

DEER INDUSTRY NEWS

Issue 6 • October 2003 • Official magazine of Deer Industry New Zealand and the NZDFA

LABOUR
FORCE
FEATURE

Training the next generation of deer farmers: p9-11



Also in this issue:

- Compression technique not approved - focus on alternatives
- Views divided on GM
- What we think of the Agricultural Emissions Research Levy
- Volunteers sought for Johne's epidemiological study
- Sampling programmes, new products in Europe
- Disease surveillance stepped up
- Livestock surveys - please do your bit
- Environment award winners



DEER INDUSTRY
NEW ZEALAND

NZDFA
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STAG SALE

Tuesday, 6th January 2004



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Sustainable Farming Fund projects bearing fruit

The deer industry is an example of an innovative industry. An animal considered a pest is being farmed, its meat marketed as a leading brand, and other products developed over time. I am pleased to see the innovation is continuing.

Your industry has taken the opportunity to make the most of the Sustainable Farming Fund, a government fund that enables rural communities to enhance their social, environmental, and economic sustainability.

There are four projects from the first three years of the fund's existence, and two of these are coming into fruition now.

The NZDFA's project to produce a Landcare Manual to meet environmental responsibilities in deer farming is already bearing fruit.

In a description on the fund's website, the manual's aim is to be both simple and practical and describe best practice methods enabling deer farmers to meet any statutory, market and ethical requirements for the long-term environmental sustainability of their deer farming operations. In addition there is a significant industry-good role with customers' and industry QA schemes. The manual aims to be an invaluable aid in allowing farmers to interact with regional environmental agencies.

Part of the project is encouraging a receptive and positive culture towards environmental issues, voluntarily instigating change where necessary, and encouraging the rapid general adoption of best deer management practices, through an awards and publicity process.

Deer, like any farm animals, have the potential to cause significant damage to the local farm soil and water resource under some management systems. Their typical behavioural response to confinement, in particular a natural affinity to both water and sensitive soil areas, is not always environment-friendly.



This potential to cause damage can be added to by inappropriate management techniques. However there is the opportunity to mitigate any such effects with modified management systems, recognising behavioural needs and investment in enhanced land protection. The Landcare Manual gathers the experience resource of proven remedies and management and together with relevant research information constructs a toolbox of best practice.

Progress is impressive.

This programme was funded in its first year by this joint SFF/deer industry project, but is now self sustaining with funding from the NZDFA and sponsorship from Sir Peter and Fiona Lady Elworthy and deer industry companies.


Another Sustainable Farming Fund project is designed to make deer farming information more accessible to deer farmers, veterinarians and researchers.

The project application describes its goal as essentially an internet-accessible archive of published literature on New Zealand deer farming ... in other words, an electronic library.

Enter "DeerSearch" – the database of research papers on the DEEResearch website (www.DEEResearch.co.nz). This archive, modelled on one developed by AgResearch scientists for internal use, provides rapid and easy access to a huge number of deer farming publications.

The project application anticipated that by the time the archive is launched, over 2500 articles will be found within it. It's making good progress towards that.

DeerSearch will be updated continually, with new papers added following copyright clearance. It will house the entire collection of the Deer Branch NZVA proceedings and may eventually be expanded to house theses and dissertations.

These, and the other projects underway, are of much importance to maintaining the momentum and growth of the industry. Of course, the deer industry is not immune to problems. There are trade barriers to venison and velvet in international markets, as well as other issues. The Government is working hard with the industry to solve these problems. 

Hon. Jim Sutton, Minister of Agriculture

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CONTENTS

Compression technique not approved	4
GM Moratorium: Industry views divided	5
Emission levy goes down like a lead balloon	6
New GM – Marketing appointed	8
AHB funding resolution will save millions	8
Labour feature: What about the workers?	9
Telford to introduce deer module	10
AgITO programme sets David on course	11
Hooked on deer	11
Branch profile: Simon Vincent – Nelson	12
Norm Parkes nominated for rare honour	12
Branch profile: Craig Bryant – Taihape	13
Benchmarking project	14
Coming events, Sire sales, Conference 2004	16
Obituary: Bernie Chaney	17
Volunteers needed for John's project	18
DEEResearch update	19
Market Report	20
Industry News: Cervena consultation	
Supermarket sampling	22
PPCS launches new products	23
Landcare update: Aspins to host farm walk	24
Disease surveillance pressure stepped up	26
Strategies for optimising calf growth	26
Please take part in livestock surveys	27

Compression technique not approved

MAF, in conjunction with the National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (NAWAC), has turned down an application by the National Velveting Standards Body for provisional approval to use the high compression technique for the 2003/04 velveting season.

The sticking point appears to remain interpretation of the mixed evidence regarding the animals' response to the technique.

At the Timaru conference earlier this year, Deer Industry New Zealand QA Manager John Tacon noted that concerns were focused on the animals' experience during the application of the device. While the outward signs were that deer were not distressed, some physiological responses from sophisticated novel experiments indicated otherwise. More research is required to clarify these issues. It is not clear yet whether this research will be conducted this season. This will be decided once proposals and costs for other research priorities are available.

Against this background, there are also serious concerns over the future of xylazine and lignocaine. As current velvet removal regulations lapse in mid-2004, much remains to be done over the next 12 months to secure the privilege of velvet removal in following seasons.

Despite MAF's decision regarding the Compression Technique, Deer Industry New Zealand remains positive about the progress that's being made planning research and registration processes for alternative analgesics. The priority is to complete research into these products to support their registration for use in deer for velvet removal to meet both animal welfare and food safety requirements.

Deer Industry New Zealand completed 26 regional velveting workshops in August and September, which were very well attended by an estimated 1500 deer farmers and veterinarians.

Deer Industry New Zealand's John Tacon, Tony Pearce, Rob Gregory, Mark O'Connor and MJ Loza teamed up to inform farmers and supervising vets of current velvet removal developments and to show them the Compression Technique in action and to listen to producer views on all these issues.

contd on next page



Photo: Colin & Maree Smith, 2002 Warnham & Woburn photo awards

Report unusual stag deaths

It is an unfortunate fact of farming life that occasionally animals die in unusual circumstances. When this occurs, it is a requirement of both the NZFSA's ACVM Group and the NVSB that they are informed. NVSB Manager Rob Gregory has asked all deer farmers to ensure this is done promptly by contacting either himself or Janice Attrill at Deer Industry New Zealand.

Last year, a number of fatal allergic responses to Xylazine were reported to the NVSB. This year farmers are being asked to return any drug suspected of causing an allergic reaction to their supervising vet so that the NVSB can perform a chemical analysis on it.


"From both an animal welfare and economic perspective, we need to collect as much data as possible on any suspected Xylazine reactions, if we are to identify the possible causes and prevent unfortunate incidents in future," Rob says. "We need basic information, such as the concentration and dose rate of drug used, as well as more complex information such as the weather conditions before and after the event, to build up a picture of what triggers this allergic reaction in deer."

"It seems unlikely that a particular batch of drug was to blame for the unusual pattern of reactions we observed last season, although we are waiting for drug analysis results before we can be certain of this."

"The allergic reaction which was believed to only occur in deer has actually been observed in a number of other species including dogs, horses and rats.

"This might suggest that last season's reactions were more related to the effect of the drug in general, rather than a particular batch, but again we can't be sure of this until the results are in."

Rob says farmers need to understand that if an animal dies following routine administration of Xylazine, this is not a slur on themselves or their ability to handle velvet removal drugs.

Similarly, farmers who suffer the loss of an animal in this way will not automatically be targeted for audit, as some rumours have suggested. NVSB audits are conducted at random, and a stag death makes no difference to who is selected. 

Velveting reminders from Deer Industry New Zealand

- Annual fee \$61.88 to be paid by 20 October
- Supervisory Vet visits completed by 15 December
- Drug record book returned by 31 March
- Tourniquet to be applied before local
- NaturO™ rings for single spike use only
- All velvet to be tagged
- Read NVSB Manual and Amendment

GM Moratorium: Deer Industry views divided

The two-year moratorium on the commercial release of genetically modified organisms expires in just a few days, on 29 October.

In line with Remit 11 at the NZDFA's 2003 AGM (see Deer Industry News, June 2003, page 7), a comprehensive discussion paper was circulated to deer farmers, and opinions about extending the moratorium canvassed.

In total, 26 responses were received, 19 from individual farmers, 3 from branches, 3 from exporters/processors and 1 from a scientist.

There was strong support for current Deer Industry New Zealand policy that GMOs should be kept out of the deer industry food chain (see below), and also strong support for keeping this policy under review.

There was less agreement that this policy is compatible with allowing the release of other GMOs where there are safeguards to protect the food chain – opinion was fairly evenly divided on this. About two-thirds of respondents believed that the science around whether GM and non-GM organisms can be effectively separated is pivotal to the issue of approved release.

A majority (19 submitters including 2 branches) believed that 100 percent freedom from GM, and zero tolerance for the unintentional presence of GM, were not necessary.

Opinion on the lifting of the current moratorium was evenly divided. Thirteen submitters (including 1 branch) agreed with lifting the moratorium, while 11 (2 branches included) were against. Of those opposed to the lifting of the moratorium, only one or two were prepared to change their stance if legislative issues were to be addressed. (A straw poll taken at the Deer Industry Conference in May showed 54% in favour of extending the moratorium, 32% against and 14% undecided.)

While supporting current Deer Industry New Zealand policy, the feedback on the discussion paper did not give a strong

message one way or the other on the lifting or extending of the current GM moratorium. The Board of Deer Industry New Zealand has not developed a stance on this either. When making a submission to the Select Committee considering the relevant legislation (the New Organisms and Other Matters Bill 2003), Deer Industry New Zealand did not make a case either for or against extending the moratorium.

For the record, the current Deer Industry New Zealand policy is:

1. Policies relating to GM must be driven foremost by market and consumer needs, and will therefore change over time if and as market and consumer needs and attitudes change.
2. Subject to consumer and market needs, decisions about GM must be based on sound science.
3. Deer Industry New Zealand does not support the introduction of GM into the environment/food-chain until the risks associated with that course of action are properly understood and can be assessed as acceptable.
4. At this stage, Deer Industry New Zealand does not support the introduction of GM organisms into animals or into the deer industry food chain (including pastures and feeds).
5. Deer Industry New Zealand supports the use of biotechnology in laboratories and will seek to exploit laboratory findings in production systems through the use of existing accepted technologies (e.g. use of GM for Marker Assisted Selection for animal and pasture species). 

For copies of consultation papers, feedback summary and GM policy, visit: www.deernz.org/?id=37#contentsection1914

Compression technique: contd from previous page


They also took the opportunity to tell farmers about compliance to the NVSB programme and the issue of illegal velvetting (velvet removal outside of the programme by non-veterinarians).

Good practice reminders

As a reminder, good practice using currently approved techniques includes:

- proper use of the NaturO™ rings currently approved for spiker velvet – e.g. ensure the rings are doubled, not looped and not used on branched spiker velvet;
- safe use of needles (avoiding needle-stick injuries);
- good drug hygiene;
- disinfection of removal equipment between stags;
- control of any bleeding;

- regular monitoring of stags following velvet removal;
- care with removal site (above pedicle);
- removal of hard antler or regrowth by 1 March;
- prompt attention to animals with broken or diseased velvet;
- reporting any unusual stag deaths to NVSB (see sidebar)

In view of MAF's decision, Deer Industry New Zealand CEO MJ Loza says methods such as alternative drugs and non-drug options all need exploring. "It's imperative that we ensure the animals' welfare, and we must justify our procedures for velvet removal on scientific grounds as well as continuing to meet regulatory requirements. The issue is that regulatory requirements are changing significantly." 

Contact: Rob Gregory, NSVB Manager, Deer Industry New Zealand, ph 04 381 6016, rob.gregory@deernz.org

Emission levy goes down like a lead balloon

Given the agricultural sector's position on the Government signing up to the Kyoto protocol, it's not surprising that the notorious Agricultural Emission Research (AER) levy proposal has been about as popular as, well, an emission in an astronaut's suit.

Deer Industry New Zealand has joined other primary sectors in roundly condemning the Government's plans to levy farmers \$8.4 million per annum to pay for researching ways of reducing non-CO2 emissions from agriculture (see sidebar for detail).


Under the Kyoto protocol, New Zealand is committed to reducing its emissions of greenhouse gases to 1990 levels. The Government claims that total agricultural emissions are up about 12% on 1990.

What has rankled most with many farmers is that the AER seemed to trample all over the initiative taken by the Pastoral Greenhouse Gas Research Consortium (PGGRC), funded by DEEResearch along with Meat New Zealand, AgResearch, Fonterra and Wrightson.

The Government's argument is that its climate change policy actually recognises the importance of farming by exempting agriculture from any kind of carbon tax. The trade-off is, of course, the proposed AER levy to fund research. A trade-off that has been ignored, however, is the carbon-sink contribution of the extensive forestry plantings made by farmers.

The levy is planned to be prorated and based on stock numbers (or milk solids) processed and collected through existing channels. In the case of deer, this would be the processors and Deer Industry New Zealand. Sheep, beef, dairy, deer and goat producers will be levied, but pig and poultry producers are off the hook as their gas outputs are considered too small.

In its climate change discussion document the Government indicates that the levy mechanism would be modelled on those contained in the Biosecurity Act 1993, where regulations can be made to collect a levy for a specific purpose.

For its part, the processing industry is not falling over itself to cooperate. Venison processors/exporters have joined other rural-based industries in opposing the AER levy proposal. From consultation undertaken by Deer Industry New Zealand, venison processors/exporters indicated that they would not be cooperating in levy collection unless required to by statute. 

See also "Gas meter" article on p8.

"The AER seemed to trample all over the initiative taken by the Pastoral Greenhouse Gas Research Consortium."

The deer industry position

The following is an edited summary of Deer Industry New Zealand's submission on the Government's climate change discussion document:

General comments

1. Alongside other pastoral industries the deer industry has strongly and consistently opposed the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol. The AER levy is an example of the costs of ratification being imposed on New Zealand agriculture. This puts New Zealand agriculture at a competitive disadvantage.
2. Despite significant opposition, the Government decided to ratify on behalf of all New Zealanders.
3. Therefore the cost of meeting New Zealand's obligations should be borne by all New Zealanders through general taxation.
4. If the government refuses to fund Kyoto compliance costs fairly – through general taxation – the Government should withdraw as a signatory to the Kyoto Protocol.
5. Deer Industry New Zealand refutes the suggestion that true consultation has taken place. Reasonable consultation would not have arrived at the proposal to implement an AER levy.

Specific comments on the AER proposal

6. Deer Industry New Zealand is strongly and resolutely opposed to the AER levy.
7. Companies that currently collect the Deer Industry New Zealand levy have indicated that they will not collect the proposed AER levy.
8. Regulating for research expenditure is unjustified, inequitable and will lead to inefficiency and sub-optimal research investment decisions.
9. Already the international trade playing field is tilted in favour of our competitors as a result of subsidies, tariffs, quotas and restrictive trade practices. Protecting the competitiveness of New Zealand's exports is essential.
10. The Pastoral Greenhouse Gases Research Consortium (PGGRC) already has a programme in place to research practical and cost-effective ways to reduce agricultural emissions.
11. The PGGRC programme was developed after an analysis of farmers' needs, realistic targets, and funding priorities.
12. The PGGRC has already successfully dealt with the issues raised in the discussion document.
13. Funding for agricultural emissions research should be funded by agricultural organisations as it is today – voluntarily by the PGGRC with input from funders and users and a focus on sensible, practical and cost effective mitigation options.

For more details, visit:

www.deernz.org/?id=37#contentsection1601



Canterbury

Imported Red Deer Stud

Stag Sale

Warnham Park

Eastern Europe

Canterbury Imported Red Deer Stud • Cossars Road, Tai Tapu, Christchurch

January 2004

9th January 2004, 11am



Thomas Albert

(Shown at 5yrs, 8.2kg SA II, 8.8kg at 6yrs) Sire of Peter Fraser's "Enoch" (5.5kg SA II at 3yrs), John Hunter's (Springs Junction) Tom (5.5kg SA II at 3yrs), Alf Kinzett's 'Batesy' (5.97kg SA II at 3yrs).

Ivanic

291kg 8.0kg SA II
Pure Eastern from dam '44'.

Nicholai

325kg 9.9kg HA
Sire of Stanfield's Maximillion, Jock and Pip Foster's Nicholas and Hurunui's Max.

Heinrich V

335kg 10.0kg HA 405
SCI, Sire of Pampas Heights' Vihar (430 SCI) and Hurunui's Janos.



Sires Not Shown

Omul

328kg 7.5kg SA II

Laszlo

358kg 8.43kg SA II

Archie

7.2kg SA II

Andrew II

324kg 6.0 kg SA II

Clive

300kg 11.3kg SA II

Lancelot

4.5kg SA II
(one side only)



Sir Peter

Shown at 2yrs. 175kg, 6.6kg HA stripped and 22pts at 2yrs. Pure Warnham by The Sultan.

The Commodore

Son of Taylor x Sultan sister. 6kg SA II at 3yrs. Heaviest velvet in 3yr red section of National Velvet Competition.

Tana

Sintana x Romany
211kg and 3.5kg SA II at 2yrs. 7.5kg hard dry stripped antler at 3yrs.

Arad

x Heinrich V
Pure Eastern, shown at 2yrs. 230kg and 4.5kg stripped, dry hard antler.

For further information and catalogues, contact:

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Max Bensemann, P.G.G. Ph: 025-322-617

Jon Waghorn, Wrightsons Christchurch. Ph: (03) 307-0429, Mobile: 025-321-872

'Gas meter' research under way

While arguments rage about the rights and wrongs of the so called 'fart tax', there is some baseline research going on. Just how much methane is being breathed into the atmosphere each day by New Zealand livestock is being quantified by AgResearch scientist Dr Marie Krause in a joint study with Massey University.

The Manawatu-based study is being part-funded by MAF to build an inventory of methane emissions so that New Zealand will be in an informed position when it comes to complying with the Kyoto protocol.

The AgResearch/Massey research aims to produce accurate figures for methane production from New Zealand's farmed sheep, cattle and deer – thought to be the source of about two-thirds of all non-CO₂ emissions here. (Estimates in an MFE fact sheet put the 1999 methane output from deer at between 1-2 million tonnes (CO₂ equivalent), compared with about 7 million tonnes each for dairy and beef cattle and just over 16 million tonnes from sheep.)

Preliminary results from this new study indicate that hinds (2 s.u.) grazing on ryegrass produce about 22 grams of methane each day – about what the scientists expected. This compares with sheep eating up to 1 kg of ryegrass a day, which produce about 23 grams of methane over a 24-hour period.

Once the deer emission figures are finalised – for example, work is still needed to measure output from young animals, or from deer grazing pasture out of a drought year – Dr Krause will calculate emissions for the total deer population.

In the meantime, Deer Industry News couldn't resist a little extrapolation from these very preliminary figures.

Applying the 22 gram figure per day across the 1.644 million deer population (2002 Statistics New Zealand census), we inferred that our deer breathe about 36 tonnes of methane into the atmosphere each day.


While that sounds like a heavy load of deer breath, it is dwarfed by the 900 tonnes a day breathed by our 39.2 million sheep (2002 Census), assuming they are indeed breathing out 23 grams of methane per day.

Putting that into a global context, while estimates vary widely, total annual methane emissions are reckoned by many to be in the 500-600 million tonne range. And where does it all come from?

Main sources of methane are thought to be: tundra, bogs,



Who, us? Preliminary research shows adult deer only breathe out about the same amount of methane as adult sheep.

swamps (26%), rice (20%), livestock (15%), burning vegetation (10%), oil and natural gas (8%), landfills (7%), coal mining (6%), wild animals & termites (4%), animal waste (3%), oceans (1%). (Source: GEONews, newsletter for the Nebraska Geographic Alliance, June, 1993.) 

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For more information contact:
Mark or Jonathan Christian
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Gloriavale Deer Farm
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Greymouth 7820
Ph: 03 738 0224
Fax: 03 738 0212
Email: canaan.farm@xtra.co.nz

or your local Wrightson,
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& Rural Livestock Agents



New GM – Marketing Appointed



Mark O'Connor has been appointed to the newly created position of General Manager – Marketing at Deer Industry New Zealand. He has been working in a marketing capacity at Deer Industry New Zealand for the past three years, primarily in velvet market development and research.

In this new role Mark will be involved with Deer Industry New Zealand's

venison market development programme alongside Venison Marketing Services Manager, Mat Moyes.

"Venison exports for the 12 months to June 2003 were valued at \$158 million and represent almost 80 percent of total deer industry export earnings," says Deer Industry New Zealand CEO MJ Loza. "Mark's appointment reflects this, as well as the fact that venison market development and promotion must be Deer Industry New Zealand's priority given very difficult market conditions."

Before joining Deer Industry New Zealand, Mark worked at Tourism New Zealand, primarily involved with international marketing, including postings to Germany and Australia.

What about the workers?

If you're finding it more difficult these days to recruit experienced staff, or young keen workers willing to learn, you're not alone. Labour and skill shortages are prevalent across the agriculture and horticulture sectors, but the reasons behind them are complex and variable – both between primary sectors and between regions.

In this feature we take a look at what's happening to develop the skills our industry needs, and profile two men working their way into the industry.

Human Capability in Agriculture Group

Deer Industry New Zealand, through Producer Manager Tony Pearse, is maintaining its involvement with this pan-industry group, which has a Sustainable Farming Fund grant of \$500,000. The group is developing a strategy and priority projects to help formulate an industry-wide approach to some of the problems which have distorted the labour market and affect all primary industries one way or another. (We hope to update readers on this group's work in December.)

Deer Workforce Review


Carried out for DEEResearch by Ian Tarbotton and Louise Hanlon of AgResearch, this review was released in August. Although the review involved interviews with only 15 deer farmers, it clearly highlighted issues that are prevalent throughout the industry. Some of the key points to emerge were:

- There has been a perceived decrease in the quantity and quality of applicants for deer farming positions in the past three years.
- Good stockmanship and an enthusiasm for deer are important attributes for prospective employees.
- There are few young applicants.
- Farmers are having to work harder to attract staff through pay, working conditions, training opportunities, involving staff in decision making etc.
- Staff experienced handling sheep and cattle need to learn new, very different handling skills with deer. Patience, and understanding of deer grazing management and behaviour are essential.
- Physical strength and a 'fearless attitude' are useful for handling deer in the shed.
- Because of the uneven workflows during the year (long periods of low activity and short periods of intense activity) many farmers are using more contractors and casual labour rather than permanent staff.
- Remoteness, poor cell-phone or internet access and negative perceptions about farming as a job are turn-offs for many young people.

“There has been a perceived decrease in the quantity and quality of applicants for deer farming positions in the past three years.”

- Desirable areas like Wanaka or Queenstown are easier places to recruit staff.
- Some farmers are reluctant to invest a lot of time in training young staff who may end up being “poached” by someone else.
- In the South Island, the dairy industry is a big competitor for staff.
- Good management, job security, tidy and safe facilities, tidy accommodation, staff training and development opportunities and working for a professional farm manager (not the owner) all make farm employment more attractive.
- Most people applying for deer farming jobs have neither practical experience nor relevant education, resulting in fierce competition for the few experienced staff on the job market.
- Formal human resource management practices such as contracts, performance assessment and further training are not widely practised – it is generally left to the employees to take the initiative for further training.
- Some, but not all farmers are comfortable sharing farm performance information with employees.
- Most farmers acknowledged that they need to improve working conditions and pay to attract and retain staff.

Among their recommendations, the report authors suggested:

- a study to gain an accurate picture of the deer industry's people and enterprises
- an industry point of contact on workforce issues
- promotion of the industry as a career path
- continued involvement in the Human Capability in Agriculture Group
- advocacy for the deer industry to be a category in surveys, e.g. by Statistics NZ or AgITO
- regular workforce issues coverage in deer industry media. 

The full report is available at www.DEEResearch.org.nz

Tell us your story

If your interest is piqued by the issues and observations raised in this feature, or if you'd like to share your own ideas and experience with labour recruitment and training, let us know! We'd like this feature to stimulate discussion and sharing of ideas on how best to tackle the skills and labour force issues facing deer farming, and *Deer Industry News* can act as a forum. We look forward to your input! All our contact details are on Page 3.

Telford to introduce deer module

Telford Rural Polytechnic has been preparing young people to join the rural sector workforce for nearly 40 years.

The demand for young people with sound farming skills and basic farming education qualifications has always been there. But today, if anything, it is stronger than when Telford opened in 1964 – and this demand affects the deer industry as much as the more widely publicised skill shortages on dairy, beef and sheep farms.

With increasingly sophisticated and technology-based farm management practices, Director, Telford Farms, Mike Stephens, says more than ever before it is vital for young people wanting to progress in farm management to obtain educational qualifications as well as practical expertise.

“Farming and farm management is a demanding occupation. Our job at Telford is to prepare our students so they can go on to a farm and do all the basic work without the farmer having to show them what to do,” he says.

“We give them good practical skills, such as stock handling and pasture management, and back that up with theory.”

Mike grew up on a farm, trained at Lincoln University 30 years ago, and has been involved in farming ever since. He has his own deer and sheep farm only 10 minutes from Telford, which is just south east of Balclutha.

He has been in his current role for six years and is responsible for the farming operations at Telford. The 800 hectare farm is broken into sheep, dairy, deer and forestry units. The 155 hectare deer unit carries around 1000 head, including 530 breeding hinds. Its focus is to produce venison to catch the spring peak schedule, with a high level of year-round management skills. The unit has been runner up in the Otago Deer Farmer of the Year Competition on two occasions. The recently purchased “Sell Block” is being subdivided and regrassed, while deer numbers are increasing. In addition it is developing a small herd of hinds with good velvet genetics to supply the top velvet herd.

While the objective of the year-long course is to instruct in all-round farm skills, the students also experience specialised areas such as deer farming. At the moment, this amounts to



Telford students get some hands-on experience in the deer shed.

about 15 percent of their time at the farm, but a full deer module will be introduced next year.

The farm units are all commercial operations, providing real farming experiences for the students. Farmers around Otago and Southland are also involved with one-on-one training, and field trips are taken to specialist operations to broaden students’ experience.

Students come to Telford from all around New Zealand, with about a third coming from the North Island. The Certificate course will be 36 weeks next year, and current indications are for an increase on this year’s 70 full-time, on-campus students. At the moment there is such a demand for farm labourers, making it easier for young people to get farm work without experience, Mike says Telford is competing with the job market to attract young people.

Most students come direct from the 6th form, and less than 50 percent of their time at Telford is spent in the classroom. They live on campus, in hostels, and are closely supervised – but also given a lot of support. Mike says students do a lot of growing up in their year at Telford and often make life-long friendships while there. 📍

Hooked on deer

These days, Dougal Laidlaw can be seen showing prospective buyers around mid-Canterbury rural and lifestyle blocks for L.J.Hooker, but he’s itching to get back into deer farming.



Dougal has been working in and around livestock farming for the past 20 years, but it has been a spell working with deer on a Canterbury station that has focused his passion and interest on this industry.

While he’d been happy working in a manager’s role on the property, when the owners put the brakes on further investment in the business, he felt mounting frustration as opportunities to grow the enterprise and carry out essential tasks like pasture renewal went begging.

But Dougal is now hooked on deer as a livestock enterprise

and has now shifted his focus to ownership. He plans to get established with a hundred acres or so, and build from there. His current rural real estate role is keeping him close to the industry, and will, he hopes, serve as a good platform for getting established in his own right.

“I love the potential with deer, and the animals themselves,” he says. “They respond well to planning and there are so many things you can do to improve productivity.

“It’s not all rocket science – it’s about growing grass when it comes down to it – but I get huge pleasure out of learning to read the signs from the soil, the pastures and the animals themselves. Once you start to get confidence, you can really start to make progress and deal with issues like fence pacing and soil management.”

Married with three young children, and dead keen to build his knowledge and involvement in the deer husbandry, Dougal Laidlaw could be one of the next generation to take the industry into its next phase of development. 📍

**LABOUR
FORCE**
FEATURE

AgITO programme sets David on course for deer career

Nineteen-year-old David Curd is setting the building blocks in place for a long-term career in the deer industry.

David lives on the family deer farm in Canterbury and over the past couple of years has worked on two deer farms, including his father's operation. At the moment, he is working for an agricultural contractor in Fairlie, building up a broader range of experience, but still working on the family deer farm in his free time.

However, recognising that hands-on experience alone isn't enough, he is getting some specialised educational qualifications to back up his on-farm skills. "My goal is to be involved in deer farming full time in the future, perhaps moving later into management, but nowadays you do need to have qualifications on paper for that," he says.

For the past two and a half years, he has been studying for his National Certificate in Agriculture (Deer Level 4), a course run by the Agricultural ITO which combines practical



David Curd out checking the stock during last month's snows.

on-the-job work with theory-based training (off job) with a local tutor. He has recently completed the course, which also comes under the jurisdiction of the Modern Apprenticeship Scheme, so has also graduated as a Modern Apprentice, the first to do so in the deer industry.

While he loves working with deer, he also enjoyed the theoretical work, which involved a fortnightly class, and working through a structured manual. Every three months, his supervisor visited the farm to observe his practical work skills and discuss his progress with his employer.

David is quite definite about increasing his academic qualifications. Next on his programme is another AgITO course, a certificate in Deer Farm Production Management, which will once again include both on-farm and theory-based training.

Originally from near Invercargill where his parents owned a farm, the family moved to Canterbury when they purchased a deer farm near Fairlie. When he left school David started on a dairying AgITO qualification but soon realised that dairying was not for him and transferred to a deer farming option. He is pleased with his achievement, and is looking forward to finding a full-time position on a deer farm at some time next year.

The NZDFA and Deer Industry New Zealand congratulate David on the initiative and being the first Modern Apprenticeship graduate in deer farming. 

Telford puts farm training on wheels



It is not necessary to travel to Telford to experience the educational programmes it offers. Instead, Telford has starting taking education out on the road.

The Telford 'T' Bus is an innovative approach introduced by Telford to give rural areas the same access to education options as urban and suburban areas. It can travel to rural communities, and experienced IT staff will give intensive training in a range of computer programmes that are now basic tools for most businesses. The bus is set up with 10 work stations, plus a tutor workstation, and can visit schools, businesses, field days or rural groups wanting to increase the skills of their members. Coaching is available in an extensive range of software packages, or special programmes can be developed for specific projects.

To find out more, contact Telford on 0800 835 367 or email lisa.biginato@telford.ac.nz

INGOR DEER FARM

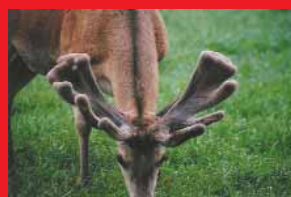
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ENGLISH
Woburn
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Branch Chair profile: Simon Vincent – Nelson

Simon Vincent has been a member of the Nelson branch of the New Zealand Deer Farmers' Association for well over 15 years and involved with the committee for most of that time.

Commitments to his Brightwater-based engineering business kept him out of the frame for the Chairman's role until 2001, but he's now in a position to take on the challenge of re-energising the Branch.

With his wife, Claire Parkes (daughter of Nelson industry pioneer Norm Parkes), he owns a 500 acre farm near Wakefield, where they winter over 3000 stock units – 1000 deer, 650 ewes, 200 hoggets and the rest cattle. Claire manages the day-to-day on-farm activities. Simon still gets hands-on in the deer operation whenever the engineering business allows, and does the velvetting, buying/selling and Tb testing.

They bought the farm in 1984, although they had deer since the late 1970s, when Claire purchased helicopter-captured deer while still a student at university. "Most students were buying cars – we were buying deer and we have never regretted it," says Simon.


The Nelson branch of NZDFA has between 60 – 70 members, about 15 of whom run 500 plus deer. Most are venison-focused, but some very high quality velvet also comes out of the region.

The branch went through some difficulties during last year's industry restructuring, but people generally seem to be very positive about it now, Simon says. "Most appreciate the substantial savings being made by removing duplicated services and overheads, but also value the quality of the staff

working for Deer Industry New Zealand, their industry knowledge, their passion and their understanding of issues confronting farmers. Everyone has moved on, and the Nelson Committee is now dealing with industry issues, working constructively for our members."

He was delighted with the success of a recent field day and is looking forward to the food-industry promotion being organised for early next year.

Earlier this year a group from Nelson travelled down to Hokitika for a field day at the PPCS/Mair processing plant – a very worthwhile exercise. Apart from the chance to inspect the plant and catch up on the processing which is adding value to the basic product, there were several valuable sessions, including one on legal requirements on documentation.

He sees helping deer farmers improve their business as an important role for the Branch, and his role as a facilitator. Members are welcome to attend Committee meetings, and the Committee seeks input from members on any local or national issues concerning them. 

We'll be reporting on further Nelson Branch activities in future issues of Deer Industry News.



Simon Vincent puts the Nelson point of view at an NZDFA AGM.

NZDFA confirms Life Membership nomination

Nelson Branch founding chairman and NZDFA Councillor (1987-91) Norm Parkes has been nominated for the rare honour of NZDFA Life Membership. The nomination cites a long list of achievements and notable firsts over a 30-year period, and include Norm's drive and vision for the deer industry, involvement in the Wakefield area and Nelson farming.

It is, however the quiet unassuming approach and total willingness to assist in deer farming development, promotion and day-to-day business that he is most highly regarded for at local branch and national level, and that this award most acknowledges.

In seconding the nomination, Bob Swann writes:

"It is an honour and a privilege to second Norm Parkes' nomination for life membership of the New Zealand Deer Farmers' Association.

"Norm's contribution to the deer industry, not only in the Nelson area, but nationally, has been quite major and largely unrecognised.

"Norm is an unassuming person prepared to speak his mind in a dignified manner.

"In my early years as Council member for the Nelson district, Norm's enthusiastic support was invaluable. He was always willing to offer his services and farm for field days and public occasions to promote the deer farmer's image. He built a fine set of deer yards which are always available for stock firms' use and district sales.


"The Nelson Branch travelled down a few rocky roads during early years, but thanks to Norm's unselfish input and personal skills he made the Branch into a strong and well run unit.

"Many entertaining and amusing social gatherings were held in the cosy warmth of the woolshed where industry (and other) matters were debated strongly, sometimes into the small hours.

"Norm has been the backbone of the Nelson branch and carried the same dedication and quiet commitment to the national level for the total good of the industry. His inspiration and motivation have been invaluable and carries all the qualities to be the finest candidate for Life Membership.

"We wish Helen and Norm every success and recognition for their role in shaping the deer industry and in their contribution to so many of today's deer farmers."

Bob and Frances Swann; Glenfidich Deer, Geraldine

The Executive Committee have approved the nomination for further process. Norm and Helen Parkes will be profiled in the next *Deer Industry News*. 



Craig Bryant: consulting with members on wise use of Branch funds.

Branch Chair profile: Craig Bryant – Taihape

The Taihape Branch of the New Zealand Deer Farmers' Association provides a unique and very profitable service for its members.

auctions and an annual weaner sale, at Waiouru, on behalf of its members. While there have been changes in how these events operate, the company has proved profitable.

As a result, recently elected Branch Chairman Craig Bryant, is facing a problem others would envy – a healthy bank balance and no specific plans on how to utilise it.

Craig, a successful businessman with a company in London and an involvement in several others in New Zealand, wants to ensure the funds are used wisely, in projects that are relevant to the deer industry and will benefit Taihape Branch members. At this stage, he has no idea what these will be, but he plans to consult with members (around 50 at the moment) on their ideas for the future.


"For the past five to ten years, the Branch hasn't done things like field days, and one question I will be asking is whether

Rather than organising educational events, field days and social activities, it set up a company to run velvet auctions, deer

the members want us to get more involved in those sorts of activities again," he says.

Craig was brought up on a farm near Taihape, but left as a young man to travel to the UK where he remained for 15 years, setting up a business there which he is still actively involved in. Three years ago, he and his wife Robyn returned to New Zealand on holiday – and ended up buying a majority interest in Kaiangaroa Station at Pukeokahu, 25 kilometres east of Taihape, and shifting their base to New Zealand.

The farm covers 1200 hectares, of which 620 hectares are deer-fenced. It runs about 1000 hinds, 200 velveting stags, and progeny of varying ages – on average there are about 2300 head on the farm at any one time. All the hinds are Red deer, of which about 300 go to Red stags and the rest to Wapiti. The rest of the farm is mainly sheep with some cattle. All progeny are finished, with cattle purchased as demand dictates.

Craig does not have much day-to-day involvement in the farm. His business partner manages the property while he remains focused on his business interests in London and New Zealand. He describes the family's return to New Zealand initially as a lifestyle move, albeit to a rather remote place. 

Outstanding management opportunities – deer industry

• Otago-based

Your chance to draw on the resources of a world-leader in genetics to create an innovative new business in an exciting industry.

Livestock Improvement Corporation (LIC) plans to create a genetic improvement programme and Artificial Insemination (AI) service for the deer industry.

100% owned by New Zealand dairy farmers, LIC is the world leader in the provision of genetics for seasonal, pasture-based dairying. We breed 75% of New Zealand's dairy cows and export semen to many other countries. We also own Animal Breeding Services (ABS), a company specialising in semen collection, AI and embryo transfer in several species, including deer. We intend to leverage our capabilities in genetic evaluation, semen technology, distribution and AI to create this new business venture in the deer industry.

To develop the programme and deliver the service, we envisage a small group of full-time staff, drawing on the skills and resources of LIC and ABS, along with a team of seasonal staff.

Applications are invited for the positions of

Managing Director and Operations Manager

Candidates for the role of **Managing Director (MD)** will be expected to have:

- experience in business development
- the ability to think creatively and strategically
- outstanding communication skills, both written and oral

A relevant tertiary qualification and experience in sales or marketing, possibly in the agricultural sector, would be an advantage. The successful candidate will be prepared to take primary responsibility for delivery of the business plan.

The **Operations Manager** will report to the MD.

Applicants for this role will have solid experience in people and logistics management. Recruitment and management of seasonal staff, as well as contractual relationships with service providers, will be vital components of this role.



www.lic.co.nz

Please apply in writing, including your CV, by Friday, 7 November 2003.

Written applications to – The HR Manager, Livestock Improvement Corporation Ltd, Private Bag 3016, Hamilton, New Zealand. Email: dmcgregor@lic.co.nz

Branches urged to take part in benchmarking project


The National Deer Performance Group (NDP) gears up for release of its benchmarking and recording project throughout DFA Branches in the next two months

For those of you unfamiliar with our activities, the National Deer Performance project is a programme for on-farm performance recording and benchmarking on a number of levels to suit the individual needs of each farmer. The group combines the concepts and experience of three previous benchmarking projects that have served the industry so well.

DeerSouth has been operating in the Otago/Southland region for the past 5 years, constantly refining and extending their base herd production programmes in growth, velvet antler and reproductive data. With technical input from key personnel involved in SCNODFA's DeerMaster and the Hawke's Bay Richmond-Wrightson Deer Performance Group and substantial financial assistance from SFF (Sustainable Farming Fund) we have upgraded and improved the DeerSouth format to enable any region in New Zealand to develop their own group within the framework of NDP.

The success of DeerSouth has been its farmer-driven basis, and that anonymously benchmarking one's own performance against the median and top performance has allowed farmers to identify not only their strengths but also opportunities for improvement.

Associated with individual productivity analysis are in-depth field days that have shown production leadership in some of the key indicators that performance recording is based on. This down-to-earth practical discussion is balanced with input from key speakers and sponsors. Over the course of the year it covers all major aspects of deer farming management and improving profitability.

We would like to talk to interested deer farmers to explain the concept further. Consequently we hope Branches will circulate members and arrange a meeting of interested farmers. The outcome of any meeting would be to form a local steering committee to facilitate a branch of NDP in your region. As a guide, we would suggest you need to have at least 25 farmer members to function effectively. 

For any further queries please contact:

*Dave Lawrence, NDP Manager
(03 236 4117), tikana@xtra.co.nz*

or

*Tony Pearce, Producer Manager, Deer Industry New Zealand (021 719 038),
tony.pearce@deernz.org*

ALL OVER TICK CONTROL

Because it only takes a couple of ticks to lay a thousand eggs



Talk it over with your local manager -

AHB funding resolution will save industry more than \$7m

The row between livestock sectors over the formula for funding the AHB's Tb Pest Management Strategy has finally been settled, and it's good news for deer farmers. The formula represents a greater than \$7m saving to the deer industry over a 5-year period. While the deer industry had been expected to pay \$2.7m in the 2003/04 year, this drops to \$1.5m instead, and drops further over the next two years.


Minister of Agriculture, Jim Sutton signalled his acceptance of the generally agreed formula on 19 September, bringing to fruition almost 18 months of discussions and negotiations between the beef, dairy and deer sectors.

While Dairy Farmers of New Zealand (Federated Farmers) had declined to support the proposal, Dairy InSight – which will collect the levy – supported it.

Dairy InSight and Deer Industry New Zealand will now contract to provide the funding in the table below.

Funding for beef cattle is collected under the Biosecurity Act.

Sector	03/04 \$m	04/05 \$m	05/06–07/08 \$m
Beef	11.6	10.2	8.8
Dairy	12.5	14.0	15.6
Deer	1.5	1.4	1.2
TOTAL	25.6	25.6	25.6

There will be a review of funding arrangements to determine funding to apply after this 5 year period. 

Bayticol Pour-on spreads to both ends of animal attacking ticks where they hide.

Partial treatments may allow ticks to survive, breed and lay eggs, increasing the overall tick burden on the farm and the animal.

Bayticol causes ticks to die, with any surviving adults normally rendered sterile, important as it only takes a couple of ticks to lay a thousand eggs.

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10% extra FREE plus
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FOR A LIMITED TIME ONLY.



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POUR-ON TICKICIDE

Trusted tick control for over 15 years.



Licensed Animal Remedy No. 5335

WRIGHTSON LIVESTOCK MARKET REPORT

October 2003

		North Island (\$/kg)	South Island (\$/kg)
Weaner Hybrid Stags	Top	2.10	2.20
	Medium	1.90	1.80
	Small Med	1.60	1.50
Weaner Red Stags	Top	2.00	2.00
	Medium	1.70	1.60
	Small Med	1.50	1.40
Weaner Hybrid Hinds	Top	2.00	2.00
	Medium	1.50	1.70
	Small Med	1.20	1.40
Weaner Red Hinds	Top	1.80	2.00
	Medium	1.50	1.60
	Small Med	1.20	1.20
		North Island (\$/hd)	South Island (\$/hd)
Rising 2yr Stags Velvet potential	Top	350	400
	Medium	300	350
Rising 2yr Hinds Hybrid	Top	260	320
	Medium	230	280
Rising 2yr Hinds Red	Top	250	300
	Medium	220	270
	Smaller	180	200
Mixed Age Stags Velveters	Top	N/A	–
	Medium	–	–
Mixed Age Hinds Hybrid	Top	280	400
	Medium	250	320
Mixed Age Hinds Red	Top	280	350
	Medium	220	300
	Smaller	180	200

Seasonal comments

A number of breeders from the northern North Island with herds from 100–300 head are exiting the industry due to lower spring returns and similar prospects for next season's weaners.

it's free Ph. 0800 927733

BSC0696



Coming Events

2003

22-23 October	Branch Chairmen's meeting including Executive Committee and Selection and Appointments Panel, Wellington
28 October	Gisborne Branch Visit to Te Pa Station and Jim Sanson's Deer Farm
31 October	Canterbury MWI monitor farm Community Interest Open Day. Latham's property Little River, Banks Peninsula
3 November	National Livestock Ltd Field Day, 1.30 pm at Maranoa Deer Farm, Takapau (signposted from Takapau turnoff). Featured speaker Dr Jimmy Suttie.
12 November	Farm walk at property of 2003 Environment Award winners, Wayne and Tricia Aspin, 195 Hatton Road, RD4, Waiuku (see details elsewhere in this issue).
16 November	Waikato Region Premier Environmental Award Winner Field Day; location TBA
21 November	Hawke's Bay Branch Velvet Antler competition Waipa Branch Velvet Antler competition and Christmas Party, Te Awamutu Waikato Branch Velvet Antler Competition
28 November	Wanganui Branch and North Island Velvet Antler Competition (Contact Brian Shaw 06-342-6995) Viewing for NI competition from 2 pm onwards
28 November	Deadline for discount on registration at 2nd Antler Science and Product Technology Symposium (see below for contact details)
29 November	Wairoa Branch Velvet Antler Competition South Canterbury North Otago Branch Velvet Antler Competition
2 December	Marlborough Branch Velvet Antler Competition
4 December	Taranaki Branch Velvet Antler Competition
5 December	National Velvet & Trophy Antler Competition (Invercargill) – entries due
7 December	National Velvet & Trophy Antler Competition: Velvet to Wrightson Invercargill by 1 pm
7 December	Manawatu and Horowhenua/Wellington Branch Velvet competition & Xmas Party
8 December	National Velvet & Trophy Antler Competition: Judging day
9 December:	National Velvet & Trophy Antler Competition: Awards Dinner (Velvet on display from 6.15 pm)
13 December	Wairarapa Branch Velvet Antler (Adult) competition

2004

24 January	Elk & Wapiti Society – National EW Competition, Croydon Lodge Gore (ph 03 208 9029 for accommodation); tour of Elk/Wapiti farm on Sat or Sunday. Contact Tom May, tom@mayfieldelk.com Book your discounted airfares now!
31 January	Fiordland Branch Velvet Antler Competition – 2yr old Plus MA Red & Wapiti/Elk Velvet
1 February	Manawatu and Horowhenua/Wellington Branch spiker, 2yo & 3yo Velvet competition
7 February	Wairarapa Branch Velvet Antler Competition: National 2yo Competitions and 2yo Hard Antler Competition
21-24 February	Inaugural World Veterinary Deer Congress (in conjunction with Antler Symposium below). Contact Sue Bastiaansen, 03 756 9002, bastiaansans@maf.govt.nz
24-27 February	2nd Antler Science and Product Technology Symposium – Millennium Hotel, Queenstown; register at www.aspt2.co.nz or email linda.murray@agresearch.co.nz, ph 03 489 9011
16-18 April	Deer Industry Association of Australia, 2004 Biennial Conference, Mt Gambier, South Australia
16-19 June	Mystery Creek Field Days – Hamilton
21 June	NZDFA Branch Chairmen's meeting, Wairakei.
22-23 June	2004 Deer Industry Conference and NZDFA AGM, Wairakei (timed to link with Mystery Creek Field Days, above)

Sire stag sale dates 2003/2004

Dec 2003

Tuesday	16th	4.00 pm	Te Puke	Te Puke
Wednesday	17th	1.30 pm	Taihape Red Deer	Taihape
Thursday	18th	1.30 pm	Maranoa	Takapau
Friday	19th	12.30 pm	Egmont	New Plymouth
Friday	19th	3.00 pm	Rockvale	New Plymouth

Jan 2004

Monday	5th	11.30 am	Rodway	Rotorua
Monday	5th	4:00 pm	Raroa	Cambridge
Tuesday	6th	12 noon	Windermere	Hamilton
Tuesday	6th	5pm	Tower Farms	Cambridge
Wednesday	7th	11.00 am	Deer Genetics	Rotorua
Wednesday	7th	am/pm	Hurunui Red Deer Stud	Hurunui
Wednesday	7th	1.30 pm	Pampas Heights	Rotorua
Wednesday	7th	later pm	Harry Waghorn Red Sire	Location TBC
Wednesday	7th	5.00 pm	Beaufort	Rotorua
Thursday	8th	1.30 pm	Doncaster Deer	Waipahi
Thursday	8th	1.00 pm	Westbush	Masterton
Thursday	8th	12 noon	Cloudy Bay	Insignis Park, ChCh
Friday	9th	11:00 am	Canterbury Red Deer	Tai Tapu
Friday	9th	3:00 pm	Harwood Deer Farm	Ashburton
Friday	9th	6:00 pm	Pelorus Red Deer	Ashburton
Saturday	10th	12 noon	Southern Elite Wapiti	Lorneville
Saturday	10th	6:00 pm	Colin Smith Wapiti	Oreti
Sunday	11th	12 noon	Carran Family Fiordland Wapiti	Te Anau
Sunday	11th	6:00 pm	Mayfield Farm NZ Wapiti	Lochiel Winton
Monday	12th	11:00 am	Foveran (Trophies)	Kurow
		4:00 pm	Foveran (Elite Sires)	Kurow
Tuesday	13th	1.30 pm	Stanfield's Bushey Park (Warnham)	Palmerston
		6.00 pm	Stanfield's Bushey Park (Eastern)	Palmerston
Wednesday	14th	1:00 pm	Black Forest Park	Outram
Wednesday	14th	6.30 pm	Arawata Partnership	Waimahaka
Thursday	15th	11:00 am	Ingor Deer Farm	Waimatua
Thursday	15th	4:00 pm	Netherdale Deer Stud	Balfour
Friday	16th	12 noon	Remarkables Park Deer Stud	Queenstown
Saturday	17th	11:00 am	Marylands Partnership NZ Wapiti	Tarras
Monday	19th	1.30 pm	Edendale NZ Wapiti	Ashburton
Tuesday	20th	pm	S J Mitchell - Don J Greig	Insignis Park, ChCh
Tuesday	27th	1.30pm	Steinvale Wapiti	Taupo
Thursday	29th	5.30 pm	Pinewood/Brock	Merino Downs Gore

Feb 2004

Tuesday	3rd	pm	J Barber NZ Wapiti	Location TBC
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This table is based on information volunteered by vendors, advertisers and agents. *Deer Industry News* accepts no liability for errors or omissions in the above table. An update will be printed in the December issue.

Tongariro Branch to host Deer Industry Conference at Wairakei, June 2004

Mark your calendars now for the 29th Deer Industry Conference to be held at the fabulous Wairakei Resort Taupo, on Tuesday 22nd and Wednesday 23rd of June 2004. We'll give a fuller outline in the December issue, but here are just a few highlights:

- Follows Mystery Creek field days (16-19th June)
- DEEResearch technical session and NZDFA AGM
- Launch of the Landcare Manual
- Results of Deer Industry New Zealand referendum
- Deer Industry New Zealand FGM
- Latest industry good funded R&D programmes
- Open forum with interactive debate.

Further details will be developed during the Branch Chairman's conference this month and advised in the December issue of *Deer Industry News*.

Obituary: Bernard Louis Chaney 1925-2003

Redoubtable deer hunter, fisherman and industry personality Bernie Chaney died suddenly in Nelson in August.

A superb marksman, Bernie was known for using a traditional open-sighted army .303 during his days as a deer culler, although he often used his .270 with telescopic sight during his meat hunting days.

As a 20-year-old, Bernie and his brother Maurice were members of a party sent to Three Kings Island by the Internal Affairs Department to eradicate goats. While there, the observant young hunter discovered a cave containing human skulls and leg bones and part of a Maori eating house, featuring a carving of a half-bird, half-man figure – a carving style which pre-dates the decorative carving more commonly seen.

The piece is now on display in the Auckland Museum. Until this discovery the only record of Maori on these islands was from Abel Tasman's log book, where the inhabitants are described as being 9 feet tall – a claim not supported by the leg bones found in the cave.


From 1946 Bernie worked as a deer culler in Northland, the Poulter, Wilberforce and Rakaia areas, before moving to Te Anau. After a spell supplying posts to Lands and Survey for farm development blocks he moved into the fishing industry, working in the Fiordland area. He had a fishing boat built, "Alias", which he worked on his own, crayfishing the Fiordland coast out of Milford Sound for several years before buying a larger boat "Huia", fishing from Bligh Sound south to Doubtful sound.

When he discovered other fishermen were lifting his craypots behind his back, he substituted his baited pots for a concrete building block and it was to his amusement and satisfaction to hear of the poachers'wasted effort.

Bernie developed a great love of Fiordland and became well-known in hunting and fishing circles. In his book Hunting in New Zealand, Rex Forester described Bernie as 'undoubtedly New Zealand's most experienced Wapiti hunter'. Bernie secured some fine trophy heads, three of which are displayed in his home.

Bernie and his wife Elsa moved north to Brightwater (near Nelson) in 1981. A Wapiti enthusiast, Bernie established a herd which he farmed until 2000. The foundation bull Shenandoah was one of his joys in establishing the herd, achieving complete domestication from a mature bull he had captured in Fiordland.

He never lost his enthusiasm for hunting, and made frequent trips back to Fiordland to hunt deer and pigs.

Bernie was a long-term member of the NZ Deer Cullers' Association, and a member of the NZDFA. He was a true and passionate man, much loved and respected by Elsa, daughters Annabelle and Louise, and granddaughter Athena. 

Our thanks to Norm Parkes, Nelson Branch, for contributing this obituary.

NATIONAL VELVET COMPETITION

Awards dinner Tuesday 9 December • Venue: Ascot Park Hotel, Invercargill

National certification and verification of weight and grade: –

Classes:

- | | | | |
|---------------|-----------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| a) Open Red | b) Elk/Wapiti Supreme | c) 3 Year Red | d) 4 Year Red |
| e) 5 Year Red | f) 3 Year Elk/Wapiti | g) Elk/Wapiti One | h) Elk/Wapiti Maiden |

i) Trophy Antler Section – Red – Wapiti/Elk Typical and Non-Typical – also for the first time, Fallow Hard Antler – **Yes!** For the first time we have included Fallow in the Hard Antler Section.

- > The National Certification is a great opportunity for both stud and commercial breeders to verify and authenticate, weight and grade (velvet), and score (hard antler).
- > There is still a small number of breeders who are claiming both records and velvet weights, even body weights, without being witnessed or verified in any manner at all. This is unacceptable.

Main sponsor:  **Wrightson**

Host: Southland Branch, NZDFA

NZDFA
New Zealand Deer Farmers' Association



Entries to: Lloyd Thayer, Merino Downs, No. 5 RD, Gore, ph/fax 03-207-6828

Deadline for entries: Friday 5 December

Guest speaker: Mark Inglis

Awards dinner tickets: Mrs Judy Gerrard, Acrestripe, RD3, Winton, ph/fax 03-236-8277

All other enquiries to Peter Allan (Competition Chairman), ph/fax 03-201-6313

Farmer volunteers urgently needed for Johne's project

The Johne's Research Group (JRG) is urgently seeking farmer volunteers to contribute to a vital research project set to commence this month.

Months of planning for the JRG's funding and practical involvement with Massey University's epidemiological study will move into action at the end of October.

Principle researchers Cord Hueur and Allie Quinn begin the next phase of the project with an in-depth analysis of 15 case study properties that have identified Johne's Disease (JD) challenges in their farming operations, and are well on the track of diagnosis, elimination and prevention. The four branches involved in the JRG are encouraging farmers who can help to be involved in this task while a further nationwide contact list of 160 farmers is developed.

This work is a critical prerequisite to the main thrust of the study – an in-depth analysis of all features of farming and management of a large number of properties.

The JRG project aims to develop a farm-level understanding of how and why the disease can occur, what factors create spread and, most importantly, what factors either prevent the risk or can be used to contain and eliminate the risk and the disease. Essentially, that is epidemiology.

A large number of herds are to be screened for potential factors (e.g. individual animal characteristics, management, environmental) that may affect the risk of clinical disease. This will enable the ranking of those factors. Should causal relationships be revealed, the exercise will provide practical guidance for management and other factors to reduce the impact of JD. It will also provide the opportunity to evaluate potential and/or relative cost of various factors.

Epidemiological studies are extremely efficient and cost-effective methods of determining the likely main factors influencing disease outcome. They can investigate a large number of "theories" or factors that are likely to be involved, at one time. This method contrasts with controlled trials in which every theory must be tested over a prolonged period – at significant cost and not always productively.

Broad-based epidemiological studies frequently identify unusual or unexpected factors associated with disease, which would be overlooked by more conventional thinking and controlled experimental methods.

Deer industry calendar sales boost Johne's Research Group funds

Deer Industry News readers can make a direct contribution to the JRG's work by purchasing additional copies of the 2004 Deer Industry Calendar. There's a free copy in this issue and an order form for additional copies. Net proceeds from these sales will be channelled straight to the JRG.

The calendar is being published as an industry-good fundraising initiative by *Deer Industry News* editor Phil Stewart, with the endorsement of Deer Industry New Zealand, the NZDFA, Warnham and Woburn Society and the Johne's Research Group.

"The calendars make ideal Christmas stocking fillers and gifts for family and friends, both in New Zealand and overseas," Phil says. "It's a great way of showing off our industry to the world, while supporting an industry-good cause. I'd like to thank the Warnham and Woburn Society for agreeing to the use of the photos from their annual competition in the calendar."

Thanks to the generosity of the sponsors, Johne's Research Group funds have already been boosted by \$2000. A limited number of additional calendars have been published for sale, and proceeds from this have the potential to boost this figure much further.

All-inclusive prices are:

Single copy: \$9.95


2-10 copies: \$8.50 each

11 or more copies: \$7.50

If you've mislaid your order form, contact Words & Pictures and we'll organise the rest:

Deer Calendar, PO Box 27-221, Wellington, ph 04 384 4688, email din@wordpict.co.nz

The JRG now needs 160 farmers for the study's database – 80 with JD experience and 80 who are clear of the disease – to take part in the in-depth survey. The project is totally confidential and participating farms will not be identified in the analysis.

If you are able help this critical part of the integral FRST-funded combined deer industry project, please contact Tony Pearse, Producer Manager at Deer Industry New Zealand to register your interest. This is an absolutely vital part of the project and potentially of immense benefit to the industry. 

Contact: Tony Pearse, Deer Industry New Zealand, ph 021 719 038, email tony.pearse@deernz.org

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DEEResearch Update

DEEResearch Chairman Collier Isaacs thanked outgoing NZDFA representative John Cusdin for his extensive contribution to the cause of industry research, during his welcome to delegates at the DEEResearch technical morning at Timaru.

Cusdin has stepped aside from his role as NZDFA member on the DEEResearch Board; his place taken by deer farmer and veterinarian, Noel Beatson. Also stepping aside is Massey University's Grant Guilford who has been replaced by Graham Barrell (Lincoln University).

Isaacs also thanked Geoff Asher (Invermay) and former Executive Committee member Peter Fitzgerald for their efforts in getting the DEEResearch database up and running. There are now 900 papers available, with that tally set to reach 2000-3000.

The number of hits on the site – about 100 a day – was gratifying, Isaacs said. As well as papers from earlier work, the current research programme is also outlined.

A draft programme for 2003/04 was presented at the conference, and is published in full in this issue of *Deer Industry News*. Research 'heavyweights', Tb, Johne's Disease and Leptospirosis take the largest individual shares, with a small number of new programmes also confirmed. These include venison processing and product quality, a pasture quality learning package, and web-based stag selection package. With limited new funding available for projects this year, more new projects are on the table for the coming year as initial 2 year projects which commenced in DEEResearch's first year come to an end.

Project Description	Funding 03/04
Johne's Disease: diagnostic tools and vaccine development	\$75,000
Heritable resistance to Tb in deer	\$75,000
Leptospirosis	\$71,000
Effect of genotype on reproductive performance of young hinds	\$50,000
Venison Processing and Product Quality	\$40,000
Pastoral Genomics Research Consortium	\$30,000
Pasture Quality Learning Package	\$30,000
Development of a new Tb test	\$27,500
Methane Mitigation Research Consortium	\$25,000
Stag Selection Information Package	\$8,000
Benchmarking for Maximum Learning	\$7,500
Johne's Consortium Development	\$5,000
Effect of Molybdenum on copper status	\$5,000
Post-Grad Support	\$5,000
PCR Kit development for product quality	\$5,000
Impact of forage herbs on methane production	\$4,390
TOTAL	\$463,390

DEEResearch's annual report will be published in the December issue of *Deer Industry News*. In the meantime, for more information on the DEEResearch programme, status reports of current projects and the latest research papers check out www.DEEResearch.org.nz 

Origin Sire Stag Sales 2003/4

December 2003

Tuesday 16th 11.00am Beaufort Deer Stud, Rotorua,
OPEN DAY Paolyta Sale Complex, Tarukenga Rd, Ngongataha

Tuesday 16th 4.00pm Te Puke Deer Farm, Te Puke

Wednesday 17th 1.30pm Taihape Red Deer, Wairouru

Friday 19th 3.00pm Rockvale Deer Stud, New Plymouth

January 2004

Monday 5th 12.00pm Rodway Park Ltd, Rotorua

Wednesday 7th 5.00pm Beaufort Deer Stud, Rotorua



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 Fax 06 343 1849
 Email: origin.national@extra.co.nz

StagWalk 2003

Thursday 11th December
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or contact: John Cusdin: 0274 444 720
Stu Gudsell; 0274 951 737





Velvet

The velvet season has started with industry agreements relating to accepting only tagged velvet and new velvet grades in place following a recent review. A velvet antler conference to be held in Queenstown next February is attracting the top scientific names to New Zealand.

VPA agrees to accept only tagged velvet

- Members of the Velvet Processors' Association (VPA) have individually signed charters to accept only tagged velvet from this season onwards. This means that they will require the velvet that they purchase from both pools and through road buyers to have industry tags attached.
- VPA members will have auditable systems in place to ensure that they are only accepting tagged velvet.
- This also offers the bonus of being able to track tagged velvet back to the farm of origin should this be required for any reason. Further, untagged velvet stands out from the bulk of velvet and immediately raises questions about its origin. The tags make it much more difficult for stolen velvet to be traded.

Antler symposium attracts top scientists

The best opportunity for New Zealand producers to hear and mingle with the world's top velvet antler scientists will take place next February. The 2nd Antler Science and Product Technology (ASPT 2) Symposium, will be held in Queenstown from 24-27 February 2004, and has attracted some of the world's foremost experts on velvet antler.

- Thirty speakers from nine countries have agreed to present at ASPT 2, which follows the successful inaugural Symposium in Banff, Canada in 2000.
- The organisers say that poster sessions, trade displays, industry exhibitions, social events, farm visits and a few surprises are in store for delegates. Topics covered will include basic antler studies, removal & welfare, composition, toxicity, active ingredients, processing and efficacies.

- Registration brochures are available from Linda Murray, AgResearch, phone 03 489 9011 or linda.murray@agresearch.co.nz or can be downloaded from www.aspt2.co.nz
- Discounted registration packages are available until 28 November 2003.

Industry Grading Guidelines review

All producers should have received a 'Removal and Grading Guidelines Update' in your last Market Report. If you did not receive a copy, you can get one from Alisha Abraham (04 381 6010) or alisha.abraham@deernz.org

Velvet season reminder

- Velvet removal is a privilege, not a right.
- Our ongoing ability, as an industry, to remove velvet is dependent on cooperation and compliance with the requirements of the NVSB velvet removal programme. Refer to the guidelines, which were inserted with the last issue of Market Report (73, October 2003).
- *Quality and Colour* – be guided by price signals in terms of the difference paid for short versus later cut grades but, in general, earlier cut velvet is preferred by the market and results in better quality. The internal colour of velvet is an important quality measure in our traditional Asian markets.
- *Velvet grading posters and measuring tapes* - are available to New Zealand deer industry participants free of charge from Deer Industry New Zealand including an update to the Velvet Grading Guidelines. Contact Alisha Abraham (04 381 6010) or alisha.abraham@deernz.org.

Market Talk: Welfare-friendly UK

Ex-journalist, Ian Damms, runs Stile Media a British communications company specialising in animal health issues. Ian monitors European animal health and welfare issues for Deer Industry New Zealand in the UK.

What is your association with British animal welfare issues?

You can't work in the UK agri-food industry without having a close association with animal welfare: it seems to permeate all aspects of our activity. At Stile Media, we have produced information materials for welfare groups and assurance schemes such as the RSPCA's Freedom Food programme and most materials we produce for the food sector will have a welfare angle. To keep up-to-date with current issues in the industry, I maintain contact with animal welfare groups – in particular monitoring the activities of the Farm Animal Welfare Council (FAWC) which advises the British Minister of Agriculture at the Department of Environment, Farming & Rural Affairs (DEFRA).

What trends do you see?

British consumers are very sympathetic to animal welfare and contribute millions of pounds each year to charities such as the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and Compassion in World Farming. This empathy is also backed by Government, a vast and confusing array of current meat assurance schemes aimed at reassuring the public of the safety and welfare standards of the products they are consuming and further technical specifications set by the large supermarkets.

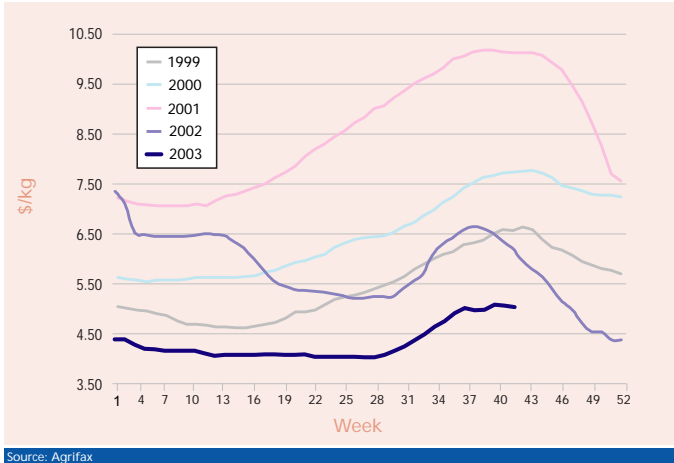
These trends were marked at this year's Restaurant Show in London, where there was an increase in the number of stands dedicated to organic production, the development of meat products sold direct from the farm to the consumer and various assurance schemes.

In general, it seems the consumer's perception is that organic food = welfare-friendly, assured food = welfare-friendly, locally farm reared food = welfare-friendly.

Venison

Promotions of New Zealand venison stretch across Europe, the United States and New Zealand. Deer Industry New Zealand is working closely with exporters and their in-market partners to give venison promotions the best possible leverage.

WEEKLY AVERAGE SCHEDULE - 60KG AP STAG



Source: Agrifax

Schedule

- At week 41, the average published schedule was \$5.07 – 19% lower than the same time last year (\$6.25) and 27% lower than the ten-year average (\$6.91).

New promotional materials

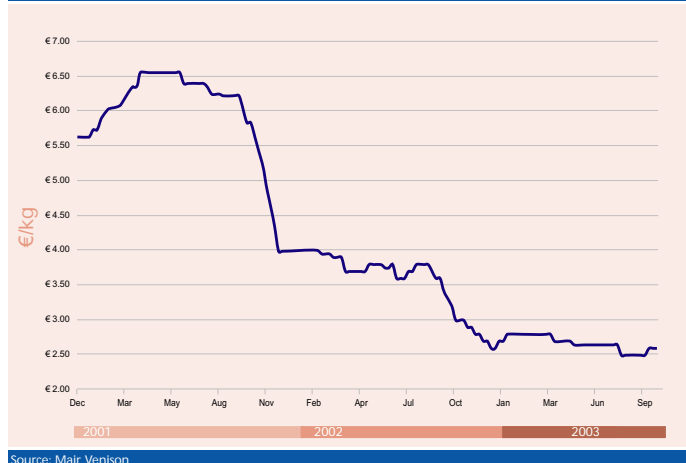
- Two new venison recipe brochures in English targeting chefs and consumers are being printed for distribution throughout English-speaking markets. The brochures feature a selection of recipes from Graham Brown, and promote year-round use of New Zealand venison. Copies are available from mat.moyes@deernz.org
- An interactive CD-ROM is available from Deer Industry New Zealand containing information on the New Zealand deer industry – from the farm to the kitchen. Primarily used as an information resource for distributors/salespeople and chefs, the CD-ROM promotes the unique selling points of New Zealand venison, while also providing cutting, storage and cooking tips. The first edition is in English but there are plans for other languages as and when required.
- A new Dutch recipe leaflet has been distributed through 500 stores of a leading Netherlands retail network. Promoting the versatility of New Zealand venison, the 130,000 leaflets support a retailer new to venison promotion.

Research shows that the British consumer wants the assurance that the meat they are eating has been produced in a welfare-friendly way but at a reasonable price. So, it is very important for New Zealand to continue to maintain its welfare standards for success in Europe.

What is happening with velvet?

We constantly monitor issues relating to velvet removal in the UK and I am often asked in farming circles, "isn't that cruel?" and I have to explain the comprehensive systems that are in place to ensure the welfare of the deer during velvet removal. There is a developing health market for velvet products in the UK, and therefore a risk of inappropriate media coverage creating a detrimental effect on the market for New Zealand venison. Careful management is essential.

MARKET INDICATOR PRICES (BONE IN HAUNCH)



Source: Mair Venison

European promotion activity

- The supermarket tasting tour in Germany has begun. It features weekly consumer tastings at various supermarkets through to December. The kitchen will be in action for 52 days throughout this period. A staff training day focused on how to operate the mobile kitchen, how to cook New Zealand venison and the key messages to give to shoppers.
- Chef Graham Brown and meat specialist Geof Christie both promoted venison at the world's largest food trade show, ANUGA, earlier this month (11 to 15 October).
- Additional European promotional work for Geof continues in the form of in-house trade fairs in both Flensburg and Rostock (Northern Germany).
- Graham Brown gave a demonstration at a chef seminar in Los Angeles, then went on to Finland for some chef functions, trade shows and a television appearance. His promotional itinerary ends with retail promotions in Denmark.

Promotion in New Zealand

- Cervena featured at 'The Foodshow' in Auckland in August, including a cooking demonstration by Graham Brown, highlighting some new venison recipes and promoting simple, year-round dish options.
- Cuisine* magazine included a promotion of Cervena in its Christmas 2003 edition. The advert featured consumer-ready product and encourages consumers to buy Cervena throughout summer.
- Venison was promoted in partnership with the New Zealand Restaurant Association and a processor/exporter at the *New Zealand Culinary Fare*, held in Auckland in late August. The promotion included a culinary competition for trainee chefs across New Zealand, judged by the Executive Chef, and a product demonstration to chefs and media.

PPCS launches venison ready meals at ANUGA

PPCS is responding to domestic and international markets by producing case-ready venison meal solutions.

The new products were displayed in Germany this month, at Anuga – the biennial international food fair.

PPCS venison marketing manager Glenn Tyrrell says ‘case-ready retail products’, as they are known in the business, are the way of the future.

These are essentially pre-packaged trays or boxes found in supermarkets that are designed to allow the consumer a quick choice.

“This segment of fresh-meat packaging is one of the fastest growing sectors of the supermarket trade,” Glenn says. “And, PPCS is moving to ensure New Zealand venison is well positioned within this area.”

Whether destined for the New Zealand or European market, the product will be packaged at PPCS plants. As with other pre-packaged meat products exported by PPCS, the venison ready meal will require packaging in different languages to


accommodate the various markets.

Glenn Tyrrell describes Anuga – the world’s largest food trade fair – as a perfect opportunity to push the “New Zealand” brand in the international marketplace.

“We know that New Zealand origin meat is a desirable product and packaging it here, under our own label, ensures we can capitalise on that competitive advantage. Anuga’s timing and location is ideal for the international launch.”

In addition to the branding opportunities, the ready meal market has other advantages: “You cannot rely on in-store butchers to supply a consistent product to the supermarket shelf – in terms of portion size, shelf life or cut. The case-ready option is consistent in every regard, so that quality to the consumer is guaranteed.”

The packaging includes preparation instructions and a recipe suggestion.

“It’s all about convenience – for the supermarket, the butchery and the consumer.” 



The appetising packaging for PPCS’ new venison meal solutions.

Wundersohn
11.5kg H/A 4 years
6.0kg Velvet @ 3 years

Sherman
4 years, 21pts
Pure Schulte Wrede
Son of Maximise

CORRIEGROVE DEER

Southland’s Specialist German Deer Stud

Contact
Graeme & Jill Watkins Phone/Fax 03 230 4015
262 Mabel Grove Bush Road, Grove Bush, Invercargill

Beckett seeks industry thoughts on Cervena

Papers are piling up on John Beckett’s desk as he starts the monumental task of reviewing Cervena. The consultant with Wellington-based Castalia has plenty of experience in the field. He is formerly a Senior Fellow of the New Zealand Institute of Economic Research and has carried out research for agricultural organisations including Meat New Zealand.



John Beckett.

The first step is to pull together all the information into a discussion document for consideration and input by industry. Input from a large number of players throughout all sectors of the industry, covering all major issues surrounding Cervena, will be sought.

The next step is for Beckett to interview key stakeholders – from producers, processors and exporters, potentially through to US-based distributors – before preparing his review report. Given the depth of analysis required, that final report is scheduled to be submitted in December 2003.

For further information contact: review@cervena.com

Supermarket sampling steams ahead

Coinciding with a leading German food industry publication, Lebensmittel Praxis, stating that "face-to-face" marketing is an increasingly important marketing tool, the New Zealand-built mobile venison kitchen has begun its supermarket tasting tour throughout Germany, bringing the taste of New Zealand venison directly to German shoppers.



The new and eye-catching New Zealand Venison mobile kitchen at work in a German supermarket. Merchandisers are excited to be working with the product and reporting good feedback.

Deer Industry New Zealand's Venison Marketing Services Manager Mat Moyes is pleased with the opening week: "Feedback has been very positive and there is a good response to the product being offered, in particular the Korean venison stir-fry which has them coming back for more!"

Over 50 days of action are involved in the programme, which runs through to December and features weekly tastings at a number of German supermarkets. A stock of German language promotional materials, including posters, in-store mobiles and brochures have been provided to give to consumers along with other promotional items like venison rub spice packs, and balloons for the kids.

German merchandisers have been employed to work the mobile kitchen and they have received a comprehensive induction on New Zealand venison at a training day. This included a venison cooking demonstration with a chef, as well as instruction on how to assemble, use, clean, disassemble and pack the mobile kitchen.

Mat says that further spin-offs from the activity will maximise the use of the mobile venison kitchen within and outside Germany. "We already have requests in from one German importer and distributor to use the mobile kitchen throughout December and from another to use it for their retail partners in December and January. The kitchen has been built, and the more it is used the better." 📺

Exporter adds mobile kitchen to fleet

In addition, another mobile kitchen, built to a similar design by the same New Zealand company has been shipped to Europe for Richmond, for use in its own retail tasting programmes with market partners throughout Europe.

Richmond's Venison Manager, Nick Sherwood, says "It's a great investment and asset to have in the marketplace and an ideal platform for the type of promotional work we are intent on pursuing."



Richmond's mobile kitchen offers European customers mobile, flexible and tangible promotional support.

The company plans to use it in Germany and, through its Brussels office in other European markets, including the UK. Designed for in-store demonstrations, the mobile kitchen has a refrigeration unit for display purposes and a barbecue cooking plate, ideal for conducting tastings. The construction makes it highly mobile and manageable to set up and move around quickly, Nick says.

"Our customers and importers will use it to promote Richmond New Zealand venison at a retail level and also at food fairs and expos," he says, adding that the unit was cost-effectively shipped to Germany in one of the chilled containers taking Richmond's product to market, arriving there in July.

The Richmond kitchen is based at the company's Hamburg office and its custodian is office manager Winfried Arwers, who will liaise and coordinate its use with customers.

"We've already christened the kitchen at a retail promotion in Germany with the retail group Edeka. Several other events are planned in Germany in the run-up to Christmas, plus it will be used by one of our customers at the Anuga Food Fair in Cologne," Nick Sherwood says. 📺

Award winners show what can be done in 10 years

Every year, the Deer Farmers' Environmental Awards deliver inspiration and a whole set of new ideas for the industry to apply on their own farms. A common theme that comes through from all winners is the pleasure gained from making a positive environmental impact and successfully balancing environmental and commercial objectives.


This year's winners of the Premier Sir Peter and Fiona Lady Elworthy Environmental Award were Wayne and Tricia Aspin. The Aspins have clearly relished the challenges involved in converting a dairy property with potentially vulnerable soils into a thriving deer property driven by a sound environmental ethic.

In their report the judges noted that the Aspins had told them, 'deer farming taught us a lot about the environment'. This indicated that a learning curve had been climbed and a sustainable approach developed, the judges said.

The photographs with this article show just how quickly a change in land management can start to pay environmental dividends. In just a decade or so, an unremarkable gully has been transformed into a rich source of biodiversity.

While it's one of the most eye-catching changes on this property, the planting of retired areas is just one of many strategies employed by the Aspins. There is more detail about the steps taken by the Aspins in the Deer Farmers' Environmental Award Brochure accompanying this issue of Deer Industry News.

If you'd like to have a first-hand look at what they've done, the Aspins are welcoming visitors to a farm walk at their property on 12 November (see sidebar for details).

The Aspins, and many like them, have discovered that a policy of sustainable land use repays the effort and investment in spades. Far from being a 'compliance' issue, sustainable practices are becoming recognised as mainstream farm business inputs, delivering economic, social and environmental benefits. 

For further information about the Deer Farmers' Environmental Awards, contact the convenor, John Paterson, 07 332 2093, john-p@wave.co.nz



2003

Wayne and Tricia Aspin show the spectacular changes on their property achieved in just 10 years.



1993

2003 Deer Farmers' Environmental Award Winners – Farm Walk

Wayne and Tricia Aspin, winners of the 2003 Premier Sir Peter and Fiona Lady Elworthy Environmental Award, invite you to a farm walk on their property.

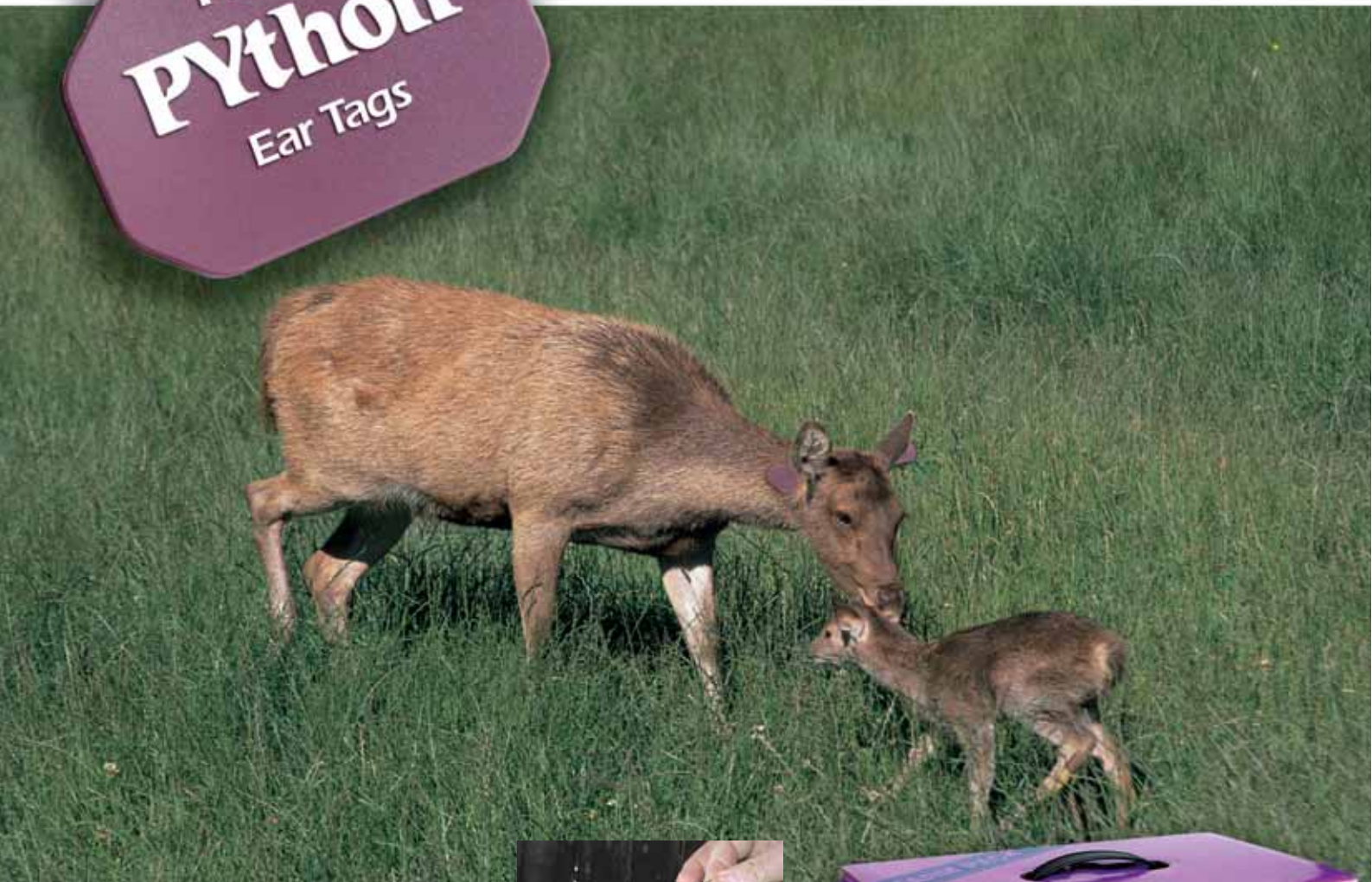
- Date: 12 November 2003
- Time: Arrive from 11 am; following lunch, farm walk departs at 12 noon and returns at 3 pm. (Note: this really is a walk – no wheeled transport will be used, so come prepared.)
- Bring: Walking boots and lunch. (Hot water provided)
- Location: 195 Hatton Road, RD4 Waiuku.
- Getting there: Allow 1¼ hours' drive after leaving SH1 South of Auckland. From Waiuku travel up the Awhitu Peninsula towards the Manukau Heads for 29 km. Just after Matakawau turn right at the fire station into Hatton Road and go on to the Aspins' farm at No. 195 Hatton Road.

Landcare Manual Update

- A preliminary draft (160 copies) of the manual has been released for comment.
- Non-farmer groups (mainly regional councils) were included for first time.
- Over 70 submissions were received – 50 from the past pool of contributing farmers, and 20 from regional councils and other environmental professionals.
- The committee is targeting release for early next year and the manual will be officially launched at the June 2004 Deer Industry Conference at Wairakei.

Tick Control

for the whole family



New PYTHON Sustained Release Insecticidal Ear tags control ticks on the head and neck of deer, including velvet antler on stags for up to 16 weeks.



Even better, during grooming adult hinds transfer insecticide to un-treated fawns from the moment they are born, helping to protect them from ticks to at least 6 weeks. Grazing action also helps to control ticks in pasture meaning that application early in the season can reduce pasture infestation later in the tick season.



PYTHON Tags are easy to apply and there are no withholding periods for treated animals.

	PYTHON Insecticide Tags	Pour-On Tick Control
16 WEEKS PROTECTION ON HEAD, NECK AND VELVET	YES	NO
PROTECTION FOR THE UN-TREATED FAWN	YES	NO

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PYTHON Ear Tags for tick control on deer, cattle and dairy cows. See your local Veterinarian for details.

Surveillance pressure stepped up

Deer Industry New Zealand is stepping up efforts to increase surveillance for Chronic Wasting Disease, and deer farmers have responded with a much higher sample submission rate during the past three months. The improved response has pleased both MAF Biosecurity and Deer Industry New Zealand, but work is still needed to match the target of 300 samples a year.

In a recent discussion paper, support was sought for continuing efforts to obtain 300 brain samples a year from animals targeted on-farm, supplemented by a new initiative to sample 3000 animals a year from DSPs.

Deer Industry New Zealand and MAF pay incentives for farmers and vets respectively for the on-farm sampling, and the meat industry has agreed to partly fund the sampling of animals from DSPs given the importance of robust surveillance to support New Zealand's TSE-free status, and the importance of this for our main export products and the by-product industry.

The on-farm sampling targets animals 2 years and older showing acute signs of wasting, pneumonia or neurological symptoms. Sampling criteria for DSPs are old, skinny animals, animals condemned in the yards, and animals that are DOA. This is less targeted sampling and so greater numbers of samples are needed.

Deer Industry New Zealand has argued with MAF that the DSP sampling should be funded from general taxation, but acknowledges that this may not happen, and industry will be expected to pay the bill.

Roger Poland, MAF Biosecurity's Programme Coordinator, Surveillance, says that for the first half of 2003, 25 on-farm brain samples were submitted, compared with 16 for the whole of 2002. Significantly, for the July-September quarter there has been a dramatic increase in farmer submissions, with 120 samples sent in for the period. That brings the total for the past 12 months to 150 samples. From November 2002 to September 2003, 134 samples from DSPs were also submitted. DSP samples support the on-farm testing numbers and are useful but can't substitute for the goal of 300 samples from targeted animals on-farm.

There is still room for improvement and no cause for complacency, Poland cautions. "The bottom line is that we are

looking for 300 samples from targeted on-farm cases over a 12-month period; we are still falling well short of the mark."

The discussion paper noted that there is increasing scrutiny from regulators, buyers and consumers in export markets about the TSE status of exporters who supply them with food products.


Surveillance programmes are being intensified overseas, and domestic deer industries are likely to demand exporters such as New Zealand are subjected to the same scrutiny.

Bleak picture

In the meantime an article by Helen R. Pilcher in a recent Nature Science Update paints a bleak picture for North Americans battling to control Chronic Wasting Disease.

The article says Chronic Wasting Disease is more infectious than was previously thought. In an experimental herd in Colorado, 90 percent were infected within 4 years. In addition to hind to fawn spread, infection is thought to be also spread through urine, saliva and faeces, shared scratching posts or simply contaminated grazing land.

Since the disease first appeared in Colorado more than 35 years ago the disease has spread across 12 States. An infectious diseases expert quoted in the Nature article says killing herds may be the only way to contain the disease. But even culling may not halt the epidemic. In the 1980s a herd of Colorado mule deer contracted Chronic Wasting Disease and was slaughtered. Their pens were decontaminated and restocked, but 10 years later the disease returned.

There is a powerful incentive to keep Chronic Wasting Disease away from this country, and Deer Industry New Zealand is urging farmers to 'use their brains' and work with their vets to help achieve the target of 300 samples per year. 

Strategies for optimising summer and autumn calf growth

Growing Red deer fawns at optimum levels in the summer and autumn is the key to increasing profitability, AgResearch Invermay nutritionist David Stevens told farmers at the New Zealand Society of Animal Production's annual conference in June.

Stevens said while potential for fawn growth was greatest during early life and lactation, fawns had a distinct seasonal pattern of growth, which was high in the summer and low in the winter.

"Achieving the potential for growth of young deer during the first summer and autumn is the key to economic success. Early slaughter (10 to 12 months) minimises the cost and maximises the returns when producing venison," he said.

While physiology and seasonality responses drove the general pattern of growth, the variation within each season was influenced by factors such as feed quality and quantity, as well as management.

The most visually apparent feature of pastures associated with quality was green leaf, Stevens said.

Growth of the suckling fawn increased at 70g/day for every 10 percent increase in green leaf during January and February, from a base of about 200g/day when green leaf

Plea for all to take part in livestock surveys

Getting an accurate count of the national deer herd is no easy matter, but a programme of more consistently based annual surveys and a regular 5-yearly census should help provide a better framework for industry number crunchers in the future.

It is widely believed that the official deer population of 1.644 million animals reported in the 30 June 2002 census was down on actual numbers. According to Statistics New Zealand figures, deer numbers grew 40% in the 3 years to 1999, and then fell by 2% between 1999 and 2003. Given the more measured growth indicated by production statistics over the past few years, it's unlikely that growth has been as stop-start as the official figures suggest.

Part of the problem has been the long gap between full agricultural censuses. Last year's was the first since 1994. In intervening years there have been lower key surveys, and the basis for survey sampling has been changing between years. That probably helps explain the wild fluctuations in official figures.

Five year cycle

However, agricultural census collections are now going back onto a five-year cycle. The census figures are being supplemented by an annual survey commissioned by MAF from Statistics New Zealand.

Senior Analyst (Statistics) with MAF Policy, Mieke Wensvoort, says the survey takes in 40,000 farmers across all sectors, and has a target 85% response rate.

"We are confident that the sample is big enough to give statistically reliable figures for the deer industry," she says.

One issue that makes life harder for survey designers is the proliferation of small holdings, many of which might be missed in data gathering. Wensvoort said there are about 700,000 holdings of less than 20 ha, and about 100,000 are included in the current survey. "It's unlikely that significant numbers of deer are on these smaller blocks," she says.

The current (2003) survey forms were distributed in July. By late September there had been about a 55% response. MAF was pleased with the level of response to date, but was

comprised 30 percent of the pasture on offer.

Weaners slaughtered at 10 – 12 months of age, rather than at 13 – 16 months of age, consumed 170 – 370 kg less feed, Stevens's research indicated.

The later slaughter of yearlings resulted in lost production, an extra feed cost and a reduced stocking rate at a critical time when next season's new fawns were being born.

Achieving early slaughter also achieves a premium for the venison sold, Stevens pointed out. Historically, this premium has been \$1.80/kg or \$99 per animal for a 55 kg carcass. Fast summer and autumn fawn growth rates provided a premium of \$21 over fawns grown at a medium rate and \$90 over slow growing calves.

Stevens advised various pasture management strategies could optimise summer and autumn calf growth:

- Maintaining high levels of green leaf.

urging more farmers to complete the survey forms so that reliable, high quality data would be available for policy making, planning and forecasting – and for the use of the industries themselves.

A small number of farmers had been reluctant to complete the surveys in case the information was used for tax collecting such as the proposed AER levy, Wensvoort says.

"I can give an absolute assurance that individual figures are not passed on to other agencies," she said. "While data from IRD is used to identify respondents, the traffic is only one-way."

Brian Speirs of MWI Innovations' Economic Service is reluctant to criticise the integrity of the statistics published after the 2002 agricultural census, but admits to being "surprised" at the lower than expected deer numbers.


He is expecting a slow but steady increase in the quality of livestock statistics coming through from the annual MAF-commissioned surveys.

"The 2002 census will provide a framework for future surveys, which could make it difficult for the deer industry with the lower than expected numbers that were recorded. The key is to get the list of producers right."

Speirs says consistency in the way data is collected will allow the Economic Service to calibrate its output figures over time.

Deer Industry New Zealand Chief Executive MJ Loza has endorsed the call for all deer farmers involved in the current livestock survey to fill out and return their forms as accurately as possible.

"We also rely on this data for our planning and forecasting, so the better the information that's provided, the better the job we can do for the industry." 

- Ensuring hinds were fawned in early, medium and late calving groups to ensure short, green leafy pasture was maintained.
- Use of late flowering species such as Timothy to maintain high proportions of green leaf.
- Roundup topping using low rates of glyphosphate to retard grass growth and seed head development to increase green leaf and clover content where summer rainfall is reliable.
- Alternative pastures (e.g. lucerne, red clover, chicory).
- Brassica crops to offset poor pasture supply and quality in January and February can provide calf liveweight gains of 440 – 495g/day.
- High-quality supplements when pasture supply and quality are unable to provide adequate calf growth rates. 

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