

Giltraps' time to shed...

By Viv Posselt

Wilfred Giltrap's January 23 shed sale of vintage tractors, engineering machinery and tools marks a significant turning point in the life of a man whose name is woven into the fabric of New Zealand agriculture.

The sale will effectively sign off on a large chunk of his life and signal the settling into another, more leisurely one in the Te Awa Lifecare home he shares with his wife Shirley.

It seems, however, that there are reminders of his legacy around every corner. "A lot of people living here are ex-farmers," he smiled. "They know all about our machinery."

Six decades have passed since a young Wilfred fostered his love of engineering on the Maihihi family farm near Ōtorohanga.

In 1959 he started Giltrap Engineering with just one worker in tow. Today, around 200 employees operate across two separate arms of the company, Giltrap Agrizone and Giltrap Engineering, run respectively by son Andrew Giltrap, and daughter and

son-in-law, Belinda and Craig Mulgrew.

From those early beginnings, when Wilfred dared not imagine such expansion, Giltrap has spread to the Pacific islands, New Guinea, Indonesia and Chile. Now, about half of the production from the engineering operation goes to Australia.

There were many landmark 'firsts' along the way, among them the development of the successful wheel drive trailer and silage wagons built for feeding out to larger herds of stock.

"The idea was to make about 15 feed wagons a year, but within two years we were making around 200." It's an enviable legacy, one rooted right here in the Waikato.

Illness saw Wilfred step back from the day-to-day workings of the business in 2002 and he relaxed into a more hobby-driven rhythm of restoring vintage tractors.

Now, he says the time has come to 'thin stuff out' - hence the upcoming sale at his recently-sold Maungatautari land near Karapiro, close to where the couple lived for 20 years



Wilfred and Shirley Giltrap going through the minutiae of a lifetime's work at their Te Awa Lifecare home in Cambridge.

before moving to Te Awa 12 months ago.

"I've decided the time is right to sell everything ... reluctantly, of course. It's quite a big step for me," he said.

It's an equally big step for Shirley, who has toiled at Wilfred's side throughout their marriage. Her early

training on Burroughs machines at the bank kicked in when she saw him wrestling with his accounts soon after they married.

"There were six statements, spread out all over his desk. I said, 'let me take care of those', and had them done pretty quickly," she smiled. "I've been doing the accounts

till I retired."

The sale from Wilfred's 180 square metre shed this weekend will see 200 lots and five tractors go. It's taking place at 983 Maungatautari Rd from 9.30am to 2.30pm on Saturday, January 23.

For more information email him on w.giltrap@gmail.com.