. It was a good opportunity to also advance the Lamdry in Europe at the huge Paris SIMA/SIA Exhibitions. Having two stands in two totally different halls that were quite some distance apart proved a challenge but must have been good for the fitness though! Thankfully Gerry Ilam and his team from Alfred Cox Surgical



were in the same

hall as the Lamdry stand and were able to assist.

One afternoon both my stands had someone to look after them and Graeme Dick (Invercargill Accountant) and I set out to explore the rest of the the huge expo. I happened to take my then huge video camera and it turned out that people thought that were a film crew! We were given demonstrations, samples and tastings. All went well until we arrived into the very popular wine and liqueurs hall. Here things went downhill quickly. A few small tastings of wine were no effort but then we came across Grand Marina and Cointreau. Now as you know these are normally served in dainty little glasses. We were given several "samples" from each in about 5 ounce glasses and both arrived back to base camp dribbling idiots.

From there we headed to London and set up our displays in the ballroom of New Zealand House and invited potential clients to a cocktail event. One that I invited was Lord Edward Fitzroy (a

direct descendant of King Charles 11 and an ex Captain of the Coldstream Guards). He was head of Ross Poultry and had a JV in New Zealand with Tegel. I was hoping that he may have some leads for the Rotomatic poultry processing units but he was totally intrigued with the lamb covers! Fast forward many years and we were able to host him in Arrowtown. We ended up at the New Orleans where Kevin Lynch was playing and the whole place was rocking. During a break I quietly told Kevin who we had with us. Lynch started the next bracket announcing this and playing "Lord it's Hard to be Humble". Lord Edward had a dance with Irene and told us all that she danced just like Lady Di!

Farmland Products (NZ) Ltd.

European Agricultural Trade Mission 1982

"Lamdry" (Dry Lamb) Protective Covers
New Zealand's leading exporters have proved that their Lamdry protective covers are the most effective way to protect your lamb carcasses from contamination. The covers are made of a special material which is resistant to bacteria and is easy to clean. The covers are also very durable and can be used for many years.

Manteaux protecteurs pour agneaux
Les exportateurs de viande de mouton ont prouvé que les manteaux protecteurs pour agneaux sont la meilleure façon de protéger les carcasses des agneaux de la contamination. Les manteaux sont faits d'un matériau spécial qui résiste aux bactéries et est facile à nettoyer. Les manteaux sont également très durables et peuvent être utilisés pendant de nombreuses années.

"Lamdry" Schutzdecken bringen Ihre Lämmer ins Trockene
Die Exporteure der Neuseeländischen Lämmer haben gezeigt, dass ihre Schutzdecken die beste Methode sind, um die Fleischstücke der Lämmer vor Verunreinigung zu schützen. Die Schutzdecken sind aus einem speziellen Material, das gegen Bakterien resistent ist und leicht zu reinigen ist. Die Schutzdecken sind auch sehr langlebig und können viele Jahre lang verwendet werden.

FARMLAND PRODUCTS (NZ) LTD
P.O. Box 902, Invercargill, New Zealand. Telex: NZ 4334

Mr. Jim Ryan



Anyway back to the 1982 Trade Mission. The whole team arrived back in New Zealand totally stuffed but very pleased with the results. There however was a small domestic hiccup!

During our time in Singapore I

had found a very nice diamond sapphire ring for Irene. Bev Laurent from Top Milk Developments offered to wear it into New Zealand to avoid the duty. That was great except that Bev got held up in customs with a surf board that she had brought and I had to scramble to catch the Invercargill flight so arrived home not bearing wifey gifts! All worked out ok when it arrived a few days latter in the mail.

Meanwhile we had set up the machine in a special room at the back of the tautau factory and Rayna was able to handle most of the quirkinesses it kept throwing up! Sales were still fairly steady but no where near the volume of the early days. Shaun, Grant and Craig did a great job making up the boxes and to this day they talk about the pay rate. Think from memory it was 2 cents a box!

Stafix Products was a great Southland Company involved with all types of farm products and owner Lloyd Heath had helped us on a lot of occasions and Sales Manager Don Sinclair had been on the European Trade Mission. As an aside about the last night we were in Paris someone shouted us to another very nice French restaurant. After he left Don proclaimed to everyone that he wished he could have had a feed at the Gore Pie cart! By the end of the night we had made a pact that we would indeed set up a European franchise of Gore Pie Carts! But back to Stafix and Lloyd asked us if we could supply them with a slightly different lamb cover to “compete” with Lamdry. As we still held the patent we agreed and got a plastic bag entity to make Lamac lamb covers. They were in a box similar to the old Jeyes toilet paper and indeed they were quite popular too.

We purchased the balance of the Farmland Products shares from Elaine and Bill and eventually Alan Martin took over running the machine and then we handed it all to him.

When we sold tautau and Alan eventually moved to Brinks Chicken near Christchurch he did take the machine up there but he was very busy in his new management roll and eventually sold it onto Southland farmers Ann-Maree and Brent Robinson from Glenham in 2010. That story is best told by Ann-Maree herself when she was asked to apply for a Rural Women of New Zealand Enterprising Award:

***Robinson Raincoats** is a family owned business based in Glenham, Southland, NZ and specialises in the production of plastic lamb covers which have been manufactured since 1975 (formerly known as Lamdry Covers). In Spring 2010 we were notified of the fact that these covers were not only hard to find, but were no longer being extensively manufactured. The machinery was sourced, and today we continue to provide New Zealand farmers with an extremely useful lambing-time tool.*

How did it come to be? – Our Story

IMPORTANT — Covers should be placed on lambs as soon as practical after birth. Do not place covers on older lambs, as they will be rejected by the ewe. If wet, cold weather is forecast, it is advisable to cover all lambs as they are born. Remember that this will usually cost you less than 1% of the potential value of the lamb saved. Most ewes initially show some signs of rejecting their lambs by backing off or bunting their lambs. Leave the ewe and lambs and within half an hour both should be settled. According to trials conducted about 5% of ewes will not accept lambs with covers, but this is dependent on breed and climatic conditions. Some shepherds find that acceptance is improved by first rubbing the cover on the new born lamb, or in the after birth. Once a shepherd has become accustomed to using lamb covers, they will be found to be a useful and economical aid for improving lambing conditions. Please do not allow cover to litter the countryside.

British Patent Application No. 41652/75
British Patent Specification No. 1468108
New Zealand Patent Nos. 175657/177394
Australia Patent Application No. 84130/75
Other Patents Pending.
New Zealand Certificate of Trade Mark
Registration No 112636
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Manufactured by Farmland Products (N.Z.) Ltd.
Phone Invercargill 74-850
P.O. Box 622
Invercargill New Zealand



Lamb covers back in business

Collette Devlin

They almost became obsolete in Southland but after the spring snow storm last year lamb covers are now flying off the shelves.

Glenham farmer Brent Robinson realised there was a business opportunity and a way to help farmers when he set out to bring a lamb cover machine back to Southland.

Mr Robinson had used plastic lamb covers most of his farming life. The Lamdry Covers had been manufactured since 1975.

During the storm Mr Robinson wanted to buy them but was told that lamb covers were not only hard to find, they were no longer being extensively manufactured.

A machine had been in Southland for many years and when farmers stopped using covers, the owner took it to Christchurch.

"I tracked down the owner of the machinery and he wasn't using it, so I bought it off him and brought it back to Southland, where it was desperately needed," Mr Robinson said.

He began production of the covers days after the start of the storm.

"Even if it was not financially viable, I decided we would use it for ourselves on our farm," he said.

However, it was not long before Mr Robinson was inundated with requests from farmers who needed the covers.

"Funding was made available to help farmers who had lost stock, so we delivered covers around the country to ensure those hit the hardest didn't lose more."

Although most farmers find the covers work, there is a chance that the ewe will reject her lamb. He said



In demand: Robinson Raincoats owner Brent Robinson produces plastic lamb covers that help protect newborn lambs during cold and wet weather.

rubbing the cover on the newborn lamb or in the after-birth.

Although the snow flurried across Southland a few times this winter, wet and cold spring conditions have affected the lambing season so far.

Farmers in some parts of Southland have recorded stock losses that are higher than last year.

Mr Robinson said he had sold more covers than expected this year, possibly a result of farmers not wanting to take risks with the weather. "Farmers are taking precautions and stocking up. We have already sold 1800 rolls (of 50 covers) and the orders are still coming in."

Well, before each lambing season begins we buy our lambing supplies including lamb covers. Every year we would buy 2 rolls of lamb covers per 1,000 pregnant ewes regardless what the weather forecast was predicting. Over the years we had accumulated a significant supply in a box at the back of the workshop. It called 'being prepared'! Early August 2010 while we were buying our lambing supplies, we learnt that sourcing and purchasing lamb covers were like finding hen's teeth. The humble lamb cover was not available to be purchased as this business was in recess and the other brands were not being produced. Although we had enough covers for that season, we were concerned where next year's supply was coming from.



Brent & Ann-Maree
PhotoGrid

Then while we were in the thick of our lambing season, we were hit with a snow storm on Saturday, 18th September. It started

snowing at breakfast time and by lunchtime we were going nowhere. We got 30cm of snow on the house lawn and 45 cm on our surrounding hills. This was the same storm that destroyed Stadium Southland and damaging several other large Invercargill businesses' by either partially collapsed or sagging their roofs. Our Southland Federated Farmers' adverse events spokesman David Rose said "The spring storm of 2010 is frankly the worst in a generation. The last big dump of snow we had was 14 years ago in the winter of 1996, while the last time we had anything this severe was 38 years ago, in 1972".

On the Tuesday (21st Sept), this storm had me in the back of the workshop digging deep into our box to find anything that would be useful for this extreme advent. I found a number of old rolls of plastic lamb covers, Brent and the boys were using them just about as fast as I was finding them, some still with their original boxes. One roll had a cell phone number on it, so I know it wasn't a decade old but was not sure if it would work or be answered. So on return to the house I rung the number hoping someone would answer it and be friendly enough to chat. Well, a lovely man called Alan from Christchurch answered the phone and I learnt he still had the machine along with some cardboard centres and some plastic. I also learnt what he didn't have, was time in his busy life to make me or anyone else some, so I asked him, if he would sell the machine. (I hadn't even seen Brent to tell him what I was up

to.) My new found friend not only agreed to sell me the lot but he was coming down to Invercargill on business on Thursday (2 days time) and would put it on a car trailer and bring it down.



So by lunch time I had spent the families' hard earn cash, bought a machine and it was on its way. The next day and half was spent getting sorted for my new business enterprise which was not even an idea, days before. A few phone calls and a trip to town all helped to make a business plan, a budget along with ideas about marketing and retail and promotion. Thursday night arrived along with Alan and his beloved machine. It was unloaded at 8.00pm and after we helped him put it back together, he gave us half an hour of staff training, showing us some of its intricacies and left for Invercargill about 9.30pm. The next morning we had a few visitors in and out to see this machine in operation. One visitor was Roger from our local vet club, Vet Co Ltd. He not only came for a look but he also brought Colin, one of his staff members, who had some mechanical knowledge to work the machine for us for two days. Remember we were still very much lambing and in our most productive and busy time of the year, shepherding 6,000 breeding ewes which is farmed intensively on 747 hectares. As Colin made the rolls of lamb covers, I packaged them up ready for the Vet Co delivery van to arrive. Vet Co delivered these covers accompanied with a note, into sheep farmers' letterboxes in Southern Southland area, free of charge over those next few days. This was a wonderful morale boost for those sheep farmers, not only to receive something free but to have some lamb covers to use on their lambing round the next morning and knowing there were more available when required. We also received great encouragement from Peter and his staff at CRT in Invercargill. These two businesses wanted our small business to be successful and we are indebted to them for their supportive, encouragement, enthusiasm and the assistance we received.

Our son Jeffrey took over where Colin left off, and now manufactures all the lamb covers for our business. Jeffrey is in his last year at our local high school and will further his studies at Lincoln University next year. He will continue to make these covers in his holiday break as a paid employee of our business. The rest is up to me.

My Role

- Order and pick up supplies of plastic, roll centres and packaging materials
- Email retail firms with an annual newsletter regarding price, our supplier number and their stock code and any changes that they need to know for the upcoming lambing



edendale clinic
phone (03) 206 6170
fax (03) 206 6171
kennington clinic
phone (03) 230 4089
fax (03) 230 4028



Plastic Lamb Covers



In co-operation with
Merial Ancare and Vetco Limited
Complimentary Plastic Lamb Covers will be
supplied to our Vetco Clients

Please phone our Edendale or Kennington Clinics to
place your order

Thanks to Brent & Ann-Maree Robinson for their innovative thinking and
sourcing the decommissioned machinery to produce these plastic lamb covers



FREE Delivery Service

All merchandise requirements can be delivered to your farm free of charge this
includes weekends until Saturday 2nd October 2010.
Phone our clinics by 10.00am to ensure same day delivery.

season. I personally follow up the email with a visit or a telephone call to as many retail outlets as possible regarding orders and the stock they have already on hand from last year. This creates a good working relationship between the store managers and ourselves.

- *Organise advertising in The NZ Farmers Weekly (a national farming newspaper which is delivered once a week into farmers' mailboxes) prior to lambing. Advertisement enclosed.*
- *Pack all the made rolls into a plastic bag with a Robinson Raincoat label ready for distribution*
- *Collect incoming orders, collate, package and deliver or freight to retail outlets both locally and throughout New Zealand (They have also being sent to farmers in Tasmania, Australia)*
- *Retail outlet also receive with their orders a laminated A4 Poster to display in their store and a complimentary small roll of 10 plastic lamb covers to show their staff and farmer clients what we are selling. This lets the staff and the farmers gain some knowledge about this product before they sell / buy it.*
- *Process the monthly invoices for orders which have been distributed*
- *Process wages, GST information and other financial accounting information to meet our obligations for the NZ tax system.*
- *Record financial performance analysing data for our own information, to better our business and the service that we provide to our retail firms and our farming clients.*

Why?



• *Firstly to provide our family farming operation with a guaranteed supply of lamb covers for years to come. We have watched over the past few years, the problems with our sheep vaccinations being bought out by international companies and because we are a small market, they are making these vaccines as they wish not as we need them. We want to be supplied and able to purchase our vaccines fresh each year, on time, when we require it. By purchasing this small business we retained not only the supply of lamb covers but the quality, the quantity and the timing.*

- *To provide a service to our fellow sheep farmers. Because the humble lamb cover was becoming impossible to find, it was hard for our local district to watch our farmers (mainly our husbands) not be able to provide added protection for their newborn stock. By manufacturing these covers it is providing our sheep famers with another extremely useful farming tool, if they choose to use them. The added stress that the farmers felt*

Robinson Raincoats
Plastic Lamb Covers
www.robinsonraincoats.co.nz
Brent & Ann-Maree Robinson

50 Plastic Lamb Covers per Roll

Available at this Store
"Made for farmers by farmers"
 Manufactured since 1975

Be prepared for this Spring!

Works like a Tunnel House
 QUALITY CLEAR PLASTIC used to REDUCE
 NOISE BUT TO RETAIN IT'S STRENGTH

when they couldn't purchase a single lamb cover while they are enduring bad weather was hard to watch and not good for their mental health. To be able to cover your newborn lambs, go home and have tea knowing that while they were out that day in the lambing paddock, they had done their best, eased the not so good days.

- *These plastic lamb covers have always been an essential tool in our lambing kit, and used in our farming operation for as long as Brent can remember. His father Bill used them for many years in his farming days prior to us taking over the family farm in 1987.*
- *To help the economy of New Zealand. The plastic covers not only protect and help the growth rate of your new born lamb by giving it a better start but will also save many from perishing in bad weather. We have no scientific analysing but if for an example 1 roll of covers saves just 5 lambs from perishing then it puts an extra \$2.5 million into the New Zealand economy over the last 4 seasons i.e. if 5 live lambs sold (at \$100 per head) = \$500*
\$500 x 5054 (number of rolls sold over the past 4 seasons: 2011-2014) = \$2,527,000.

About our family

Brent and I farm in the district of Glenham, south of Wyndham. It is a family farm which has been in the Robinson Family for nearly 110 years. Brent is the 4th generation and in 2010 we did the NZ Century Farm Awards. We have 3 sons (and a daughter in law) who are aged between 17 & 22, who have all been educated at our local high school (Menzies College) and either have or will graduate from Lincoln University in Christchurch. All have a love of farming and will one day return to their own farm and business.

Other community involvement that I am currently involved in outside our farming and lamb cover businesses, and family life:

- *Board Member, Deputy Chairman and Trustee of the Wyndham & District Community Rest Home Inc starting in February 2006*
- *Treasurer of the Glenham Community Hall Committee*
- *A CRE teacher at our local Primary School*
- *Member of the Wyndham Evangelical Church and the WEC Holiday Programme team (which runs 3 week long holiday programmes for school children aged between Year 1 – Year 8.)*

It has been a thrill for us as a family to meet farmers from all around New Zealand that have read about, talked about and used our product.



Ann-Maree and Brent called to see Irene, Tosh and myself in October 2018 and it was a pleasure to meet them and share many stories. Over an evening meal a while ago one of their sons made the

comment along the lines of “Mum and Dad - please in your will don’t leave that damn machine to me”!

The tenacity and goodwill shown by Ann-Maree and Brent is to be admired. They tracked down “The Beast” from Alan Martin. Spontaneously brought it. Learnt very quickly how it worked (with all its frustrating quirks). Worked alongside their Vet Club to produce and distribute the covers then proceeded to donate them to farmers in a time of great need and stress.

This demonstrates a true Southland spirit and I only wish Bill Wells had lived long enough to witness and be part of something very special.

I have no idea how many covers we sold but it was many millions (10 million plus little round bits of plastic too!) and it all started from that dark and stormy night at Boggyburn in 1974.

It was a great journey and a lot of fun and rather remarkable that at least 43 years on they are still being sold. How many products last that long in the market place?!



Robinson Raincoats - 50 Pack Lamb Covers



Availability: **In stock**

Regular Price: ~~NZ\$44.00~~

Special Price: **NZ\$36.20**

Qty: 1



Appendix

We were able to eventually track down the original patents. The New Zealand Intellectual Property Office didn't have a copy and neither did our Patent Attorneys - A.J.Park and Son in Wellington but they were able to supply the reference numbers and suggest that we contact Archives New Zealand. After nearly a month they found them and these are just some of the key pages.

NEW ZEALAND
PATENTS ACT, 1953

Patents Form
No. 1
1 773 94

APPLICATION FOR A PATENT

NOTE: This is a comprehensive form and parts inappropriate to a particular application should be cancelled. In the case of an application by the inventor, only sections 1, 4 and 6 of this form are appropriate, and section 5 if a Patent of Addition is applied for.

A.J.P. & S.
Hy 26/2/76

(a) Insert (in full) name, address and nationality of applicant(s).

1. ~~I/We~~ (a) ~~FARMLAND PRODUCTS NEW ZEALAND LIMITED~~, a company incorporated under the laws of New Zealand, having its registered office at MALLOCH McCLEAN & CO of P.O. Box 134, Invercargill, New Zealand,

(b) Delete the words which are not applicable.

(c) Insert title of invention.

~~I am/are~~ in possession of an invention which is described in the accompanying (b) provisional/complete specification under the title (c) IMPROVEMENTS IN OR RELATING TO ANIMAL COVERS AND/OR METHODS OF MANUFACTURING SAID ANIMAL COVERS AND/OR APPARATUS EMPLOYED THEREIN

(d) Insert name of inventor if inventor is the applicant

~~(b) - (I/We -~~
~~(The said (d) -~~
~~claim - to be the true and first inventor - of the invention.~~

2. ~~I/We~~ believe (e) JAMES WINSTONE RYAN a New Zealand citizen of 166 Catherine Street, Invercargill, New Zealand

(e) Insert (in full) name, address and nationality of inventor(s) if inventor is not the applicant.

PATENT OFFICE, N.Z.
RECEIVED
\$ 4 -
2-MAY 1975
Receipt Abstract **7203**
Issued by **G** Checked by **JP**

to be the true and first inventor of the invention,

and (b) ~~(I/We~~ **(N.Z.)**
~~(the said~~ FARMLAND PRODUCTS NEW ZEALAND LIMITED

(f) Insert (in full) name, address and nationality of communicator.

A.J.P. & S.
Hy 26/2/76

~~(am -~~
(b) ~~(are the (b) (assignee s.. of the said inventor in respect of the right to make this application.~~
~~(is~~
~~(personal representative - of the said inventor -~~

175657

177394

NEW ZEALAND
PATENTS ACT, 1953

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No.: 175657/177394

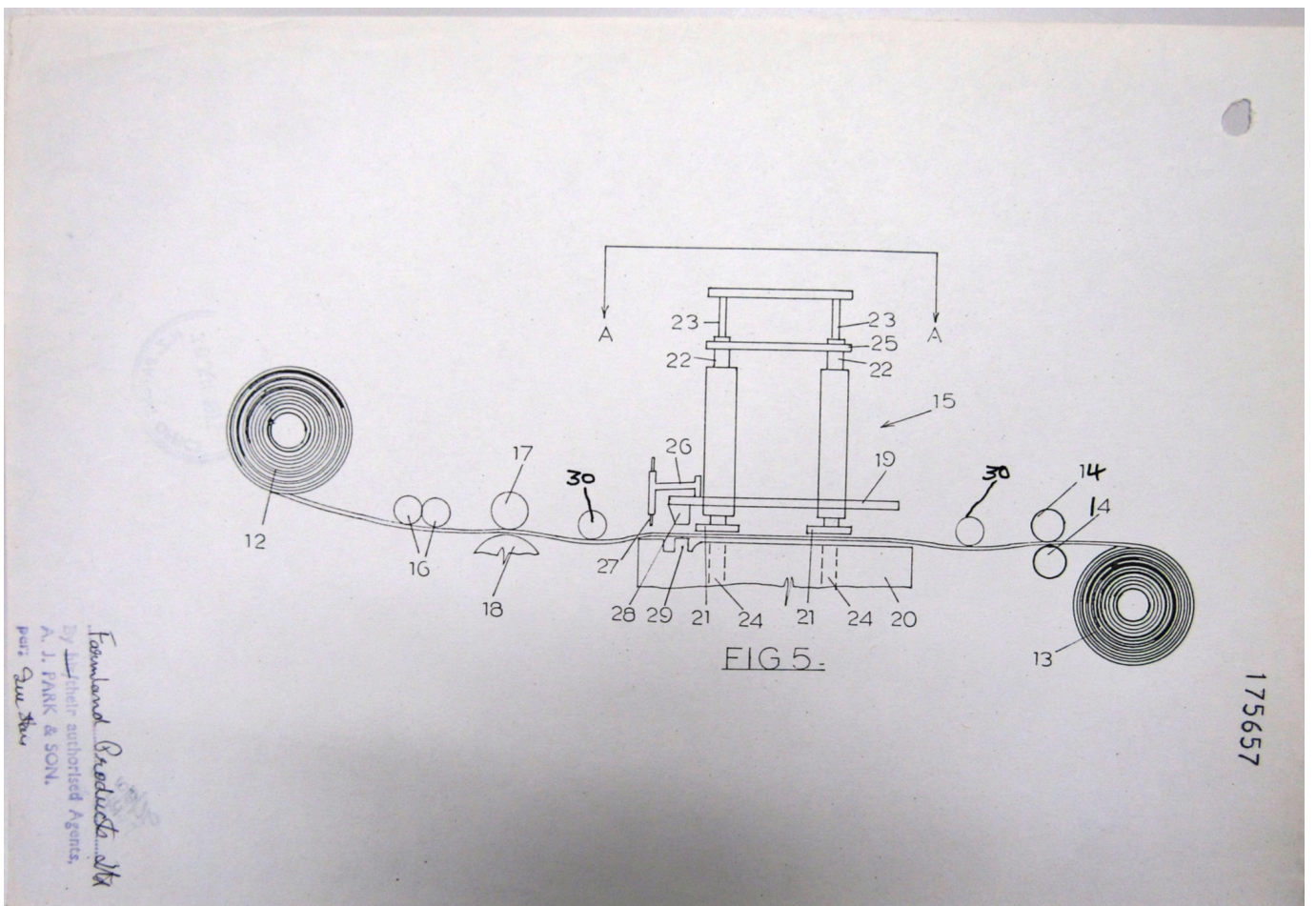
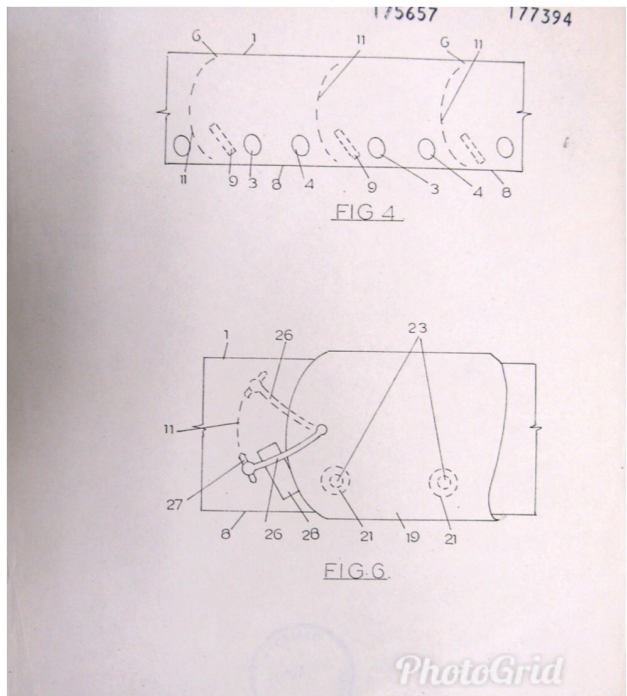
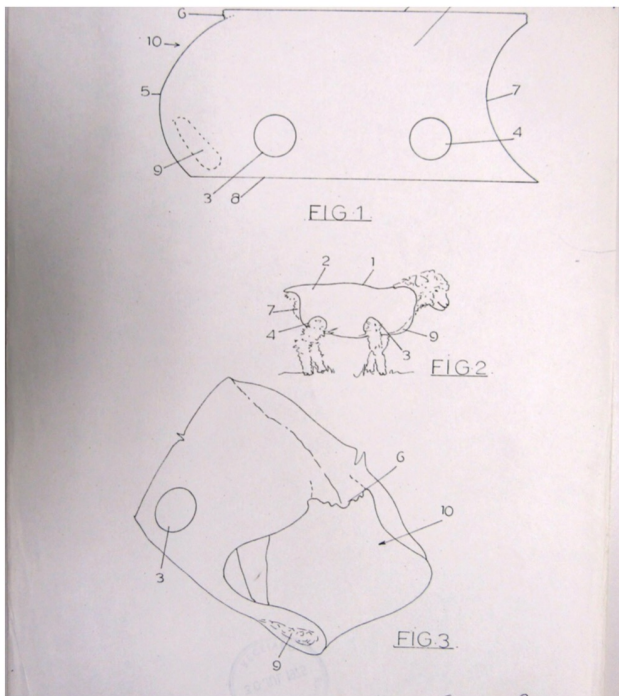
Date: 10 October 1974 and 2 May 1975 respectively

COMPLETE SPECIFICATION

IMPROVEMENTS IN OR RELATING TO ANIMAL COVERS AND/OR METHODS
OF MANUFACTURING SAID ANIMAL COVERS AND/OR APPARATUS EMPLOYED
THEREIN

I/We, FARMLAND PRODUCTS (N.Z.) LIMITED, a company incorporated
under the laws of New Zealand, having its registered office
at MALLOCH McCLEAN & CO of P.O. Box 134, Invercargill,
New Zealand,

hereby declare the invention for which I / we pray that a patent may
be granted to me/us, and the method by which it is to be performed,
to be particularly described in and by the following statement: -



175657

Forward Products, Inc.
By their authorized Agents,
A. J. PARK & SON,
Per: Que Steu



No. 175657/177394

LETTERS PATENT

ELIZABETH THE SECOND, by the Grace of God Queen of New Zealand and Her Other Realms and Territories, Head of the Commonwealth, Defender of the Faith: To all to whom these presents shall come, Greeting:

WHEREAS pursuant to the Patents Act 1953 an application has been made for a patent of an invention for

IMPROVEMENTS IN OR RELATING TO ANIMAL COVERS AND/OR METHODS OF MANUFACTURING SAID ANIMAL COVERS AND/OR APPARATUS EMPLOYED THEREIN

(more particularly described in the complete specification relating to the application)
AND WHEREAS

FARMLAND PRODUCTS (N.Z.) LIMITED, a company incorporated under the laws of New Zealand having its registered office at Malloch McClean & Co., of P.O. Box 134, Invercargill,

(hereinafter together with his or their successors and assigns or any of them called "the patentee") is entitled to be registered as the proprietor of the patent hereinafter granted:

NOW, THEREFORE, We by these letters patent give and grant to the patentee our special licence, full power, sole privilege, and authority, that the patentee by himself, his agents, or licensees and no others, may subject to the provisions of any statute or regulation for the time being in force make, use, exercise, and vend the said invention within New Zealand and its dependencies during a term of sixteen years from the date hereunder written and that the patentee shall have and enjoy the whole profit and advantage from time to time accruing by reason of the said invention during the said term:

AND WE strictly command all our subjects whomsoever within New Zealand and its dependencies that they do not at any time during the said term either directly or indirectly make use of or put into practice the said invention, nor in any way imitate the said invention without the consent, licence, or agreement of the patentee in writing under his hand, on pain of incurring such penalties as are prescribed by law and of being answerable to the patentee according to law for his damages thereby occasioned:

PROVIDED ALWAYS:

- (1) That these letters patent shall determine and become void if the patentee does not from time to time pay the renewal fees prescribed by law in respect of the patent:
- (2) That these letters patent are revocable on any of the grounds prescribed by the Patents Act 1953 as grounds for revoking letters patent:
- (3) That nothing in these letters patent shall prevent the granting of licences in the manner in which and for the considerations on which they may by law be granted:
- (4) That these letters patent shall be construed in the most beneficial sense for the advantage of the patentee.

IN WITNESS whereof We have caused these letters patent to be signed and sealed as of the 30th day of July 1975

K. S. Dalefield

Commissioner of Patents

AJP&S

PATENTS ACT 1953

DECLARATION AS TO INVENTORSHIP [Section 10 (5)]

(a) Insert name(s) of applicant(s).

~~My~~/We (a) FARMLAND PRODUCTS (N.Z.) LIMITED

(b) State name, address and nationality of inventor or of each inventor

do hereby declare that the true and first inventor of the invention disclosed in the complete specification, filed in pursuance of ~~my~~/our application numbered 175657/177394 and dated the 10 October 1974 and ~~day of~~ 2 May 1975 ~~is~~, is/are (b) JAMES WINSTONE RYAN a New Zealand citizen of 166 Catherine Street, Invercargill, New Zealand, a British subject and New Zealand citizen

(c) This need not be filled in if the inventor(s) named at (b) is or are an applicant or applicants, or if the right to apply is as stated in the application form.

and that my/our right to apply for a patent for the invention is as follows

(c) _____

(d) To be signed by applicant(s)

(d) FARMLAND PRODUCTS (N.Z.) LTD

J. W. Ryan
DIRECTOR

To the Commissioner,
The Patent Office,
Wellington, C.I.



