

STAGLINE ONLINE

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Stagline Online is a monthly newsletter for members of the NZ Deer Farmers' Association

SPECIAL COVID-19 EDITION 2

Stagline Online is the monthly e-letter published for NZDFA members. During the Covid-19 crisis, we will be publishing *Stagline Online* more frequently and sending it to all known deer farmers and industry contacts.

These are extremely challenging times. Now, more than ever, it is vital that we stay connected with each other, keep informed and do our best to support each other.

Your industry organisations are here to help. If you have any questions or concerns, don't hesitate get in contact with one of us, or a member of the NZDFA executive committee.

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NZDFA chair

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MARK MCCOARD: WE'RE BACK AS THE ENGINE ROOM OF THE ECONOMY

As we move into Covid-19 Level 3 it makes you reflect on the transformational times we are living through. No one knows what to expect in the weeks, months and potentially years ahead. Tuning in at 1 pm for the national Covid-19 updates has replaced watching the soaps for many New Zealanders.

While our progress on keeping the virus at bay has been impressive, the economic impact to New Zealand has yet to be fully felt by all sectors. This daily focus is very quickly going to need to be replaced by short, medium and long-term strategic plans to get the country on its feet again, with agriculture playing a vital role in this process.

Middle New Zealand once again has been reminded that farming is still the engine room of our economy. After two or three years of being bombarded with potential regulation and legislation we now have the opportunity to display the progress we have made as an industry on many of these issues, while now being a critical part of the solution. If this exposure is managed well it will give us the leverage required to find sensible workable solutions that were falling on deaf ears prior to the Covid-19 crisis.

While sorting these previous imbalances are important to our farming futures, equally important will be the decisions we make on how to progress in the uncertain world ahead. Issues such as close personal contact, supply chain disruptions and wild market fluctuations, to name a few, will certainly bring its challenges. The industries and countries that adapt quickly will have the best chance of success, with the phrase "where there is adversity there is opportunity" perhaps a good starting point to rebuild from. Our venison and velvet have well-deserved international reputations as trusted high quality food sources – great assets given current concerns around food safety.

The deer industry has always prided itself on being forward thinking and adaptable. When combined with our unique industry structure in which all parties work together collectively, we are in a very strong position to navigate the challenges ahead. Regular and clear communication between all parties will be vital to ensure we move fast enough to take advantage of new and existing opportunities as they present themselves, while also retaining confidence in our industry.

Included in this edition of *Stagline Online* is an up-to-date list of all your NZDFA contacts, including your local branch chair. I would encourage you to convey to them any thoughts and concerns you may have to ensure these are heard.

While planning for the future is important, please take the time to check in with family, friends and neighbours as the challenges we are facing effect people in different ways. A friendly face on the other side of the cattle stop, particularly armed with a beer, can make all the difference to balancing stress levels. Stay healthy and positive for the future ahead.

Mark McCoard
NZDFA Executive Committee

DROUGHT AND PESTILENCE, A REAL DOUBLE-WHAMMY

Yesterday we were looking at some photos taken in the coastal Hawkes Bay hills (picture). Going by their colour, you would think the photos were taken in mid-summer. In many other regions the grass is green but there is precious little of it.



Meanwhile, the backlog at the Deer Slaughter Plants is clearing slowly. If you are anxious about getting some hungry mouths off your farm, have a ring around. No-one will call you disloyal.

Some plants are making more progress than others, but all processors are looking at the stock coming in from farmers at this the traditional low point of the venison consumption calendar. Restaurants remain locked-down in all our major markets, and while they will re-open, the timing and level of demand is still unknown. The squeeze is on for everyone in the industry, from plate to paddock.

If you are fortunate enough to have a fresh green bite for your weaners, don't forget your parasite control. It's tempting to believe the summer dry will have killed off all the worm eggs. But nah, they'll be hatched and back, waiting for your hungry stock to Hoover them up.

Vet Pania Flint penned a useful article on animal health for the latest (on-line) edition of [Deer Industry News](https://www.deernz.org/sites/dinz/files/DIN101-FINAL.pdf) (<https://www.deernz.org/sites/dinz/files/DIN101-FINAL.pdf>). She advises anyone who is on a limited drenching programme to do some form of monitoring of weaners, either through measuring weight gains, regularly checking for coughing (lungworm), or doing faecal egg and larval counts. At this time of the year faecal egg and larval counts can be very useful, she says.

The current drenching recommendation is to use a combination of highly effective actives, all at higher dose rates than the label dose for cattle and sheep. To slow the development of a 'super worm', drenching should be complemented by pasture management and refugia.

If you want advice on products and doses, consult your veterinarian.

Photo: Debbie Walton

ROCK OF CERTAINTY IN UNCERTAIN SEA

PGG Wrightson Velvet has told its suppliers that it has sold the last of its first-cut grades at a slightly lesser price than shipments earlier in the season. Manager Tony Cochrane says it was an informed choice due to current market uncertainties, logistics and increased supply.

"We decided to accept a price we could live with, rather than to hang on, hoping that we might do better. We are entering the northern hemisphere summer, the low point of the velvet consumption season. We won't know the true demand for next season until September at the earliest."

Tony says there is a potential for velvet to emerge from the Covid-19 pandemic in good shape. Currently demand for health food products is growing in South Korea. Against this has to be balanced a potential global economic recession and steadily growing velvet production in New Zealand.

"I am not about to advise farmers what to do, but with increased supply there is a growing price differential between Super A velvet and non-traditional styles. Producing nice, balanced, traditional heads and cutting them at the right time will almost certainly pay off in the years ahead. That's what the South Korean market wants.

"As for the China market, farmers are growing spikers with more branches than ever. But more weight for the farmer is not necessarily quality for the buyer. They like regrowth and spiker to have a large single spike or a single branch. They are focused on the tips ... the bigger and rounder they are when they are frozen, the more the Chinese customer will have to sell when they are dry."



The 'wax' slices, taken from the tip of the stick, that are so prized in Chinese herbal medicine

HOW'S YOUR COVID PLAN LOOKING?

Worksafe has been working with all the major farming groups, including NZDFA/DINZ, on a template Covid risk management plan for farmers to use as NZ moves down through the risk levels to Level 1. This is expected to go on-line next week.

Because Covid-19 is a disease that can be caught in the workplace, employers must have formal protocols for dealing with that risk, just as we do for other disease risks like leptospirosis. Most farms are expected to add them to their existing farm safety plan. You don't have to present these plans to MPI in order to operate, but will be expected to produce them if requested by WorkSafe.

The template plan is geared for traditional farm businesses, where family members provide much of the labour and there are close relationships with employees who may even be in the farm bubble, and larger businesses. Like all businesses, farms are obliged to eliminate transmission risks where possible.



5 key things you need to do to eliminate the transmission risk

- Confirm people are okay to come to work (includes people employed on farm and those in supporting businesses)
- Ensure physical distancing at work
- General hygiene including disinfecting surfaces and maintaining good personal hygiene, particularly hand hygiene and cough/sneeze etiquette
- Aim to minimise the size of work bubbles and personal bubbles
- Keep records of visitors (and your visits outside your bubble) to support contact tracing if someone gets sick.

See the latest information from [Worksafe here >> \(https://worksafe.govt.nz/managing-health-and-safety/novel-coronavirus-covid-19-safety-plan-what-you-need-to-think-about/\)](https://worksafe.govt.nz/managing-health-and-safety/novel-coronavirus-covid-19-safety-plan-what-you-need-to-think-about/)

LOOK AFTER YOUR SIRE STAGS

Your top sire stags are likely to have been withdrawn from the hinds by now and are probably looking a bit worse for wear. This is one of the two times of the year when it is crucial to give quality feed to your breeding and velvet stags. The other time is in the month before button casting in the spring.

DINZ producer manager Tony Pearse says there are still a few weeks when stags have enough appetite to regain condition lost during the rut before they go into winter.

“High quality hay or silage, supplemented with concentrates, is probably the way to go if you don't have any saved autumn pasture. Best results come from giving each animal their own feeding spot, well separated from other stags. Because of aggression, group feeding in troughs or lines doesn't work well at this time of the year.”

WHAT'S EATING YOUR NATIVE BIRDS?



If you are hearing and seeing little evidence of native bird life in your bush block or fenced off wetlands, there may be some evil killing machines at work. Mustelids – ferrets, stoats and weasels – are difficult to control and breed like rabbits.

If you want to learn more about these critters and how to control them, Landcare Research is running a webinar, hosted by vertebrate pest ecologist Andrew Veale. In this webinar, he will discuss the state of play for mustelid control at a landscape scale and consider where the knowledge gaps are.

Landscape control and eradication of Mustelids – what do we know and what do we need to know? [Register here >>](https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/8011887650801396240)
(<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/8011887650801396240>).

Photo: David Hallett

WHAT LURKS BENEATH...



If you are one of the many deer farmers who has built sediment traps or settling ponds to capture sludge and sediment from run-off, you may have checked them during summer. But if not, there may still be time to clean them out if necessary. (There's got to be some plusses in having hard, dry ground at this time of the year.)

It's a big job building sediment traps and the like, so once they've been built there's a tendency to tick the job off the list and forget about it. Unfortunately, sediment traps fill over time and stop working. The extent to which they have filled can also be deceptive. Ducks may be paddling around, but beneath them may be 200 mm of water and 2 metres of sludge. The only way to find out is to start probing the depths.

If you have to dig the sludge out, the ideal is to spread it out somewhere uphill where it will grow grass. That might not be practical right now. The most important thing is to move the sludge well away from waterways.

For more information on sediment capture, check out the *Deer Fact: Protecting Waterways from wallow and feedpad run-off* (https://www.deernz.org/sites/dinz/files/DeerFact_Protecting_W-ways_Web.pdf)

Photo: An over-full sediment pond on a deer farm that wishes to remain anonymous...

COOL WATER QUALITY SITE

If you are trying to get a handle on water quality in your region, check out LAWA (Land Air Water Aotearoa). It gives you easy access to the latest data on air quality, water quality (ground, rivers and lakes) and water availability/use.

Originally set up by the regional and unitary councils, LAWA is now a partnership between the councils, Cawthron Institute, and the Ministry for the Environment and has been supported by the Tindall Foundation and Massey University.

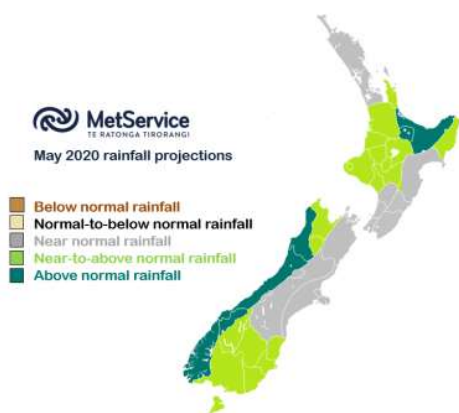
It's easy to use and allows you to talk knowledgeably about water quality in your neck of the woods. [Check it out here >>](http://www.lawa.org.nz) (<http://www.lawa.org.nz>)

LET US KNOW YOUR THOUGHTS – NZDFA CONTACT LIST

[Click here \(/sites/dinz/files/NZDFA%20Contacts%202020%20May.pdf\)](/sites/dinz/files/NZDFA%20Contacts%202020%20May.pdf) to view the complete list of the current regional Branch Chairs from North Island to South Island and NZDFA Executive Committee >>

If you have any thoughts and concerns you would like raised at a national level, just give them a call.

MONTHLY OUTLOOK – MAY 2020



A deep low brings rain and gales to NZ this weekend, with significant potential for severe weather (www.metservice.com/warnings/home (<https://metservice.us11.list-manage.com/track/click?u=63982abb40666393e6a63259d&id=8f53a4bc9d&e=3376c19fd1>)). Very cold southerlies kick-start next week, bringing rain into eastern areas, before high pressure brings drier weather to southern and central NZ mid-week. Showery easterlies are signalled across the upper North Island by the end of next week.

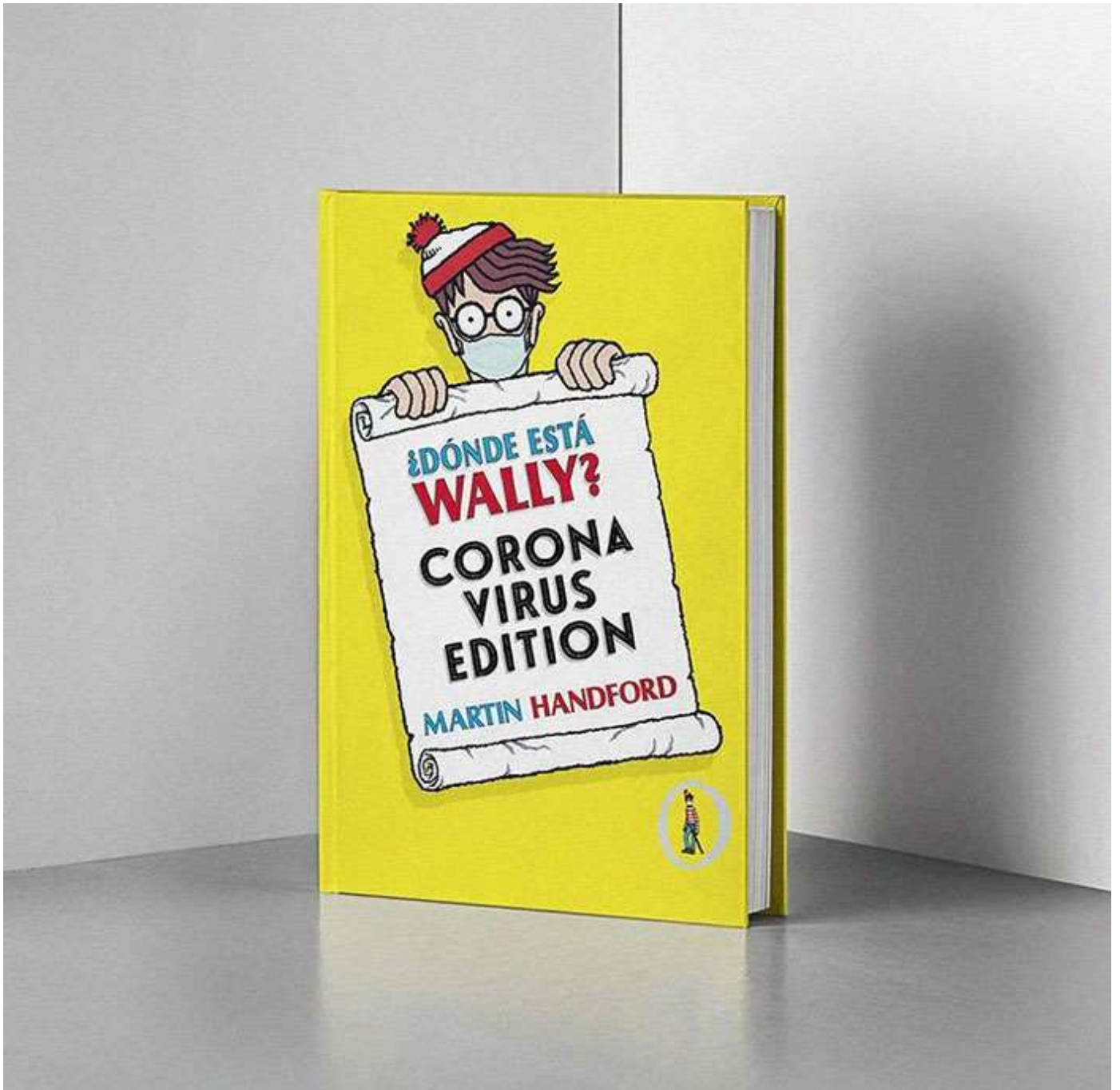
For weeks 2 and 3 of May (11-24 May), frequent lows and rain bands are predicted, with a wetter than normal theme across most of the country. By the last week of May, a ridge may return to Northland, bringing westerlies across NZ, and some spells of settled weather for northern and eastern areas of both Islands.

Near normal to above normal May rainfall tallies are forecast across the country.

Expect an unusually cold start to May, then temperatures gradually return closer to average. The month runs cooler than average, overall. There is a strong signal for some decent snow events for the South Island alpine areas during May.

Bottom Line: A stormy and unsettled May. A relatively wet month, with near normal or above normal rainfall signalled for all areas. A cooler than average May, overall, largely driven by a cold start to the month.

Joke of the month



GREETINGS
WILLY FOLLOWERS!
NOW THE BEACH WAS
GREAT TODAY! I SAW
THIS GIRL STICK AN
ICE-CREAM IN HER
BROTHERS FACE, AND
THERE WAS A SAND-
CASTLE WITH A REAL
KNIGHT IN ARMOR
INSIDE! FANTASTIC!

Willy



TO:
WILLY FOLLOWERS
HERE, THERE,
EVERYWHERE.





HI FRIENDS!

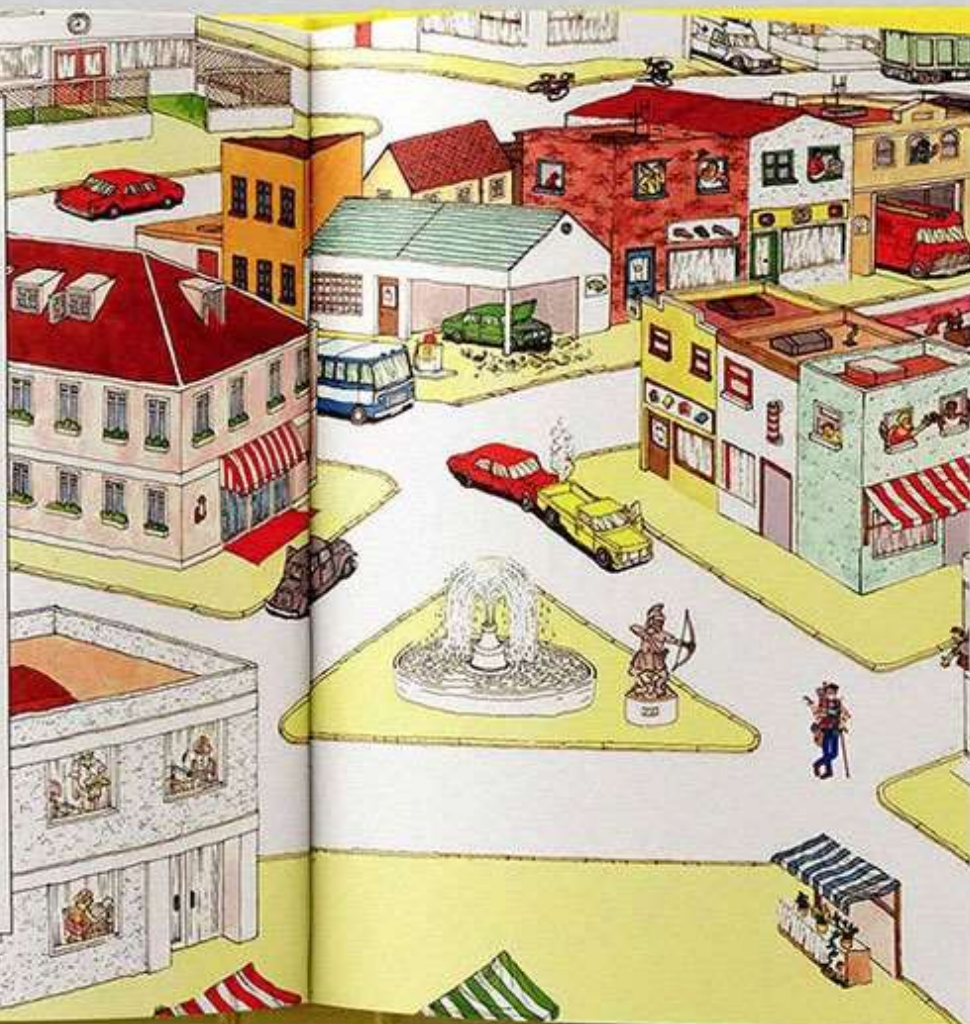
MY NAME IS WALDO. I'M JUST SETTING OFF ON A WORLDWIDE MIKE. YOU CAN COME TOO! ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS FIND ME.

I'VE GOT ALL I NEED—WALKING STICK, KETTLE, Mallet, CUP, BACKPACK, SLEEPING BAG, BINOCULARS, CAMERA, SHOVEL, BEE BAG, AND SHOVEL.

BY THE WAY, I'M NOT TRAVELING ON MY OWN. WHEREVER I GO THERE ARE LOTS OF OTHER CHARACTERS FOR YOU TO SPOT. FIRST FIND WOOF (BUT ALL YOU CAN SEE IS HIS TAIL). WENDA, WIZARD WHITEBEARD, AND ODLAW. THERE ARE ALSO 25 WALDO-WATCHERS SOMEWHERE. EACH OF WHOM APPEARS ONLY ONCE IN MY TRAVELS. CAN YOU FIND ONE OTHER CHARACTER WHO APPEARS IN EVERY SCENE? ALSO IN EVERY SCENE, CAN YOU SPOT MY KEY, WOOF'S BONE, WENDAS CAMERA, WIZARD WHITEBEARD'S SCROLL, AND ODLAW'S BINOCULARS?

HOW? WHAT A SEARCH!

TO:
WALLY FOLLOWERS,
HERE, THERE,
EVERYWHERE.



GREETINGS,
WALLY FOLLOWERS!
WOW! THE BEACH WAS
GREAT TODAY! I SAW
THIS GIRL STICK AN
ICE-CREAM IN HER
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THERE WAS A SAND-
CASTLE WITH A REAL
KNIGHT IN ARMOR
INSIDE! FANTASTIC!

Wally



TO:
WALLY FOLLOWERS
HERE, THERE,
EVERYWHERE.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Event	Date	Details
All events postponed until further notice	Various	For updates on DINZ events, please click here >> (https://www.deernz.org/events) .