



**Where we have been with
the Central Regions DIFF
project**

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Including DIFF aims...
“more, heavier and earlier”

Monitoring- “heavier”

Practical feeding- “heavier”

Animal health- “more and heavier”

Practical farm ideas and practices- “more
and earlier”

Monitoring

- Hind and fawns weights
 - Absolute top end of HB performance
 - MA hinds typically 125 kg and 3.5 cs to the stag
 - All R1 weighed at weaning, end May, end August, end November
 - R2 hinds selected 95kg+ in December
- Pasture covers and feeding- Farmax and consultant

Animal health

- Huge topic- underestimated initially...
- Some proactive monitoring
 - faecal egg and larval counts
 - faecal egg count reduction test
 - trace elements including Multi-min trial
- More often reactive (which is “normal”)
 - autopsies
 - johnes

Faecal egg and larval counts

- Regular testing of R1/R2 deer and bulls. Reduced need for drenches, especially in yearlings
- Diagnosed issues in first-fawner fawns but after the event
- Individual illthrift cases often high FEC
- FECRT done 2009 with good kill of lungworm (100%) but poor kill on roundworm (80-90%)

Trace elements

- Traditionally no supplements for copper
- MA hinds tested “low” in spring 2008 but no treatment
- One possible enzootic ataxia case died before post mortem 2008
- Little local evidence of a “need”
- Some selenium and cobalt in fertiliser??????

Post mortems

- Nothing more than being curious... but still not done often enough
- MCF in one hind
- Yersiniosis in weaners explained autumn deaths
- Illthrift in yearlings
- Johnes in 2008...



Johnes

- Diagnosed winter 2008 in bought-in R2 stags (two sources) and home bred R2 stags
- Whole herd tested
 - 90% MA hinds cleared
 - 84% yearling hinds negative (82% in 2009)
 - Role of genetics- one stag line identified with 40% culled
- 54 cull hinds allowed to fawn
- These fawns followed from weaning

Johnes

- Yearling hinds over-mated and tested 2009 – last group born from untested hinds
 - 82% clear again- no change, as expected
- Several positives became clinically affected within a month (winter and stress in R2 deer in NI)
- Await yearling results post-scanning in 2010
- Fawns from infected hinds are 6 kg lighter in spring than selected yearlings (JML agrees)

Feeding

- Chicory and plantain- lactation and R1 growth
- Fodder beet- winter feeding R1 deer
- Brassicas/oats- R2 deer and bulls
- Self-feed silage pit
 - 400+ MA hinds wintered
 - HBRC input - sediment trap and fencing
 - annual improvements to facility

On-farm practices

Weaning

- early: 18-20 February
- Aitken Technique...

Mating

- large AI programme
- single sire mating reds including high BV stags
- red v. wapiti/B11 “trials”
- yearling mating: spikers v. two year olds

Aitken Technique

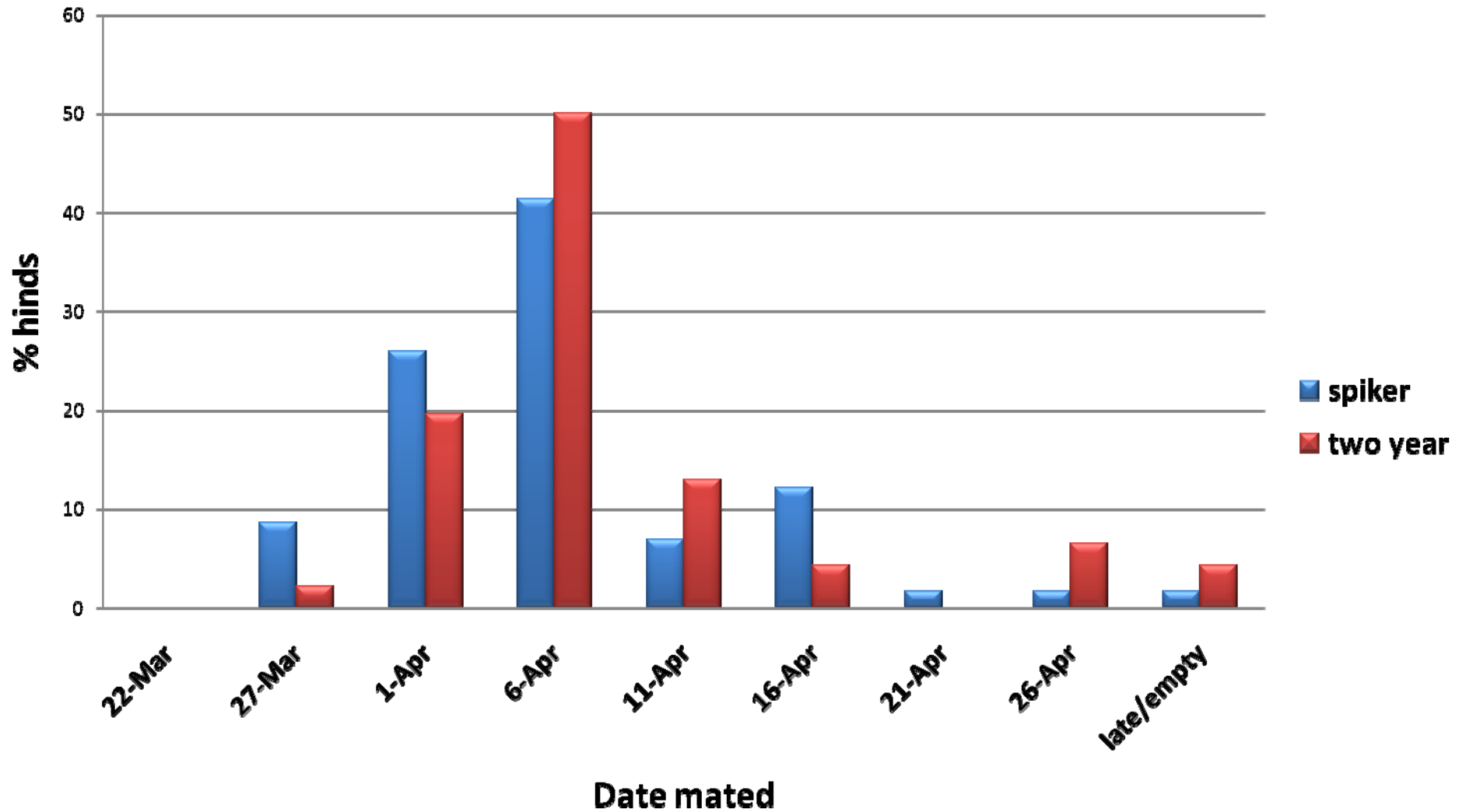
- 500000 fawns born and weaned.
- Commonly 1% deaths in the month postwean so 5000 fawns lost through accidents, foot infections, injury, yersinia...
- If death rate halved across national herd (conceivable) then 2500 extra deer at \$450 is...

\$1.125M p.a.

Yearling mating

- 95% pregnancy rates
- Early pregnancies so lates culled
- Early stag introduction- spikers/two year olds
- Scanned other CHB herds...
 - importance of bodyweight
 - culling rates and expectations
 - european v. english 10-14 days

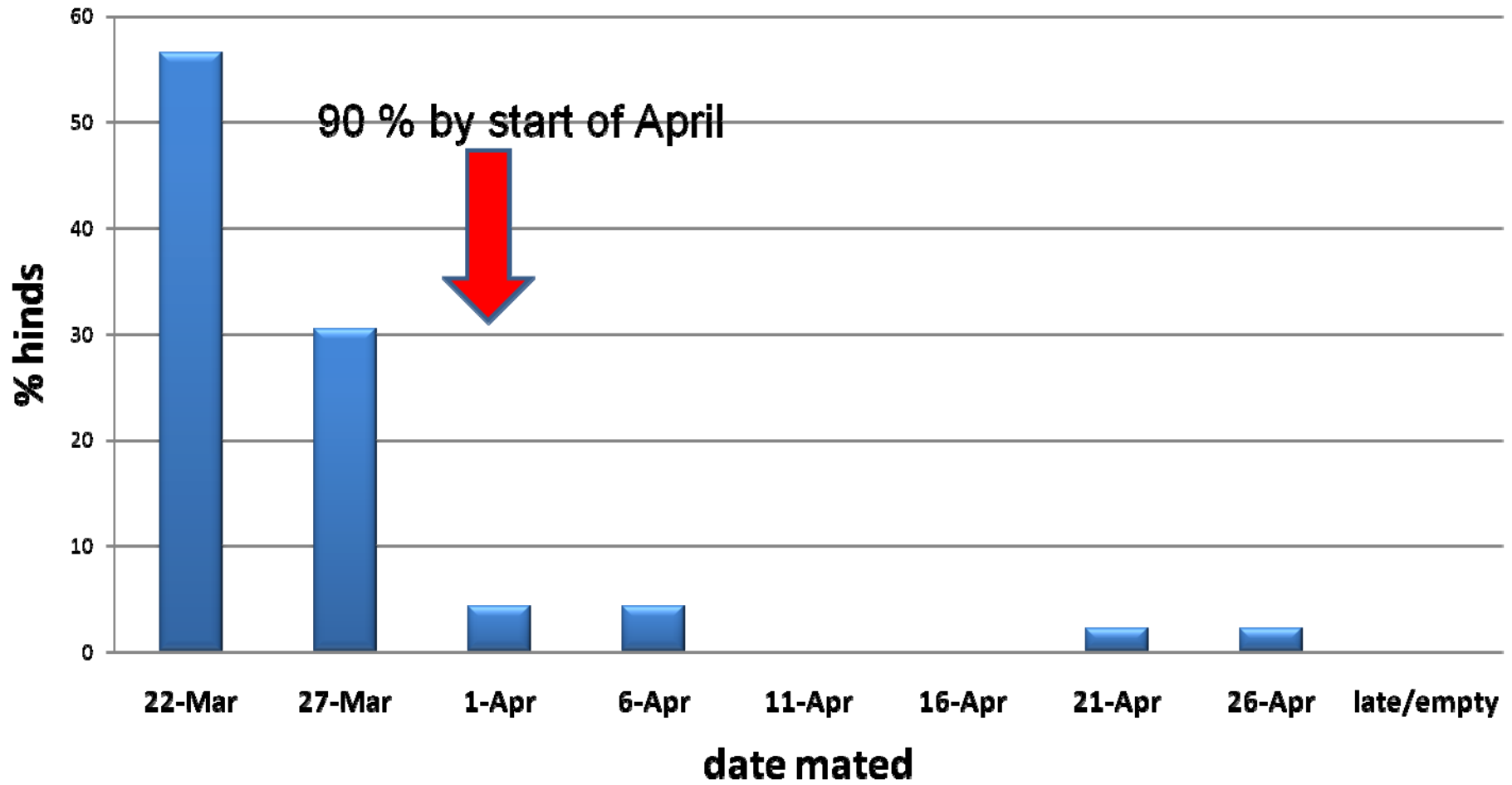
Spikers v. Two year olds 2009



MA hind mating

- Single sire mating (usually no back up)
- Consistently early matings: 90% in March
- Get stags in early- no sex, no babies!
- Lates often culled
- Variable fawning rates: paddock selection

The Steyning: MA Red hinds to Red Stag 2009



Key dry-land strategies

- Adjust fawns to supplements pre-wean
- Aitken technique- plan ahead
- Drench and vaccinate pre-wean?
- Wean early- late Feb
- Stags in at the same time
- Water availability
- No late fawns means no scungy fawns

Take home messages...

- Nearly everything affects everything else, somehow
- Well fed, well bred and well managed animals are more fun to farm
- Deer farming can be a lifestyle or a profession- your choice
- Deer still don't get flystrike, eczema or staggers. And don't need milking or crutching
- Keep farming deer!