



The Bugle... blast!



Last Meeting July 22nd: **Present:** Donald Whyte, Paul Waller, Tracey McLean, Grant Hasse, Tony Pullar, and Dave Lawrence. **Visitors:** Jason Archer, Jamie Ward

Major Meeting Discussion points:

Animal Health Project: Dave Lawrence reports that we are just about up and running with our drench (injectable) residue testing and the first line of animals should be through the system with a result by November 1st this year. To recap on the project from **inception to here** we should recall that there was a great degree of belief that a fading elk type disease was in fact drench failure. By failure I mean either a resistance or application failure. Our reliance on the pour on method of application had been widespread and was the industry norm when it came to parasite control. Astute farmers recognised that there seemed to be a failure in the efficacy of moxidectins by pour on and some moved to injectable methods with very good results. This prompted the EWS to realise that we needed to further investigate the drench systems and products available to elk farmers in this country. Our first move was to post mortem light animals on farm and latterly a few through the DSP's. The results of those early post mortems confirmed that the so called "wasting or fading elk" syndrome was in fact something as simple as parasite burden. The abomasum linings suggested that even animals that had recovered from a severe parasite burden had long term health issues with a depleted gut lining unable to fully digest food. We now also think that long term, animals can self repair after treatment but it was obvious that prevention would be preferable to looking for a cure. Anecdotal evidence suggested that a reliance of pour-on drench systems seemed to result in poor parasite control and this was extenuated in elk simply because of their thick protective coat which includes a down layer. In addition we know for a fact that application error where the product was not applied (forced) down through guard hairs and the underlying down to the actual hide would have also account for many failures. As does application when there is dirt in the coat. Our next and current move is to look at providing an injectable parasite control that is acceptable to the venison trade. The registration and approval of a previously unlicensed for deer injectable drench is a cost prohibitive process and one even the drench companies would not embrace. Through astute and practical thinking Dave Lawrence has positioned the Society to be at a point where we are soon to embark on the next phase of the project which will hopefully result in a positive testing period in the area of chemical (injectable parasite control) residue testing. The present situation is moxidectin (**Cydectin**) injection **is not registered** for use in deer so automatically has a withholding period of 91 days. The aim of this part of the project is to residue test for chemical, after use in deer. We want to provide a safe recommendation for use that is practical and considerably less than 91 days. As reported earlier in the Bugle we again through Dave Lawrence have been successful in applying to the Sustainable Farming Fund (SFF) for funding assistance. We understand that this successful application is the only SFF funding for a deer project approved for this funding round. Along with our EWS and DINZ funding, Pfizer Animal Health Ltd is also contributing to the project (More on Pfizer's contribution later in the Bugle). There are rigid SFF reporting structures in place and Dave has milestone reports to prepare for the SFF as the projects enters its final stages and hopefully a successful conclusion. So there you have it, a recap and progress report to date. You should also be aware the EWS funding in this project is sourced directly from our reserves and more importantly, funds generated from our annual Benefit Auction. Any further information required on the project by members can be obtained in the first instance from Dave directly. I will email any significant milestone achievements to all members and continue to report on the project through the Bugle.

Velvet Sales: Donald reports that there is still an amount of unsold elk-wapiti velvet and although there is interest in the product the price's offered are way below expectation. It is catch 22 and although we would like it sold we are determined that it will not be at a fire sale price. We have taken on board that some buyers indicate that a few grades are grown too long and the EWS is addressing this with consultation between its members and buyers. The Velvet Grading guideline chart is also under review and we will be having input into any changes. The message has been relatively clear from the market place that some NZ product is grown to long so for elk-wapiti velvet growers it is important that we do adjust the appraisal period and keep this in mind. Remember, the customers always right!

Road Buyers: A brief page of points for discussion were tabled by the Secretary after they were received by fax from Graeme Hawker. As per the motion received at the AGM the council is to look at all options for elk-wapiti velvet sales and marketing. All sales and marketing options are being explored and this will be an ongoing process with much deliberation ahead. Members will be informed and consulted at every opportunity.

Genomics: We were taken through the latest developments in the deer science sector with Jamie Ward and Jason Archer of Agresearch. They gave a comprehensive explanation of progress in the deer science sector specifically a “Genomic Revolution” including successfully identifying and sequencing deer genes. Jamie is working on producing an economical process for identifying higher meat yielding venison animals primarily through ultra sound scanning.

AGM Report: The 25th EWSNZ Anniversary AGM passed us by with little fan fair. There were no controversial remits and the Council was elected without any complication. We had one remit which allowed for a lower quorum requirements at council meetings and this was understandable due to our current membership levels. The only other remit was one relating to the adoption of email addresses as a valid communication tool. Both remits were put to the meeting and passed unanimously. There was also a motion passed at the AGM which instructed the incoming council to explore any and all options for the sale of elk-wapiti velvet. One group who have been looking into an increased involvement in elk velvet sales is a loosely grouped cooperative of Hawker Deer, Fogarty Deer and CK Imports. The meeting agreed to ask the incoming council to look at any proposal from this group or any other group in the hope that a lift in elk wapiti velvet sales could be achieved.

Election of officers was a straight forward affair with the executive incumbents being re-elected unopposed. The 2010 EWSNZ council is as follows,

President; Donald Whyte **Secretary:** Tony Pullar **Treasurer:** Tracey McLean.

South Island Council members are: Dave Lawrence, Paul Waller, Jack Pullar and John Falconer. North Island Council member is Wilton Turner.

Members at large: are Grant Hasse for the South Island and Mike Steiner for the North Island.

Presidential report: August 6th

Elk & Wapiti Velvet Situation: This report will have some of you saying “We’ve heard all this before” but this is mostly from the NZVM General Manager this morning We have an interested possible buyer for the balance of the EW velvet still in store. This is a regular customer and we are optimistic on a sale around about the middle of this month. Those EW grades completely sold to date will qualify for the VSM final payment but those of us with velvet still in the unsold grades which are predominantly Supreme, W1’s W2S, and OG will be waiting a while yet.

International indications are positive with other suppliers of “big” stick velvet, Russia, China and Nth America having the same sales policy as ourselves, with expectations of realistic prices and not fire selling as has happened in the past. This coincidental approach is helping to stabilize and restore confidence. In saying that, having sold stocks would be better!! I understand that a shipment of Nth American product was sold for \$70NZ which when you add in the risks and difficulties associated for this velvet is reasonable money. I have been told that in general terms velvet stocks are low in Korea and much has moved from China so with having had a reasonably steady trading season(exchange rate excepted) with no major hiccups, confidence is returning and should lead into the new season. Buyers have been reacting to the global and local situation by buying to order and in small parcels as they need them. For the next season buyers have signalled that they will continue to be selective and prices will be more based on processing recovery than speculation. As growers we need to recognise that to maximise returns on this basis we need to cut first for quality. All major buyers both private and with NZVM have echoed this call.

CUT ON TIME Weight doesn’t really mean as much to your bank manager as \$\$\$\$\$\$ The style of velvet is primarily determined by breeding, long will always be long and some stags and bulls will never have big beams, but we can determine the day we harvest those animals to maximise our sales potential. Thanks, hopefully a sale is close and we can then look forward to doing it better this year.

Donald

Email: ewsnz@ihug.co.nz

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Elk Semen dispersal: Grant Muir has decided to sell out of his elk semen and offers the following straws for purchase by tender. Columbus Y127- 17 straws Rockafella P3 - 14 straws Stretch Y532-5 straws B116-5 straws Montgomery P29 -2 straws **Total 43 straws**

Sale by tender, closing 31st August 2010. Tenders will be accepted for the total quantity, and /or for individual bulls. Tender acceptance will be at the sole discretion of the vendor and tenders should be addressed as Semen tender, and either sent to; GJ Muir, 188 Stafford St, Hokitika, 7810 or by email to wapitipark@kinect.co.nz



Big Sticks: photo to left is an image of antlers cut this year in North America. The breeder is Eric Robinson of Regal Point Elk Farm. The bull's breeding is as follows, Sire is Sundance Kid (Clearstone). Dam is from Doozer (Ted Parkinson). Doozer is a Korean Gold son. The bulls name is Colt 45. The weight of these antlers is 62.5 lbs. (28.35kg). Although this is not near the world record it is pretty big stuff. Tony Pearse reports he has judged velvet in Korea that was 29.5 kg produced from animals of Canadian origin, (specs of 28 cm beams and royals about 30 cm in length and an overall length of 1.1m). What we can be proud of in New Zealand is that most big velvet would have been produced from the goodness of grass and at best, deer nuts or grain. When I was in North

America ten years ago I was told by a leading elk stud owner that he fed his top bulls up to seven times a day, yes seven times a day and if they didn't get up to the feeder he would annoy them till they did! In North America it is also common practice to allow velvet growing bulls to have access to ad lib creep feeders containing anything from cereals to sunflower seed or high protein formulated feeds. Korean elk farmers are also well known for their high protein feeding diets. Its big stuff but at what production cost!

Deer Nuts: Council member Grant Hasse has been involved with the formulation of deer nuts designed specifically for elk. These are being made in South Canterbury and Grant is happy to send any member the contents table. You can contact Grant directly at gandshasse@xtra.co.nz

Obituary: For those who don't already know It is my sad duty to report the sudden passing of long time elk stalwart Steve Thomson of Temuka. Steve died suddenly on the 26th of June. Steve would be well known to most EWS members having been involved with the Society for many years. Steve often judged



elk velvet either at the South Canterbury velvet competition or the EWS competition. Steve was often a volume buyer at Southern elk sales and bought many male elk from leading studs with an often uncanny ability to pick more than average sires or velveters's. He rarely bought female elk and when he did it was often for clients, Steve himself preferred to let others have breeding females and preferred to deal with elk bulls without the need to produce his own replacements. Another cunning plan was to lease venison sire bulls throughout Canterbury and this will be a void that will be hard to fill. Leasing bulls was sometimes lucrative but often the animals would come back from a mating situation in a state of disrepair. Steve grew some very good

elk velvet and had a strong relationship with Fogarty Deer. He was also an avid competitor in velvet competitions and was very often able to bench some beaut heads. Trophies were also grown out but again Steve had forged a long relationship with a local trophy operator and most years his trophies went to the same park. Steve was a passionate elk-wapiti farmer and a good friend to many around the South Canterbury region. Personally I enjoyed Steve's straight forward humour and we had many laughs over the years. We shall miss his knowledge, enthusiasm, and quick wit. R.i.P



Clachanburn Field Day: Mark the calendar now, Wednesday **October 13th** is the day we all need to be AWOL and at Clachanburn Elk farm, Pateroa, Central Otago. John and Mary Falconer along with the EWS and the Otago branch of the DFA are hosting a field day at Clachanburn. The early itinerary of the day will centre on hybrid venison production, managing terminal sires and Fodder beat production. John is adamant that the formal part of the field day will be brief with more emphasis on the actual farm tour and socialising. To this end morning tea and the afternoon barbeque will be among the highlights. For those who have never been to Clachanburn this is a great opportunity to visit a unique part of New Zealand. The landscape and farming conditions are more akin to North America and in my opinion this has to be one of the best geographical regions New Zealand has to farm elk. Of additional interest is close the proximity of Clachanburn to Big Sky dairy farm. Big Sky in itself is an interesting and controversial operation and it highlights the

diversity of the area. Make sure you are in attendance and we especially encourage those members involved in the sale of elk-wapiti terminal sires to take the opportunity to both promote the breed and their animals.

Mayfield Red Deer Stud on the move?: Red deer on the loose in central Southland needed a little more coaxing than usual to return to their home paddock – they had to be rounded up by a helicopter. Mayfield Elk Farm owner Tom May said the mob of 75 were spotted by a neighbour on his way to work on Monday morning. "We had a bit of a burst trying to get them in," he said. Traffic made it more difficult to round the deer up, and Mr May said they seemed happy in the neighbour's paddock eating swedes. "The neighbour might not have been too happy though. I think we'll take him out for dinner," he said. With about 30 of the deer still on the loose yesterday morning, scattered around the farm, near Winton, Mr May decided to use a helicopter. "Up in the helicopter **they stood out like dog's balls,**" he said. "It was incredible what you could see up there." The roaming deer were worth \$600 to \$4000 each, and Mr May said the helicopter was worth the "very reasonable" \$750 it cost him. He described pilot Steve Gamble as a chopper legend, and explained how he used wind created by the helicopter to move the deer along. "Next time I won't even hesitate," he said. "I've got his mobile number for next time; hopefully I won't need it though." Mr May said his son Josh and the police had been a great help, and had stopped any traffic from driving along the section of Thomson's Crossing the deer were on. I have it on good authority that the only animal not recaptured tasted bloody good. Tom declined to reveal who of the two May's was responsible for the escape but I'm guessing the older of the two Mays decked out in a tight lycra mountain biker suit was enough to set the mad reds off at pace.



As previously mentioned in the Bugle, Pfizer NZ has kindly offered to assist us financially with our Animal Health project (*see 1st page of this edition under animal Health project*). This offer has come by way of product donation (Cydectin injection 500ml packets). The Society will sell product to members only and direct all proceeds to the Animal Health project. To allow fair opportunity to all EWS members the product will be available on a first come first served basis and will only be offered at a **special price** (\$265 including gst and postage) until the end of September 2010. This product will be dispensed by our vet/member Dave Lawrence and will be sent to you once payment has been received by the treasurer either by internet banking (EWSNZ account number is **02-0957-0057521-00**) or by sending a cheque to the **EWSNZ Treasurer, 317 Bluff Rd, RD1, Sheffield**. You will also need to **provide a clear** delivery address for the drench to be sent to your door. Your support will be appreciated. Any further inquires contact the secretary. **Email** ewsnz@ihug.co.nz **ph** 03 4738 740 **cell** 027 662 7356.