

Judging brief

The NZ Deer Industry pioneered the Pasture to Plate Quality Assurance concept.

Our customers are increasingly aware that farmed deer should not only be content and healthy, but also that the farm environment aims for similar standards and long-term sustainability.

The judges are impressed by innovation, productivity and care in a farming environment that balances the production systems. They will favourably assess farming practices that ensure long-term sustainability of the land, without loss of productive potential and reward aspects that enhance sustainable management.

The judges will be interested to see projects that enhance and preserve any existing natural features as well as any new features created that are beneficial to both deer farming environments and the local environment in which you live. These might include wetland retirement, QE II Trust Covenant, riparian management, soil conservation projects, farm beautification and feature tree shelter or plantation planting.

Conservation and protection measures around waterways and other natural features are particularly important, as well as innovative approaches to specific deer farming challenges. These may be structures or other physical changes on the farm or in management methods, e.g. ways that the movement patterns of deer are controlled to prevent or minimise environmental damage.

Your farming lifestyle and aspirations is also an important part of the judging.

Because deer farms throughout the country have considerable differences in typography, land class and climate challenges, consideration will be given to the degree of challenge a property presents to sustainable deer farming.

The judges will be particularly interested in discussing any problem areas and the practices developed in minimising any undesirable effects.

Past actions need not have been 100% successful, but if there is an ongoing long-term programme in place with achievable goals (a sustainable management plan), this will be of particular interest and rate highly.

The judges are keen to promote a two-way exchange of views as part of the assessment, and their skills and experiences are also available to you as part of the discussion. The judging process will also report back following the competition on features of your property that impressed with the opportunity for comments and suggestions.

A standard series of photographs is taken as a record and for use at the awards ceremony that will be held in May at the Deer Industry Awards Dinner and conference (May 2023).

The Deer Industry Awards programme is primarily funded by Deer Industry New Zealand, supporting this former role from the New Zealand Deer Farmers' Association. The awards were an early initiative of the Deer Farmers Landcare Manual Project, with financial support from MAF's Sustainable Farming Fund. Further generous industry sponsorship is annually committed for prizes and the production of publicity material.