

Deer Industry News

Pre-season market activities in Europe

Environment

SOUTHLAND ACTIVITY, FENCE PACING SOLUTION, NEW GROUPS UNDER WAY

International Conferences

ASPT4: CHINA, WORLD DEER CONGRESS: RUSSIA

Next Generation

FARM TECHNOLOGY AND VELVET PROCESSING ON SHOW

Deer Industry News

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NEW ZEALAND AND THE NEW ZEALAND
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Contents

Editorial 2

Markets

- Game on for NZ venison in Europe 3
- European Summer Cervena® 5
- Venison schedule update 7
- Venison "star of the team" at Alliance 8
- Gearing up for velvet season 9

Environment

- Good humour, great food, clean water 12
- Painting southern landscape 14
- Simple solution for fence pacing 18
- New groups underpin commitment 19

International Conferences

- Overview 20
- World Deer Congress 24
- Antler science conference 26
- Chinese industry can do better 28

NVSB

- NVSB fees 31
- Seasonal reminders 32

Next Generation

- Waikato hosts Next Generation Conference 33

Education

- Deer courses underway 39

Research

- Seasonality and skin quality studied 40

Regulatory

- DFA response to MPI search powers 41

People

- Velvet industry pioneers pass away 42

On Farm

- Deer section in KPI booklet 43

Cover: Hands-on chef and buyer education was part of the programme of pre-season market activities in Sweden. See page 3.

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New entrant 'bloody glad' he made the change

Last month I was lucky enough to attend the NZDFA Next Generation Programme in Hamilton. The programme was held over two days and included trips to Gallagher and CK Import Export, as well as some really good discussions and presentations on day two. [See pages 33-38 for a full report.]



Ben Anderson.

FROM A VERY new deer farmer's perspective, I found the programme invaluable. While there was a lot of quality information provided in a short period, a couple of key things really stood out to me.

The first was that the growth the industry is currently experiencing still has significant potential. It was interesting hearing from Colin Stevenson and his team about where the market has come from, where they saw it heading and what that might require of us, the producers. It was also nice to hear that New Zealand-grown product continues to be strongly valued, although I'm sure the onus still sits with us famers to ensure that what we produce continues to meet the expectations of the premium market.

The second thing that stood out for me was the willingness of the deer industry and the people within it to share their knowledge and expertise. Having worked in other industries, it was refreshing to talk to people who would so willingly share what has worked for them and what they consider to be best practice.

I've been very lucky to have Grant Charteris farming nearby and his enthusiasm for the industry and his willingness to answer my bleedingly obvious questions has been massively appreciated. (To be fair he's a pretty rubbish quiz master but he's not a bad farmer!)

In summary, as a new entrant into deer farming I'm bloody glad my family and I made the leap. It's always a bit nerve racking when you enter an industry from scratch, but knowing the support is out there gives me a lot of confidence.

To the NZDFA, thank you very much for putting on a great event and I look forward to staying involved. ■

– Ben Anderson, Hawke's Bay



Next Generation visitors receive a briefing before touring the CK Import Export plant.

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Game on for New Zealand venison in Europe

Following the summer Cervena® programme, activities have also ramped up ahead of Europe's traditional October–March autumn and winter game season, reports **Ali Spencer**.

AT THE END of September, DINZ Executive Chef, Graham Brown returned from a three-week European tour setting the groundwork for New Zealand venison's game season. He and Europe-based chef Shannon Campbell, another familiar face for this sector, were involved in activities supporting exporters and in-market partners in Sweden, Belgium and the Netherlands.

"Europe was very warm with the summer that keeps on giving," Graham says, "so the venison season will start late. However in Sweden and Europe our promotions were very timely with chefs from our events ordering good quantities for their new menus.

"There has been a lot of interest in the new cuts and some of the less expensive ones as the prices are at the tipping point on the saddle and even the leg. Chefs love anything different and challenging so it all fits rather well with extending their repertoire of cuts. It also provides a great opportunity for us to get better value from the carcass. We have had good feedback from our ventures so let's hope the autumn/winter season delivers good sales."

The Swedish activity – which has involved a week's worth of demonstrations and hands-on chef and buyer education – has gone particularly well, reports DINZ Venison Marketing Manager



Graham Brown educating Swedish chefs about New Zealand venison at the start of the programme – part of a busy week for he and Shannon Campbell working in-market with venison exporter Mountain River and in-market partner Minagro.



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Nick Taylor, adding he was delighted to learn Campbell has already been invited back to run more classes.

In Belgium, they worked for another week with importer Bimpex, which partners with venison exporters Alliance and Duncan New Zealand. Later, they also supported importers Kiplama at the Gastvrij Rotterdam hospitality show in the Netherlands.

Taylor says Campbell has also been supporting Silver Fern Farms with photoshoots for the game season promotions, as well as continuing to undertake in-store tastings in wholesale markets where chefs shop.



Graham Brown and an Alliance representative hold court at Belgium's most renowned culinary school Ter Groene Poorte. Students start part-time at the school, while still at high school, and specialise in either culinary arts or butchery.



The duo did workshops for sales teams as well as with chefs.



Students at the Belgian Culinary School celebrate what they learned about New Zealand venison from Graham Brown (centre) and Shannon Campbell (far left).

One of the next game season promotional activities in Campbell's diary is Busche Gala, an annual event in Germany where the country's gourmet guide is launched and which attracts chefs and hoteliers. New Zealand Venison (Neuseelandhirsch) will have a presence at the function following the ceremony, where chef Matthais Geliß from Berlin's Volt restaurant will prepare a dish to share with the other attending chefs.

"We will also be holding three special press dinners around Germany. Each event will be hosted by a prestigious chef who is a supporter of New Zealand venison," says Taylor. ■



Shannon Campbell has also been introducing New Zealand venison to old and new chef customers in in-store tastings in up-market wholesale markets, in support of Silver Fern Farms' promotion activity.

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European Summer Cervena® chilled volume steady

The third year of the Summer Cervena programme in Europe has seen plenty of activity in Germany and Belgium, holding sales volume of the high-quality chilled venison stable. Venison exporters have all also committed to continue work in the region next year. **Ali Spencer** reports.

DESPITE THE HIGH prices, sales volumes of the high-quality chilled venison remained at a stable 90 tonnes in the two markets, worth nearly \$3 million, reports DINZ venison marketing manager Nick Taylor, who met with other members of the Marketing Working Group (MWG) recently.

To support the second year of activity in Germany there has been a special focus on the German food trade and media, says Taylor.

As in the Benelux countries (Belgium, Netherlands and Luxembourg), the Cervena promotional activity undertaken by DINZ within the Passion2Profit Primary Growth Partnership, aims to raise awareness of the suitability of Cervena for summer menus with chefs and food influencers. It provides umbrella support for individual exporters' chilled venison activities in the two markets during the Northern Hemisphere summer months from April through to August.

A press dinner at one of Germany's top restaurants, the Michelin-starred Carmelo Greco, opened Germany's Summer Cervena activity in early July. Guests included eight key food media and bloggers including *Allgemeine Fleischer Zeitung*, *Chefs! Magazine* and *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*.

Taylor says it was "great to see" that every journalist who attended the event wrote a piece about the programme.

This year's programme also featured five high-end restaurants around Germany – two one-Michelin-star restaurants Stuttgart (Stuttgart) and Carmelo Greco (Frankfurt), Volt (in Berlin), Kraftwerk (Oberursel Taunus) and Dr Kosch (Dusseldorf) – selected to offer a summer Cervena tasting menu for at least two weeks, Taylor explains. Each promoted their menu and Cervena through social media channels. An advertorial about the merits of Cervena appeared in several editions of *Chefs! Magazine*, which targets German chefs and foodservice.

In addition, as a result of work with key food bloggers, delicious recipes have started appearing on blogs such as Wunderbrunnen, Magentratzerl and Patricia Pötzsch's *uhiesig*. The bloggers had been sent Cervena samples and were invited to create new and innovative summer recipes, he says.

Coverage from the German campaign, which includes magazine articles and blog posts about Cervena, is now being collated and evaluated, says Taylor.

As in the Benelux programme, the P2P campaign overlaid exporters' more targeted tactical work in the market and followed up launch activity from Silver Fern Farms last year.

It aims to grow awareness and penetration of Cervena into Silver Fern Farms' key customer segments throughout the summer season, explains group marketing manager Nicola Johnston.

The company works closely with in-market partners, HP Klughardt in Germany and Luiten Food in the Netherlands. The team's marketing programme has been more intensive in 2018, building on last year's sales growth, with a spectrum of marketing activities undertaken, including events, digital communications



Silver Fern Farms' Cervena cooking demonstration and tasting with Delta at the Internorga Show in Hamburg in March 2018.



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Selected food media enjoying dinner at the one Michelin star Carmelo Greco.

and sales support material updated in line with the new Cervena brand guidelines, she says.

In partnership with HP Klughardt, the exporter's Cervena range was displayed in March at the trade show Internorga, an important forum to meet and do business with German foodservice customers. In-store tastings at Frische Paradies, a speciality retailer and supplier of fine foods, followed in April and were supported with a new web page for the retailer in May, featuring the product and range of cuts.

The programme has also included cooking demonstrations, the development of a new Cervena web page, incorporating new DINZ video content, and public relations work with key opinion leaders and media.

This has resulted in Cervena being added to the Ox & Klee restaurant menu in Cologne and a key opinion leader endorsement from German Michelin chef Daniel Gottslich. Advertorials in *Gastronomie & Hotel Impulse Magazine* have also prompted readers to try the dish at Ox & Klee and buy the meat from Frische Paradies.

"While German consumers are typically slow to change their habits, the P2P Summer season programme is starting to gain traction with a select group of cutting-edge chefs looking to differentiate their menus and meet the needs of an emerging segment of more adventurous and socially conscious German diners," says Johnstone.

"Cervena offers that point of difference and it is hoped these early adopter chefs will prove excellent ambassadors for New Zealand pasture-raised venison by delivering innovative and memorable dining experiences."

In the Netherlands, Silver Fern Farms also actively worked with partner Luiten Foods this summer season to promote Cervena at chef events hosted by premium foodservice wholesaler Sligro; in a summer menu promotion with luxury hotel chain Van der Valk; and through social media channels with influential social media bloggers Chicks Love Food.

A whole raft of activities were also underway in Belgium, with Alliance Group in its second year working with wholesaler Metro in the Summer Cervena programme.

"Getting chefs and diners to serve and order venison in summer takes time and consistent pressure through wholesalers and butchers," says Alliance group marketing manager Katrina Allan. "However, after three years, many chefs and restaurants are now familiar with Cervena."

She is confident that continuing to persuade wholesalers to generate attention for Cervena at the beginning of the season will mean a large proportion of customers and restaurants will use it again on the menu next year.

Taylor says the combined programme went well, particularly the activities in Germany, which saw a good increase in volume. "It was the first year we have had some well-known chefs involved and we received great coverage."

Social media has become a key promotional channel too, with food bloggers in both Germany and the Netherlands positively engaging with the programme.

"I think we will continue to see more activity incorporating social media elements."

Taylor notes the companies all recognise this summer presented challenges. With average temperatures rising above 25°C, consumers were eating less meat and more outside. In addition, the FIFA World Cup meant a complete focus on football for the three to four weeks of the competition with more associated foods such as burgers and sausages going onto the BBQ, rather than fine dining.

"Creating a change in the consumer perception that venison can only be consumed during game season is challenging and will take time," he says.

"However, what is great is that all the companies are positive about the programme and remain committed to supporting it next year." ■



CERVENA, NIETS DAN VOORDELEN

Nieuw-Zeeland is een eilandengroep die door zijn geïsoleerde ligging en zijn eindeloze graslandschappen de ideale voedingsbodem is voor puur natuurlijke veeteelt.

De Cervena certificatie geldt enkel voor dieren die (1) het hele jaar door vrij rond lopen, (2) exclusief met gras & hooi gevoed, (3) vrij van hormonen, antibiotica of groeiversterkers en (4) maximaal 3 jaar oud zijn.

◆ Cervena in de keuken

Geen afval: geen vet (enkel silverskin te verwijderen)
Steeds even mals: geen onderscheid tussen bout of rugdelen
Ideaal voor zomerse bereidingen

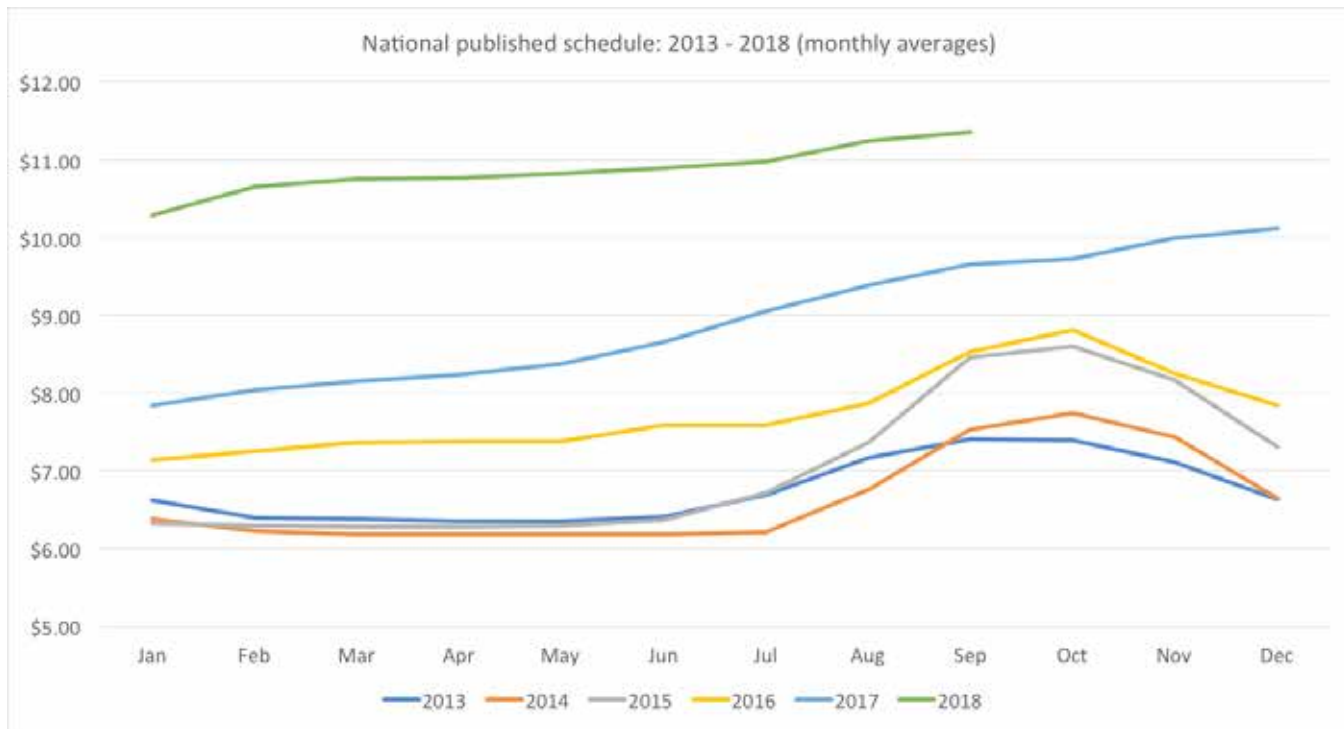
◆ Cervena op het menu

Mager, bijna geen vet (<3%)
Zachte fijne smaak
Rijk aan proteïne & ijzer
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CERVENA.BE

Alliance adapted a DINZ Cervena template for use in the Metro Summer Cervena push.

Market update: Venison schedule



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Venison 'star of the team' at Alliance

by Ali Spencer, *Deer Industry News* contributor



Venison has been the "star of the team" for Alliance Group, says chairman Murray Taggart.

"WE'VE SEEN VERY strong prices in market for venison, supported by more aggressive demand for some of the lower-value cuts than we've seen previously, which are going into the petfood market," he says.

This has been market price driven, he noted, but there has not been a compression of margins for the processor to deliver the high farm-gate prices of the last season.

"The processing margins have been perfectly acceptable as far as we're concerned. As a co-op, we're making acceptable margins and we pass the rest on to the farmer. That's our job," he says.

He sees no pressing reason in the coming year for a dramatic change.

"However, it is an expensive meat and there has been some customer pushback on prices," he said, adding, however, the co-operative is feeling "reasonably confident at this stage".

Taggart was speaking in the early stages of the co-operative's annual four-week roadshow of 24 meetings around the country. He and Alliance colleagues, including chief executive David Surveyor and general manager livestock and shareholder services Heather Stacy, have been updating the shareholders, including deer farmers, about their co-operative's activity. This includes its continued strategic push away from being seen as a meat processing facility for commodities towards a food business, capturing more value from the carcass via its products and adding it to its bottom line to benefit farmer shareholders.

Most recently, this has manifested in a new brand and strapline "Farmers' Produce" – only the second time the logo has been changed in the co-operative's 70-year history.

The food business has been focusing on improving plant performance and is now seeking extra workers to enable it to capture extra value from products, Surveyor says, adding Alliance is not alone. He pointed to calculations from the Meat Industry Association suggesting an extra 2,000 workers are needed for the entire processing sector.

Surveyor has also been telling shareholders venison has been a great example of a co-op operating exactly the way it should.

"We broadened the markets we play in, we had terrific prices in global markets and had well above budgeted profits for it, he said,



Alliance chairman, Murray Taggart, sees no pressing reason for a dramatic change in the coming year to this year's strong performance for the co-operative in venison.

adding the extraordinary profit was immediately passed back to Alliance deer farmers.

Shareholders can expect to receive a bonus payout for deer supplied in 2017/2018 in December, which for venison is set at \$4 per head.

Alliance has also rolled out a major upgrade to its Farm Assurance Programme and a new app to support compliance and is trialling electronic Animal Status Declarations in its plants.

Showing its further confidence in the future of the deer sector, Alliance invested \$15.9 million in its new venison processing plant at Lorneville, Southland, which processed its first deer on 17 September. This features improved handling facilities and enhanced configuration, with a larger slaughterboard, boning room and offal area than at Alliance Smithfield and the old Makarewa plant.



Inside Alliance's new venison plant at Lorneville.

"We think we'll be able to capture products and create value from venison that we haven't been able to do so far because of this new plant," Surveyor has told roadshow goers.

Alliance is working hard to capture greater value for Pure South venison in the co-operative's global markets. In addition to marketing venison in Germany and Europe for the game season, the food business is selling it into the United States and United Kingdom with value-added propositions.

"Our goal is to increase out-of-season chilled consumption, while at the same time continue to grow sales of our seasonal chilled consumption," says Surveyor.

For the 2018 season, Alliance is forecasting its venison price range to be between \$11.00–11.75 per kg for the first quarter, settling back to \$10.40–11.00 in Q2, once the chilled season is out of the way.

While there may be livestock procurement pricing tensions in play in 2018, the company believes the biggest risk in the year ahead for venison will be the exchange rate. ■

Gearing up for another velvet season

by Rhys Griffiths, DINZ Market Manager Asia

By the time this edition goes to print the 2018/19 velvet season will be well underway. Farmers will be right into velvetting and importers/wholesalers will be eagerly awaiting the new season's velvet crop. Many of the main velvet exporters have been to the market to work with their respective importers for the coming season.

MOST EXPORTERS REPORT

good demand at similar levels to last season. Some early reports are for a slight firming, but until the first exports begin, it is too early to predict this season's price. Most people throughout the velvet industry (farmers, exporters and marketers) are keen for continued stability.

Sizable fluctuations in velvet prices can result in one side of the supply chain losing confidence in its respective velvet business operations. For example, a significant drop in velvet prices can lead to land use changes to more economic options. The exact same applies to the health food companies investing in New Zealand velvet as an ingredient. In many cases, the investment in velvet products requires funding for research, product development, manufacturing and marketing. If these companies perceive prices as becoming volatile, then their interest in velvet could reduce, resulting in the search for an alternative ingredient (of which there are many).



Smoothie with ground health supplement to be sprinkled on top at a New Origin cafe.

Promotion in markets continues

New Origin (featured in the August/September *Deer Industry News*) has now opened 20 stores in Seoul (with three concept stores). The stores feature trendy cafés with high-end organic meals and delicious smoothies paired with single-serve offerings from their health food segment of the store.

Korean food companies report reasonable success with their thanksgiving (Chuseok) campaigns and are getting geared up to meet their main winter season consumption period. Suppliers in the traditional sector are also innovating with significant upgrades in processing capability. Hanpure is a fantastic example of a new generation traditional medicine supplier that loves NZ velvet. Literally a stone's throw from the North Korean border, Hanpure is justifiably proud of its near complete new GMP factory. ■



DINZ market manager Rhys Griffiths (left) with owner Alex Chung at the front entrance to Hanpure's impressive new factory.



A new New Origin concept store in Gangnam.



Hanpure has the ability to personalise Oriental medicine prescriptions.

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Advance Party members brave the southerly blast to look at the wetland that will be fenced off and dammed with low bunds to create sediment traps. They were seeking advice from the group about water testing – what should be tested for, when and where?

In the discussion that follows Moate's presentation, Tony asks about water sampling. It's quite costly – from \$100 to \$150 a sample – depending on what's being tested for. But he's keen to have before-and-after samples, both above and below the wetland. He wants to know what's flowing into the wetland – nutrients, bacteria and sediment – and what flows out. This will give him a handle on the effectiveness of the wetland, both for himself and for other farmers who may be interested in their experience.

He's also keen to have a simple macro-invertebrate survey done of his waterways before the wetland work begins, so he can compare the results with surveys after it is completed. Moate agrees to organise this.

Members chime in

Other AP members chime in with suggestions and experiences with waterway testing:

- Spring is a good time, but not within 2 days of a big rainfall event.
- As well as your samples for testing, if it's a small creek, get a measure of the flow ... that will tell you what you are losing per hectare.
- Record any significant management changes in the catchment in the fortnight before testing.
- Take samples at the point where the waterway leaves the farm, because that's what you will be judged upon.
- It's also important to test water where it comes into your system, so you can tell if what you are doing to improve water quality is working.
- A rough and ready way to assess sediment loss is to place an 8 x 1-inch board in a creek and weigh it down. Lift it in a month or so to see how much sediment has gathered underneath.
- If sediment is an issue, a lab test is needed, because visual tests of clarity can be confused by the presence of natural organic matter (like tannins) in the water. A 1 litre sample is needed to measure sediment content.
- If you want to measure *E. coli*, the samples need to be tested within 24 hours. Or you can label and freeze them, and take a batch of them to the lab to be tested at one time.

Moate urges the Robertses to take lots of before-and-after

photos of their wetland: "In 10 years' time you won't remember what it looks like now."

The other members updated the group on their AP projects.

Cam Nelson (see *Deer Industry News*, Feb/Mar 2018) has been testing water quality and getting much better than expected results. All the tests were taken from a tile drain running under his main crop paddock. Next year he will take tests from the creek that runs past the crop paddock at the point where it leaves the farm.

Bruce Allen is putting electric wands (see article on EnviroWands on p 18) along some fences where the deer are prone to pacing. **Peter McIntyre** says he successfully runs electric bungies across corners to stop stags from munting strainer posts. Bruce is also going to trial a geotextile along one side of his proposed wintering barn.

John Somerville has some soil compaction issues and is interested in learning more about the topic. David Moate says compaction assessment is easy to learn and suggests the AP has a quick workshop on the topic on their next farm visit. **Bruce** points out that direct drilling of crops is better for soil structure than ploughing.

Peter McIntyre has fenced off another gully and planted it in Oregons and the pines with the large cones (*Pinus coulteri*) that are in demand from interior decorators. A couple of gullies have been drained where the deer were making a mess.

Next on the list is an effluent capture tank for his deer shed. The effluent volume is small and the nutrient levels will be low, but it needs to be managed. He plans to connect a permanent hose from the tank to a paddock with a k-line irrigation system.

Michelle Roberts is loading the farm data onto Overseer, both to find out what has to go in and what comes out the other end. She's surprised by the amount of detail required – stock numbers and classes into what paddocks and for how long: "I don't know how fertiliser reps do nutrient budgets for farmers using Overseer, given the information needed." (See Roberts profile, page 14.)

Jane Chrystal, the AP facilitator, says there's good information in Overseer for deer, but it is a model, so there will always be a degree of uncertainty about the accuracy of the figures it produces, she says.

"So instead of focusing on whether the outcome it produces for your farm is 11 or 12 kg N/ha/yr, focus on the trend and how that value could be reduced under different farming scenarios, such as different stock classes or paddock management."

The members agree that they want to know more about nutrient measurement and budgeting. For their next meeting they agree to visit a deer farm that's done a nutrient budget, where they can discuss what's involved, as the basis for doing them on their own farms.

The meeting concludes with a discussion about how they could help other Southland deer farmers with their FEPs. They value the ideas and information they get from Environment Southland's David Moate and feel it's in all farmers' interests to work with the regional council to come up with answers that work for everyone. Moate says he benefits too, learning at a practical level from the AP members about how to work effectively with deer.

They agree they should try and organise a facilitated FEP workshop for deer farmers in the new year, with the members of the Advance Party acting as mentors for farmers doing an FEP for the first time. ■

Painting a picture on the Southland landscape

by Trevor Walton, *Deer Industry News* contributor

Tony Roberts has had an “antler addiction” all his adult life, but until two years ago he – along with wife Michelle and daughter Kate – was focused on climbing the dairy tree from milking, to sharemilking, to becoming fully fledged dairy farm owners.

NOW THE DAIRY cows are in the past, as the family develops their new deer and beef property at Merino Downs near Gore. At last, Tony’s antler addiction is being allowed free rein and Kate has the space to run her own small Simmental-based breeding herd.

Tony and Michelle are members of the Southland Environment Advance Party.

“The three of us continually discuss everything we are doing on the farm and have a shared vision of what we want to achieve,” Tony says. They don’t have a written business plan, but they share a vision of creating a farm where the streams run clean and the deer and cattle graze pastures bordered by trees providing shelter and shade.



Kate, Michelle and Tony Roberts: practising and communicating the message that profitable deer farming is not incompatible with the environment.

“I don’t know why I have an interest in the environment, but I hunt a bit and worked for DoC many years ago. I love the bush and wildlife. Also, you need trees and shelter to make the whole farm ecosystem work,” he says.

Michelle is a former banker and fills the role of farm business manager. She keeps a close watch on the farm budget and “applies the handbrake when it’s needed”, but she says she doesn’t have to do this very often: “We’ve always made a profit in our farming businesses; we’ve always found a way to modify and adapt if income is down.”

In their dairying days Tony says they were “what you might call early-adopters” when it came to fencing off streams and planting riparian margins. Michelle recalls they were the inaugural winners of the Otago Farm Sustainability Award.

“We worked with the regional council, who used us to develop guidelines for best practice for farmers. We involved the local

school in riparian planting and pupils at Blue Mountain College used us for case studies. The kids inspected our stream and found koura and invertebrates, so hopefully they got the message that farming is not incompatible with the environment,” he says.

These days one of the family’s motivations is to demonstrate to the general public and to other farmers that it is possible to farm deer sustainably and profitably.



Kate and Tony Roberts with a wetland on their beef unit they have already fenced off. This area will stay pretty much as is: a red tussock wetland. In existing riparian areas on the deer unit they have planted natives and ornamentals. New plantings could include timber species or even UMF manuka for honey production.

“I see myself as a landscape artist, working on a giant painting that’s never finished. I paint in fences here and wetlands and shelterbelts there. Each year we add to the painting,” says Tony.

The farm is made up of two blocks. Until 10 or 12 years ago, one of these was owned by Southland deer farming identity Lloyd Thayer who sold his 83 hectares to a cattle farmer who didn’t continue with deer. The family bought it on 1 December 2017 and combined it with a 186 ha neighbouring sheep and cropping farm they had bought eight months earlier.

The last two years has been full-on. Ten kilometres of deer fencing has been erected – expanding the existing Thayer deer area from 60 to 120 hectares – and a deer shed has been built within the existing woolshed. The 123-ha beef unit has been rejigged, with new lanes and water troughs and most riparian areas on the beef block excluded from cattle grazing.

The farm is essentially the west face of a low rolling ridge

running north-south. Five spurs run down from the ridge toward the main road, with the creeks and wetlands that lie between the ridges open to public gaze.

Tony describes the farm's 2.7 km road boundary as their "shop window", a description that's borne out by the number of comments they get from locals about how pleased they are to see deer back on the property. That's great to hear, but the family wants passers-by to see no deer in the waterways and that the riparian areas are being protected and enhanced.

Fencing beef cattle out of riparian areas doesn't need to cost an arm and a leg. The same can't be said for deer fence at up to \$25 a metre.

So far, they have deer-fenced 4 km of riparian strips and in the process have removed 4.5 ha from deer grazing. This year they are planning to fence deer out of 4.9 ha wetland and a stream that drains about 30 per cent of the farm. This is the focus of the family's current Advance Party project, which has also had input from Environment Southland field officer David Moate (see separate story).

Tony and Michelle are originally from Taranaki, where Tony's parents farmed. As a teenager, he persuaded his Dad to buy some fallow from local pioneer deer farmer Ross Vivian. From that he developed a love of fallow and their antlers.

Those deer stayed on his parents' farm after Tony and Michelle married and embarked on dairying, initially at Oeo in coastal Taranaki before moving to Southland with their herd in 1995.

Deer did not feature in their farming life until 2008 when they bought a run-off for their dairy herd at Conical Hill, South

Otago. This was an ideal place to have a dabble with deer. They fenced off a small area for a fallow bought from Ken Swainson in the Manawatu. Later, they expanded the fenced area to 25 ha and added red deer.

Eight years later, in 2016, the deer bug bit again and it bit hard.

"One day Michelle and I had an epiphany. We felt we had achieved everything we set out to do in dairy and didn't want to continue the daily grind of milking into our 50s. Why not go into deer full-time?"

They then discussed the idea with their adult children Nathan (now an adventure guide in Canada) and Kate. She wasn't quite so keen – but these days she has no complaints. Her affinity for cattle is now being well catered for. She's the stock manager on the beef unit and has her own small herd of Simmental and Speckle Park-cross cows.

The focus of the beef operation is finishing. Michelle and Kate rear beef calves bought locally and take them through to slaughter. They also buy in beef weaners for finishing, depending on their price and feed availability.

To go from dairying with a small deer block on the side to developing and running a new deer and beef operation is a huge leap into the unknown, but the family loves it. All three are gregarious and ooze enthusiasm for the things they choose to do. They are quick to ask advice of others and are not afraid to acknowledge what they don't know.

"We find everyone in the deer industry is willing to share their knowledge. The industry is small enough that the people in the leadership roles are accessible to everyone," Tony says.



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It's a great help to have industry legend Eddie Brock farming over the back boundary. Others they've turned to for advice, given willingly, include Steve Blanchard, Alastair Midgley, Barry Gard, Kelly Bennett, Ian Bristow, Peter McIntyre and other members of the Southland Environment Advance Party. Tony describes them as "motivated inspirational farmers".



Object of addiction: some of the Roberts family's fallow trophy bucks, pictured early this year. Photo: Tony Roberts

The focus of their deer operation is antler – red deer velvet and fallow trophy. Both herds are being expanded, but not at the expense of antler quality or feeding. Their objective is to produce up to 1 tonne of velvet and 40 4-yr and 5-yr old fallow trophy bucks a year. Last season they sold 27 fallow trophy bucks and velvetted 187 red stags. This season 276 will be velvetted.

Their velvet stags originally came from Gary Fowler of Cambridge and are largely Windermere bloodlines. Their hind

herd is based on cast-for-age hinds from Kelly Hudson. The fallow antler genetics came from Alistair Midgley, South Canterbury and Ian Bristow, Kaipara.

The deer farm is not yet fully stocked but Tony will be taking care not to overdo things. He believes that deer perform best and are kinder to the environment when they get plenty of "vitamin G", in other words, plenty of leafy dairy-length pasture.

"If there's not enough good grass ahead of me, I always have supplements available."

He says – and it's true – that the farm has no fence-line damage from pacing deer, because of good feeding. Pasture quality is maintained in the summer by bringing cattle into the deer block, or by mowing.

With no fence-pacing, few wallows, good shelter and a programme of riparian fencing well-advanced, the Roberts are actively minimising the sediment, phosphate and bacteria likely to be washed off the farm into waterways.

Their Waikoikoi soils are prone to compaction, so they subsoil paddocks as needed and break up the ironstone pan where this is causing surface ponding. To reduce pasture damage this year they wintered their mature velvet stags in a shed that Lloyd Thayer had adapted. They are now discussing best practice indoor wintering with other farmers with experience in this area.



R2 stags with the new central laneway, shelter plantings and deer shed in the background. The mature trees were one of the things that attracted Tony and Michelle to the property. Photo: Trevor Walton

The Roberts run the fallow does in the paddock above the wetland and creek that is the focus of their Advance Party project. This paddock has a small gully filled with red tussocks running down the middle. During the hot summer months, the does like sheltering under the tussocks, an asset that Tony doesn't want to fence out.

"Unlike reds, fallow don't create wallows and play in water, so we're hoping that the small amount of tracking they do won't be too much of a problem," Tony says.

"We'll be monitoring the quality of the water running into the wetland and sediment ponds from this paddock and also monitoring its quality when it leaves the wetland. The figures will tell us whether we need to riparian fence the fallow paddock, but hopefully not."

This year they put in about 10 ha in crop, mainly fodder beet. This is another area of potential risk that Tony has identified – both in terms of public perceptions and damage to the environment. Future crops will usually be sown in paddocks that

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Fallow does crossing a gully that drains into the wetland and sediment ponds that the Robertses are planning to create. The red tussocks in the gully provide valuable shelter for the does so the family hopes that water quality testing will show that this ephemeral stream doesn't need fencing. Unlike red deer, fallow don't wallow or play in water.

don't have a road frontage and there will be ample buffer strips between the crops and waterways.

Back in the homestead, Michelle has been loading the farm up onto Overseer while the program is still free of charge. An unknown fee will be charged sometime in 2019.

It's pretty laborious work. She's uploaded 17 pages of detailed information and has had to make a few educated guesses about things like the area excluded from grazing by riparian strips. She's also discovered that the system doesn't provide for indoor wintering of deer ... the only option is to pretend they are being wintered outside, which over-states the herd's N output.

Although the main environmental impact of deer farms comes from sediment flowing into waterways, nitrogen limits are likely to be on their way, so the family would like to know how much N they are producing. Overseer is the only cab on the rank that goes there.

Waikoikoi silt-loams are not naturally prone to nutrient leaching, except via mole and tile drains. But once Michelle has an N figure she's confident in, the family will discuss their potential options for reducing it, should that one day be necessary.

Of course, if existing N discharges are grand-parented by the Regional Council – the local water quality plan has yet to be finalised – there may be a perverse incentive to do nothing, or to increase their N output in the meantime.

It probably wouldn't pay to suggest this to Tony and Michelle – they didn't get where they are today by waiting for things to happen to them. Besides, having a profitable deer farming operation that's in tune with the environment is what gets them up in the morning.

That's not about to change.

Vital statistics

Roberts farm, Merino Downs, Southland

- Total area: 263 ha. Deer block, 120 ha (40 paddocks). Beef block, 123 ha.
- Deer wintered: 276 red velvetting stags; 145 red hinds; 127 red weaners; 132 fallow does; 66 fallow bucks; 52 R2 fallow bucks; 142 fallow weaners.
- Soil type: Waikoikoi, gravel-free silt-loam on rolling hills. Derived from loess. Prone to compaction. Underlain with an ironstone pan.
- Elevation: 130-200 m (approx)
- Rainfall: 900-980 mm, normally well spread ■



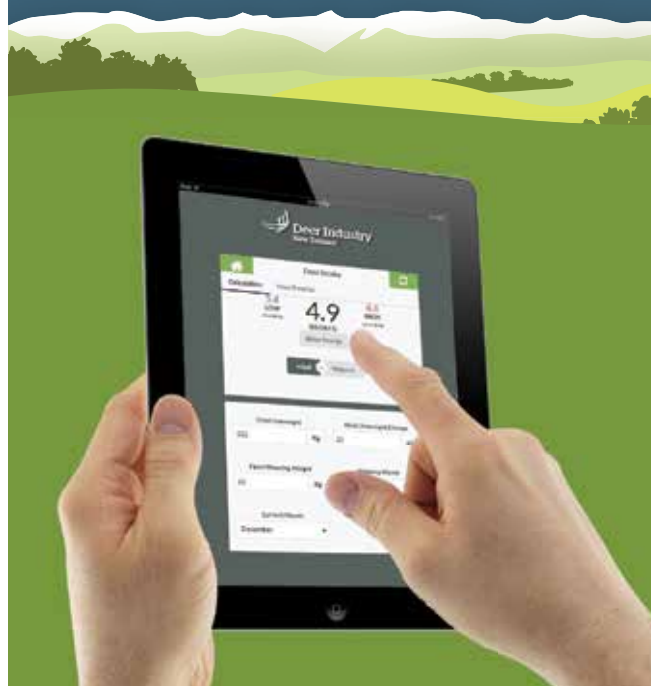
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The deerapp also includes the feed intake and feed allocation calculators developed by Dr David Stevens and Marie Casey. More calculators will be added.



Simple solution for fence pacing

by Phil Stewart, *Deer Industry News* Editor

Fence pacing is one of the deer industry's biggest environmental bugbears, but an Eastern Bay of Plenty deer farmer has come up with a simple solution that not only mitigates the pacing problem, but also protects fences from rough treatment by deer. The invention has so far been flying under the radar, but increasing numbers of deer farmers are latching on to the idea and using the "EnviroWand".

THE INVENTOR IS Jerry Brandford, who runs a small breeding herd for trophy deer in the Waimana district. He says he always had problems with the fencelines getting "ploughed" since he started running deer in the early 1980s. For the past 30 years he has been working on ways to get deer to back off the fences, but in the last five years he's perfected his system, which he has patented and is now making commercially available.

Like many, he had experimented with outriggers, but in the end has simplified the system to a wire "wand", which extends 900mm from the fence. The wand can be on either or both sides of the fence and is cantilevered from the post by way of a bracket. The wire is partially sheathed in a black plastic sleeve. The wire of each wand is twitched to the hotwire running along the fenceline, so they are easy to replace or shift.

Brandford says depending on the terrain, the post spacings and the deer, it's not always necessary to fit an EnviroWand to each post, although many do. "You've really got to try it and see. If it's a bad fence [for pacing] then it might be best to do all the posts, but you can always add more later if you haven't used enough to start with." The main objective is to cut down the damage caused by pacing, he adds.

He says deer learn very quickly to stay away from the wands, which flex back and forth if an animal is careless enough to push past. The wire is reasonably stiff and if the wands do get bent out of shape during the roar, they can usually be straightened easily enough. In the rare cases where one is broken, they can be easily untwitched and replaced. Brandford says he's never had to replace one on his own place.

"Some stags really hammer fences. The good thing about [the EnviroWand] is that even if it's an old fence that's getting a bit tired, these will extend its life because the deer stop damaging the fence, as well as mitigating the pacing that happens especially during the roar or weaning. You can never entirely stop deer pacing at those times, but the wands push them back from the fence and you'll get no more than trampled grass – not bare, broken ground."

Brandford's first EnviroWand customer was the Glenfiddich Partnership, neighbours in the Opotiki district, who bought some in 2014. Several Hawke's Bay farmers have since started using them and another big fan is Malcolm Cane, who farms in the Reporoa district. Cane says he "can't speak highly enough" of

the wands. "I refenced our original 80-hectare block which had pigtail outriggers. I used the EnviroWands instead and they're far superior. It stops the damage from pacing but the animals can still graze up to the fence between the wands, so you don't get a strip of long grass."

The EnviroWands sell for \$4.40 + GST each and are made to order by contacting Jeremy Brandford:

ph 07-312-3331 or jeremybrandford@gmail.com ■



Enviro Wands on a new fence at Malcolm and Kathy Cane's property, Reporoa. Malcolm Cane says the wands have stopped the pacing and allowed grass to start growing again along the previously bare fenceline.

New groups to underpin environment commitment

by Phil Stewart, *Deer Industry News* Editor

Unglamorous but important jobs like filling a wallow with rock or fencing off a spring are part and parcel of improving the environmental performance on any deer farm. Now the drive to enhance environmental outcomes like soil conservation, water quality and biodiversity on deer farms is getting more support at national level through the Passion2Profit (P2P) programme.

DEER INDUSTRY ENVIRONMENT Groups (DIEGs) are to be established around the country to help deer farmers improve their farming environments through a combination of mutual support and professional guidance.

Introducing Phil McKenzie

Phil McKenzie will be helping set up Deer Industry Environment Groups throughout New Zealand. He is a Wellington/Wairarapa-based farm consultant, originally from a farm in Southland. With experience at Landcorp, most recently as General Manager Environment, Phil has deep farm systems knowledge gained from working and learning in many farming regions. Coming into the role, which he started this month, he's been impressed by the innovation and dedication that deer farmers bring to their business and the industry.

"My focus is on engaging farmers and communities in positive conversations and design. Farmers are great observers and together have a lot of collective wisdom. I'm really looking forward to helping establish these groups. My aim is to help get the conversations going to enable deer farmers to tweak their systems so they remain profitable, environmentally sustainable, and, feel loved for what they do."

Phil will be working two days a week and can be contacted at any stage on phil@changeforgood.co.nz or 0274 997 809.



Phil McKenzie pictured in the one of Southland's largest QEII Open Space wetland covenants, the 1,456-hectare McKenzie covenant near Mossburn.

The initiative will be coordinated nationally and led by Phil McKenzie, former Landcorp General Manager Environment (see sidebar).

The groups will function along similar – but not identical – lines to the highly successful P2P Advance Party (AP) model. It's expected the DIEGs will include between five and eight farms, a little smaller than most APs. And unlike APs they will be working within a timeframe rather than being open ended.

There will be a paid facilitator and budget available for external expertise where needed. (This writer has seen the positive impact of outside experts first hand at environment field days, where local knowledge of soils, suitable plant species and so on provides invaluable insights.)

Each DIEG will have a farmer leader who will work with the facilitator to help arrange meetings and also provide feedback from the group.

Members will be helped within the group to work through a process to:

- identify and prioritise environmental risks
- agree on actions to manage those risks
- monitor the impact of those actions
- document the actions and outcomes.

Farm environment plans

P2P manager Innes Moffat says it's expected that all DIEG members will have completed a farm environment plan (FEP) or similar after their first year in a group – something that DINZ expects all deer farmers to have done by 2020. He says the recently published Deer Industry Environmental Management Code of Practice will be a great resource for DIEG members.

Moffat says DINZ will fund the facilitators and outside expertise and also provide practical information and links to outside expertise. He says it's important that the whole "community" of each member is engaged in the group – partners, other family members, staff and others with an interest in the farm. He says facilitators are likely to be well schooled in good environmental practice and be familiar with local regional council requirements.

The process will be a balance between outside support and self reliance. For example, facilitators will not be completing FEPs for group members – they will be expected to use their own resources for that, although some might choose to hire environmental consultants to help. ■

Antler science conference and world deer congress: An overview

The 4th Antler Science and Product Technology Conference (ASPT4) and World Deer Farming Congress VII (WDC VII) were held in August. **Tony Pearce**, DINZ Producer Manager, attended both and reports on the events for *Deer Industry News*.

EACH EVENT ATTRACTED about 200 participants plus trade displays. Chinese students and researchers made up the bulk of the attendance at ASPT4, which was held in Changchun City, Jilin Province, China.

Attendees at the World Deer Farming Congress in Belokurikha, Altai Kray, Russia, included government officials, large antler product manufacturers, Russian and European local leadership, deer farmers and (including Federation of European Deer Farmers' Associations representatives) and about 20 from New Zealand, Australia, Canada and Mexico.

ASPT4, China

The conference was co-hosted by DINZ (Chairs Dr Li Chunyi and Catharine Sayer) and supported by the Chinese DFA and major sponsor Professor Yanamei Wang, company group of Jilin Dong Ao Deer Industry and significantly supported by the Governor of Shuangyang District, (a major centre of Sika deer farming and, increasingly, deer product manufacture). Delegates were hosted, catered and entertained in good facilities and surroundings for minimal cost.

An excellent set of paper abstracts in English had been produced beforehand, enabling New Zealand participants to at least stay engaged in many of the complex papers from the Chinese research team. These were often pitched at the molecular and biochemical level, which for many New Zealand delegates at the basic farming level, was challenging.

Chinese presentations were summarised in English on slides, although not translated during the presentation, while the English papers had both Chinese and English wording featured on presentations. We were struck by the commitment to research, incorporation of valid work around properties of velvet antler and their ongoing development of new and innovative products in what is a rapidly growing industry.

(See also *Chinese deer industry can do better* on page 28 for more on the experience of the New Zealand group travelling to China for this event.)

Issues and comments

From the lay and non-skilled scientist's perspective, the ASPT4 presentations would have been enhanced by an overview presentation from the Chinese- and Korean-based research community. A big picture perspective from Dr Li, or equivalent, explaining how his institute has been granted its special status

and considerable funding, and setting out the objectives of these complex science papers, would have been useful. It's hoped that such an overview might be developed in the later published proceedings, as that would be of huge interest to the New Zealand velvet production and manufacturing industry.



New drink formulations featuring velvet as an ingredient.

Given the strength and detail of the papers, where potentially velvet antler has role in treating human ailments like Alzheimer's disease, stem cells and regeneration therapies, bone strengthening and many other areas, there have been significant advances and higher profile in new product development in China. This has been accompanied by huge investment in company infrastructure around the manufacture and diversity of high-quality deer products, from antler, deer blood extracts, wine based around velvet antler and a growing range of well-presented and expensive, keenly sought-after products. The pace of that development is growing.

While home-grown deer products will have the emotional edge for many, there is an increasing opportunity for New Zealand product to be used as a base ingredient in this new wave of manufacturing. Chinese deer farming systems still have a long way to go in terms of increasing numbers, efficiency and volumes, although genetic improvement via AI and ET is being undertaken by some of the leading deer farms in this province.

WDC VII, Russia

This event was organised and funded for all participants through the Altai Kray government, with up to a 250 attendees in an ideal setting in the heart of Maral deer farming country based around the Altai Kray region and the neighbouring Republic of Altai. It featured two days of high-level science and industry presentations



An impressive collection of hard antler at Mr Yu's antler museum in Xifeng.

in Russian with simultaneous English translation. Delegates represented 18 countries including about 20 delegates with New Zealand connection origins, mostly part of the organised tour group.

The event was held in a resort of high class hotels, most of which featured day health spas and treatments which largely involved access to manufactured deer products and various versions of balneotherapy (heat based treatments including baths, saunas, steam treatment, or massage) all utilising a large array of velvet antler- or deer blood-derived products.



Venison delicatessen.

The retail areas of the resort and local shops all featured extensive arrays of deer-based products such as cosmetics, foods, health supplements, cured meats as venison or venison small goods, chocolate, cheeses, clothing, jewellery and so on.

Conference sessions were supported by a strong and diverse trade show of high quality, featuring about 20 major companies from the wider region, manufacturing using antler, deer blood and other co-products.

The conference was also supported with visits to local deer farms which also had their own day or week-long spas and velvet-based treatment programmes. Delegates were offered choice of three major deer product manufacturing operations in the ancient Russian City of Biysk to visit.

Abstracts of most papers have been published (predominantly in Russian) and the executive has compiled a large array of

material and advertising that gives a perspective on the depths and changes within the Altai deer industry in recent years (held at the DINZ office).

Issues and comments

An unexpected development once arriving at conference, was to find that FEDFA (Federation of European Deer Farmers' Associations) had taken the opportunity to meet in Belokurikha before WDC VII (and during ASPT4). It would have been useful to have known this beforehand and to have met as an NZ/Australian delegation more formally. That may be a concept to develop if this international congress event is to continue.

However, numbers of FEDFA delegates stayed on for the WDC VII. That included a pre-congress visit to the combined resort and large deer farming operation of the Maral farm Kaimskoye, Nizhnekayancha village, Altaisky district.

Maral handling at that operation (from mountain muster to sorting and processing for antler removal) is through newly renovated yards. Either a mechanical or hydraulic deer crush is used for traditional velvet removal, i.e. via drop floor crush, with considerable additional constraints (heavy yoke or neck collar) and rope tie downs and then removal. There was reasonably strong reaction from many – including the New Zealand contingent – to description of those methods (not actually demonstrated), including of further blood collection for further use as whole product blood or for later added-value product manufacturing.

As the conference developed, the increasing reference to and reverence of deer blood-based products seemed to add to those in terms of antler removal and farming purposes. DINZ presented at the WDC VII, concentrating on New Zealand legal requirements, legislation, welfare, pain relief, correct use of veterinary medicines and the new Regulated Control System. We took the opportunity to suggest that these standards must become internationally accepted, and part of the culture for velvet antler farming. It was also emphasised that on-farm collection of deer blood for manufacturing was not part of the New Zealand velvet farming vision. Irrespective of this, it was explained that animal identification, health status and disease risk surveillance programmes are an integral part of on-farm deer health management. The presentation was based on the paper given at ASPT4 but with the focus as above.

There is considerably more interest in product development based around blood wines and use of deer blood in spas, and new products beyond the pantocrine extracts and products on seen on display just four years ago in Russia.

There was also increasing discussion about Siberian red deer farming (claimed to be *Cervus elaphus sibericus*, as opposed to the Altai Maral). We got the impression that this could also have been a convention around western Russian deer farming development near Moscow, or the harvest of younger deer antler at the same growth phases as New Zealand production, to better compete with New Zealand product in the Korean/Chinese market. However it was hard to be definitive.

Many of the conversations and papers also referred to the farming of Axis deer (we know these as the subtropical Indian species *Axis axis*, where the animals depicted were clearly the Chinese spotted sika *Cervus Nippon*). There certainly is evidence that numbers of these spotted deer are increasing in the Altai and are run on farm alongside the Maral. ■

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World Deer Farming Congress VII: Final resolution

Leading scientists and specialists in deer breeding, processing of raw materials, deer herding management and health, along with regional and Russian Federation officials attended the congress, running from 20–25 August at Belokurikha, Altai Kray, Russia, **Tony Pearce** reports.

THE MAIN GOAL of the congress was to exchange experience and present the latest developments on the breeding and keeping maral deer, increasing velvet antler production, as well as processing deer products to produce high-value, environmentally safe and biologically active compounds and drugs derived from velvet antler.



The World Deer Congress venue at Belokurikha in the Altai Kray region of Russia.

Following the presentations and plenary sessions, the conference concluded the following:

- The development of antler-based deer herding, processing and extensive use of products is one of the promising factors for maintaining human health.
- Co-operation between producers of food products and pharmaceuticals, research teams and agricultural producers promotes effective management of the industry, increasing the production of high-quality and competitive products of deer herding and more intensive deer farming.
- Development of the domestic market for antler products is impossible without coordination between agricultural producers, processors, scientists, doctors and pharmacists, controlling institutions and authorities.

Congress participants determined general directions for implementing practical tasks for the development of deer breeding and processing of raw materials. Existing and new state support measures for the industry in the Russian Federation considered included:

- increasing the annual subsidy rate for one head of maral to 14,000 roubles (\$NZD \$316)
- a road map for the development of deer breeding in regions of the Russian Federation, consolidated by the Ministry of Agriculture of Russia into a single concept, which, within the framework of a single subsidy of the state programme, will be reflected in compensation for part of the cost of 1kg of sold antlers.
- introducing modern reproductive techniques for Maral deer.
- improving the forage base for deer to increasing efficiency.
- encouraging cooperative associations with the aim of creating modern processing facilities.
- introducing modern biotechnological methods into processing

of raw materials.

- public education about the benefits of deer products.
- In order to maximise the use of deer products for human health, it is necessary to increase:
- application of science, especially in restorative and preventive medicine
 - use of deer products in accordance with the requirements of international legislation, in the training of athletes and for workers in professions with difficult working conditions
 - recognition of the need for scientific support for the development of modern drugs for certain people, including those that promote active longevity.

Also recommended was the introduction of pantoherapy technologies (the therapeutic use of deer-antler velvet and extract) in sanatorium and resort practices overseen by a single federal body. In this regard, the Federal Medical and Biological Agency of the Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation would be asked to explore scientific support for research.

The congress resolved to hold the World Deer Congress every two years, with the next scheduled for 2020 in Slovakia and the following one in 2022 in the Russian Federation Republic of Altai.

- Adapted from the post Congress press release: **www.deercongress.com**
- Source: Ministry of Agriculture of the Altai Territory
- For a general overview of the region and its deer products see <http://en.deercongress.com/media/video/>

New Zealand perspective

The two-year timeframe is too arduous and returning to this region (Altai Republic), while fascinating, is not advancing a greater global perspective for world deer farming. Connection with the Korean market would be more attractive for the New Zealand industry in 2022 or before.



Velvet products on display at Belokurikha.

This year an opportunity was lost in that the Federation of European Deer Farmers' Associations (FEDFA) was hosted through the Russian Deer Breeders' Association with delegates from the FEDFA countries in Belokurikha while ASPT4 was being held in China.

It might have been a useful connection, as apart from excellent

papers from Slovakia, and Latvia on deer nutrition, and assisted reproduction technology, there were no co-ordinated FEDFA presentations at WDC VI.

It was interesting also to learn of and understand the FEDFA Code of Ethics in relation to deer farming (see sidebar).

FEDFA Code of Ethics – I acknowledge:

That I have an obligation to the deer farming industry to promote the highest standards of husbandry and health of the animals under my care, minimise their distress, enhance their natural protection from predators, parasites and diseases and provide them adequate shelter, feed and water and respect the environment at all times.

- That these standards call for an adequate and well-formulated health care programme.
- Procedures, which induce severe pain or distress, will only be performed under the direct supervision of a veterinarian, using anaesthetics or analgesics when appropriate.
- That transportation of my deer will be done humanely, using measures appropriate to the species.
- That I have an obligation to all deer farmers to truthfully share the non-proprietary lessons of my experience. I acknowledge the need to further my own knowledge of deer farming and will support participation by both myself and my employees in programmes for continuing education and communication with other deer farmers.

- I will protect proprietary information and respect confidentiality in all business transactions.
- That I have an obligation to be responsible and accountable in all my business transactions, respecting the international community, observing and keeping all existing laws and ordinances and quality assurance standards and producing high quality products.
- That I have an obligation to ensure that animals sold are honestly represented. I will offer prospective buyers the right to inspect my farm and livestock and I will deliver to the buyer upon requirement or request a veterinarian's statement of the health of the animals at the time of sale.
- I shall adhere to a policy of truth in business transactions and shall promise only that which can be fulfilled.

Accepting these obligations as a member of the world deer farming industry, I shall ensure that my business reflects the highest standards of ethical conduct in dealing with my customers, employees, regulatory agencies and deer farmers around the world. I pledge observance and furtherance of the letter and spirit of the above World Deer Farmers Code of Ethics. ■



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Antler conference links velvet producing nations

About 160 full registrants representing eight countries (New Zealand, Canada, China, South Korea, Australia, United States, Pakistan and Burundi) attended the 4th Antler Science and Product Technology Conference (ASPT4) at Yulong Hot springs Resort, Changchun City, Jilin Province, China on 15–17 August 2018. DINZ Producer Manager, **Tony Pearse** was there.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY of the Chinese Deer Farmers' Association recognised the ASPT4 as helping underpin a long-term, stable and mutually beneficial relationship with other velvet producing countries, and welcomed free and frank exchange of research and technology.

Sika deer farming in China

Professor **Wang Yanmei** reviewed sika farming in China.

Deer have existed for more than 38 million years. In China, the domestic sika deer (*Cervus nippon*) has been kept in captivity for more than 300 years and today the 700,000 sika deer are concentrated mainly in the provinces of Liaoning, Heliogjiang and Inner Mongolia.

There are seven recognised subspecies of sika, named for their geographic origins (*Dongfeng*, *Xifeng*, *Shuangyang*, *Xingkai Lake*, *Siping*, *Aodong* and *Changbai Mountain*). Shuangyang, Dongfeng and Xifeng are the most concentrated areas of deer farming. These are known as the home towns of Chinese sika (or meihalu) deer.

Breeding methods are either small-scale household farm captivity, a combination of captivity and stocking (pen fed) or mountain farming.

Recent developments have seen industrial park bases developed in main provincial centres. Shuangyang was named as the home town of Chinese sika deer in 2016.

In 2015, 5,000 deer farms were formally recognised, including 1,600 deer enterprises registered by the state industrial and commercial departments in Shuangyang.

The annual trading price is set here for fresh velvet antler with an annual transaction volume of about 2 billion yuan (NZ \$453m).

Shuangyang sika are recognised as the world's first farmed deer species. The province produces the greatest amount of high-quality antler and has the highest demand for it and its products. Most are roughly processed: mainly fresh velvet, dry velvet and velvet slices.

There is a recognised lack of scientific data on the efficacy of deer products.

Sika deer co-products are used as key ingredients in food including:

- Heart for health products (deer heart powders and crystals)
- Hard antler (deer antler wine)
- Velvet antler (in capsules, essence, tea, oral liquid, wine, powder)
- Bone (powder, deer bone collagen and calcium, gel, mineral solution)
- Spleen (capsules and granules)

- Fetus (liquid, paste, granules, essence)
- Blood (wine and powder).

Processing systems

- First generation (62%): crude preparations of natural active substances and mixed ingredients
 - Second generation (~25%): biochemical components with targeted therapeutic effects produced by modern biochemical separations and purification technology
 - Third generation (~13%): natural bioactive substances produced by bioengineering technology.
- The entire body of deer can be used – other than velvet, fetus and antler deer bone, which must be approved by the State Food and Drug administration in China. Other items are produced and treated as ordinary foods.

For intensively produced products the quality is still low but is rapidly rising. Varieties are few and the current value add is comparatively low. There is a need for a branded enterprises to lead the development of intensively processed products.

In 2018, the government of Shuangyang set up the China Shuangyang Sika brand operating centre and selected some sika deer enterprises.

The leading company, Dong Ao Deer Industry, will provide the platform and is striving to cultivate influential deer brand enterprises on the provincial and national level within a few years.

Goals

- to create further standards for the deer industry (for farming facilities, production, formal programmes, institutional structures, trade, deer health and environmental outcomes).
- use science and technology to transform deer products into functional foods, gradually from low-end to high-end, high-value products.
- develop tourism associated with high-value products
- to lead future products towards having proven functions, with segmented consumer targets and customised services.



Mr Han's farm – the oldest known sika farm in China.

Jilin Dong Ao Deer Group

The new facilities cover more than 8 hectares, with ¥50m yuan (~\$11m NZ) as registered capital. The group aims to concentrate into standardised and large-scale production, including teaching and scientific research, deer farming, product processing, spread across four specialist companies.

While Dong Ao Deer Group is newly established, 10 students from the Changchun Institute of Science and technology have been sent to Hanguo University in Korea to train R&D talent for added-value product development.

The product development team has a mission to combine basic product R&D with the associated engineering development required to produce in commercial volumes. The group also specialises in high-end packaging and associated marketing material featuring brand origins and provenance of sika or spotted deer as part of the imagery.



Sliced antler drying outside Xifeng market.

Changchun

It's not uncommon among Chinese, if someone mentions Northeast China, for their first thought to be of ginseng and deer antler, especially in relation to human health. The pursuit of good health has led the antler industry in the city of Changchun, Jilin province, to become the major source of the product.

The city's Shuangyang district has a 300-year history of raising sika. In 1990, its antler business got first place at the National Science and Technology Progress awards and it has kept moving ahead since then, claiming 20 other national awards and becoming a national sika deer pilot zone in 2014.

The district now has over 12,000 households in the business managing 220,000 deer (30 percent of the national herd). It has 38 deer product processing companies, producing 130 types of medicines, health care products, and beverages, which do well in South Korea, Japan, Singapore, Hong Kong and some Western European countries. It produces 155t of antler and 2,500t of deer products annually, bringing in ¥250 million (\$54m NZD).

To create a large antler brand, the local government and enterprises have held an annual sika deer festival since 2014, bringing large crowds of tourists interested in health care products and business overseas. This year's sales are up 10 percent from last year.

Industry personnel are also looking at cooperation with research institutes and universities for further development. Liu Qiang, the district head, says they have research contracts with Jilin University, the Zuojia Product Research Institute, and a Singapore lab for more research on dietary supplements. ■



Processed antlers in the city of Changchun, Jilin province Photo: Liu Xiao/ China Daily

Further information:
chinadaily.com.cn/m/jilin/2015-07/06/content_21192849.htm

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Chinese deer industry can do better

By Ann Liu, *Deer Industry News* contributor

“It’s going to be a joint venture, so both sides benefit. I am sure we are on the right track by doing that. This congress did that, showing us that both industries are open to information sharing and working together.” –DINZ science and policy manager Catharine Sayer

A GROUP OF New Zealand deer farmers and scientists attended the 4th International Symposium on Antler Science and Product Technology (ASPT4) in Shuangyang, China, on 15–17 August. The symposium was jointly hosted by the Institute of Special Animal and Plant Sciences of CAAS (Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences) and DINZ. Attendees enjoyed a two-day programme of plenary papers covering antler science, velvet product technology, and velvet products and marketing.



New Zealand delegation at ASPT4 in Shuangyang, Jilin Province, China.

Deer velvet research in China

Papers from these sessions presented intriguing new discoveries, including the potential to arrest memory impairment and the antioxidant and anti-tumour effects velvet antler can have at a cellular level.

DINZ Producer Manager Tony Pearse said, “The work of Dr Li Chunyi and his talented colleagues, and emerging Masters and PhD students from this leading research centre (Institute of Special Animal and Plant Sciences), provided great confidence to the industry. Internationally, most deer velvet research now seems confined to China, Korea and New Zealand via DINZ and VARNZ.”

Bringing research to market

Most of the New Zealand delegation found the research papers interesting, even though the science was a little challenging at times. While delegates could understand what the scientists were focusing on within the velvet industry, it was not always apparent how research outcomes might be commercialised.

However, conference attendee Andrew Fraser from Mt Cecil Trophy Deer in Waimate says opportunities to commercialise research results in China would offer real opportunities to grow New Zealand’s deer velvet supply to China.

“It’s good to see all the research that has been done. My concern is that we now have to look at how to commercialise it, instead of leaving it on the shelf gathering dust. Certainly it shows the amazing potential of deer products in China. If the local [Chinese] Sika farmers can’t supply the products, it is probably an opportunity for New Zealand,” he said.



DINZ Producer Manager Tony Pearse speaking at ASPT4.

Regulatory barriers resolved

China is still mainly a traditional market for consuming sliced deer velvet and a few years behind South Korea in its industry evolution. The latter has been moving from producing mostly traditional products to supplements in convenient formats such as capsules.



Wendy and Andrew Fraser in the ASPT4's deer products display room.

However, the big focus of deer velvet research in China will no doubt flow through to deer product innovation and the Chinese market has the potential to be huge. DINZ has now turned its attention to China, where its major goal is to develop a market for velvet-based Healthy Functional Foods (HFF).

Seamus Harris, DINZ's China region representative, says the latest Chinese regulations make it clear New Zealand velvet is a legitimate Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) ingredient that can be used in TCM and HFF in China.

Previously, the legal status of New Zealand velvet in medicines and functional foods was unclear, which meant Chinese pharmaceutical and HFF companies had been reluctant to invest in food products containing New Zealand velvet. Regulatory barriers have been largely resolved during the past year and a positive outcome is expected.



Seamus Harris, DINZ's China region representative.

Peter Swann from Glenfiddich Deer Farm in Ashburton is optimistic about the industry's future after his second visit to China.

"The Chinese market is big. The biggest problem is that if we move away from traditional slices into powder velvet, it is very hard to distinguish in powder form. The hardest thing is once we start going to the extracts, which will eventually happen in China, then I think the flow [of our supply to China] will be better. At that



Peter Swann at the Shuangyang deer farm.



Catharine Sayer visits the Jilin Dong Ao Deer Industry Group.

CALLING ALL NORTH ISLAND VELVET & HARD ANTLER GROWERS!

NORTH ISLAND VELVET & HARD ANTLER COMPETITION (NIVC)

1 December 2018

Waipa Race Course, Race Course Road, Te Awamutu

As you begin to cut this season's velvet, please consider keeping back your best heads to support and enter into this year's NIVC. The 2018 North Island Velvet & Hard Antler Competition awards dinner is on Saturday 1 December at Waipa Race Course. The viewing and dinner will be held onsite. Viewing is from 5.30pm – 6.15pm and the Awards Dinner starts at 6.45pm. Velvet & Hard Antler needs to be in your local collector's hands for delivery to the competition no later than 5.00pm on Wednesday 28 November. See local collection contacts below.

PGG Wrightson has offered once again to transport velvet from Te Awamutu to Invercargill for the National competition. We thank PGG Wrightson for their ongoing logistical support of this competition.

Contacts

Entry forms will be posted to all previous entrants. If you haven't entered before and would like an entry form or other competition details, please contact **Cenwynn Philip**, Deer Industry New Zealand, Phone **04 471 6110** or email cenwynn.philip@deernz.org; or visit deernz.org/2018-19-velvet-comps and download a pdf for printing or a word document for emailing to enter.

Or contact Craig Hocken: **06 328 7702** or email c.hocken@farmside.co.nz

Local coordinators for velvet & hard antler collection:

Central Regions (Wellington, Manawatu, Wanganui, Taihape and Taranaki)

Craig Hocken: 06 328 7702, 0274 576 388, c.hocken@farmside.co.nz

Hawke's Bay, Gisborne, Wairarapa:

Grant Charteris: 06 856 5747, 027 230 8531, grantcharteris@gmail.com

Te Awamutu/Waikato–King Country:

Steve Borland: 07 872 4679, 027 666 4269, Southerndeer@xtra.co.nz

Thank you to **CK Import Export**, **PGG Wrightson** and **Provelco** for being our sponsors this year. Good luck to all entrants and we hope you can make the awards dinner for a great entertaining night out. Dinner tickets only can be booked via an entry form or direct with Craig Hocken: c.hocken@farmside.co.nz



Diane Bristow (with camera) and Ian Bristow (standing) on a tour bus to deer farms.

point, we will develop specific products for specific problems, such as health issues,” he said.

Speaking at the end of the China trip, DINZ science and policy manager Catharine Sayer was impressed at the diversity of retail products from both deer velvet and the entire deer carcass that Chinese companies were producing. Chinese processing facilities appeared to be extremely well equipped and have significant capacity. New Zealand companies should be aware that their Chinese counterparts have a growing awareness of the possibilities for deer products so the scene is set for both the New Zealand velvet industry and the Chinese deer industry to reap the benefits of product and market diversification.



New Zealand delegation's visit to the wholesale market of traditional deer velvet products in Xifeng, Liaoning province, China.

“It’s going to be a joint venture, so both sides benefit. I am sure we are on the right track by doing that. This congress showed us that both industries are open to information sharing and working together,” Sayer says.

Memories of China

Many of the New Zealand delegates, especially those visiting China for the first time, returned home with memories that will last a lifetime. Ian Bristow, owner of Pinewood Deer Farm in Kaipara, said, “I now understand the Chinese market and China itself far better than I ever did. My first visit to China has been pretty amazing. The people here are friendly – even when we couldn’t speak the same language, they were friendly towards me and [wife] Diane, which we really appreciated. A smile or a laugh is a pretty good way to communicate.” ■

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NVSBS fees: Delivering exceptional value

by Dr Ian Scott, NVSB Chair

NVSBS annual subscriptions will increase from \$125 to \$250/yr. Some may see this as a dramatic increase, so I would like to clarify why the change was needed.

THE NVSB HAS not increased its fees in recent years. Its real running costs have been paid by a mix of direct fees from accredited velvetters and industry-good funding through DINZ. The rationale is that everyone benefits from a well-run velvetting programme, assuring customers (velvet and venison) that animal welfare is a paramount concern of the New Zealand deer industry.

Times are changing, however. Deer farms are now fewer and more commercial with greater numbers of stags. Trained velvetters are registered to do the task better over more deer on the properties concerned. This sometimes involves several farms and multiple sheds. For the NVSB, this means fewer fee-paying accredited velvetters but more facilities that must be checked, which means falling revenue in the face of increased costs.

However the biggest challenge we now face is implementing the requirements of the new Regulated Control Scheme (RCS). We now have to not only check every registered NVSB participant, but also all those who have had smaller animal numbers and used the local vet through facilities of varying quality. This in itself is a sound reason for continuing or increasing industry-good funding.

We are attempting to check and approve *all* facilities over a three-year period, not the previous target of 10 percent per year. This has greatly increased the commitment in terms of time and mileage needs from the nine highly skilled and experienced vet auditors working with the NVSB.

The administration and management time put in by Pam MacLeman and John Tacon in the DINZ office also deserves special mention. We are very fortunate to have their services. Pam and John are totally committed to the success of this industry and have unique skills and knowledge, available nowhere else.

We have had cost estimates for outsourcing the legal audit requirements of the NVSB scheme and the RCS and I can assure you that the estimates make the upcoming fee increases look very modest!

Couple this with the fact that NVSB Board members, auditors and DINZ staff work countless extra hours answering questions, returning phone queries and attending field days to help everyone understand their obligations. Much of this work is uncompensated and farmers are nearly always able to tap into the auditors' vast experience for advice on aspects of the farm's operation or solutions to any problems identified.

You would never get this level of service with a freshly trained auditor from a fisheries or biosecurity background, for example. The system would become another faceless compliance exercise without any of the added value currently available.

That said, to keep our costs within the current budgeted limits, we farmers need to ensure that we are as close as possible

to meeting requirements *when* the auditor arrives. Although our auditors are happy to share their experience when they can, don't lean on them as point-by-point problem finders and solution providers during audit visits. This is not in the job description and it can greatly add to time and costs.

Also try to fit in regarding timing. As each year goes by, it becomes harder to fit multiple audits in the same area on the one day. A special visit means a lot of extra mileage and a big chunk out of someone's day, when they could be earning greater fees doing their normal job.

Finally, if you have corrective actions please own them and return the relevant data or photos to the auditor as soon as possible. We don't want to spend nights on the phone chasing people or doing revisits. Cost recovery in these areas will have to be faced – costs that someone will have to pay. Ask a dairy farmer what it costs if they fail areas on their annual shed inspection!

Our great industry is enjoying sound returns, and we are fortunate to have access to some exceptionally talented individuals who work alongside us, but everything comes at a price. Keep everything in perspective. The NVSB will do all it can to keep costs reasonable and ensure the best, most skilled people are out there doing the job.

I look forward to talking with as many of you as possible and providing industry-based solutions where I can. We want to keep everyone velvetting and supplying a quality product to the world. ■



Ian Scott: Fees are still modest, even after increase.

Reminders for 2018/19 season

The following checklist summarises the Velvet Programme Bulletin, which was sent recently to accredited velvetters under the NVSB scheme.

Regulated Control Scheme (RCS)

The RCS became a law under the Animal Products Act 1999 in August 2017. It applies to any person (not just those who are part of the NVSB) who harvests, stores, handles or transports velvet before it is received by an RMP operator.

Failure to comply with the RCS may result in velvet being ineligible for export. It would also be an offence under section 135 of the Animal Products Act 1999.

Every deer farmer/velvetter/farm with deer is being offered a free audit of their facilities regardless of whether or not they are members of the NVSB.

Once the farm facilities and systems have been signed off, the farmer/velvetter can legally sign off and sell their velvet.

It will take at least three years for the NVSB audit team to audit all velvetting facilities; however farmers/velvetters who have not yet had an audit but who have made an effort to meet the RCS requirements can still sign off their VSD and legally sell velvet.

If they haven't made any effort to make necessary changes and still attempt to sell their velvet as coming from facilities that meet RCS requirements, they would be falsifying their velvet status declarations.

Last season (2017/2018) more than 300 velvet facilities were audited. This season another 300 plus facilities have been selected and those farmers notified. Next season the same will apply. The cooperation from farmers and velvetters is greatly appreciated.

It is the farmer/velvetter's prerogative to opt out of an audit but doing this means that they cannot fill out a VSD and sell their velvet into the food chain for export. Those who opt out are added to the MPI non-compliant list of suppliers.

New velvet agent/buyer AVSDs this season

It is the velvet buyer's responsibility to purchase velvet only from facilities that meet RCS requirements.

It is the responsibility of velvet buyers/agents/depots to collect the *completed and signed* VSD from the farmer when receiving each consignment. All velvet must be tagged in accordance with the NVSB.

During transport or handling, velvet must *remain frozen* the entire time. Frozen velvet can remain outside an RCS-compliant freezer no longer than *four hours*.

Velvet can be transported only in a clean sealed receptacle. (This could be a mobile freezer unit but cannot contain any other products.)

Buyers must keep an inventory of all incoming and outgoing velvet. One up/one down traceability is a requirement for all products (including velvet) under the Animal Products Notice.

Buyers/agents/depots must provide an Agent's VSD (AVSD) to the recipient of every outgoing consignment of velvet.

MPI will monitor VSDs and AVSDs at RMP facilities.

Restrictions on transporting animals with injured horns or antlers

The Animal Welfare (Care & Procedures) Regulations 2018 came into effect on 1 October and one of these (Regulation 39) affects transport of deer with injured antlers.

Specifically, it applies to deer with a bleeding, discharging, or broken (and unhealed) velvet antler, horn, or pedicle (but not when the deer has naturally cast its antlers).

Animals in this condition must be accompanied by a veterinary certificate stating they are fit for transport or specifying conditions that must be complied with to manage the associated animal welfare risks.

For the full regulation, visit: <https://bit.ly/2RnId5N>

New traceability systems for velvet

DINZ is looking at traceability systems for velvet. The current plastic velvet ID tag system is not 100% and breakages are common. Several ideas are being looked at and trials of different tags are planned for the coming velvet season, hopefully with implementation of a new system in the following season.

NVSB Farmer Velvet Antler Removal Manual

The manual has been reviewed and updated to incorporate RCS requirements. Changes have also been made to keep it in line with changing systems and requirements. The NVSB intends to make the manuals available online to all individually certified velvetters in a password-protected format. Hard copies will always be distributed to new entrants to the NVSB programme. In future there will be a cost-recovery charge for hard copy replacement manuals sent to any certified velvetter. Contact NVSB/DINZ to order a hard copy.

NVSB programme annual requirements

- pay annual fee by **20 November** (\$250.00 incl GST)
- annual supervisory vet visit/consultation by **15 December**
- complete velvet record book (including NaturO rings users) and return unused drugs (including local) to supervising vet by **31 March**.

Failure to comply may result in suspension from the NVSB programme, meaning all subsequent velvet removal must be done by a veterinarian.

Contacts

John Tacon (Quality Manager): 04 471 6117,
john.tacon@deernz.org

Pam MacLeman (Quality Systems Administrator): 04 471 6114,
pam.macleman@deernz.org ■

Waikato hosts Next Generation programme

by Phil Stewart, *Deer Industry News* Editor

The NZDFA's 2018 Next Generation programme shifted north to Hamilton on 12–13 September for an intensive programme that packed in plenty. This is the sixth year of the programme, which never has trouble attracting a new crop of young people keen to network and expand their industry knowledge.

WHILE THE DEFINITION of “next generation” was pretty generous in some cases, it was heartening to see many new young faces among the 60 or so participants. NZDFA Executive Committee members Justin Stevens, David Morgan and Grant Charteris worked hard in tandem with DINZ staff to ensure they got great value from the experience.

Every host location plays to its strengths. Last year the programme at Mosgiel featured AgResearch's deer work at Invermay along with the Deer Research Laboratory and Duncan New Zealand's processing plant. This year it was Hamilton's turn to show off and on the first day visitors were treated to tours of two contrasting but highly successful commercial enterprises.

Gallagher visit

Gallagher Global Marketing Manager (Animal Management) Mark Harris is also a DINZ Board member, giving the visitors to the company's headquarters and manufacturing base plenty of extra insights into the kind of technology that is now becoming so integral to deer farming productivity improvement.

Groups were given an extensive tour of the plant, which employs more than 500 locals and over 1,000 world wide. Everything from the precision machine tooling required for even the most basic plastic fence components to assembly of sophisticated electronic circuitry used in technology such as the top of the range TSi and TW weigh scales were on show. Visitors

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David Morgan (standing) leads one of the Next Generation workshop sessions at The Narrows Landing, Hamilton.

were especially impressed by the extreme testing done before hardware is considered suitable for the challenges of a farm environment. The TW weigh scales, for example, can operate between -40°C and >100°C, while surviving drops onto concrete surfaces with no problems.



Gallagher Global Marketing Manager and DINZ Board member Mark Harris (right), explains some of the technology in the machine tool shop at the Gallagher plant.

Animal Data Management Systems Consultant Geoff Pooch explained the scope of the company's EID readers, which are not only NAIT compliant, but are also capable of channelling a plethora of individual animal data – weight gains, body condition scores, drafting for sale and so on.

“We keep upgrading as we learn,” he said.

Weigh scales can be used to track actual growth rates versus targets and measure daily weight gains, which can be graphed for individuals if necessary. “That way it’s easier to intervene if certain animals are lagging behind target weights,” he said.



Electronic componentry being assembled at the Gallagher plant.

Pooch noted that pedigree records can also be fed in, which can give insights into the progeny performance of certain sires (made available through parentage testing and DNA sampling using the Allflex tagging kits).

The tour was a rare opportunity to look at the day-to-day workings of a significant technology company. Particularly impressive was the inclusive work culture where all individuals are encouraged to contribute to identifying and helping solve any problems. The tour was concluded with lunch, generously hosted by Gallagher.

CK Import Export

Following the Gallagher tour, the Next Generation group were taken south to the outskirts of Te Awamutu and the headquarters of CK Import Export Ltd. The company now handles about one-third of New Zealand’s velvet harvest.

It’s a family business, and the visit was hosted by the Shaun and Lisa Stevenson, the son and daughter of company founder and managing director, Colin Stevenson. Shaun is in charge of product development and marketing, while Lisa looks after finance, human resources and other areas of management.

The company has developed an impressive product range. As well as velvet and the various co-products such as blood, tails, pizzles and sinews, it has also ventured into the high-end pet food market with its Platinum Ranch range of dog foods. These include deer jerky, liver and brisket-based products.

Industry briefing

While at CK Import Export, DINZ Market Manager, Asia, Rhys Griffiths and NVSB Chair Ian Scott briefed visitors on the state of the velvet market and our regulatory framework.

Griffiths said that in the past we had little control over what happened in the market but that was starting to change as we move away from commodity to high-end products. “Over the past five years the value of the velvet industry has more than doubled.”



Shaun and Lisa Stevenson, CK Import Export.

This growth has been a result of both the NZ–China and NZ–Korea Free Trade Agreements resulting in a reduction in tariffs. It has also coincided with a growing demand in China for premium products and in Korea for velvet as a health food ingredient.

He said the links between velvet growers and end consumers are strengthening as the influence of “middle men” starts to erode. The partnership with Korean company KGC was a good example of innovation that boosted the market success of two products –

ginseng and deer velvet. “KGC’s story was that they had searched the world and discovered the pristine environment of New Zealand where velvet was produced – they bought into the idea.”

He said the incorporation of velvet into KGC’s Cheong Nok Sam luxury product had been a runaway success, now having accounted for \$130m of turnover in three years.

Following on from the experience with the KGC partnership, other high profile companies such as Yuhan, Lotte and LG were keen to replicate the success from repositioning velvet.

China was a huge potential market, 26 times the size of Korea, Griffiths said. Millennials in that country were well off, well travelled and keen to adapt Western culture within their own traditions – a great platform for new velvet-based products. For example, a test shipment to China of Moa’s “Red Stag” beer incorporating deer velvet had sold out before it got there.

Looking at the Regulated Control Scheme introduced last year, Griffiths said that it may have seemed a hassle for farmers at the time but it had a very positive effect when it comes to promoting velvet as a healthy food.

NVSB update

Ian Scott, Chair of the National Velvetting Standards Body (NVSB), reminded the Next Generation visitors that the system for regulating velvet harvesting allows industry marketers to promote our unique product and welfare standards.

He said MPI was constantly working to set minimum animal welfare standards. In the deer industry’s case, however, the

concern was not that regulations were too tough, but that they might not be tough enough.

“We want to have regular audits to ensure things are being done right. Because we have the NVSB we can maintain control – we don’t have inexperienced auditors policing our standards.

How much is too much?

CK Import Export managing director Colin Stevenson shared some typically forthright observations with the Next Generation visitors that evening as an after-dinner speaker.

He said it used to be thought that much over 400 tonnes of velvet produced would crash the market.

“We were close to 700 tonnes last year and it was all sold to the best of my knowledge. We’ll [produce more] this year.”

Quality was also high, he said. “Our company handled 235 tonnes of velvet this year. Only 15 tonnes of that was BCD grade. Sixty-five percent of our tonnage was Super A grade.”

Stevenson said the type of velvet to avoid was the really big stuff. “It’s hard to process – hard to get the moisture out of it, and it can go bad on you. So you’ve got a risk. It’s easy enough for us to turn this into powder, but the problem is convincing these big companies that there’s nothing wrong with this big Super A, but they are getting a different raw material ingredient than they are used to.”

On the subject of big velvet, Ian Scott commented that breeding for velvet weight was approaching the physiological limits of stags to be able to bear the large heads now possible.



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Bigger isn't always better.

“Bigger isn't always better. If we tinker too much with the system we'll end up with what we deserve, not what we wish for.” He said the dairy industry was also seeing the results of pushing too hard for a trait. “You can't pinch too much energy out of the system and put it into milk or antler. Don't be blinkered about what we want to achieve.”

Stevenson said his company already exports velvet in powder form, but they batch test for amino acids and proteins. “If you process it too long the proteins and amino acids drop off – it's easy to see if that's happened.”

Of the total New Zealand production, about 400 tonnes fell into the traditional Korean grade category, he said. About half of this was consumed in Korea in the food sector, while the other half was split between Taiwan, China, Hong Kong and smaller markets.

“We probably aren't overproducing in the health food sector yet. If our production keeps growing by six-to-ten percent annually that could change, but I don't see [oversupply] problems in the market this year. Production in Australia and Canada has fallen and we've taken up some of the slack – it's hard to know what level we can reach before we hit the wall.”

He echoed Rhys Griffiths' comments that companies that are similar in size or even bigger than KGC, such as Yuhan Corporation and LG Life Science were now starting to add deer velvet to some of their products. The key was to select a partner that was prepared to spend enough money promoting velvet-based products.

It was possible to export powder into the US market, but it was expensive getting in there, he said.

Looking at healthy food products, Stevenson said Yuhan Corporation (which has a memorandum of understanding with Alpine Group, DINZ and AgResearch) was looking at immune

function and anti-fatigue products, and these had some science behind them.

He knows of two companies in China that between them use 150 tonnes of frozen equivalent New Zealand velvet in their products. “We can't export direct to them yet. That's where we need to be.”

Take your documentation seriously

Stevenson was also concerned that the VSD form required of farmers and the AVSD forms required of the velvet company agents, are completed correctly. “Everyone is legally required to put the tag number series they operate with on the form. You might think it's a pain, but it is so important. We had an MPI monthly inspection recently. They looked at one 14-tonne container of product going to China and demanded every VSD form relating to that product. It took our office girl just 10 minutes because no-one supplies us without those [tag] numbers.”

Stevenson said there was \$1.8m worth of velvet involved. “Think of the risk if we didn't have the right documentation. If I can't prove where that product comes from, they have the right to purple-dye the velvet – then I wouldn't be able to sell it. That's why it's so important to get this stuff right.”

“You employ me”

DINZ CEO Dan Coup kicked off day two of the programme by with a reminder of his industry service role: “I work for you guys.”

He explained that DINZ works for both farmers, and marketers and exporters, while supporting DFA initiatives such as the Next Generation programme.

Reviewing the industry he noted that an annual kill of 300,000 was low but also seemed like the “new normal” and was underpinning the high schedule. It seemed the reduction of capital hinds had ceased and the national herd was stabilised, possibly with an uptick in numbers. Some growth may have been accounted for by the increase in the velvetting herd.

Coup said the vision of a “confident and growing industry” was starting to be realised. “We're feeling okay now!”

He briefly reported on progress against the four sub-sections of the industry vision.

Premium positioning

The Passion2Profit summer Cervena® programme in Europe had made a promising start, although there was a long way to go. “We are selling about 100 tonnes into this segment. We want to go past 1,000 tonnes.”

The aim to get premium positioning for New Zealand velvet was also being realised in Korea (see comments above from Rhys Griffiths).

RAROA STAG SALE | Sunday 16th December at 9.30am
 3yr stags and 1yr hinds contact Bill 0272870596

Market diversification

This is also happening, with reliance on the Eurozone for venison declining while sales into the United States grow. There are also “old school” efforts being made to diversify venison sales into Asia.

Sustainably grow on-farm value

Coup said most farmers surveyed think their businesses are becoming more productive. Carcass weights are improving and there are signs fawn survival rates are headed in the right direction.

A cohesive and respected industry

Advance Parties are helping connect farmers, while there are signs confidence has turned around with fewer farmers intending to downsize than upsize.

Be proud!

Dr Jacqueline Rowarth, former Agribusiness professor and chief scientist for to the Environmental Protection Authority, gave the next generation of deer farmers plenty to feel good about when it comes to their industry and its place in the world.

In a bracing rebuttal of some of the negativity surrounding farming, the science advocate and agri-environmental analyst made the following points:

- Always base what you say on science and the facts.
- New Zealand already adds plenty of value to its primary production – we’re the world’s biggest exporters of venison, dairy products and sheep meats.
- The primary sector is responsible for 61 percent of New Zealand’s export income, with agriculture’s share of land 40–46 percent.
- Despite appearances, dairying covers less than 7 percent of New Zealand’s landscape while 32 percent is in the DoC estate – we wouldn’t be able to afford to have such a large estate without agriculture to support the economy.
- The common belief that horticulture/cropping will use less nitrogen and other nutrients than livestock farming is a fallacy. Some crops such as avocados, potatoes and onions use more than pastoral agriculture.
- Stories about risks to human health from nitrate poisoning have been overstated.
- It’s untrue that no “chemicals” are used in organic farming.
- Water quality is drinkable in “most of our rivers”.
- The link between dairying and decline in native fish species has been overstated.
- Protecting our “social licence to operate” requires us to develop trust and a sense of fairness with our communities. But being transparent also opens us up to scrutiny via social media.
- Food now accounts for a declining percentage of household expenditure – if venison had been keeping up with the CPI, the schedule would be topping \$16/kg now!
- Sustainability and high productivity are compatible: Rowarth’s partner, Ian Scott, achieves three times the district average for milksolids production on their dairy farm, while losing (leaching) half the average nitrogen for the district and achieving improved soil organic matter levels.
- Good leadership requires the ability to energise and enthuse others and a good dose of EQ.

- Leadership requires practice.
- When setting goals, think about KPIs such as production per hectare or per kg nitrogen lost.
- Also consider the risks to your business: climate, lack of shelter, soil losses, water quality and the social licence to operate.

Farm ownership options

When you’re young, farm ownership can seem a very high mountain the climb. Rabobank’s Anna Cuming talked about what it takes from the bank’s perspective when considering a proposal. She said the bank looks for:

- farming skills
- a good track record
- business acumen and financial reporting abilities
- past financial performance
- standing in the community
- ability to service debt and consider risk
- a robust sensitivity analysis
- any capital backing (including support from parents).

She said the bank rates personal attributes highly. “We’d prefer someone with the right attributes over someone with \$100k cash and the wrong attributes.”

Cuming said ownership structures were changing, with corporate involvement growing. Equity partnerships were getting more common, with some giving farm managers an opportunity to get a stake in ownership. Leasing and lease-to-buy were also options.

Family farms were still the industry mainstay, but the businesses were growing to stay viable and even family farms were



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developing more corporate governance structures.

“Family investors want a return from the farm – parents for lifestyle reasons and and non-farming siblings to help support their own enterprises.”

Cuming said having a group of family members/investors involved in a farm business meant the strengths of different people could be tapped. She reminded her audience that it was also important to have an end-point in mind when setting up an ownership structure – for example, if people wanted to exit their interest in the business further down the track.

- For a podcast by Rabobank’s Blake Holgate about the deer industry building on its success: see <https://bit.ly/2y5fjPO>

Workshop sessions

Participants spent the rest of the available time in two workshop sessions. The first focused on animal health, genetics, feeding and environment as part of a modern effective deer farming system. Highlights included:

Animal health:

- Health is strongly linked to good environmental management.
- Internationally, New Zealand is among the most highly rated for its animal welfare while being one of the lowest users of antibiotics in agriculture (only Norway and Iceland use less).
- We need to be able to demonstrate our good practices in an accountable way – a formal Deer Health Review (noted by one speaker to be a “fantastic” resource) is the way to do this.
- For further information: deernz.org/animal-health-review

Genetics:

- Accelerate genetic gains through technologies like AI.
- Reduce the generation interval by retiring sires and replacing with younger better BV stags sooner rather than later.
- Information on genetic merit must be objective – Deer Select is an authoritative source.
- Don’t be afraid to ask breeders about what they can offer, what are their breeding objectives (and ensuring they align with yours) and for proof of the genetic merit of their sires.
- For further information: deernz.org/deerselect

Feeding:

- Be prepared for extremes such as drought.
- Try new pastures and forages to improve performance, with a view to better productivity and longevity.
- There are great information resources on feeding available through the Deer Hub.
- Success is 90 percent feeding and 10 percent breeding.
- Palm kernel offers an opportunity as a strategic supplement but also presents risks because of public perceptions.
- For further information: deernz.org/deerhub/feeding

Environment:

- Document your planning and progress.
- An environment plan also presents a marketing opportunity.
- Catchment groups and regional councils are good sources of local advice.
- Local regulations can be complex and also limit innovation.

- While retiring areas and planting removes some land from productive use, it can also add value to your business overall.
- For further information: deernz.org/environmental-tools
The second workshop looked at the future, with views on how the DFA fits into the picture. There were calls for the Next Generation to have a presence on the NZDFA Executive Committee, perhaps through some sort of internship, and for the DFA to play a bigger role in connecting Advance Parties with the wider deer farming community.

Participants felt the DFA could also do more to help members with new challenges such as the Regulated Control Scheme and there was continuing interest in succession planning.

Looking at the wider environment, the workshop groups highlighted the need for the industry to properly tell its story and engage with their markets in a positive way.

Good science, skilled staff, better education of rural professionals, productivity improvement and creating good pathways into the industry for young people were among the other priorities discussed.

Nuffield Scholar shares experience

FMG’s Jason Rolfe, who has been on three overseas trips as part of a Nuffield Scholarship, shared some insights with the Next Generation group.

On a visit to China he was interested to see that cash and cheques had fallen out of favour in commerce, with online payments via WeChat and simiar apps the much-preferred option. He said buying online shortens the supply chain and enables better contact between food producers and their customers.

In China at least, it was imperative to have your online sales set up to work on mobile devices.

In China, 75 percent of smartphone owners had bought a grocery item via their phone, whereas only 21 percent of New Zealand smartphone owners had.

Rolfe said bricks and mortar stores still had a role in retail, although it was mainly so people could come in and look at goods first hand – they would then go away and order online.

He said buying via a mobile device opened up a tremendous channel for telling the story of your product. Information such as the farm and region of origin, feed given, veterinary treatments and how much the farmer has been paid can all be included in the product story. Consumer ratings can also be collected through online sales – another powerful marketing tool, he said.

Once a product line was gaining traction through online sales, it could attract the attention of e-commerce giants like Amazon or Alibaba, which had the strength to source their own product and create a budget brand.

- The 2018 NZDFA Next Generation programme was sponsored by **Gallagher, CK Import Export, Rural Livestock, PGG Wrightson and FMG.** ■



Jason Rolfe: Essential to have your online marketing platform mobile-friendly.

Deer courses under way

All three of the NZ Certificate in Agriculture Livestock Husbandry (Level 3) (Deer) courses are now under way with 14 enrolled throughout the country and more set to join a course being run at Taupo this month.

RACHAEL HANDY, PRIMARY ITO's Sector Manager (Sheep, Beef and Deer) says that as well as the time spent in class working through their evidence portfolios, the trainees have been out and about with their tutor, John Fahey, visiting different deer operations and hearing from the managers/owners about their farming systems.

The Geraldine class visited Kelly Bennett at Deer Genetics Ltd; the Te Anau course is being held on Pāmu (Landcorp) Stuart and the class has also visited Pāmu Mararoa. The Taupo class had great delight in being entertained by Murray Matuschka, a pioneer in his own right, full of insight and experience.

“It is great to see the interest and passion of these young people coming through the industry and let’s hope with the support of Deer Industry New Zealand as well as all of the other tools and resources available, they see [the deer industry] as a credible and viable future pathway,” Handy says.

Primary ITO has had expressions of interest to run more of these programmes in Taupo and Central Otago in late Feb/March 2019. If you or your staff are interested in the NZ Certificate in

Agriculture Livestock Husbandry (Level 3) (Deer) qualification, please contact Rachael Handy on 027 438 3196 or rachael.handy@primaryito.ac.nz ■



Murray Matuschka (orange vest) welcomes learners from the Taupo-based class to his property.



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Seasonality and skin quality being studied

by Phil Stewart, *Deer Industry News* Editor

If you want to make a nice top-end handbag out of a deer pelt, you need large, flawless areas of nicely grained leather to work with. The problem is, only a small percentage of skins from New Zealand farmed deer can match this requirement.

A NEW RESEARCH programme being supported through the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment's Strategic Science Investment fund is seeking to help the industry improve the quality of deer skins and add more value to an already valuable animal. The New Zealand Leather and Shoe Research Association (LASRA) is undertaking the three-year study.

The work is being led by senior LASRA scientist, Sue Cooper, who also worked on quality issues as part of the Deer Progeny Test (DPT).

LASRA Director Geoff Holmes says a good deer skin can be worth \$80 or more, but damaged skins are virtually worthless. While a large area of fault-free skin is desirable, bigger is better only to a point. Holmes says larger deer also have a coarser grained leather which can have irregularities that reduce the value of the skin.

He says the results of the DPT were sobering for a "leather man" such as himself. "We used to think we had a lot of control over the quality of the leather through processing, but [the DPT] showed us that a lot of this is controlled by the animal."

Holmes says a lot of the damage to deer skins happens in the last three days of a deer's life, close to the slaughter plant and processing. "This can be frustrating given the good life the animal has lived up to that point." He says fresh damage to skins is often correlated to meat quality issues. Older scars from "last year's fights" were not associated with carcass damage.

Industry income from deer skins and leather has halved in the past five years from about \$24m to \$12m. Holmes says that while that was partly a reflection of the drop in numbers, market factors were also involved. "A drop-off in demand in China for luxury items, including those made from deer skin, has had a big effect on prices," he says. However there are signs of a recovery, he added.

Cooper says seasonality is an important part of the research. "There has been very little work done on deer skin quality, so it's quite an open field," she says.

"The strong seasonality of deer is unique among farmed animals. In stags, the same collagen that is in the skin is also used in developing antlers, so that could affect skin quality – we need to have a closer look at that. We don't know how levels of collagen affect things like thickness and quality."

Links and interactions between skin thickness, and the size of the animal, gender, age at slaughter, season or genetic factors will be explored. The impact of breed would also be looked at, Cooper says. "We'll be looking at the impact of red x wapiti cross on quality and composition."

Cooper says the study will analyse levels of faults in deer skins through different seasons, but also the changes in skin structure and composition through the year. "There's been very little work in this area. One study showed there was less carcass damage in males when they were in velvet because they are being protective of their growing antler at that stage."

Holmes says lack of traceability in the past has limited their ability to link skin damage to on-farm management, but the advent of NAIT will make that easier. In addition, Pāmu stamped its deer skins, which could provide another important way to link skin quality and management or seasonality. He says the advent of deer milking by Pāmu could provide further insights. "It would be interesting to see if the animals that are used to being regularly handled have less skin damage."

While there are currently no direct financial incentives for farmers to protect and enhance deer skin quality, Holmes says that because there is a strong association between carcass and skin quality, it is likely one will follow the other. "It would seem reasonable that the added value [from skins] could be passed on to farmers, given the difference between top skins and those that are shipped to China as commodities." ■



Top-line Prada bags like this require large areas of fault-free, well-grained deer leather.

New MPI search powers: DFA's response

by John Somerville, Chair NZDFA Executive Committee

The DFA is very concerned with the sudden passing of a Bill that gives MPI wide-ranging powers of search when investigating possible NAIT infringements (National Animal Identification and Tracing Amendment Bill 2018).



John Somerville:
Concerned about lack of consultation.

THERE WAS NO consultation with the deer, beef or dairy industries prior to its passing. It is a knee-jerk reaction to the *M. bovis* crisis, which has been hamstrung by poor (and in many cases non-existent) movement records, particularly in regards to the dairy calf trade.

When NAIT was set up it had two main functions. The first was to ensure animal traceability from the farm to market; the second was to record the movements of all cattle and deer between farms so in the case of a disease outbreak it could be contained quickly.

Unfortunately there was a strong emphasis on compliance for animals arriving at meat processing plants but none for animals moving from farm to farm. A subtle compliance approach should have been taken by periodically stopping trucks or cars with trailers moving stock, checking the ASD forms and following up to see if movements were being put through NAIT. This wouldn't have required huge resources to have achieved results because news of the checks would soon have spread by word of mouth or regional advertising. The prospect of random checking could have made people tighten up their compliance and NAIT would have probably found that a lot of untagged calves were being moved around the country.

From nothing to a big hammer

But instead we go from nothing to the big hammer. Before the government action I asked Michelle Edge (then OSPRI CEO) why they had not attempted any compliance surveillance for stock movement. She responded that it was too hard to check animals unless a truck was unloaded and also that the ASD forms lacked information such as the NAIT number of where the stock were being moved to.

This highlighted how outdated the ASD forms are. You shouldn't have to unload a truck as they should have forms for all animals on board which could be recorded and checked to ensure that the movements are recorded on NAIT. In addition, they would have soon found many loads, particularly in trailers, contained untagged animals.

We urge deer farmers to ensure that their animals are tagged and registered and stock movements are put through in that 48-hour period required. If you do it quickly you won't forget and when stock arrive, make sure you respond when the confirmation request is sent.

Bloody mindedness or slackness can cause huge problems when we have an outbreak. It is also why we face this overreaction from the Government.

I am concerned that this new compliance requirement might concentrate on farm animal records and still miss those untagged animals that never appear anywhere in people's NAIT records. If they haven't been recorded as they move from farm to farm, that is the compromising part when you have a disease outbreak.

- For further information about the changes: <https://bit.ly/2BXd7wo>
- For a perspective from Beef+ Lamb New Zealand: <https://beeflambnz.com/news-views/clarifying-na-it-changes> ■

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Velvet industry pioneers pass away

Two pioneers of the New Zealand deer velvet industry have passed away within a fortnight of each other.

RAY JENNINGS, WHO farmed at Awarua, near Bluff, since the mid 1960s, died on 26 August following an illness. He and wife Irene broke in a tough, trackless 1,200-hectare block of “tussock and bogs”, eventually transitioning in the 1970s from sheep and beef to exclusively deer. The venison and velvet operation, with a herd of around 4,000, is run today by their son Chris and wife Kelly.

The deer business was built up the hard way, based partly on deer trapped near Lake Hauroko in Fiordland. (Ray had half shares in a deer capture business.)

Ray was one of the first to develop red x wapiti hybrids. Irene recalls they had to keep their four wapiti bulls out of sight “in the garage” in the early days when it was still not permissible to farm the animals.

She says Ray was a “workaholic” who would often work until 10 or 11 at night and expect others around him to match his efforts.

Former Southland Farmers CEO Russell Cull, who worked with Ray from the mid 1970s, says Ray proved that deer could be successfully farmed in the area. “Ray was a good stockman and selected carefully for both velvet and venison traits. He was truly a pioneer of the industry.”

Russell says Ray Jennings was “one of life’s characters”, who achieved a lot of firsts in the industry, including the development of deer yards and handling facilities.

Velvet industry veteran **David Ward** passed away in Hawke’s Bay on 10 September. David’s 30+ year career in the deer industry began in 1975 at a time when deer farming was becoming commercialised. His involvement in sourcing stock formed liaisons between Russell Cull and Jeff Erskine of Southland Farmers and Ron Schroeder of Canterbury Farmers – PGG.

After setting up many large-scale deer farms in the North Island, David was instrumental in establishing the first New Zealand commercial velvet pool in 1977 for Hawke’s Bay Farmers

(HBF). This first pool was a modest 1.8 tonnes, but it wasn’t long before the size of the pools grew many fold.

As a company deer manager, David was involved in at least seven mergers, starting with HBF–Dalgety and later PGG and Wrightson. He also held the position of manager for Challenge Deer. Previous to David’s last position as PGG Wrightson’s North Island Velvet Coordinator based in Hawke’s Bay, he was GM of PGG Velpool. At various times, David’s work took him to Russia, Poland and Asia – even as a consultant to Eskimo herders in Alaska.

Following his retirement from PGG Wrightson in 2007, David continued to pursue his interests in his Hawke’s Bay winery and recreational fishing. ■



Ray Jennings (left) and David Ward during the early days of the velvet industry. Photo and background information courtesy of Tony Cochrane.

Benchmarked production and Johne’s disease info on your deer

Season	Carcass weight (young deer)
2013	52
2014	53
2015	55
2016	51
2017	60

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Deer section in KPI booklet

A new resource designed to help farmers measure their farm business performance has been launched by the Red Meat Profit Partnership (RMPP).

THE KEY PERFORMANCE Indicators (KPI) booklet includes detailed descriptions of 16 core KPIs, example calculations and resources for farmers who are considering how improvements can be made to their farm business.

The KPIs, which were developed in conjunction with industry professionals and farmers, include lambing percentage, ewe flock efficiency, calving percentage, fawn weaning percentage, gross farm revenue per effective hectare and liveweight gain.

Malcolm Bailey, chair of the RMPP, says understanding how a farm business is performing is critical to making decisions on how to improve productivity and profitability.

“It is important farmers know where they are now, so they are able to set targets and then see how their actual performance measures up against these targets.

“Many measures can be used to analyse the performance of a farm business, but we encourage farmers to use the core set of KPIs in this resource as a starting point to understand how their farm business is performing.”

KPIs are sometimes referred to as benchmarks, Bailey says.

“Although the two use the same measures, their purposes are different.” He says KPIs are used for on-farm targets such as increasing the weaning percentage, or hind herd efficiency.

“Benchmarks are used to help them to compare their businesses against other farms, for example, against a region or other farms of the same farm class.

“KPIs and benchmarking both help farmers identify where they are doing well and where they need to improve.

“KPIs can help farmers identify the great things they are already doing and the things where there are opportunities to make positive changes.”


For further information:

<https://beeflambnz.com/knowledge-hub>

DINZ has a supply of hard copies. If you'd like one, contact innes.moffat@deernz.org.

Alternatively, a copy can be downloaded directly from:

<https://beeflambnz.com/knowledge-hub/PDF/kpi-booklet>



12 KPI Booklet Red Meat Profit Partnership
HIND HERD EFFICIENCY

What is this?
An indicator of herd fertility, feed quantity and quality, and management practices.

Why is it important?
Kg of product produced per kg of productive unit is the fundamental driver of breeding efficiency and profitability. Maximising the number of live fawns born, minimising losses through ill health while ensuring optimum nutrition to achieve growth potential will assist profit.

Data inputs

- ▶ Number of fawns weaned
- ▶ Average fawn weight at weaning (kgLW)
- ▶ Number of hinds mated
- ▶ Average hind weight at mating (kgLW)

What does this mean?
For every kilogram live weight of hinds mated, 0.44 kilograms live weight of fawns were weaned (i.e. 44% of total weight of hinds mated).

How do I compare?
An indicator of good performance from AgResearch data is 51%.

How can I use this?
Fawns are capable of rapid growth in the summer and autumn and weaner weight at 1 June will be a major factor in determining spring weights due to lower growth potential during the winter. Weaner weight at weaning (1 March) provides a measure that can greatly assist planning feeding and health programmes for the winter.

Example

Number of fawns weaned	400	
multiplied by	x	
Average fawn weight at weaning (kgLW) ¹	56	
Total weight of fawns weaned (kgLW) (a)	=	22,400
divided by	-	
Number of hinds mated ²	420	
multiplied by	x	
Average hind weight at mating (kgLW)	120	
Total weight of hinds mated (kgLW) (b)	=	50,400
Hind Herd Efficiency = (a) ÷ (b) x 100	=	44%

How can I improve?

Top three things to consider

1. Ensure optimal feed quality and quantity is available over peak lactation and through the autumn
2. Ensure hind BCS⁴ at mating is at least 3.5
3. Ensure adequate feed is available during pregnancy, especially the third trimester

See the following resources for more information:

Q. www.deernz.org/deer-facts

- Management for profit: Setting reproduction targets
- Management for profit: Best practice management of pregnant hinds

Q. www.deernz.org/deerhub

- Deer - Reproduction

Definitions

1. Actual weights if possible, as at 1 March, otherwise estimate
2. **kgLW:** Kilograms of Live Weight
3. **Hinds mated:** Exclude in-fawn hinds sold. Include in-fawn hinds purchased. Include scanned/pregnancy tested does sold or kept. Do not adjust for deaths.
4. **BCS:** Body Condition Score

Part of the new KPI booklet launched by the Red Meat Profit Partnership.



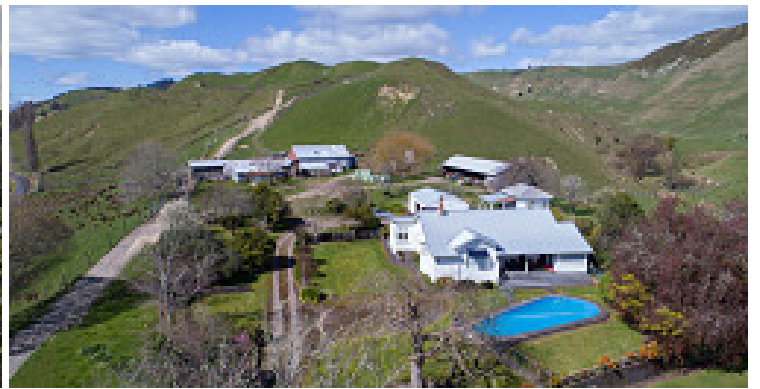
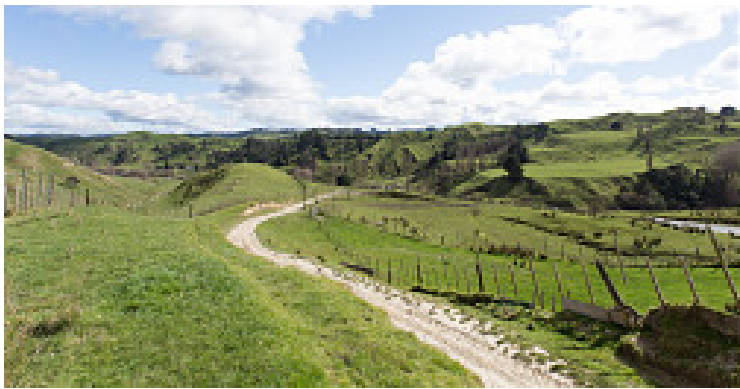
HYUN DAE DEER PRODUCTS LTD
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-Licensed Exporter -Mpi Approved Processing facility

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Deer, sheep and beef farmers - 461ha

386 Makirikiri Valley Road, Upokongaro, Whanganui



Attention sheep, beef and deer farmers! 386 Makirikiri Valley Road is a large established deer unit barely 15 minutes drive from Whanganui city.

On the open market for the first time in almost 100 years, this farm is made up of just over 461 hectares, with a complementary mix of flat, medium and steeper hill country. Essentially broken into two fairly even blocks, available as one or two units. Both blocks include, a house and sheep yards, with the southern block containing most of the farm infrastructure, being: Homestead, wool-shed, implement shed, single-mans quarters, cattle yards and deer handling facilities.

Almost entirely deer fenced, this property is currently being run as a genuine sheep and beef breeding operation, but could be converted back to deer with only limited infrastructure change required. The property has received regular, documented, fertiliser and weed control over many years.

Located approximately 4km from the local primary school and secondary bus route at the Upokongaro Village. This property poses a great opportunity as a stand-alone unit, or if sold as two blocks could be an ideal first farm.

For Sale by Deadline Private Treaty
(will not be sold prior)
2pm, Monday 12th November 2018
208 Victoria Avenue, Wanganui, New Zealand

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BARTLEY REAL ESTATE LTD, BAYLEYS,
LICENSED UNDER THE REA ACT 2008

bayleys.co.nz/**3000668**

Property Details

Land	461.5059ha (being 220.4ha and 240.9ha approx)
Grazing	Deer, cattle, sheep
Opportunity	Can be sold as two farms
Location	15 minutes drive to Whanganui
Dwellings	Main farmhouse and a cottage

