

# DEER INDUSTRY NEWS

Incorporating **STAGLINE** and **Market Report**

Issue 3 • February 2003 • Official magazine of Deer Industry New Zealand



Deer Industry Conference Preview: p5

Velvet quality: planned culling the key: p23

## Also in this issue:

- Elk/Wapiti velvet competition
- Two year old velvet competition
- Trophy animals – what to look for
- Legal status of escaped deer
- Innovative velvet processors profiled
- Sire sale roundup



**DEER INDUSTRY  
NEW ZEALAND**

# Black Forest Park

*We wish to thank all Deer Farmers and friends that attended our 1st Annual Sire Stag sale held in our new complex and helped make it a great day that was enjoyed by all. We especially thank successful purchasers of new Sires for their patronage.*



Laszlo @5yrs, 8.43SA2, 358kg  
NZ Hard Antler Champion



Hindon @6yrs  
7.2kg SA2, 308kg



Neskey @6yrs, 10.24kg SA2 @  
8yrs, 338kg. NZ Velvet Champion



\*Sintana @6yrs  
6.9kg SA2 @ 4yrs, 327kg



Alexei @9yrs  
8.2kg SA2 348kg



Romeo @5yrs  
7.3kgSA2, 362kg



Berwick @7yrs  
8.5kg SA2 NZ velvet Champ, 285kg



\*\*Romany @ 4yrs. Peak  
performance 8.1kg SA2, 345kg

## 2002/3 Statistics

Best Velvet	Neskey - 10.24kg NZ Velvet Champion
Heaviest Stag	Romeo - 362kg @ 5yrs
Heaviest H/A	Zagora - 19.8kg @ 8yrs
Widest Spread	Festl King - 67"
Best 2yr Stag	Salvidor - 214kg, 9.88kg Full Velvet SCI 360

### *In Calf Hind Sale*

Our next event will be an In Calf Hind Sale featuring High quality Commercial Hinds and pedigree Eastern and German hinds, details and dates for this to be advised.



Contact: Trevor Currie  
Ph/fax 03 486 1148  
Mobile 0274 326 466  
email: trevor@blackforest.co.nz

Adam Whaanga  
Farm Manager, Clinton  
Ph/fax 03 415 7662  
Mobile 027 238 8956  
email: adam@blackforest.co.nz

or Peter Crowle  
Mobile 025 905 786  
Wrightson

Graham Kinsman  
Mobile 025 362 113  
Wrightson

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## Fundamentals are right to tackle challenges

*Welcome to the first issue of Deer Industry News for 2003. In looking to the year ahead I am encouraged by the results achieved by many of the industry's programmes and excited by the challenges that we will be working to address. There's much to be done.*

The industry restructuring completed last year is performing exceptionally well, with more communication and support for DFA Branches than ever before and a truly representative industry organisation. I believe the industry has the fundamentals right with a clear vision and an efficient structure delivering improved service and cost savings. With all industry sectors and participants truly represented, we also have a solid basis to plan and implement necessary market development programmes and undertake our full range of industry-good activities.

DEEResearch's systems are well established and results from its programme are becoming available. The web-based DEEResearch database of research papers is an excellent resource for the industry and is being well used.

The VARNZ velvet research programme continues to support the velvet industry's strategy. State of the art molecular techniques are being used to speed up this discovery process towards commercialisation.

An important part of VARNZ's programme is the research into new velvet removal techniques. The ability to meet welfare needs as well as consumer and regulatory demands for natural, residue-free products is critical. This research will be fundamental in supporting a proposal to MAF in the middle of the year seeking approval for a new compression technique for velvet removal in mature stags. This, as well as the need to publish Codes of Welfare for Deer Farming and Velvet Removal for public consultation will see welfare, QA and the activities of the NVSB take on special importance in the next 24 months.

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Of course, the state of our venison markets is our top priority at the moment. The schedule of \$4.20 at the start of February is 24% below the 10 year average for this time of year. Positively, exporters report initial signs of what may be a turnaround. Assisted by strong consumption of frozen product over the game season and relatively low production from New Zealand, prices have started to flatten out and prices for some products – especially legs and shoulders which faced severe price pressure – have seen slight improvements.

While it is too early to say we are seeing the end of this difficult period, these signs are promising. While demand is strong at current low prices, the challenge now is to improve prices in a sustainable way and manage volumes onto the market. Factors such as the strong New Zealand dollar, a possible war in Iraq and New Zealand's climate could impact on the industry's ability to achieve this.

The velvet market appears to be relatively healthy despite the dollar and tensions arising out of the North Korean situation. Part of the reason for stable market conditions can be attributed to the relatively stable supply situation. With reports that a reasonable number of stags have been retained for velvet production over the last year, early thought needs to be given to the impact this is likely to have on prices next velvet season. The "cull for quality" message is as relevant now as ever. Production improvements arising from improved genetics, selection and breeding mean producers should consider lifting their cut-off for velveters ever higher (see article on page 23).

Deer Industry New Zealand continues to push for improved access into key markets such as France and Norway for venison and Korea and Taiwan for velvet. We are also very active working with other agricultural Boards and organisations on issues of common interest including trade liberalisation, research and biosecurity and looking for further efficiencies and cost savings.

I would like to welcome Rob Gregory (NVSB Manager), Janice Attrill (Quality Systems Administrator) and Alisha Abraham (Receptionist) to Deer Industry New Zealand. They join the rest of the team in looking forward to assisting the deer industry to grow and prosper. 🇳🇿

*MJ Loza, CEO, Deer Industry New Zealand*

Deer Industry News is published by Deer Industry New Zealand and incorporates the former *Stagline* and *Market Report*. Deer Industry News is published five times a year, in the months of February, April, June/July, October and December. It is circulated to all known deer farmers, processors, exporters and others with an interest in the deer industry.

**Circulation enquiries:** Deer Industry New Zealand, PO Box 10-702, Wellington, Ph 04 381 6014, Fax 04 382 9143, Email [info@deernz.org](mailto:info@deernz.org)

**Editorial and advertising enquiries:** Words & Pictures, PO Box 27-221, Wellington, Ph 04 384 4688, Fax 04 384 4667, Email [din@wordpict.co.nz](mailto:din@wordpict.co.nz)

Cover photo: Dot Mullay, Invercargill.

# New appointments at Deer Industry New Zealand

**Rob Gregory** has been appointed Manager of the National Velvet Standards Body (NVSB) and **Janice Attrill** as Quality Systems Administrator at Deer Industry New Zealand.

Rob completed PhD studies in animal welfare at Oxford University in 2000 and after some project management work in the healthcare industry in the UK has been in New Zealand since April 2002 working with MAF, AgResearch and Massey University on a number of animal welfare projects.

The position of NVSB Manager is new and was created to provide a dedicated resource within Deer Industry New Zealand to ensure the completion of a number of key projects for the velvet removal programme in the next 24 months, including:

- a proposal to MAF seeking the approval of a new compression-based technique to provide analgesia for velvet removal
- the development of a Code of Welfare for Velvet Removal under the Animal Welfare Act
- the development of a code of practice under the Agricultural Compounds and Veterinary Medicines Act to replace existing Regulations which expire in 2004.

The NVSB remains a distinct entity made up of two representatives of each of the New Zealand Deer Farmers' Association and the New Zealand Veterinary Association.

"The creation of this new position reflects the importance placed on welfare as one of the most important issues facing

the deer industry," says Deer Industry New Zealand CEO, MJ Loza.


"It is critical that our systems and practices continue to evolve to meet the changing needs of our international consumers. With increasing scrutiny being placed on production systems, it is more important than ever that we can provide credible assurances on a range of issues including food safety and animal health and welfare."

Janice Attrill has been appointed as Quality Systems Administrator to replace Sue Lindsay, who left Deer Industry New Zealand last month (see Deer Industry News December 2002, p16).

Janice received a BSc. from Massey University in 1982 and has almost 20 years' experience in managing quality programmes in the food, healthcare, laboratory and manufacturing industries. As well as administering the NVSB programme, Janice will work with John Tacon (Quality Manager) to ensure the smooth running and continued development of the industry's various DeerQA Quality Assurance Programmes: On-Farm, Transport Operators, Stock and Station Agents and Processors.



Alisha Abraham, Janice Attrill and Rob Gregory

**Alisha Abraham** started with Deer Industry New Zealand as Receptionist at the start of the year, replacing Megan Burrell who left at the end of 2002. Alisha has front-line experience in the legal, insurance and media production industries. In addition to reception duties, Alisha will provide direct support to Producer Manager Tony Pearse. 

## A chip off the old block

Clearly inheriting his dad's eagerness to meet deadlines, young Thomas Loza burst into the world on Christmas Eve, three weeks ahead of schedule. Early it may have been, but the arrival was also a straightforward one – Thomas and his mum Sarah were able to get out of hospital in time for Christmas lunch.

Weighing in at a strapping 3.4kg, Thomas is now putting on a healthy 40g a day. MJ reports that he at least is getting plenty of sleep and is thoroughly enjoying parenthood. And, judging by this picture, Thomas is finding sonhood pretty relaxing so far.

Congratulations and best wishes for the future to MJ, Sarah and Thomas from the team at Deer Industry News.



## Getting Deer Notes?

*Deer Notes is a free email newsletter distributed by Deer Industry New Zealand on a roughly fortnightly basis. It is the best way to stay in touch with the most up-to-date market information, events and news.*

Each issue contains current price and market information as well as a list of upcoming industry events, recent news and items of interest. Because it is put together by Deer Industry New Zealand staff and is distributed by email it is the best way for Deer Industry New Zealand to get current and time-sensitive information out to the industry. We also welcome your input into issues and information you want to see included in Deer Notes.

Deer Notes is currently sent to about 600 deer farmers, processors, exporters, vets, researchers and others involved with the deer industry. If you are not already receiving Deer Notes and want to, email [deer.notes@deernz.org](mailto:deer.notes@deernz.org) with your full name and address. Previous copies of Deer Notes are available on the Deer Industry New Zealand website <http://www.deernz.org.nz/?id=115>, or click the Deer Notes link on the homepage.



The NZDFA and Deer Industry New Zealand warmly invite you to the 2003 New Zealand Deer Industry Conference. This Conference returns to the provinces and combines an excellent programme with superb entertainment. There will be a strong balance between formal presentations and informal discussion, building contacts and renewing friendships.

The themes are to emphasise the vision and the value of deer farming and its superb products. The new look industry structure will be on display with integration of the technical sessions and Deer Industry New Zealand FGM as a feature. The conference begins with the NZDFA AGM and finishes with an open forum and an opportunity to share your views on the directions and values of this industry. The Conference will feature a uniquely South Canterbury style, supporting the focus on venison and the industry awards dinner.

We already enjoy terrific sponsorship support and this will be a well planned, vital opportunity for you to share your vision, your values and your future ... together. Welcome!

## Industry partners

This year sees the establishment of Industry Partnerships with the different sectors which service deer farming. We are delighted to announce that Rabobank and PPCS have accepted this offer and join as representing the banking/financial and processor/exporter sectors respectively. From the farm supply and servicing sectors we welcome Ravensdown and Goldpine. At press time we are in negotiation with a company to represent the animal health sector as an industry partner.

## Conference exhibition and breeder display

An extensive exhibition will be staged in the main auditorium of the Conference venue, giving registrants the opportunity to bring themselves up to date with the latest industry knowledge and services.

There has been strong exhibitor support and space is filling fast. For further information please contact: pat@dcms.co.nz

## Promotion of the South Canterbury/North Otago Branch: Hard antler exhibition wall

A unique feature of this year's Conference will be the display of superior stud antlers from leading stud operations in the SC/NO DFA area.

## Conference venue and location

The venue for this year's conference is Caroline Bay Hall. Located on the bay front, this venue provides good space for exhibitors and delegates to enjoy the business and social side of Conference; it also offers ample parking and is only a short distance for delegates to walk from accommodation to the venue.

The Welcome Function on the Tuesday evening will be held at the Landing Services Building (adjacent to the Loaded Hog and Timaru Visitor Centre).

## Transfers from Christchurch Airport and return

A coach transfer service has been arranged for registrants arriving at Christchurch Airport prior to 10am and 12 noon on Tuesday 27 May. A coach from Ritchies will leave outside the domestic terminal at 10am and another at 12 noon and will deliver registrants either to their hotel/motel or to Caroline Bay Hall.

No arrangements for transfers can be guaranteed after 15 May. Please indicate on the registration form if you require this service. The cost will be advised with your confirmation of registration.

A return service to Christchurch Airport will also operate. This coach will leave from Caroline Bay Hall on Thursday 29 May at noon, travelling via South Canterbury properties.

## NZDFA AGM

Tuesday 27 May, Caroline Bay Hall – 2-5pm

## Breakfast sessions

These will be held in the Exhibition Area at Caroline Bay Hall on the Wednesday and Thursday mornings from 7.30-9.00am. Topics will be detailed in the conference programme and will include topical issues facing the industry and an informal chance to talk.

For catering purposes please indicate your attendance on the registration form.



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## Conference registration

Register now! A registration form has been enclosed with this issue of *Deer Industry News*.

**Full registration:** includes full conference attendance Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, morning and afternoon teas and lunches for these days, conference programme, satchel, Welcome Function and the traditional Awards Dinner and unique entertainment.

**Day registration:** includes attendance and catering for the day of attendance, conference programme. No social functions are included – tickets for these can be purchased on the registration form.

## Accompanying person's fee

This includes the Welcome Function and Awards Dinner and catering throughout the conference. Only one accompanying person's registration can be obtained per full delegate registration.

## Cancellations

Cancellations must be advised in writing and a refund of fees, less \$50 administration cost, applies to cancellations prior to 15 May. After this date, refunds will be at the discretion of the organising committee.

## Social events

### Welcome Function – Tuesday 27 May – (inclusive with full registrations)


**Additional tickets: \$45.00**

To be held at the Landing Services Building, this function will take the form of a Food Festival. Graham Brown will show off the European venison market development programme with a demonstration alongside local chefs who will each prepare a venison dish in a different style for delegates to taste and enjoy. A wine tasting and organic beer tasting (Speights will be available for the less adventurous) will ensure the evening has variety.

This evening will also incorporate the Research Auction and the Deer Industry Environmental Awards featuring the premier award sponsored by Sir Peter & Fiona Lady Elworthy.

### Awards Dinner 2003 – Wednesday 28 May – (inclusive with full registrations)

**Additional Tickets: \$90.00**

The Conference dinner will be held in the Caroline Bay Hall and will incorporate the Warnham & Woburn Society Photo Award, Matuschka Award and the Deer Industry Award along with signature dish and some 'southern' entertainment. 

## AGM, constitutional and other matters

*Annual General Meeting: 27 May 2003  
2 - 5pm.*

**Remits, Remits, Remits! Get them in early.**

Remits to the AGM are customarily submitted through Branches. Branch members are urged to submit all remits to the Association offices by **Monday 31 March 2003** to enable them to be published in the pre-AGM *Deer Industry News*.

While remits can be submitted later, the NZDFA wants them as early as possible so that all Branches can present an informed view at Conference. It is to **everyone's advantage** for Remits to be circulated to all members. Remits will be posted on the website and circulated to Branch Chairmen.

## Matuschka Award

Nominations are called for a farmer or farming entity who or which has made a significant contribution to deer farming and the DFA in particular at Branch level.

The award is aimed at the grass roots farmer and will be presented at the 2003 Timaru AGM.

Nominations should be made through the appropriate Branch. It is not a requirement of the award that the

nominee be aware of the fact that a nomination has gone forward. Nominations must be submitted to the NZDFA no later than 5.00pm on 17 April 2003.

## Deer Farmers' Environmental Awards 2003

**Entries are now being received for the 2003 Environmental Awards. An information kit with entry form is available on request from Alisha at the Deer Industry New Zealand office (ph 04 381 6010).**

The 2001 and 2002 winners also attracted positive media interest with their environmentally-friendly deer farms featuring in regional newspapers and rural publications.

As a result, the deer industry enjoys a positive rapport with several environmental organisations at a time when other rural industries have had a hammering from activist groups.

## An integral part of the Landcare Project

The Awards were initiated as the publicity and knowledge transfer arm of the joint Deer Farmers' Association, Game Industry Board and Sustainable Farming Fund Landcare Manual Project.

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This important industry good activity is now promoted entirely by the DFA to maintain the industry's positive environmental image and promote environmental awareness among farmers.

Associations are continuing with our loyal sponsors for the individual awards and particularly for the production of the widely distributed (6,000 copies) Awards brochure. This will again feature the environmentally-friendly farming techniques and profiles of the winning farms.

## Elworthys' lead continues on home patch

We are very fortunate to have the commitment of Sir Peter and Fiona Lady Elworthy who, again, will again provide funding for the premier award package for this event.

The 'Sir Peter and Fiona Lady Elworthy Environmental Award' winner's package includes a \$2,500 cash prize, Awards dinner, a commemorative native tree and plaque to feature at a special site on the winning property.

The Awards ceremony comes to Timaru this year. We are particularly pleased that the Elworthys' vision and encouragement will be featured in their home territory. The revised Award format this year has increased significance as local farmers continue discussions with Environment Canterbury regarding the Canterbury Draft Natural Resources Plan that could affect all farming in what must be the most diverse environment in New Zealand. The use of judges from DOC, Fish and Game and regional councils is a key aspect of the Awards as deer properties that have developed sound and innovative sustainable systems are displayed as commercially viable examples of modern farming thinking.

**Environment Awards information and entry kits now available – but be quick! Phone the Deer Industry New Zealand office today on 04 381 6010 and ask Alisha for a copy of the 2003 Deer Farmers' Environmental Awards information kit. Entries are due by 14 March.**

## Rumpole Cup


Entries are invited for the Rumpole Cup, which is awarded to the best Branch or Associated Society newsletter. The inaugural competition for this trophy was held in 2000, awarded to the Coastal Bay of Plenty Branch and the 2001 winner was the Tongariro Branch with Hawke's Bay taking out the 2002 Award.

The award is to promote good communication at grass roots level. Newsletters are judged on: variety, topicality, quality of writing/editing, effective communication, originality and presentation. Smaller Branch newsletters which cannot afford more expensive printing are not disadvantaged.

Please submit your entry to the Rumpole Cup, NZDFA, PO Box 5646, Wellington by Thursday 17 April 2003. You can submit either one or a number of issues of the newsletter, provided it was published during the previous 12 months.

## Warnham & Woburn Society Photo Competition

This popular competition is on again this year thanks to the continuing support of the Warnham & Woburn Society and its sponsors (see advertisement on p13).

It is an excellent opportunity for us to showcase our industry and share our unique experiences working with these magnificent animals. An entry form is enclosed with this issue of *Deer Industry News*. 

## Deer Industry Conference 2003: Proposed programme

### Tuesday 27 May 2003

11.00am	<b>Registration Desk Opens:</b> <i>Caroline Bay Hall</i>
1.30pm-2.00pm	<b>Welcome and Conference Opening</b>
2.00pm-5.00pm	<b>NZDFA AGM</b>
6.00pm-10.00pm	<b>Welcome Function featuring Graham Brown:</b> <i>Landing Services Building</i>
	<b>Demonstration followed by food festival and including:</b>
	• Research Auction
	• Deer Industry Environmental Awards

### Wednesday 28 May 2003

7.30am-9.00am	<b>Breakfast:</b> <i>Caroline Bay Hall</i> Hosts: Deer Industry New Zealand Executive staff, DFA Selection and Appointments Panel, DFA Executive Committee, Producer appointed members of the Deer Industry New Zealand Board.
9.00am	<b>Technical Half Day Deer Research</b> Theme <b>Adding Vision and Value - From pasture to plate</b> DEEResearch, Technology Transfer and Science update
12.00-1.00pm	<b>Lunch – in the exhibition area</b>
1.00pm-5.00pm	<b>Deer Industry New Zealand Formal General Meeting</b>
7.30pm	<b>Industry Partnership Pre-Dinner Drinks</b> <i>Caroline Bay Hall</i>
8.00pm	<b>Awards Dinner 2003</b> Warnham & Woburn Society Photo Awards Matuschka Award 2003 Deer Industry Award

### Thursday 29 May 2003

7.30am-9.00am	<b>Breakfast – Deer Industry New Zealand &amp; Sponsors:</b> <i>Caroline Bay Hall</i> Working Conversations
9.00am-10.30am	<b>Markets and Marketing – Visions and Values</b> What could the future hold for venison – velvet and the New Zealand scene?
10.30-11.30am	<b>Discussion Groups</b>
12 noon	<b>CLOSURE AND LUNCH</b>

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# AGM CONSTITUTIONAL MATTERS

## A) EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE NOMINATIONS

Members of the NZDFA Executive Committee (two members representing the North Island and two representing the South Island) are elected for a two-year term. Members retire by rotation.

The two members required to retire (one representing the North and one representing the South) are those who have been longest in office since their last election. The current Committee members were all appointed in 2002. Therefore, each Island's representatives will decide between themselves by agreement or lot who will stand down. The retiring members may re-offer themselves for re election and, if elected, will begin a new term of appointment.

Nominations are now called for the following positions:

- *Executive Committee member, North Island, one vacancy*
- *Executive Committee member, South Island, one vacancy (Current member Peter Fitzgerald will retire this year and will not restand).*

Each nomination must:

- *be in writing and specify the Island which the nominee seeks to represent*
- *be moved and seconded by two other full members or levy-paying members of the Association resident in the same island as the vacancy*
- *be signed by the nominee; and*
- *be delivered to the Association's office by 5.00 pm on Friday 4 April 2003.*

All nominees are entitled to submit a statement of approximately 150 words in support of their election. This statement must be sent to members at the same time as the ballot papers.

Details of postal voting and procedures, candidate profiles and the confirmation of time lines will be sent with the April edition of Deer Industry News. Postal voting runs for 21 days and must close 7 clear days prior to the AGM on Tuesday 27 May ( i.e. voting opens on 30 April, closing on 20 May) .

## B) SELECTION AND APPOINTMENT PANEL (SAP)

The role of the SAP is to make producer representative appointments to the Deer Industry New Zealand Board and to meet with those appointees at least once a year to discuss industry matters and their roles as Deer Industry New Zealand representatives.

The 8 member SAP is made up from:

- *Four Executive Committee members*
- *Four non-Executive elected members. Two members from each of the North and South Islands.*

The elected non-Executive Committee members whose term expires at the forthcoming AGM are (NI) Tim Aitken and (SI) Stewart Stevens.

Nominations are now called for the following positions:

- *SAP member, North Island, one vacancy*
- *SAP member, South Island, one vacancy*

Each nomination must be in writing and moved and seconded by two full members or levy paying members, signed by the nominee and delivered to the Association offices by 5.00 pm Friday 4 April 2003.

The nominees must be full members or levy paying members. Further, nominees:

- *must not be a member of the Deer Industry Association*
- *can not hold more than a 20% interest in any organisation which is a member of the Deer Industry Association*
- *can not be a candidate for membership of Deer Industry New Zealand, or a current member of Deer Industry New Zealand.*

[The voting procedure and timing of the process is the same as that for the positions on the Executive Committee.]

## C) NZDFA Appointments TO Deer Industry New Zealand Board

The Deer Industry New Zealand Board comprises four producer representatives selected by the New Zealand Deer Farmers' Association Selection and Appointment Panel, one Extraordinary appointment selected by the SAP, three representatives selected by the New Zealand Deer Industry Association and one Government appointee and One Extraordinary Appointment. Clive Jermy (Chairman), Warren Moyes, Mike Pattison and Jeffrey Pearse are the current producer representatives. John Scurr was appointed to fill NZDFA's Extraordinary vacancy in 2002.

Nominations are now called for the following NZDFA positions on the DINZ Board:

- *Deer Industry New Zealand Board member, Retiring by Rotation (Warren Moyes), 1 vacancy.*
- *Deer Industry New Zealand Board member, Extraordinary vacancy, 1 Position.*

This vacancy was created voluntarily as part of the Industry Restructure proposal endorsed by the NZDFA at the 2002 AGM and December referendum. A formal "vacancy" as part of that agreement will be created. The retiring member is eligible to offer themselves for reappointment along with other potential candidates. That appointment will be valid until 2004 (1 year term). While this position can be filled by direct appointment under the constitution it was agreed under the reform process that for this year it will be part of the normal SAP process.

Each nomination must be moved and seconded by two levy-paying members, signed by the nominee and delivered to the Association's offices before 5.00 pm on Friday 4 April 2003.

The Constitution (2002) refers:

### **37.10 NOMINATIONS FOR DEER INDUSTRY NEW ZEALAND:**

The Selection and Appointment Panel shall appoint a Returning Officer who shall publicly announce, in writing, the names of the retiring deer farmer nominees of Deer Industry New Zealand and call for nominations for their replacement, prior to the end of March each year. Nominations shall be:

- made by any two Full Members or Levy Paying Members
- in writing; and
- in the hands of the Returning Officer at a date to be specified which will be before the Annual General Meeting of the Association each year.

### **37.11 ELIGIBILITY FOR SELECTION AS NOMINEE TO DEER INDUSTRY NEW ZEALAND BOARD**

All persons interested or engaged in the deer farming industry shall be eligible for nomination, with the exception of employees of Deer Industry New Zealand or of the Association. Each nominee for selection shall be required to make a written declaration of any office held or managerial position or financial interest that either the nominee or any of the nominee's immediate family or any partner or fellow shareholder in any deer farming project has in any organisation which deals directly in the products of or materials for the deer farming industry. The products of the deer farming industry refers to the commercial processing or commercial trade in venison, velvet, co-products and similar products but excludes live animals and velvet sold from the farm.

Nominations for both positions will be considered by the Selection and Appointment Panel with recommendations being made to the Minister of Agriculture for appointment to the Board.

## **NOMINATION FORMS**

Nomination forms for the Executive Committee, SAP and Deer Industry New Zealand vacancies can be obtained from the Association's office, Phone: 04 382 8626; Fax: 04 382 9143; email: info@deernz.org. Nomination forms are also available through your local Branch and will be posted on 1 March on the website: www.deernz.org

## Spectacular debut for 'Gene Jumpers' at Elk/Wapiti Awards

Enter 'Kobe'. This typical elk 2 year-old bull from the Winton farm, Tikana of Dave Lawrence and Donna Day swept all before it in the new 'Gene Jumper' Class at the 2003 Elk and Wapiti Society (EWSNZ) 5th Annual Velvet and Antler Awards.

The inaugural winning selection had already won the 2 year old class with an impressive average 18.15cm beam, weighing 5.91 kg. It lost only 6.25 fault points of 50 available.

To put that in context, the 2002 champion was 5.48 kg, 18.8cm beam with 8 fault points, and "Silverado" in 2001 at 7.6 kg.

The EWSNZ has used the now well-proven New Zealand judging system to develop and mirror the North American Certified Weight Index. Fault points are made positive once judging is completed, kg converted to pounds and beam measurements included, allowing comparison year to year and some measure of progress within and between ages and years. The 2 year old New Zealand CWI of last year's winner at 103.6 was exceeded by Kobe at 105.6 this year, although Silverado at 118.4 remains the 2 year-old industry benchmark.

The new class is borrowed entirely from the Albertans, Rob Pek and Eric Falk's E&R Elk Consulting "Futurity Classic", where the sole prize was a 2002 \$C17,000 (about \$NZ20,000) incentive and has been as high as \$C50,000 (about \$NZ59,000). The concept allows all participating members exclusivity a year ahead of the animal being on the market, with 2 straws of semen from the winner given to members and no more available that year.

In New Zealand, 15 members each invested \$500 to enter. Not all members put up heads for judging, but EWSNZ President Tom May was pleased with that level of support and is convinced the competition will grow in stature and competitiveness. Only those who enter a genetics investment syndicate get to judge their 2 year-old champion.



Judges at the 2003 Elk and Wapiti Society velvet antler competition, from left: Steve Thomson, Lloyd Morgan, Russell Henderson, John Fogarty and trainee judge Colin Smith.

*Table 1*

Bull	2yo weight	CWI	3yo weight	CWI
Silverado	7.60 kg	118.4	10.2kg	133.7
Tussock	4.83 kg	96.6	6.24kg	100.3
4 Play	5.29 kg	98.9	9.84 kg	123.6
G5	5.48 kg	103.6	9.10kg sale	
Kobe	5.91 kg	105.6	(2004)	
Scorpion Canada	9.16 kg current champion		(2003)	
Cobra Canada	9.03 kg		13.78 kg	
Diablo Canada	9.03 kg		No data (hard antler)	
Sultan Canada	7.97 kg		13.50 kg	
Oak Point Jesse USA	8.69 kg		14.73 kg	

*Table 2*

**EWSNZ Velvet and Antler Competition Results**

Class	Place	Bull	Owner	kg	NZCWI
2 Year	1	'Kobe'	D Lawrence	5.91	105.6
	2		D&L Whyte	4.67	89.7
	3		T May	4.1	87.9
3 Year	1	'4 Play'	T May	9.84	123.6
	2		D&L Whyte	6.23	108.8
	3		S Thomson	5.63	97
4 Year	1	'Tussock'	D&L Whyte	10.49	119.9
	2	'Monarch'	J Falconer	8.3	117
	3	'Sparky'	N&S Cunningham	7.79	111.1
5 Year	1	'Hercules'	J Falconer	11.38	129.7
	2		D&S Quantock	7.2	110.1
	3		M&T Cook	9.96	101.4
6 Year	1	'Alberta'	D&L Whyte	13.84	145.5
	2	'Vitamin'	M McBride	11.7	143.8
	3	'Kiwi Renegade'	T May	13.81	140.3
Open Wapiti1	1	'Vitamin'	M McBride	11.7	143.8
	2	'Sparky'	N&S Cunningham	7.79	111.1
	3		D&S Quantock	7.2	110.1
Open Supreme	1	'SuperChamp'	D&L Whyte	16.7	163.6
	2	'Colorado'	D&L Whyte	15.07	149.5
	3	'Goldberg'	N&S Cunningham	16.23	146.1

*Table 3*

Sire of 3	Donald and Leigh Whyte Edendale Station W67	Champion
	Donald and Leigh Whyte Edendale Station 'Superchamp'	Reserve
	Tom May Mayfield Elk '4Play'	
Hard antler Typical	1st Brian Kenton, Mountainview Elk	Y127 'Columbus' SCI 17 & 5/8ths
	2nd Donald & Leigh Whyte Edendale Station	'SuperChamp' SCI 11 & 3/8ths
Hard antler Non Typical	1st Donald & Leigh Whyte Edendale Station	'Flathead' SCI 423 & 3/8ths
	2nd J Falconer, Clachanburn	Y178 SCI 409 & 7/8ths
	3rd S Thomson/L Morgan	'True Grit' SCI 391 & 3/8ths
2yo Hard antler	1st Colin Smith 2 Mile Farm	Red 774 SCI 280 & 7/8ths
	2nd Tom May, Mayfield Elk	G19 SCI 249 & 4/8ths
	3rd Wade Waller	40 SCI 238 & 6/8ths
Commercial 1: Value weight X grade. 3 heads 2-4kg Class	1st JB Whyte Riverton	
Commercial 2 Value weight X grade 3 heads 4-6kg Class	1st Steve Thomson Stonebridge Elk	
	2nd Lloyd Morgan Blue mountain wapiti	
	3rd JB Whyte Riverton	

Quality, weight and style issues all come to the fore as people select the antler characteristics that they judge as the best to be added to their own herds.

Xcell Breeding services generously supported the class and provide semen collection services for the winner and distribution of the straws.

So what of 'Kobe'? Dave Lawrence describes this big, very quiet 2 year old as the best he's ever bred – the result of years of selection and breeding through previous AI work and rigorous recording programmes at Tikana. The genetics go back to Tim Wallis's champion Blue 116 on the sire side and traces to his and Mike Bringans' 'Revolution'. He was understandably delighted.

Does it work? The non-scientific table (Table 1) charts a few recent competition entries recording 2 year-old heads and subsequent 3 year-old progress in New Zealand and Canada. It's biased as a table of course, but there's no denying the progression. There is enough indication here for a confident step at the top end of production.

The 2003 competition had great strength in all grades, although particularly in the adult and Elk Supreme™ sections. (see Table 2)

Stars of the event were undoubtedly Donald and Leigh Whyte of Edendale Station, Mid Canterbury, who won the 4 year old, 6 year old and Open Supreme sections, then Sire of 3, 2003 Champion of Champions, and non-typical hard antler section.

Superchamp's head was described by judges as one of the greatest classic Supreme™ heads yet produced in New Zealand and follows hard on its success in the Nationals. The Whytes also arranged a vote, the 'people's choice' competition, where the crowd were asked to rank the top 5 heads in the open section as the judges had, and pick the reserve and champion heads. This proved immensely popular and was conducted blind without owner ID or weights on display.

The evening, hosted at Lincoln University, was notable for the large number of family groupings attending with many new and young faces emerging. The evening was a fitting tribute to the work and enthusiasm of this group with members again digging deep and raising a further \$20,000 for Society funds and their extensive research programme. While this certainly had the effect of subduing the late night revelry of the 120 attendees to some extent, the occasion was a fitting tribute to Elk excellence and a most active and committed society. Congratulations to all involved. President Tom May looks forward to the first 20kg head in the near future. 📧

**Tony Pearse, Producer Manager, Deer Industry New Zealand**

'Kobe', a bull from Dave Lawrence and Donna Day, swept all before it in the 2 year-old class in this year's Elk and Wapiti Society velvet antler competition.



Ian McDonald with Dave Lawrence, winner of the 2 year-old class with "Kobe".



Leigh and Donald Whyte and family.



"Superchamp", 2003 Champion of Champions and Open Elk Supreme Champion. Donald and Leigh Whyte, Edendale Station, Canterbury. He scored 163.7 NZCWI points, 15 points ahead of any recent winners.

## Events Calendar

**27-29 May 2003:** Deer Industry Conference 2003 at Timaru. Branch Chairmen's meeting and associated meetings 27 May.

**27 June 2003:** Deer Production Seminar (part of NZ Society of Animal Production Conference), Queenstown.

**25-27 June 2003:** NZ Veterinary Association, Deer Branch Conference, Queenstown, in association with Society for Animal Production.

**24-27 February 2004:** Second Antler Science and Product Technology (ASPT) Symposium – Queenstown. Co-hosted by AgResearch and Deer Industry New Zealand. Following on from the successful ASPT Symposium in Banff, Canada in 2000, this symposium will update all key areas of velvet antler science and product technology.

## National Branch Velvet Challenge: "Remington Steel" s the show for Southland

*Fourteen 2 year old red heads, averaging 4.03kg, absolutely stunned the judges and Wairarapa Branch supporters and visitors at the West Bush Deer Stud complex on Saturday 8 February at the National Two Year Old Velvet Competition.*

The greatest of these was a 4.675 kg perfectly cut set of antlers from the breeding programme of Peter Swann. The velvet from Remington Steel set a new benchmark in quality, presentation and style. Second place went to the heavyweight (5.27kg) Austin (0079) from Windermere and 3rd to Southland again with an attractive 4kg head from Geoff Gill.


National trainee judges Peter Crowle and Andrew Fraser stepped up to this difficult task under the eye of Deer Industry New Zealand Producer Manager Tony Pearse, and competition organisers Andrew and Rachael Mitchell. While the trend at some of the regional competitions had been for producers to push these young heads into Long Top grades, the 2 year olds on display were, on the whole, conservatively and well cut and presented. The velvet heads in the first four places were all Super A grade, with only small point margins separating the minor placings.

The Wairarapa Branch still remains frustrated that the Branch Challenge, and indeed the 2 year old classes, aren't better supported. Only five Branches entered the challenge this year. Remington Steel combined with National Champion David Stevens' Maximus to ensure that Southland took the case of Borthwicks Riesling wine and Trophy. South Canterbury/North Otago Branch was in second place and Sherwood (1 point leader over Maximus and Myson in the Open Red) brought the home Branch into 3rd in the Branch Challenge.

Organisers next year will offer a stripped hard antler 2 year old class as well, to attract some of the heads that are grown out.

The Wairarapa Branch, with West Bush Deer Stud's generous help, arranged a quality meal at a local boutique café where a concept for a further Branch Challenge was unveiled – to be sponsored by Black Forest Park – the development of a truly unique deer industry cocktail-hour liqueur.

Dave Lawrence's 2 year old stag Kobe took the Wapiti section following its success at the EWSNZ and Gene Jumpers class although there was little competition for this champion (one other entry).

All in all this was a wonderful event despite the lack of support from other viewers and entrants - a pity given the quality on display. Next year it would be worth making the effort, as those who did had a VERY good time! 



*Southland's winning Branch Challenge combo: Maximus (tag 4) from DH & LM Stevens, and Remington Steel (tag 11) from the Swann family. Remington Steel was also outright winner of the individual national 2 year old competition.*

### National Two Year Velvet Competition Results

Place	Owner	Stag	Weight
1st	Swann Family Southland	Remington Steel Blue 422	4.675kg
2nd	Windermere Deer/WG & J Oliver, Hamilton	Austin 079	5.270kg
3rd	G Gill - Southland	B423	3.925kg
4th	Peel Forest, Arundel	00-85	4.295kg
5th	FJ Ramsey Ltd - Southland	White 645	5.185kg
6th	EA Brock	W296 Son of Brutus	4.045kg
7th	Tower Farms, Hamilton	Mr Flugin - 00-16	4.105kg
8th	Chris Petersen, Te Anau	YR555	2.960kg
9th	Tower Farms, Hamilton	Pratt - 00-45	3.550kg
10th	Gary & Robyn Borland, Pleasant Point	0060	4.350kg
11th	Tower Farms, Hamilton	Watson - 00-138	4.425kg
12th	WG & J Oliver, Christchurch	Y11	3.930kg

### Branch Challenge

Place	Branch	Owner	Stag	Combined weight
1st	Southland	DH & LM Stevens Swann Family	Maximus Remingto	12.820kg
2nd	South Canty/Nth Otago	Gary Rooney Peel Forest	Myson Arundel 00-85	13.445kg
3rd	Wairarapa	West Bush Deer West Bush Deer Stud	Sherwood	13.320kg

### National Two Year Wapiti

Place	Owner	Stag	Weight
1st	DW Lawrence Southland	Kobe Blue 205	5.900kg
2nd	Duncan & Linda McLachlan Te Anau	Yellow 19	4.580kg

# Game estates: not just any old stag will do

*Put ten hunters in a room with ten trophy heads and come back two weeks later – they'll still be disagreeing!*

Trophy heads are as much in the eye of the beholder – especially the successful hunter – as they are in the varied international scoring systems. The Safari Club International (SCI) system is now used in scoring heads from New Zealand's game estates and safari parks, and is generally accepted as the industry benchmark.

SCI works well for the plain antlered species (wapiti, sika, whitetail, rusa and even the palmated fallow and moose), but is not so straightforward for red deer. There have been instances of red antlers submitted for international record books being downgraded later – with the inevitable emotion attending such decisions. Naturally, this can have a backlash for commercial estates from disgruntled clients.

The vast majority of trophy heads taken in New Zealand are in the high silver/low gold category – in SCI terms this is between 280 and 350 points.

However, James Guild, president of the New Zealand Association of Game Estates, speaking at the Stanfield's Bushey Park Velvet & Antler Seminar last year, said the value in a head is often not necessarily its medal status, but can involve a range of factors based around the whole hunt experience.

Every bogus on-farm dispatch sold as a trophy puts the Game Estates industry at severe risk internationally, James said. The SCI has begun a worldwide survey to determine the extent of "canned hunts", and he said New Zealand's behaviour had been a prime catalyst to this initiative.

"To counter this, the New Zealand Association of Game Estates has implemented the world's first independently audited certification for game estates or safari parks," he said. Based on industry-agreed standards, it covers:

- animal management, welfare and behaviour, including the internationally-accepted 'five freedoms'
- animal health and disease surveillance
- fencing and environmental standards
- infrastructure such as tracks, bridges and buildings
- professional standards for guides
- client safety and equipment; and
- sound commercial practices and standards.

"The whole process is underpinned by the independence of the auditors and reassessment procedure. A landowner trophy certificate which requires the signatures of the estate owner, hunting guide and the client, will accompany each trophy to be submitted for record book consideration," James said.

Every member of the association has now either completed or begun their first audit, and a second audit, procedural only, is being considered for the future.

James said game estates were not a sideline of the velvet business, but a highly specialised industry in its own right, requiring different genetics, management, facilities and skills.

He commented that the capacity of the industry to absorb an increasing supply of trophy stags grown out of deer farms should not be overestimated.

"The value of each individual should also not be overestimated. The laws of supply and demand are constant.



Photo: Roy Veronese, Warnham & Woburn Society Photo Awards

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"Given the commercial sensitivities involved, and the erratic nature of the business, it is hard to know what the total annual harvest of trophy stags on New Zealand game estates is on average. I estimate that it is probably about 400 reds, 200 fallow and 100 wapiti. The bogus 'shoot by numbers' operations may account for another 100 reds or more," said Guild

"At least half these animals will be bred on the estates, either naturally or in an adjacent or allied breeding farm. For economic and managerial reasons, this trend to own breeding will grow, and I expect that in a few years the percentage of animals sourced from specialist breeders may be as little as 30 percent – about 100 to 120 annually."

James Guild had some practical pointers for those interested in producing trophy stags. "It is probably easier to tell you what I, as a game estate owner, do not want, rather than what I do want," he said.

"I do not want to buy a trophy stag that is older than 6-8 years. A 12-year-old gummy will not survive the hierarchical confrontations or the climatic shock of foraging on native pasture at 3000 feet. A six-year-old that is not taken in early seasons will acclimatise and grow a better head in the future, and I have not lost my investment.


"I do not want a stag that has never carried an antlered head through to casting. On our deer farm, we do not cut any of our farmed spikers' velvet and a high proportion of our two-year-olds carry hard antlers right through. Removing a head that is just starting to strip in mid-January is not the same as carrying a hard head through the rigours of the rut.

"There is a huge animal welfare issue with stags carrying their first hard head as mature adults, when they have never experienced the social friction and the physics of leverage of an extra 45 inches of antler on the top of their head. Antlers broken off at the skull are a direct product of not having previously carried a head in hard antler, are a preventable animal welfare problem and are a total commercial loss on a game estate.

"This is why I predict more properties will breed their own. Few breeders seem prepared to stand the loss of even one year's velvet income. You should note, however, that currently, the DeerQA On-Farm QA Programme does not allow stags to run in hard antler.

"I do not want to source animals from a property that does not have the facilities (yards, load out races, etc.) that can handle full antlered stags, or where the grower is terrified of them.


"I do not want to buy deer that are pumped up full of chocolates and cream puffs and have had a life of overmedication. Once they are out on the hill I cannot intervene in their wellbeing.

"I do not want to buy from a breeder who sells by Dutch auction, playing one bidder off against another. I want to go to a specialist who is in the business for the long haul and who is happy to build a relationship that stands the vagaries of an erratic business, and is prepared to develop the skills and commitment required." 

**Warnham & Woburn Society**


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## Branch Chair profile: Bob Kingscote – Canterbury

*With its mix of plains, foothills and high country, Canterbury caters for the whole spectrum of deer farming operations. On the Canterbury Plains there is the biggest concentration in New Zealand of finishing units, which sees a big annual influx of weaners into the district from other parts of the country.*

There are about 700 deer farmers in the region covered by the Canterbury Branch of the NZDFA, extending from the Conway River in the north through to the Rangitata River in the south.

Bob Kingscote has been Chair of the Canterbury Branch for the past two and a half years. He and his wife Mary run deer, sheep and beef, 5,500 stock units in all, at 'Toppesfield' in the Waiau district. Their three grown daughters, Anna, Vicky and Libby are pursuing careers respectively in winemaking, landscape architecture and design, but still retain a strong interest in the family farm.

Bob says the Canterbury Branch has an active and enthusiastic committee of twenty and it's one of the bigger Branches in the country both in terms of members and land area.

"We put most of our energy into field days and farm visits that are of direct benefit to members. Last year we organised the Canterbury Deer Farmer of the Year Award which was a huge success for us, and several field days."

The first major Branch event for 2003 was a velvet field day on 12 February, which included a visit to National Deer Horn's plant at Belfast.

Bob says that because of its size and history, many of the deer industry's leaders in the past have emerged from the Canterbury region. He notes that the current Branch committee continues that tradition, including 2002 Matuschka Award holder Kelvin Kimber, and PGG Deer Manager Ron Schroeder among their number.




*Bob making a point from the floor at last year's industry conference.*

*"The committee has consistently challenged the effectiveness of the DFA's national organisation."*

He says the Canterbury Branch has always been a catalyst for change and the committee has consistently challenged the effectiveness of the DFA's national organisation. "Our remit in Masterton in 2000 was the catalyst for change in the industry and the formation of Deer Industry New Zealand," he notes.

Like most throughout the industry, Canterbury Branch members have found the low venison schedule disappointing. But rather than looking for someone to blame, Bob says the industry needs to focus on developing new markets and rebuilding the confidence of venison importers.

"We need a mature approach to our market development and we also need our product to mature in the marketplace," Bob says. "Products like lamb have established a sustained market presence, and that's what we need to do for venison, so we can avoid the big peaks and troughs we've been seeing." 



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## Branch Chair profile: Rodney Dixon – Waikato

*Rodney Dixon has been Chairman of the NZDFA Waikato Branch for just over a year, but his association with the industry goes back much further. He first joined the DFA in 1979 as a Branch member (in the then South Auckland Branch) and has remained an active member ever since.*

The Waikato DFA district extends from Auckland city down through the Coromandel to Putaruru and includes a wide diversity of deer properties both in size and type. These include stud farms, finishing blocks and everything from the big operators such as Landcorp, and Kaiaroa (which runs 5000-6000 weaners) down to those on a few acres with only 10 or 20 deer.

Rodney and wife Dawn farm in the Te Akau district west of Ngaruawahia where they run 1200 red deer, 300 cattle, a small Hereford stud and a Suffolk stud on 1200 acres of rolling to steep hill country. They also lease an adjacent pine block, which they under graze to keep tidy.

Rodney says the Waikato Branch is active and well supported by a committee of 15. Branch activities focus mainly on field trips to various properties and discussion groups. In the past they have tackled trips ('expeditions' as Rodney describes them) as far afield as Otago.

"As a Branch we concentrate on farm visits and discussion groups which serve a double purpose for our members. They offer great education opportunities and equally as importantly this type of activity gets farmers off their farms and mixing with others. Farming can be an isolated occupation and I've always benefited from getting away and mixing with others to exchange ideas and build friendships."

Rodney says there are no big animal health issues in the area. There are often scares with dairy cows that throw up a Tb reactor, but to the best of his knowledge there are no Tb-infected deer herds within the Branch's region.

"We get the odd case of swayback due to copper deficiency but our main problem is with ticks. It's certainly not a catastrophic situation but they are well spread throughout the area. We also get some facial eczema in our red deer and farmers report problems with grass staggers from time to time."



He says the Branch is ticking along nicely with the committee particularly keen to encourage younger entrants into the industry. "A few have popped up lately to enter a local velvet competition which is pleasing – we have no problem with experience having some very long-serving members among our number, but it's reassuring to see the next generation of deer farmers getting involved and adding their bit to the mix." 

*Rodney Dixon feeding out on his Te Akau farm.*

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## Good genetics and tough culling feature on award winning property

*Eddie and Bronwyn Brock may be deer industry leaders, but they're not about to rest on their laurels.*

In November last year the couple won the Duncan and Co. 2002 Southern Deer Farmer of the Year Award, and picked up two additional awards for special business performance and animal management. Some of the secrets of their success were shared at a field day on their property at Merino Downs, near Gore on 4 February.



*Eddie Brock (centre) makes a point during the field day.*

The Brocks farm 460 Red breeding hinds, 400 mixed-age stags, and 364 rising one year hinds and stags and six master stags. They also run sheep on another leased 40ha block.

The Red hinds, which are stocked at 15.4su/ha, suit the summer-wet property with its Waikoikoi silt loam soils.

### Velvet production focus

Although they have the broad spectrum of the market covered, Eddie's particular focus lies in velvet production around which sire selection was based.

"It's a fantastic product [velvet] and we're continually striving to do better," he said.

Eddie purchased the family sheep farm in 1988 and spurred by a desire for "more money and less time input" started the deer conversion with 50 hinds.

Although he envisaged deer fencing no more than 40ha, this gradually expanded – by 2000 the 158ha farm was fully deer fenced.

Eddie has traditionally selected only his best hinds for artificial insemination, but now uses the technique over all his hinds to get the best genetics over the whole herd.

The hinds are synchronised and AI'd using semen from both his own stags and outside bloodlines. This is followed up with natural matings. Eddie says the AI conception rates have varied considerably from 15 to 85 percent and they're still learning why it's so variable.

The fawning result typically averages 88 percent due to 25 percent of the herd being two-year-old hinds.

A key factor in the Brocks' win was their strong financial results. They achieved an economic farm surplus of \$343,906 last year.

Eddie usually buys stags in partnership with other breeders as they are able to share the genetic gain and purchase twice as many. They keep 90 to 100 replacement hinds each year and all stags are retained until two years of age.

The on-going focus is on increasing velvet weight and quality per head. "The bar's lifting all the time. It's challenging to produce better and better velvet," he said.

Although Eddie is lenient on culling criteria for two-year-old stags, cutting down to 1.7kg of velvet, he is tough on them in the third year. The mixed-age stags average 4kg of velvet each year.


Poor-performing velveters in each age group are culled each year, along with any dry and cull hinds. Weaners are drenched every six weeks following weaning, including two oral mineral drenches.

They are weighed every two months so growth rates and the breeding potential of sires can be tracked.

The weaners are all-grass wintered while the adult deer are fed swedes and supplemented with hay. The stags receive baleage in winter and early spring, which helps increase their protein levels. Paddocks are sprayed with copper prior to spring.

The Brocks hold an on-farm deer sale each January, where they sell two-year-old breeding stags, 15 month hinds and some mixed-age hinds. They also sell up to six trophy stags each year.

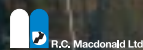
Eddie admits they've made some mistakes during their time deer farming. In hindsight he would have located the deer shed more centrally, given the expansion of the deer farm, and he would have fenced along the ridges.

His message for people contemplating deer farming: "Do a lot of homework on the land you've got and the type of deer you want." 

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## Escaped deer: still rights of ownership, but there are conditions

*There have been a number of inquiries seeking clarification on the ownership status and extent of the farmer's rights and responsibilities if farmed deer escape.*

The incidents are characterised by argument and anger as the uninformed public have shot animals in a couple of herd escapes where the farmer and neighbours were co-operating in the return plans. That is the key. There has to be an active effort in recapture.

After a great deal of lobbying and submission from the NZDFA, largely through Trevor Norriss, legislative protection was granted in 2000. The law passed verifies:

***Under the Wild Animal Control Act (WAC) when deer are identified under the Biosecurity (Animal Identification Systems) Regulations they are not considered to be wild deer, i.e. they are under private ownership whether they are within a farm or have escaped.***

***Wild Animal Control Act 1993 Part 1, section 9 (2)(d) Amendment May 1999.***

The Wild Animal Control Act governs the ownership and control of deer (in particular, sections 2(1), 8 & 9). Releasing deer into the wild is also illegal under this Act. This provision came via the Director General of Conservation. DOC takes responsibility for escaped deer and they are currently none too pleased about the reported numbers of escapes. There are some important farmer responsibilities here.

Identification must be through an official tag, so it applies as of right to all deer born from 1999 that must carry the AHB tag or the MINDA system. Tags must be in the ear, as required by the Biosecurity Act, at the age of 1 month if the animal is leaving the property. In deer, tagging should be done as soon as practical (usually this means at weaning, at 3-4 months).

Stagline June 2000 reported that on May 12 2000, the Director General of Conservation notified approval of the MINDA system and the AHB identification system for farmed deer. These are the only two official systems, so older or alternatively tagged deer don't have the same protection unless they are also retagged with an official tag.

The farmer must also be actively involved in the recovery process if it has all gone wrong and animals have been shot.

You must notify neighbours, (Trevor Norriss suggests that the police are a first call), and DOC, and you must actively have a plan and be actively involved in trying to recover the animals. The public may well think that a feral status applies once outside the fence, so as well as your concerns there may well be some confrontation and emotion involved.

Irrespective of that, the legal protection is there. The AHB advises that the scheme and its legal requirement was never designed to protect ownership status for escaped deer as it simply identified the herd of origin (birth herd) and subsequent movements are supported by documentation of herd number movements and numbers in a group but not necessarily individual animals.

You must therefore quote the Wild Animal Control Act and the Biosecurity Act as the linking legislation, and check and maintain your fence security.

### At a glance

- Escaped deer which are identified with the approved AHB or MINDA tags are NOT considered wild deer under the Wild Animal Control Act.
- All deer born after 1 July 1999 must be identified with the official tags anyway.
- Official tags can be used on animals born before that date, to afford proper legal protection to escapees.
- Since 1 July 2001 any cattle or deer older than one month have been required to be tagged with an official tag before being moved off farm.
- DOC is responsible for escaped deer. If your deer escape you must inform DOC and your neighbours (it's also wise to tell the Police).
- You must be actively working to recapture the deer if they are to be protected under law.



## Increased reporting needed into stag deaths

The issue of stag deaths following adverse reactions to Xylazine was discussed at January's NVSB meeting. There is anecdotal evidence of more stag deaths this velvet season than in previous years, and the NVSB is keen to know why. At this stage, the scale of the problem is not known, which is why the NVSB is urging the entire deer industry, including vets, to report all drug related deaths to them.

"It is essential that we get accurate information about this problem so that a pattern can be identified and an appropriate course of action taken," says NVSB Manager, Rob Gregory. "At present we don't know whether this is a drug issue, a hypersensitivity issue, or even a breed issue. That doesn't help anybody, especially those who have lost animals this season."

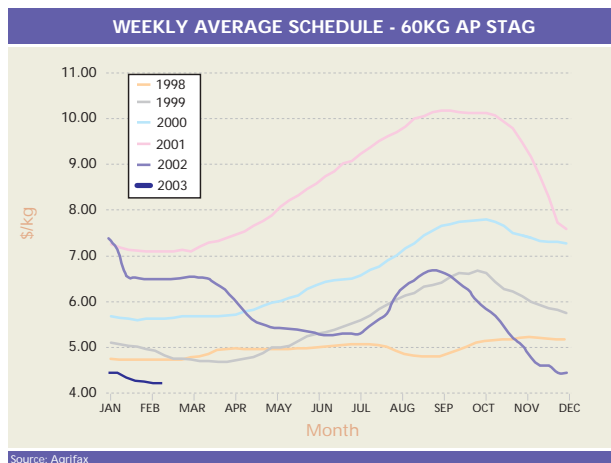
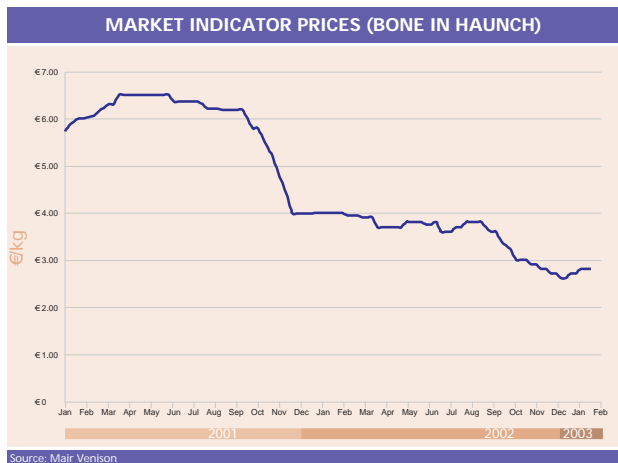
In the meantime, farmers should be aware that there is an inherent risk associated with all drugs, not just Xylazine, and that they should seek veterinary advice if they have any concerns about a drug.

As a separate issue, the NVSB would like to remind farmers that Xylazine can only be used under the NVSB Programme for the purpose of velvet removal, and not for other practices such as trophy head scoring. The use of Xylazine in applications other than velvet removal may only be undertaken by a veterinarian.

Please report any stag deaths during velvet removal this season to the NVSB by calling Janice Attrill on (04) 381 6014, Rob Gregory on (04) 381 6016, fax (04) 382 9143 or email [janice.attrill@deernz.org](mailto:janice.attrill@deernz.org) or [rob.gregory@deernz.org](mailto:rob.gregory@deernz.org)

## Venison

Venison production is still down on the previous year and schedule prices remain almost 25% below the 10-year average price for this time of year. The strong and appreciating New Zealand dollar adds to the industry's difficulties. However, exporters report early signs of what may be a turnaround.



### Production

- Production for the 12 months to January 2003 was 446,272 animals, a 10% drop on production in the previous year.
- Average carcase weights for the January year-end were 54.1kg, down from the same period the year before (54.9kg).
- The combination of fewer numbers and lower average carcase weights mean total production for the 12 months to January 2003 was down 11% on the previous year.

### Schedule

- The average schedule for the 2002 calendar year was \$5.86; this is compared with an average schedule of \$8.56 in 2001, \$6.58 in 2000 and \$5.53 in 1999.
- Since the end of 2002, schedule levels have dropped approximately \$0.20. At week 7 in 2003, the average schedule price was \$4.20. This was 26% below the five-year average for that week (\$5.65), and 24% below the 10-year average (\$5.51).

### Exports

- Total venison exports for the year to December 2002 reached 15,777 tonnes - 11% below the volume of exports for 2001.
- Market conditions remain difficult. However, there are reports from New Zealand exporters and European importers of increased demand as a result of low market prices. Reduced market prices seem to have stimulated demand and subsequently the market appears to have stabilised compared to the end of last year.
- The schedule appears to be flattening out despite currency movements and there are some slight improvements in some cuts – especially legs and shoulders, which have been under severe price pressure.
- While still early days, exporters appear cautiously positive that this may be the start of a turnaround.

### 2003 Chef Programme

- Deer Industry New Zealand Executive Chef Graham Brown is scheduled to leave New Zealand mid-February for a three-to four-week market mission. Graham will be working at a series of in-house trade fairs throughout Germany and a major wholesaler trade-fair. Before returning to New Zealand, Graham is scheduled to promote Cervena® at chef workshops in Australia.
- Due to strong demand by exporters and importers, Graham will be accompanied by Chef Geoff Christie, the former head of the Food and Hospitality School at the Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology. With 20 years experience with various organisations on similar projects throughout the world, Geoff will be available to assist Graham on future market missions.
- In July, activities are planned to coincide with the European summer, as well as a market visit in autumn (October), where Graham will showcase New Zealand venison at ANUGA – the world's largest food trade show.

## Market Talk: Spring/Su

**A top German chef, HRI consultant and cookbook author says that New Zealand venison is becoming more accepted in that market as a Spring/Summer menu item.**

Patrik Jaros runs several trendy restaurants in Cologne and first became involved with New Zealand venison following the 'Chefs Together' workshop, organised by Deer Industry New Zealand and agency Modem Conclusa in the early 1990s.

New Zealand venison's high quality and freshness was what persuaded him to put it on his menus all year round for the past eight years. "The main season is still 'the classic game season' but the acceptance to eat venison also in spring and summer is getting higher and higher."

# Velvet

Large volumes of velvet came onto the market in early January, with reasonable buyer interest. However, the strengthening New Zealand dollar and reports of tight buyer liquidity and dampening sales.

## Velvet Market

- The velvet market was reasonably robust throughout January despite some large volumes of velvet coming onto the market.
- Buyer interest has been reported by pools to be reasonable. However, the strengthening New Zealand dollar is one factor that is dampening buyer enthusiasm. It has risen by 26% against the US dollar and by 13% against the Korean Won in the past year.
- There are also reports that buyer interest may be softening due to problems with buyer liquidity. As product moves through distribution channels this may be resolved.
- Price ranges for the week to 31 January were:

	Current Season Week to 31/1/03	Last Season's Weighted Average	Approx. Change from Last Season
SA	119 - 149	\$132.64	1%
A	106 - 126	\$116.41	0%
B	106 - 124	\$112.18	3%
C	91 - 115	\$107.47	-4%
D	85 - 95	\$84.23	7%
E	77 - 84	\$70.12	15%
RG	66 - 120	\$87.67	6%

## Korean Sliced Access

- New Zealand's efforts to gain access for sliced velvet have taken another step forward.
- The New Zealand deer industry has been lobbying for access to the Korean market for New Zealand sliced velvet since 1994. In the past two years, Korean officials have moved from a flat refusal to discussing possible ways in which sliced access for New Zealand velvet could function.
- One barrier in the way of New Zealand gaining access has been the requirement for a Korean standard of what constitutes sliced velvet. The Korean Food & Drug agency issued a draft standard in January 2003. The standard includes a DNA-based test developed by Velvet Antler Research NZ Ltd (VARNZ) to identify reindeer antler that may be misrepresented as deer velvet. Reindeer antler is banned into Korea.
- The path is now clear for Korean and New Zealand officials to discuss New Zealand's ability to meet the Korean standard. It is likely that a working level group of Korean officials will visit in March 2003 to inspect New Zealand's processing facilities and MAF's assurance systems.

## Consumer Brochure

In January, Deer Industry New Zealand produced a new brochure that introduces New Zealand deer velvet. Marketers wanted a piece that was small enough to fit on retailers' shelves, but sufficiently detailed to allow consumers that knew nothing about New Zealand deer velvet to gain a basic understanding of it. The brochure is planned for use mainly in the USA.

## Summer Menus in Germany

Consistent and reliable good quality product supplied all year round are two of the factors that could determine the success of New Zealand venison in Germany's HRI market, Jaros says. For a restaurateur, fluctuating prices need to be minimised: "We are looking for products of good quality with good price margins. We also co-operate with national and international suppliers."

High profile food scares, like mad cow disease and salmonella, affect the customer's menu choice and Patrik Jaros says he aims to serve products with a good public reputation. He senses a growing interest in natural farming practices and animal welfare after each food scandal but says that, fortunately, the effects last for just a short time.



Deer Industry New Zealand Executive Chef Graham Brown and top German chef Patrik Jaros.

According to Jaros, the latest food trends in Germany are a move towards very cross-culture savoury food and another taking diners back to their European roots.

"Sweet, salty, sour and sweet kind of Californian style, such as fried meat with cold spicy sauces and grilled fruits, is the modern cross-culture savoury food, while classic Italian cuisine with home-made pasta regional dishes or classical German and Austrian dishes is nostalgic of everyone's childhood."

# Focus on velvet processing: Alaron Products

Nelson-based Alaron Products Ltd is a 21st century apothecary with credentials to impress. The company is this country's largest independent contract manufacturer of a wide range of natural health products; it is listed in the latest Deloitte's Fast 50 as one of New Zealand's fastest growing companies and is included in New Zealand Business magazine's Top 100 exporters list.



*Ron Geiger, Managing Director of Nelson-based Alaron Products Limited.*

Alaron is fully licensed for the production and export of supplements sourced from fish, shellfish, game, game meat and meat as well as herbal and other natural ingredients. It is also licensed for dairy products, has Halal certification, Biogro certification and is EU-listed.

As an encapsulator and bottler, Alaron is the largest contract manufacturer of deer products in this country. It processes virtually all parts of the animal including antlers, bone, pizzles, sinews, blood, testicles and tails producing supplements such as deer velvet capsules, health supplements plus a wide range of other niche products popular in the Asian market.

The end product is presented as bulk powders, coated and uncoated tablets, several sizes of capsules in bulk and bottled form and bottled liquids through to shelf ready end-product, which is labelled, shrink-wrapped and packed in export cartons.

## *Capacity for large or small volumes*

Managing Director Ron Geiger says Alaron is structured to meet the needs of both large and small organisations within the dietary supplement industry. "We have the capacity, equipment and staff to meet the high volume demands of wholesalers, distributors and large retailers. On the other hand, we can also accommodate short runs with few minimums, allowing us to assist the smaller customer launch a new product or complete market testing."

Alaron's state of the art premises, including its 60 trained staff and specialist machinery, are audited regularly by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry to ensure ongoing compliance with the stringent requirements of national and international standards. The company also operates under the direction of the Ministry of Health Medsafe Division and holds a Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) Certificate.

Ron says traceability is a big part of the operation and it




*Packing bulk velvet powder in Alaron's state-of-the-art processing facilities.*

employs a full time Quality Assurance Manager, as part of an eight-person quality team, to manage this aspect of the business.

He says most of the deer products produced by Alaron have wide appeal around New Zealand and are sold on the local market – the rest goes to Asia and Asian tourists.

However, the company is keen to expand business to Western markets and has been active working with Deer Industry New Zealand at US trade shows to introduce its products to the US natural health product market. "It takes a long-term commitment to 'showing up' and that is what has led to what success we have had," Ron says.

"Because deer product is extremely sensitive to the heat normally generated in the milling process it goes through our unique cold milling process to protect the delicate hormones and proteins from damage. Our cold mills were designed and produced exclusively for Alaron and, because they keep product cool during this critical milling process, maximum benefit is assured to the customer purchasing the end product."

He says while Alaron creates the product and works closely with velvet marketers it is not involved in the marketing or sale of product although, according to Ron, the company continually examines procedures and products to make sure Alaron keeps up with client requirements. 


## Richmond focus on further development

Further development expertise gained in beef and lamb is enabling Richmond to improve the product form of some traditional venison cuts. The company has come up with a new range of portion-controlled venison cuts suitable for a wide range of markets.

Using its FoodTech plant in Central Hawke's Bay, the company's initial focus has been on leg cuts and improved marketing options. Richmond Venison Marketing Manager Nick Sherwood explains: "Given that all legs are further processed once in the market and the product that the consumer ends up buying is vastly different from many of the primal cuts we export out of New Zealand, we knew what sort of scope and direction the development had to take."

Less costly than tenderloins and suitable for a range of sectors across many markets, Richmond's new portion-controlled leg medallions or steaks are produced from de-skinned leg muscles from young animals, which have been formed into a cylindrical shape and use a natural enzyme to bond the muscles together, Nick says. "These are then precision-cut to exact size using a computerised slicing machine, allowing us to produce leg medallions or steaks of the same weight and dimension."

With a variety of packaging techniques available, Richmond can supply set weight retail packs and design specifications for individual customers.

The quick-to-cook products have already attracted good interest in New Zealand and the United States and Nick says the leg steaks have potential in foodservice, airline catering and retail markets around the globe. Richmond is also working on portioned skin-pack products, gourmet burgers and other further processed and cooked venison products to extend its product offering beyond the traditional primal cuts and add value to its business mix. 



*Richmond's new portion-controlled leg steaks.*

## Velvet antler quality: Planned culling key to productivity

It has been long reported that the progress of the Chinese and Russian industries in achieving spectacular antler weights can be put down to selection for beam and weight. It is primarily increasing beam, as measured at the mid point circumference, that is responsible for the weight increase.

In New Zealand we have also seen a spectacular improvement in the genetic base, contributing to what must be one of the greatest single advances in any productive character in an animal in recent times.

To preserve the returns from such quality we have a detailed grading system, a tagging system and the ability to select individuals based on easily recorded traits. We are also fortunate that our venison industry provides a ready market for young animals that don't 'make the grade' as velveters but which are still prime quality in terms of venison. Farmers need to accept that older cull animals are of lower tenderness and quality for the venison market and constructively cull as early as possible.

The messages are clear. Until new demand can be created in the West through robust scientific results or until access restrictions throughout Asia can be removed and China's wealth provides a large new consumer base, the industry needs to carefully manage production volume. Two year old velvet weight and style can indicate future animal performance and there is no profitability in carrying passengers.

Farmers should be selecting spikers based on their 12-15 month body size and spike diameter at SP1 stage with knowledge of the genetic background as a screen, although this is not absolute. Twenty five to 30 percent of potential animals may


make the cut and be retained for velvet from a typical, reasonably bred group of spikers. Antler genetics are highly heritable, so a velvet breeding programme would have a higher retention at this age and rely on a major cull at two years old.

At 2 years of age everything below your 2 year-old average weight including all D and lower limit C grade, and animals with single lower tines, style faults or poor temperament should be culled. Culling decisions can be made at velveting time for grade and faults and a review of weights should be undertaken at the end of the season.

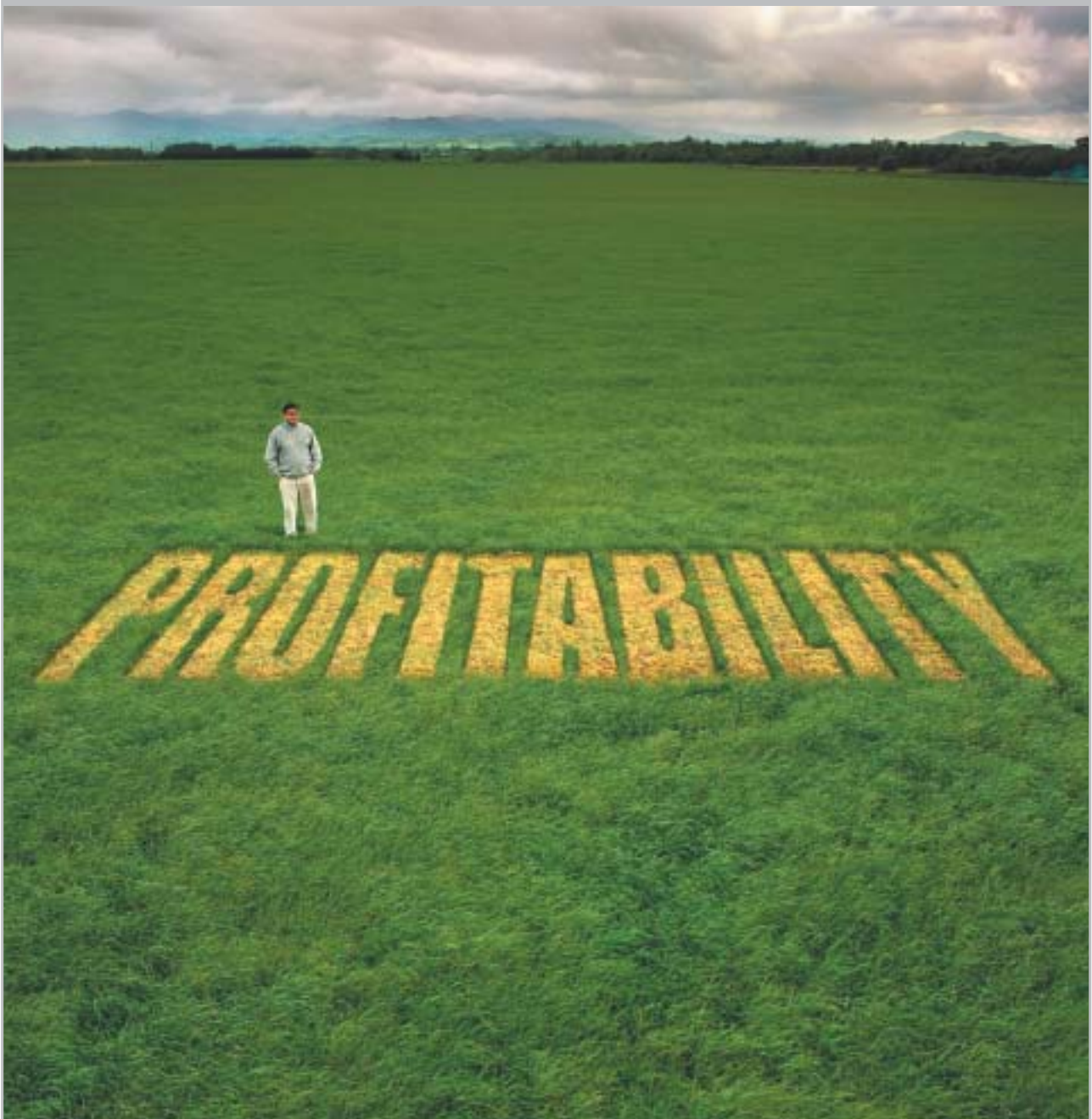
Similarly at 3 years old the 50 percent cull criteria will ensure great strength and consistency in the mixed age herd as animals reach their peaks from 4-9 years old.

At this time of year, virtually all adult stags will have bulked up and be exceeding GR limits and will be changing behaviour. Establishing settled social groupings of cull 2 and 3 year-olds now and giving them as much space as possible away from your on-farm mating programme and the older adults will allow them to settle, lose less weight and condition over the rut and be ready to supply late season and early season venison markets.

This preparation can also be aided by a couple of weeks of quality post-rut feeding to assist weight gain and cost effective recovery in venison returns.

Planning, selection and a cull mob management programme in combination adds value to both the venison and velvet industries. As regrowth is currently being removed, our advice is to plan and act now. 

*Tony Pearse, Producer Manager, Deer Industry New Zealand*



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# Care for waterways caught judges' eyes

*Takapau deer farmer, Clint Thomsen was very surprised last year to get a phone call out of the blue asking when a panel of judges for the Deer Farmers' Environmental Awards could visit his farm.*

His wife, Shelley, had nominated him for one of the awards, and her belief in his care for the land and waterways was justified – the work he has done on their 165 hectare farm earned the Fish and Game Environment Merit Award for best riparian management practices in last year's awards, which are part of the deer industry's Sustainable Farming Fund project.

Clint is the third generation of his family on the farm, joining in a partnership with his father's traditional beef farm in 1979 and starting up the deer side of the business that year. His father had always loved planting trees and over the years had planted a number of specimen trees, partly for shade but also to improve the overall look of the farm.

## *Father's programme continued*

Over the past 20 years, Clint has taken the task more seriously, and has planted shelterbelts in every paddock, all evergreens, mainly pine, Douglas fir and redwoods. As well, he has continued his father's programme of planting specimen trees, and every year plants 10 or 15, including poplars, oaks, sycamores and liquid ambers. He has limited these plantings, so that he can give them dedicated attention in their first few years, to ensure their survival. This includes regular watering each tree for several summers and building deer-proof fences around them (at approximately \$150 per tree).

But it is for the work protecting his waterways that he won

last year's award. Deer, he explains, really love wallowing in mud and can make a real mess of river banks, streams or even drains – in fact they will climb into troughs, splash out all the water with their front feet and, by wallowing, create mud pools over five metres wide and up to a metre deep.

The Manipopo Stream runs through the farm, and to prevent the wallowing – and the subsequent erosion and pollution – the Thomsens fenced off the stream, with a big buffer zone, and have undertaken extensive riverbank plantings of largely willows and flax. In addition, the Makaratu River runs along one boundary, and Clint is working with the Hawke's Bay Regional Council to fence this off and plant the banks, as part of the council's erosion control programme.

Clint said the Fish and Game representative on the panel, Mark Sutton from Southland, had been impressed by the work he had done, and had commented on the health of the waterways, the water quality and the range of insects and bugs present.

The Thomsens run up to 550 deer on their farm, 250 of them hinds and 80 of them velveting stags. They also winter about 600 cattle. The main focus is on velvet, and Clint has what he describes as "a quite good velvet herd". He regularly leases out several of his velvet stags for breeding and occasionally sells a few trophy stags.

He is philosophical about the debate on trophy hunting. The way he sees it, they either end up at a processing plant or as trophies – and the first stag he sold to this growing industry lasted three years before he was shot!



*Clint and Shelley Thomsen: praised for riparian management skills.*

## *Velvet sideline growing*

A growing sideline industry for the Thomsens is the small MAF-licensed factory on the farm that produces powder and capsules from velvet they buy back from the velvet pool. Clint says their Gevir Deer Velvet is now sold through 250 outlets around the country as well as through their website ([www.gevir.co.nz](http://www.gevir.co.nz)), and is exported in bulk to the United States, England and several other countries.

The Thomsen family is of Danish stock, and 'gevir' is the Danish word for antlers. It is a rewarding sideline for the family and they get great pleasure from receiving letters from around the world from customers who enjoy their products. 📧

# Deer Welfare Code draft nearly ready for comment

*The long process of writing the new Code of Welfare for Deer is one session away from a draft ready for comment from deer farmers and other industry stakeholders.*

Once that in-house consultation has occurred and the industry has signed off, the formal draft will be presented to the National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (NAWAC) who will formalise the document and send it out for public submissions. Once this process is completed and any amendments made, the Code will be given to the Minister of Agriculture for approval and passage into law.

The development group has been chaired by John Tacon, Quality Manger at Deer Industry New Zealand. The group represents the expertise and viewpoints of farmers, veterinarians, the service sector (stock agents) and the processing sector, with a linkage to Industry QA schemes. The members have also become students of the subtleties of English, with much time spent on the implications of farm practices and animal needs, and the significance of words such as "shall", "must" and "should".

The reason for such care is also implicit in the delay in the first six of 22 animal welfare codes that are required to be notified to the Minister over the next couple of years. These codes will have a strong basis in law and are based on welfare standards built around the 'five freedoms' of animal welfare.

Such is the public's interest in the pork and poultry industry codes, that those programmes have been delayed by many months, attracting more than 100,000 submissions. There has been a recent political battle in parliament with parties demanding more progress and more resources.

The deer industry should not become complacent because pressure is being directed to other sectors, as we also have investigations underway, particularly in the area of illegal removal of spiker antler prior to venison production.

**Total analgesia is a legal requirement and can only be performed by your vet, or by you on your property only if you are a fully accredited and current operator. That includes the use of compression rings, local anaesthetic or sedative/anaesthetic combinations.**

The deer industry is fortunate in having a long pro-active history in adoption and refinement of both the NVSB velvet removal programme and the linked DeerQA On-Farm QA programme. This and the industry's other DeerQA programmes for transporters and processors have been critical in supporting industry promotional programmes, and in allowing farmer removal of velvet.

## *Welfare an emotive issue*


Animal welfare generates considerable public emotion – informed, biased or extreme – over traditional farming practices. It is going to be very demanding on deer farmers to have external comment on industry practices, which is why so much care and clarity is needed in the code.

This code includes aspects of feeding, water requirements, yards, pre-transport needs, shade, shelter, over wintering and handling principles. It is based on a standard MAF format and the existing industry QA programme. The group's resources include copies of all relevant industry codes of welfare for deer from Australia, Canada, the UK and other industries.

Typically a section will begin with a short clear statement of intent and the Rule that is recognised as the legal minimum requirement – the "must" clauses.

These will be followed by a series of recommended best practices and establish advised targets, e.g. growth rates, water requirements, physical conditions or procedures. A section can also include a further industry comment or reference information, additional advice and commentary.

The NVSB has confirmed that a specific code of welfare for velvet removal will be developed separately.

Quality Manger John Tacon believes that with one more session to go, the draft will be available by the 2003 Conference and should be ready for presentation to NAWAC following a consultation period. 



## Pre-Roar

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## Fine-tuning consultation for 2003-04 DEERResearch programme

*Work is well underway to develop DEERResearch's 2003/04 research programme which starts on 1 July 2003. The development process follows the timeline published in 2002 and involves significant industry input and consultation.*

The first step in the consultation process involved a survey form asking producers to rate and prioritise a long list of research opportunities and to identify any other research needs not covered. This survey form was sent to all DFA Branches and was made available on the Deer Industry New Zealand website.

Five Branches and 21 individual producers responded to the survey, rating the following issues as priority areas for non-velvet research from a producer's perspective (in order of priority):

1. Johne's Disease
2. Bovine Tb
3. Estimated Breeding Values
4. Support for benchmarking projects
5. Model copper to provide more effective management tools
6. Lungworm – especially organic methods of control
7. Leptospirosis
8. Yersiniosis
9. Impact of deer farming on sediment, nutrient transfer and contamination of waterways
10. Development of a strategy for technical transfer.

Importantly, 100% of respondents identified research into Johne's Disease as having high importance with 57% ranking it as their 1st or 2nd priority. However, the focus on animal health issues arising from the consultation might indicate a deeper issue. Given limited funding, rather than immediately addressing all these issues separately, DEERResearch will need to consider how improved management systems might have application and benefit across a number of these conditions.


Despite the low response, DEERResearch Chairman Collier Isaacs saw the feedback as very positive. "Not only does the survey provide DEERResearch a strong signal regarding the relative importance to producers of different research areas, but also there was strong support for areas where DEERResearch, or other industry bodies are already investing.

DEERResearch is already investing relatively heavily in the area of Johne's for example.

"The challenge now for DEERResearch is to shape a research programme that makes the most of the funding available and leverages funds from other sources to create a package of work that delivers the best value and outcomes for the industry. We need to consider how we spread resources across the range of areas and over time."

Research providers were given this feedback and asked to provide Expressions of Interest for research by the end of January. These Expressions of Interest will be discussed with DFA Branches and the Executive Committee in February and March in time for the DEERResearch Board to consider Expressions of Interest and feedback at their April Board Meeting. The first set of successful proposals will be identified at this meeting.

"The consultation process for developing DEERResearch's programme seems to be working very well," says Isaacs. "While there are certainly benefits in having a well known and understood process in place, we will be reviewing the process on an ongoing basis to make any improvements we can. For starters, we've taken on board comment from DFA Branches that the survey forms need to be shorter and simpler to complete; any other comments or suggestions are also welcome."

Two new features of DEERResearch's consultation process this year are the establishment of a Science Reference Working Group to provide technical input and support to the DEERResearch Board as required, and the establishment of a Venison Processors and Exporters Research Group to provide a focus for input from this sector. 

*For more information on DEERResearch and its research programme please visit [www.DEERresearch.org.nz](http://www.DEERresearch.org.nz) or call MJ Loza on (04) 381 6012.*

## Deer industry chips into \$25m search for better clover

The dairy, meat and deer industries are combining in the use of modern biotechnology to improve pasture performance and extend the growing season. The deer industry, through DEERResearch, is contributing \$30,000 per annum to the joint venture during its five-year life.

Pastoral Genomics, a joint venture of Fonterra subsidiary ViaLactia Biosciences (NZ) Ltd, Meat NZ subsidiary Agritech Investments, DEERResearch and AgResearch, will seek to discover how white clover genes influence pasture performance, with a view to lifting the productivity of the farming sector.

The joint venture will receive funding from Government worth \$12.5 million spread over the next five years, and the four partners will together contribute at least this much.

Pastoral Genomics will use the latest biotechnology to speed the development of new and improved species of white clover, a pasture plant essential to the dairy, meat and deer industries, which together contribute \$10 billion to the economy.

The programme is based on a novel gene marker discovery technology GeneThresher™ developed by US biotechnology company Orion Genomics.

Pastoral Genomics, through ViaLactia, has worldwide exclusive access to the technology in clover, to exploit the untapped segments/information of the clover genome. These very areas may house the key tools to promote step changes in the agricultural efficiency of clover. The technology supersedes the existing Expressed Sequence Tag (EST) approach, currently being used by Pastoral Genomics' international competitors. ViaLactia is already using the technology successfully in its proprietary ryegrass programme funded by its parent, Fonterra.

White clover has widespread adaptability and can withstand grazing stress and interspecies competition better than other legumes. Increased available nitrogen directly influences the level of pasture yield, reducing the need for nitrogenous fertilisers, and improving animal performance.

# Sire sales buck schedule gloom

*Good galleries, good prices and generally good sales have been features of the latest round of stag sales around the country. Several records were achieved, including the heaviest 2-year-old stags, and the first time one sale has ever grossed seven figures. For many, the sales brought better results than they expected, given prevailing market conditions for venison. But, as one agent said, velvet saved the day. Buyers were on the lookout for animals with good genetics, good bodyweight and good velvet, taking the opportunity to upgrade the genetics of their own lines. There was particularly strong demand for Eastern European bloodlines, with energetic bidding at some sales.*

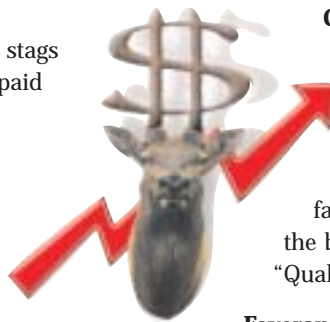
**Arawata Deer Stud:** good animals fetched good prices, but limited buying power in middle order stags and some passings occurred. Top price \$30,000, paid by Evan Tayles of Gore, for a stag that cut 4 kg SA2/A2S velvet. The two-year-old stags on offer included the heaviest-cut velvet in NZ (to 4.6 kg SA2 velvet) and top body-weights (up to 223 kg at sale time). Red terminal sires bred for growth rate and temperament sold well, with spirited bidding to \$4000. 13 month hinds found a limited market; hinds with strong trophy potential up to \$1500 and hinds with high EBVs for velvet production up to \$900. Complete clearance of sale hinds.

**Avonlea:** with the move from Rotorua to Katikati, sales were down. Top price \$3000 for a son of Terry. Stags were in good condition and the best one cutting 3.15 kg velvet (2 year old).

**Beaufort Lodge:** keen bidding and total clearance of 2 and 3 year stags. The top Gladiator 3-year-old sold for \$23,000 to Laurence Rau. A 3-year Caligula son went for \$19,000 to Kelly Oaks, which also secured the top Caligula 2 year son for \$12,000. Nineteen 3 year stags averaged \$8800 and the twelve 2 years averaged \$4800.

**Black Forest:** excellent turnout of 320 attended the first sale in the new purpose-built venue. 38 East European 2 year sires offered; complete clearance; average \$11,500. Top prices were a Neskey son sold to Arawata Deer Stud for \$40,000; a brother of Brusnik sold to Leithen Valley Farm for \$36,000; and a Sintana son sold to Cloudy Bay Stud for \$34,000. A feature of the sale was the large number of sires sold to the stud industry.

**Canterbury Imported Red Deer Stud:** well attended, with some spirited bidding. 35 sold, all 2-year-olds; average \$4800. Top price \$12,000 for a pure Eastern 2-year-old; top price for an English \$10,000.



**Cloudy Bay Deer Stud:** a full gallery of at least 100 and a very good day with 32 of 37 stags on offer sold. Even with venison downturn, stags sold extremely well, with prices up substantially on last year. Top price of \$18,500 paid for a 2-year-old by a commercial deer farmer from North Canterbury. Average \$4700, with the bulk going to Canterbury, Marlborough and Buller. "Quality sells well," the vendor noted.

**Foveran Deer Park:** 47 animals sold; average \$5000 and top price \$8500.

**Egmont Deer Farm:** a good sale with all 22 stags on offer sold; average \$3275, top price \$5000. Yearling hinds averaged \$769.

**Harwood Deer:** very pleasing turnout, with a lot of interest in stags and hinds for next year. Top price \$11,000; average \$4660 for 19 2-3 year old stags with Woburn bloodlines.

**Hurunui Red Deer Stud:** a good turnout for first its on-farm sale, with good interest in the only South Island herd of Maral bloodlines and probably the biggest in the country. 29 2-year-old stags for sale by Helmsman Auction, with 25 sold; top price \$5300; average \$2400.

**Ingor Deer Farm:** top price of \$14,000 paid for one of 28 elite stags on offer; all but one sold; average \$4800. All yearling hinds on offer sold; top price \$800; average \$400. Average \$625 for 2-year velveted stags; top \$825; total clearance.

**Netherdale Deer Stud:** a good gallery of buyers, although the average price was down slightly on last year. Complete clearance of 2-year velveted stags; 66 sold for an average of \$840. Top price for yearling hinds was \$3050; average \$950. Average price for 3-year sires - \$6700, with 90 percent clearance.

*An attentive gallery of around 170 at the successful Remarkables Park Stud Red Deer sale in Queenstown on Friday January 17.*



**Oraka Wapiti Deer Park:** has sold nearly 60 stags by private treaty; top price about \$60,000; average nearly \$3000. Keen interest, including one buyer who purchased 25 stags.

**Pampas Heights Red Deer Stud:** all but one of 29 mainly 2-year English and Eastern stags sold, for an average of \$2800. Top price of \$6000 was paid for a son of Sir Gallahad, while the best Eastern son of Vihar fetched \$3800. Nine yearling hinds sold up to \$1350; average \$950.

**Pelorus Deer Stud:** good interest, with 25 of the 27 animals on offer sold, and predominantly pure English bloodlines drawing good prices. Top price \$13,000 for a Woburn, and next was \$12,500 for a 3-year-old Warnham. Average \$5940.

**Raroa Deer Stud:** increased registrations, better clearance and the average price up \$350 on last year. Of 34 stags on offer, all but 3 sold. Top price \$9700; average \$4100. First crop of sons from Goldie on offer, and all six sold for good prices.

**Remarkables Park Stud:** a very successful sale, with some New Zealand auction records, including a top weight two-year-old stag at 266kg. All 32 two-year-old stags recorded an average weight of 226kg, and a five-year-old stag sold weighed 338kg. A near total clearance sale with 40 out of 43 stags and a total clearance of the 37 hinds offered. The top individual stag price was \$12,250; top hind price \$1125. Alastair Porter says the excellent weight gain characteristics of their animals paid dividends this season for their own commercial herd. Their animals got away early and heavy enough to catch the schedule before it went into its early freefall.

**Stanfield's Bushey Park:** another excellent sale, with record prices. The top price of \$95,000 was paid for an English stag. Average \$17,500 for English with 44 sold. Easterns averaged \$19,500 with 15 sold, and the top price of \$53,000. Sale grossed \$1m mark for first time.

**Tower Farms:** 38 English and Eastern stags offered, with an outstanding Pacquin son out of a Heathrow daughter selling for \$27,000. Other sons of Rembrant and Pacquin were sold for up to \$10,000. A total of 31 sold for an average of \$4400. A 2-year Rembrant hind sold for \$1600 and yearling Agassi hinds made up to \$1600. A total of 11 hinds averaged \$1200.

**Two Mile Farm:** the first sale held on farm and a good turnout of around 140. Thirty-five animals offered – one 4-year-old stag and the rest 3-year-olds. Body weights had risen significantly since the December weighing for the catalogue. Average \$3900; top \$6600 for a stag from Purple 396 purchased by the Whyte-Herdman partnership.

**Windermere:** offerings of 36 mainly 2 year Warnham/Woburn stags resulted in some keen bidding. Some passed early in the catalogue were cleared at the in reserve prices post sale. The top Warnham/Woburn sire sold to Sheerwater Farm for \$25,000 and a pure Woburn realised \$20,000. In total 29 sold for the sale average of \$8300. 📄

*In compiling this report we have made every endeavour to cover all known sales as widely and as accurately as possible. The information here is based on what had been supplied to us at press time, by vendors and agents. If you would like to ensure your annual sale is reported in future years, please send us your information.*

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*Andrew Button – Hawarden, North Canterbury*



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## Otago farmer appointed Director of AHB

*Otago sheep and beef farmer Graham Clarke has been appointed as a director of the Animal Health Board, in charge of the national strategy to eradicate bovine tuberculosis.*

Mr Clarke is past Chairman of the Otago Regional Animal Health Committee which represents the Animal Health Board in the region. He is current Chairman of the New Zealand Beef Council, and is a director of Feepak International, a supplier of on-farm animal parasite monitoring systems.

Steve Anstis, Chairman of the AHB Representatives' Committee says Mr Clarke will bring valuable skills and perspectives to the AHB directorship.

"His experience as a Regional Animal Health Committee Chairman in a region with difficult Tb problems gives him a first hand understanding of the practical aspects of Tb control and the impact the disease can have on farming families and businesses.

"Graham Clarke is a clear thinker and a straight talker, who is well respected in farming and industry circles."

Mr Clarke replaces Mr Alan Pollock of Wellington on the AHB Board of Directors.

## Lester reappointed Director of AHB

*Manawatu deer and beef farmer, Chris Lester, has been re-appointed for another three years as a director of the Animal Health Board, where he will continue to work on progressively releasing the disease management contract out to competitive tender.*

Mr Lester joined the AHB nearly two years ago, appointed on the death of former director, Don Linklater. A former chairman of Federated Farmers Meat and Fibre Producers Council and member of Federated Farmers national board, he is currently chairman of the Manawatu Wanganui Regional Council. In that role he is also very keen to see the total eradication of bovine tuberculosis from his region.

"The King Country has historically been one of the worst affected areas in the country, but in recent years, with increased vector control and intensive disease testing. A lot of progress has been made in the central North Island," he says.

This year he hopes to see final signoffs on the national strategy to help New Zealand gain international recognition as being free of the disease within the next decade.

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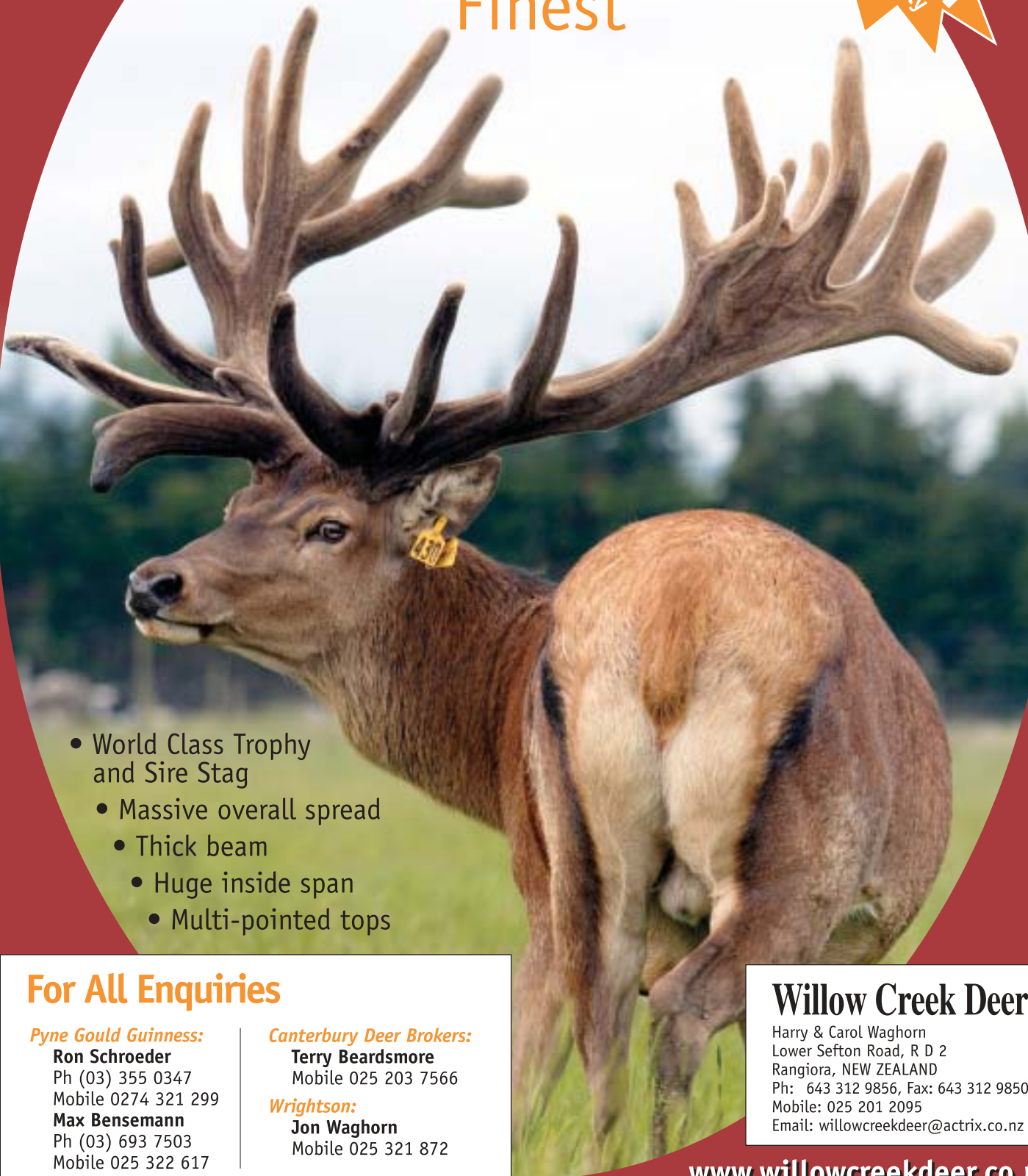
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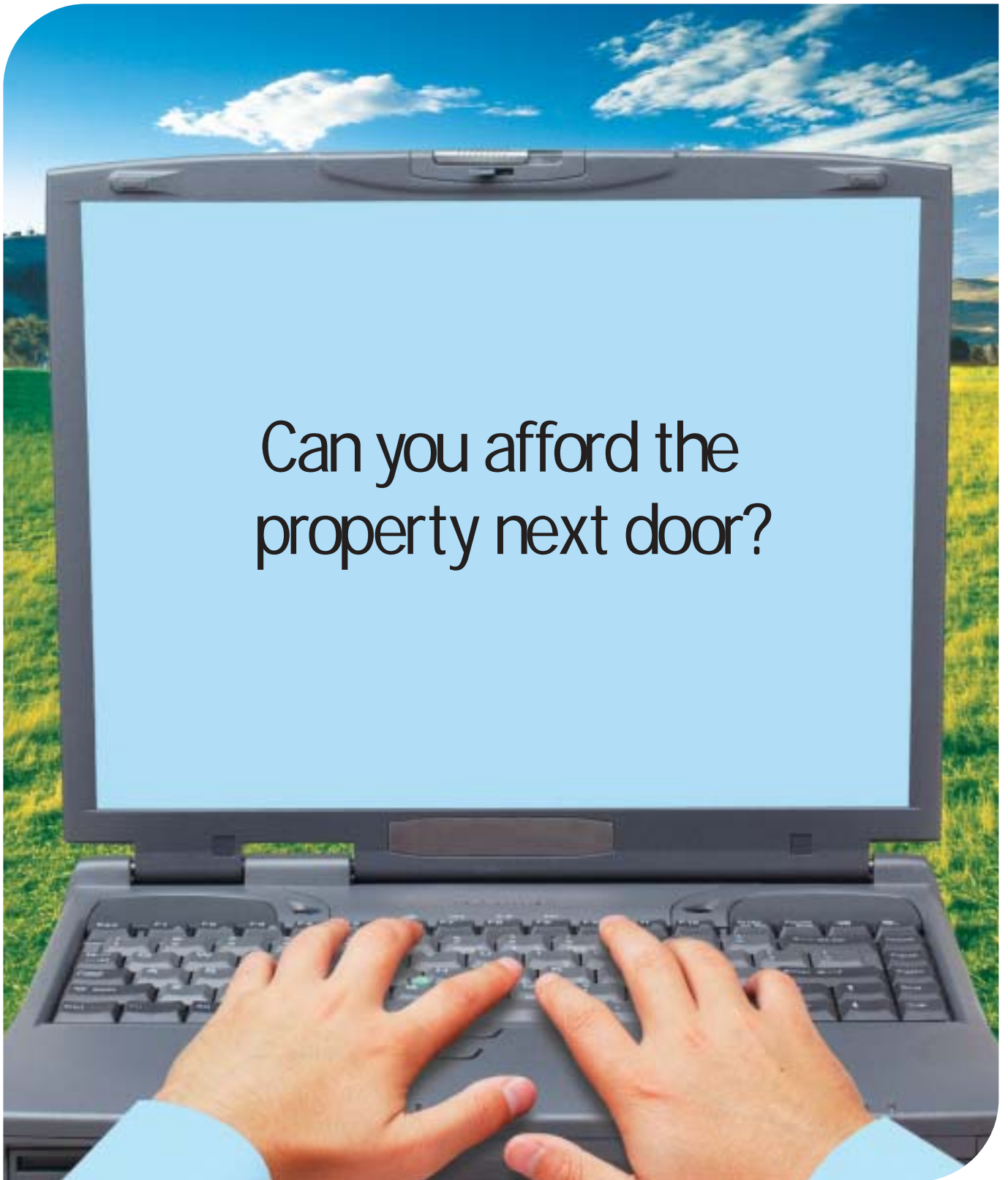
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