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Deer Industry News

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF DEER INDUSTRY NEW ZEALAND AND THE NEW ZEALAND DEER FARMERS' ASSOCIATION

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Cover: Photographer Nikki Astwood has picked out contrasting colours and shapes to pique interest in this Cervena® promotional photo. See page 10.

Deer Industry News is published by Deer Industry New Zealand in February, April, June, August, October and December. It is circulated to all known deer farmers, processors, exporters and others with an interest in the deer industry. The opinions expressed in *Deer Industry News* do not necessarily reflect the views of Deer Industry New Zealand or the New Zealand Deer Farmers' Association.

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Fit for a better world

In December, with the support of Prime Minister Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern and Minister of Agriculture Hon Damien O'Connor, the Primary Sector Council released its vision for the agriculture, food and fibres sector of Aotearoa New Zealand – *Fit for a Better World*.



Lain Jager.

THIS SHARED VISION for our farmers, growers, fishers, makers and crafters celebrates our high-value produce and the increasingly sophisticated farming, processing and marketing systems, and technologies we use.

Our economic challenge – and opportunity – is to position ourselves to meet the demand for high-value food and fibres by discerning global consumers.

In our consultation with the sector, we heard loud and clear the themes that continue to play a crucial part in the success of the sector. These include sustainability, grower-to-plate storytelling, pasture-fed protein, volume to value, excellence in water management, and consumer expectations and desires.

In a world seeing a rise of synthetic, highly processed products with no link to heritage or provenance, we have the potential to produce truly outstanding, healthy, natural products. If delivered through *genuinely* sustainable production systems, these will be increasingly valued by discerning consumers.

A good example for the deer industry is Passion2Profit, which is improving farming practices and productivity, and helping the industry to respond to market demands.

Fit for a Better World is an anchor for strategy and investment. It's a guiding star for decision-making and a pathway to sustainable prosperity. It provides the foundations and a framework for future producers, innovators and sustainable businesses to grow from.

A new government-industry partnership – Food and Fibres Aotearoa New Zealand – will be established to bring the vision to life. Work is underway to get this group up and running, and I look forward to sharing more details. The Primary Sector Council is also working on our final report with recommendations, due for completion in March 2020.

Our natural capital – our land, oceans and climate – represents a powerful source of sustainable competitive advantage.

Fit for a Better World is grounded in the Māori concept of Taiao – a uniquely Kiwi approach to embedding environmental health and wellbeing into our practices.

It describes a deep relationship of respect and reciprocity with the natural world. It's about making sure those working on the land and in the water make determined efforts to leave the environment no worse than they found it, and ideally better.

Many New Zealand food and fibre producers are already well on the pathway to producing ethical and sustainable products that recognise sustainable, regenerative practices as fundamental.

Our deer industry is no exception – it's front and centre of the new vision by offering world-class and high-value products with strong environmental and welfare credentials.

We believe *Fit for a Better World* reflects the broad, diverse nature of the agriculture, food and fibres sector. While the language may be new, the idea of producing food and fibres in balance with nature is absolutely understood and embraced by our agriculture, food and fibres sector.

Through *Fit for a Better World* we now have a way to wrap our "New Zealandness" around every food and fibre product we produce. The vision is the start of a journey that we believe the deer industry, and all New Zealanders, can be part of.

For more: fitforabetterworld.org.nz and facebook.com/FitForABetterWorld ■

– Lain Jager, Chair, Primary Sector Council

Welcome to the heartland!

The Annual Deer Industry Conference heads to heartland Southland in 2020. It will be based in Invercargill with the full programme beginning at 10.00am on Tuesday 19 May, preceded by NZDFA's 45th AGM at 9.00am. (The theme is a work in progress. Currently being considered are: *Embracing Challenge* or *2020: The focus is on you!*). Watch this space!

THE INDUSTRY HAS changed dramatically since the event was last in Invercargill 12 years ago – as have conference programmes and objectives. (This year's programme will be finalised next month.)

To streamline the event and encourage attendance we are designing a well-structured two day programme with agribusiness and people well-being the focus on each day, on Tuesday 19 and Wednesday 20 May.

We have been welcomed into the extraordinary surroundings at one of New Zealand's most exciting and unique conference venues, the Bill Richardson Transport World (photo below). Top-class conference rooms, catering and a dedicated display area will be set off with the Silver Fern Farms Welcome function on the Tuesday evening and Alliance Group's formal deer industry awards dinner on the Wednesday.

The P2P programme also makes an appearance with a Technical Workshop day to be held at the Ascot Hotel on Thursday 21 May. This event, while also targeted at the deer farming communities of Southland, Fiordland and Otago, is also open to all delegates and has no associated attendance fees.

- The DFA will hold a pre-conference Branch Chairs, Executive Committee and SAP meeting from early afternoon on Monday 18 May and host an informal dinner with the DINZ Board and DFA leaders at the Ascot Hotel, the main accommodation venue for delegates (many other options are also available).
- Following the success of engaging skilled MC Jamie Fitzgerald in 2019, we are delighted to confirm that Sarah Perriam (Perriam Media) has agreed to take on this role.
- For the seventh year, the event will be live streamed, also with Perriam Media. This will allow interactive commentary and provide a permanent record on the DINZ website (see deernz.org/2019-deer-industry-conference-proceedings).
- We have secured the impressive talents of **Kaila Colbin** as the featured keynote speaker (<https://boma.global/>). Kaila, a futurist and founder of Global Boma, was a powerful speaker at the 2017 conference and is committed to sharing “transformational learning experiences for a smart, ethical future”. Boma New Zealand supports Aotearoa's business leaders, government, educators, entrepreneurs, young people and changemakers to navigate our rapidly changing world.

- The business session will feature P2P, venison and velvet marketing sessions with keynote speakers from the international venison and velvet markets and will also focus on deer industry environmental initiatives and updates with the DINZ Board and Executive.
- The conference will also feature a further 3–4 keynote speakers.
- DFA and DINZ leaders are also keen to host discussion on rural resilience (mind and body), especially dealing with the constant societal pressures that impact on all our day-to-day lives.
- We know how much conference goers enjoy time together and this year we are planning something a little different. The welcome function opens the event on the evening of Tuesday 19 May and will allow delegates unimpeded access to the World of Transport Museum, wearable arts and other features of this extraordinary venue. A mildly competitive event will also feature. The annual awards dinner is on 20 May. We are keen to encourage deer farming couples, Next Generation and past and current deer farming people to celebrate and enjoy this 45th annual deer industry conference.
- Registrations and conference management will be supplied by Wellington-based Melissa Bähler, via Positive Events Plus and aided by the DFA Executive Committee and DINZ staff. Melissa is also the events manager for the NZ Institute of Primary Industries Management and well versed in rural and professional conferences.
- To encourage attendance, a 35% discount will be offered on full registration for the second (or more) registered delegate from the same farming entity.
- Registration fee and the support from both new and well-established conference sponsors are being finalised. These, and further programme and speaker details, will be publicised in March's *Stagline-online*, on the conference website and in April's *Deer Industry News*. ■

For further information:

Tony Pearse at tony.pearse@deernz.org, 021 719 038 or
Melissa Bähler at positiveeventsplus@xtra.co.nz, 027 664 3080



Deer Industry Conference:

19–20 May 2020

45th NZDFA AGM constitutional matters:

NZDFA and DINZ nominations: 2020/21 year

Following discussion initiated at the 2019 AGM and Branch Chairs' meeting in May, a constitutional amendment that removes the geographical North and South Island-specific positions and rules was proposed. That amendment was passed unanimously as a NZDFA constitutional change at an NZDFA Special General Meeting on 17 October 2019, (associated with the Branch Chairs' annual meeting, and circulated in *Deer Industry News*, *Stagline-online* and via branches). As of now, both the North and South Island-specific representation positions have been disestablished and the annual retirements by rotation are simple vacancies. This applies for both the Executive Committee and the NZDFA Selection and Appointments Panel.

Individual Executive Committee members will still be allocated specific branches for liaison and servicing that will as best as possible have some regional connection.

A) NZDFA Executive Committee

Members of the NZDFA Executive Committee are elected for a two-year term. Members retire by rotation.

Nominations are now called for the following two positions:
Executive Committee members, two vacancies.

Current members, **John Somerville** and **Grant Charteris** retire by rotation. Grant Charteris is not seeking a further nomination.

Nominations are invited for both positions. These two Executive Committee vacancies are open to wider nomination from all NZDFA members.

Note: The nominees must be current financial members of the Association.

For the Executive Committee positions each nomination must be:

- in writing
- moved and seconded by two full, life or elected members of the NZDFA
- signed by the nominee
- delivered to the Association's office by 5.00pm on **Friday, 27 March 2020.**

Scanned emailed copies are acceptable and can be sent to info@deernz.org or tony.pearse@deernz.org

All nominees are entitled to submit a statement of about 150 words in support of their election. This statement must be

continued on page 6

MSD Animal Health Photographic Awards

Get the picture?

Yes, another year has flown by and it's time again to show off your photographic skills – and your beautiful animals – in the MSD Animal Health Photo Awards.

We had a record number of entries last year and a fantastic array of entries. Let's do it again in 2020! Entry is all electronic and your photos will be proudly displayed on a large monitor at the Deer Industry Conference in Invercargill, where the winners will be announced. Submit your entry form, fee and digital photos online. Entry fee is now a flat \$5 per photo entered.

Entry deadline is 7 May. See page 7 for further details.

For an entry form contact:

Rebecca Norling, Deer Industry New Zealand

Phone 04 471 6110, email rebecca.norling@deernz.org

or download the form from

www.deernz.org/MSD-photo-competition

Conference: continued

distributed to members at the same time as the ballot papers.

Should an election be necessary, details of postal voting and procedures, candidate profiles and confirmation of timelines will be sent with the April/May 2020 edition of *Deer Industry News* or by separate post to meet deadlines.

Postal voting runs for 21 days and must close 7 clear days prior to the NZDFA AGM on **Tuesday 19 May 2020** (i.e. voting opens on **Tuesday 21 April 2020**, closing on **Tuesday 12 May 2020**).

B) Selection and Appointments Panel (SAP)

The role of the SAP is to make producer representative appointments to the Deer Industry New Zealand Board and to meet with those appointees at least twice a year to discuss industry matters and their roles as Deer Industry New Zealand representatives.

The 8-member SAP is made up from:

- Four Executive Committee members
- Four elected non-Executive Committee members.

Each nomination must be in writing and moved and seconded by two full, life or elected members, signed by the nominee and delivered to the Association offices by **5.00pm on Friday 27 March 2020**.

The nominees must be full, life or elected members of the NZDFA. Further, nominees:

- may **not** be a member of the Deer Industry Association
- **cannot** hold more than a 20% interest in any organisation that is a member of the Deer Industry Association
- **cannot** be a candidate for membership of the Deer Industry New Zealand Board, or a current member of the Deer Industry New Zealand Board.

Current members **Paddy Boyd, South Canterbury** and **Leith Chick, Waipa**, retire by rotation and have indicated they are available for consideration and re-nomination. Further nominations are invited. These two SAP vacancies are open to wider nomination from all NZDFA members.

Note: The nominees must be current financial members of the Association.

For these positions each nomination must be:

- in writing
- moved and seconded by two full, life or elected members of the NZDFA
- signed by the nominee
- delivered to the Association's office by 5.00pm on **Friday, 27 March 2020**.

[The voting procedure and timing of the process is the same as that for the positions on the Executive Committee.]

C) NZDFA Appointment to Deer Industry New Zealand Board

The Ministerial approval of the Regulations to allow a 50:50 levy share from producers and the processor/exporter sector was formalised in October 2004 in the Deer Industry New Zealand Regulations 2004.

The Deer Industry New Zealand Board comprises four producer-appointed representatives and four representatives appointed by the processing/exporting sector.

The producer representatives are selected by the New Zealand Deer Farmers' Association through an Electoral College

process and have been appointed for a **three-year term** on recommendation by the NZDFA's Selection and Appointments Panel according to its detailed Operating Code of Practice and then advised to the Minister. Successful appointments who retire by rotation are eligible for further terms.

Nominations are now called for the following NZDFA-appointed positions on the DINZ Board:

1 vacancy:

Deer Industry New Zealand Board member retiring by rotation, **Kris Orange** who was appointed in 2017 for a 3-year term.

The nominations must be moved and seconded by full, life or elected members, signed by the nominee and delivered to the Association's offices before 5.00pm on **Friday 27 March 2020**.

- The NZDFA Constitution (2008) refers:

37.9 Nominations for DINZ: The Returning Officer shall publicly announce, in writing, the names of the retiring Association representatives of DINZ and call for nominations for their replacement, prior to the end of March each year.

Nominations shall be:

- (a) made by any two Full Members, Elected Members or Life members of the NZDFA
- (b) in writing; and
- (c) in the hands of the Returning Officer at a date to be specified which will be before the Annual General Meeting of the Association each year.

37.10 Eligibility for Selection as DINZ Representative:

All persons interested or engaged in the deer farming industry shall be eligible for nomination, with the exception of employees of DINZ or of the Association.

Each nominee for selection shall be required to make a written declaration of any office held or managerial position or financial interest that either the nominee or any of the nominee's immediate family or any partner or fellow shareholder in any deer farming project has in any organisation which deals directly in the products of or materials for the deer farming industry.

37.11 Right to Address AGM: Each nominee for selection as a DINZ representative may address the Annual General Meeting of the Association at a time and date to be specified by the Executive Committee.

37.12 Selection Process: As soon as possible after the closing date for nominations the Returning Officer shall publish to all Branches and in *Deer Industry News* a full list of the persons nominated, together with any declarations of interests received from them. On the date determined for the selection (but not later than the end of **June** each year), the Selection and Appointments Panel shall convene, interview and select from the nominees as many Association representatives as are required to fill available vacancies on DINZ.

Nominations for the positions will be considered by the Selection and Appointments Panel following the 2020 AGM within 21 days of that meeting, with recommendations and appointment to the Board being advised to the Minister for Primary Industries at that time subject to the Operating Code of Practice procedures.

Nomination forms

Nomination forms for the Executive Committee, SAP and Deer Industry New Zealand vacancies can be obtained from the Association's office: Phone: 04 473 4500; Fax: 04 472 5549;

email: tony.pearse@deernz.org

Nomination forms are also available through your local Branch Chair, Secretary or the Producer Manager and will be posted on the website: deernz.org/nzdfa-constitutional-information

For further information please contact the Returning Officer, Tony Pearse at the Deer Industry New Zealand office or 021 719 038 or tony.pearse@deernz.org

Awards and competitions

Matuschka Award 2020

Nominations are called for a farmer or farming entity who or which has made a significant ongoing or lifetime of contribution to deer farming and the NZDFA in particular at Branch level.

The award recognises the grass roots farmer and unsung contributor to local area activities, functions and core spirit of deer farming. It will be announced at the Deer Industry Conference awards function on the evening of Wednesday 20 May 2020 at Richardson Transport Museum, Invercargill.

As recognition of the unsung heroes at Branch level, it is appropriate that the award itself be presented to the 2020 winner at a special mid-winter function in the recipient's Branch.

Nominations should be made through the appropriate Branch.

It is not a requirement of the award that the nominee be aware that a nomination has gone forward.

Nominations must be submitted to the NZDFA no later than

5.00pm on Tuesday, 14 May 2020.

For further information contact:

- Producer Communications and Administration. Rebecca Norling 04 471 6110, rebecca.norling@deernz.org

Producer Manager, Tony Pearse, 021 719 038, tony.pearse@deernz.org

2020 MSD Photographic competition

MSD Animal Health has kindly agreed to continue its sponsorship of the annual deer industry photographic awards, with some great prizes on offer:

- \$500 cash prize for the overall winner
- Category winner cash prizes
- Premium wine gift pack for "People's choice" award
- Framed photos of winning entries

Following the success of the updated digital-only competition format introduced in 2018, the awards will again be a feature of the 2020 annual conference with entries viewable on a large monitor in the trade display area. Judging will be coordinated by the *Deer Industry News* editorial group with results including Judges' and People's Choice awards announced at the conference.

Entrants no longer need to submit a print of their entry/entries.

Only the digital photos and entry form/fee are required. In addition, the entry fee is now a flat \$5 per photo, which makes entering simpler.

Rules and entry form are available from via the DINZ website at www.deernz.org/MSD-photo-competition. Alternatively, contact Rebecca Norling, Tony Pearse or Phil Stewart (details below).

In general, all photos must be of subjects that are suitable for wider publication, taking into account the public's perception of

the deer industry. The judges retain the right to disqualify any photo they deem to be unsuitable in this regard.

Judging criteria

- technical aspects (focus, composition, balance, quality, etc)
- conveying core values including best practice for animal welfare, environmental stewardship and animal husbandry
- ability to show the industry in a positive light
- that special "wow" factor that makes the shot stand out.

Eligibility

The competition is open to all participants in the deer industry – farmers, farm employees or those employed in a subsidiary industry (transport, vets, research, fertiliser, seed etc).

Preferred subject material

- **Deer in the field:** This shows farmed deer in their "natural" setting – in crop or pasture or tussock hill country for example. It could be individual animals or groups; stags, hinds, fawns, weaners).
- **People working with deer:** Positive images of animal husbandry work and interactions with deer.
- **Our deer farming environment:** An opportunity to show off the beautiful landscapes and environmental enhancement that goes hand in hand with best practice. The deer are still present but play a bit part – the farm environment is the star.

Format of entries

Please submit your photo in digital format. Photo prints are no longer required!

Make sure your digital camera is set to take pictures in high resolution format. The electronic file should be a minimum of about 2600 x 3875 pixels (printable to A4 size at 300 dpi).

It should be a jpeg file of about 2.5Mb to meet these criteria but a .tif file format is also acceptable. The digital file must be in its original state and not altered in any way. Cellphone photographs are acceptable but please be aware of their limitations, e.g. zoom function is best avoided.

For further information contact:

- Producer Communications and Administration Manager, Rebecca Norling 04 471 6110, rebecca.norling@deernz.org
- Producer Manager, Tony Pearse, 021 719 038, tony.pearse@deernz.org
- *Deer Industry News*, Editor Phil Stewart, 021 620 399, phil@wordpict.co.n

NZ Deer Industry Award 2020

The Award is to be presented each year to the person, persons jointly, or organisation who, in the opinion of the judges, has made the most outstanding contribution to the New Zealand deer industry, either in the previous year, or over a period of years.

The selection panel is made up of three judges who are the nominees of:

- NZ Farm Life Media (*Countrywide/The Deer Farmer*)
- The NZ Deer Farmers' Association (Inc)
- Porter Holdings Ltd

Presentation of the Award is made at the NZDFA annual conference dinner or, if this is not possible, at another function as determined by the NZDFA, after consulting with NZ Farm Life Media.

Nomination forms are available from:

deernz.org/nz-deerindustry-award ■

We've hit the ton!

100 issues of Deer Industry News

It seems like yesterday and it seems like last century. It was actually just over 17 years ago that the first-ever issue of *Deer Industry News* was mailed out – more than 5,000 copies – in October 2002. This is our 100th issue. Editor **Phil Stewart** put together that first edition along with contributor **Ali Spencer**. Both are still working on the ever-evolving magazine and share their thoughts on what became the first industry-wide deer magazine, incorporating everything from farm to market. They also asked **MJ Loza**, **Ian Walker** and **Clive Jermy** for their thoughts.

Phil Stewart

THERE WERE TEMPLATES

of sorts when Ali and I put together the first *Deer Industry News*. For a few years I had been editing the NZDFA's *Stagline* newsletter while Ali had worked on *Market Report*. *Stagline* had grown from a modest four-page two-colour newsletter into a colour magazine in 1996 when the DFA utilised a commodity levy to fund its activities, while *Market Report* was bringing focused and up-to-date information from overseas markets to the industry in New Zealand.

When DINZ was formed, streamlining industry governance, it made good sense to bring together the existing newsletters into a new magazine that was a big step up from what had gone before.

Looking back, things were very different in 2002, while some things don't seem to have changed at all.

Total industry earnings were just over \$250m. While not hugely less than the current \$300m, this was generated from a much larger herd, indicating productivity is indeed growing. Venison



promotion in Europe was being ramped up. The industry was still feeling the hangover from a sugar rush in 2001/02 when the schedule had peaked at \$10.17. By year's end it had plummeted to \$5.25. The NZ dollar was much weaker at the time, buying only US\$0.46 in 2002.

Genetic modification was becoming a controversial topic, while the board of enquiry into Tb funding was well under way. The United States accounted for only 7% of our venison exports and shrinking. The national herd was said to be growing strongly.

A wound healing velvet product was touted as the next big thing, while a code of welfare for antler removal was being developed. The industry was arguing vociferously against the New Zealand Government signing up to the Kyoto protocol.

In our first issue of *Deer Industry News* we reported on the need for velvet competition judging to be standardised. We profiled an up-and-coming Otago DFA branch chair, Mandy Bell, published results of a Gisborne/Wairoa "Pasture to Plate" carcass competition and noted the dispersal of Warwick Gregory's Rakaia red herd.

The role of tannins in parasite control, faster Tb testing, the looming threat of Johne's disease and environmental challenges also featured.

Many of these issues are ongoing and new ones have emerged. Today, our bimonthly magazine is complemented by faster communication channels. *Stagline* has re-emerged as an electronic newsletter for DFA members while the DINZ eNews, Facebook and YouTube ensure important news gets out quickly.

While the look and content of the magazine have evolved, we hope that we're still satisfying the main demand – supplying topical and relevant information for all those involved in growing, processing and marketing products from these amazing animals.

And a couple of final shout-outs: throughout these first 100 issues, the support of our advertisers has helped us bring readers the volume and quality of industry information they demand. Thank you! Please return the favour by supporting those who make the (wise!) decision to advertise in *Deer Industry News*.

Thanks also to DINZ producer manager Tony Pearce whose friendship, support and huge reservoir of industry knowledge have been invaluable throughout – and for his willingness to proof each issue any time day or night to help us meet our deadlines. We couldn't do it without you, TP!



Then and now: Issue Nos. 1 and 100. The look has changed, but much remains the same.

I REMEMBER IT being very satisfying seeing the new magazine come out, reflecting our new way of working with the NZDFA. Bringing Tony Pearse onto the team as Producer Manager was another highlight of the time, again reflecting that joined-up way of working, and like Tony, *Deer Industry News* has stood the test of time and continues to serve the industry very well. It also reflected a focus on industry members, wanting to get them quality information in one place, and presenting and representing a unified industry.



MJ Loza, Former CEO, Deer Industry New Zealand

Ali Spencer

IT SEEMS FITTING for *Deer Industry News* that, as the teens roll into the '20s, it comes of age as a centenarian – 100 issues. Wow, where did all those issues go?

Market news was previously covered in The Game Industry Board's *Market Report*. As Phil notes, from 2002 this was incorporated into *Deer Industry News* and we've carried on reporting on industry news in the magazine ever since.

The deer industry's certainly evolved over those years, and in many ways leads the red meat sector, which has seen massive change over the past decade and given me plenty to write about. The past four years, in particular, has seen unprecedented collaboration between the five venison exporters – Alliance, Duncan NZ, First Light Venison, Mountain River Venison and Silver Fern Farms.

The Primary Growth Partnership, Passion2Profit, is delivering improved profitability for deer farmers and has



DEER INDUSTRY NEWS

is an important part of the communication strategy for New Zealand's deer industry. Congratulations to Phil and his team for achieving the milestone of 100 publications of *Deer Industry News*, which keeps us all up to date with what is happening around the industry. Phil is often seen at deer industry-related events both on and off farm, and we appreciate the informed comment and integrity of his reporting of the topical issues and items of interest to us all.

Ian Walker, Chair, Deer Industry New Zealand



led to exciting initiatives including the focus on the Summer Cervena® programme in Europe, a rejuvenation of the brand in North America, plus the Advance Parties and Deer Industry Environmental Groups among other initiatives.

Last year, the United States overtook Germany as the top market for New Zealand venison. There has also been growth in non-traditional venison markets like China.

Most exciting, for me at least, is the new meat science and technology transforming the way the sector works. This includes the MBIE programme investigating the combination of new sensor technology with robotics to non-invasively measure meat quality on the processing line and a range of technologies to improve returns from the whole carcass, including co-products. Robotic boning technology is already commonplace in many of the plants, and most recently, meat processors were trialling the latest exoskeleton technology to protect and assist workers with heavy and repetitive work.

Now the sector has got itself into order, the focus has shifted onto even bigger challenges: climate change, dealing with the Government's policy-making and issues affecting trade around the globe.

The future is already here and we're looking forward to covering it all for you in this issue number 100 and beyond as it takes off into the 2020s.

IT IS HARD to believe that nearly 18 years have passed since the inception of the substantive reform programme that saw the restructuring of our board to a 50/50 composition and 50/50 levy sharing. The NZDFA gave up the commodity levy in exchange for the Board underwriting a specific level of research and providing executive support including the appointment of Tony Pearse as executive officer for the NZDFA.

Once those structures came into force we were able to attract the big hitters to the board from the export sector. Our excellent chief executives at DINZ worked at a high level with the marketers.

I have very fond memories of the seriously talented people I had the privilege of working with through that period – MJ Loza, Collier Issacs, Mark O'Connor and many many others, especially the board members and foundation GIB chair, Tom Williams.

And so to issue 100 of *Deer Industry News*: Let's not forget that through this entire period our brilliant magazine has been managed by one man, Phil Stewart – thank you Phil. *Deer Industry News* in my humble opinion is the finest agricultural publication around. It has served our interests so well as a superior communication vehicle, covering every aspect of our industry's day-to-day activities, from the marketplace, to science and research outcomes, to producer affairs. There is nothing any one of us could be left wondering about in terms of highly relevant industry issues and developments once you read your latest issue of the magazine. Long may it continue!

Clive Jermy ONZM, Former Chair, DINZ ■



Snapping Cervena®

by Ali Spencer, *Deer Industry News* writer

Deer Industry News has looked through Nikki Astwood's camera lens to see what it takes to get the perfect shot of New Zealand Cervena.

OVER THE PAST couple of years, the Wellington-based photographer has been working on new images of Cervena dishes for use in DINZ's social media activities around the world.

"With social media use increasing, it's really important that we have good quality images, especially for visual channels such as Instagram," DINZ Venison Marketing Manager Nick Taylor explains.

With a background in catering and hospitality, Nikki has worked in all stations from front-of-house to the restaurant kitchen and has a good understanding of what's required of a good-looking dish.

Nikki had always been a keen photographer, taking photos for her own social media use before entering – and winning – Instagram photo competitions.

For her, photography is all about the story. "Photography and food is a perfect combo for me," she says.

"I want to inspire people to connect to the image, want to eat the food shown and draw them into the photo."

Taking the plunge professionally as *Revised Edition* just four years ago, Nikki now operates from her and her husband's Wellington home, where one room has been dedicated to her studio. Her skills and clean, crisp signature style have been put to good use by food and beverage companies including DINZ, Te Pa Family Vineyards, Wild Fennel and tableware company the Alchemist's Table.

Achieving the right results is a collaborative effort with the client. Working from a brief from Taylor, telling her what cuts he wanted to use and the messages to convey, Nikki went back with her own ideas before they settled on the approach, styling and shots.

Taylor has been pleased with the results. "The dish shots Nikki created were all well thought out, and styled and executed to a high standard," he says.

So far, Nikki has produced 50 images over a week for each of two sets of images for summer and winter. The most recent session was in early August.

For each set, she considered how each dish was to be styled, set up the scene herself, using items from "quite a collection of stuff" in her own props library, and then cooked the meat perfectly at the last possible minute, resting it before slicing and popping it into place as the hero of the plate.



Nikki Astwood has combined her experience as a chef with her passion for design and photography to chart a new course as a brand stylist.

Meat is the hardest food to shoot as it has to be cooked perfectly to look really good.

"I want the food to look as natural as possible and, if it's going to be eaten afterwards, it needs to be edible too," she says. The only trick she might employ is a bit of olive oil to make the food look shiny.

Her favourite image from the Summer Cervena shoot exemplifies what she regards as the ideal shot: simplicity and a contrast of colour and textures.

"I love that photo [main photo below]. I think it's



Main photo: Astwood's favourite image from the Summer Cervena shoot exemplifies her crisp, clean styling.

Inset: Cervena loin is made the centrepiece of this image, through a plain background and contrasting ingredients.

the combination of the textures and the colour of the meat with the green salad; they go so well together. It draws the eye into the middle of the food," she says – perhaps understating her own technical ability to use her Canon 5D Mark 4 camera to best effect.

For those wanting to improve their own venison photography, Nikki says practice is key.

"Take any opportunity you can get to do it. Also, think about the different ingredients and colours and textures that complement each other – not forgetting the background." ■

• To see more of Nikki Astwood's work: revisededition.co.nz

Innovation and inspiration for the game season

by Ali Spencer, *Deer Industry News* writer

New Zealand venison was under the noses of Germany's top celebrities this Northern Hemisphere autumn.



Like a miniature star fleet, the venison tortellini is ready to serve.

SLICED VERY THINLY, cured New Zealand venison was used to replace the outer pasta shell of tortellinis, encasing a cheese centre. This was one of three innovative New Zealand venison canapés created by Michelin-starred Dutch chef Erik van Loo, chef/owner of the famous Parkheuvel restaurant in Rotterdam.

He and his son Julien worked with New Zealand venison, the featured protein at the twenty-first Busche Gala evening in October. Organised by the Busche publishing house, this is a big event on the German hospitality calendar, where the Germany culinary world gathers to network with chefs, hoteliers and business and show-business celebrities.

DINZ venison marketing manager Nick Taylor reports that van Loo actually produced three dishes from venison instead of the one he was required to do. "He really loved the meat," he says.

Information about the collaboration and also New Zealand farmed venison's attributes was included in the event programme.



Erik van Loo (right) worked closely with his son Julien in the preparation of the venison tortellino for the Busche Gala.

Chef Sache conference

New Zealand venison was also on show at Chef Sache – a major cuisine conference held each over two days each year in September in Düsseldorf, Germany.

"This attracts top-quality speakers, this year including New Zealander Ben Shewry from Attica in Melbourne," says Taylor, adding that the more than 3,000 chefs and hospitality professionals mingle and come to experience the various stands between conference sessions.

The programme also includes workshops and tasting sessions for restaurateurs, alongside others for sommeliers, baristas and a variety of networking events.

At the New Zealand venison stand, four high-profile German chefs prepared and served New Zealand venison to their interested peers over the two days, with two featured each day. Three of them – Alexander Dinter, Volker Drkosch and Matthew Gleiß – had worked previously with New Zealand venison.

A new chef working with DINZ this year is Benedict Faust, executive chef for two restaurants including the Michelin-starred Kuno 1408 in Würzburg. Taylor says having Faust and other well-known German chefs presenting New Zealand venison in a variety of ways was great for engaging with attendees.

"They know of the chefs and are keen to meet them and see what sort of dish they have come up with. Having a changing roster sees delegates returning to the stand several times over the fair."

In addition, DINZ consultant chef Shannon Campbell has been working with venison exporters in the run-up to the game season, continuing the ongoing programme of demonstrations.

Together, the events will have raised awareness of New Zealand venison with German chefs for autumn and winter menus. ■



Volker Drkosch putting the finishing touches to his dish.

Industry pioneer Goodwin McNutt passes away

DEER INDUSTRY PIONEER Goodwin McNutt died on 8 January aged 89.

On 16 December 1966 he became the first person to capture a live deer from a helicopter in New Zealand. McNutt was the pilot and Barry Stern the bulldogger. Deer farming was illegal at the time, but McNutt had the Forest Service's permission to keep deer in confinement to study, so he began capturing live animals. By 1969, when deer farming was legalised, he had 75 animals behind wire that he had caught or been given.

Incidentally – and proving that New Zealand really is a small village – *Deer Industry News* editor Phil Stewart recalls visiting McNutt at his central Hawke's Bay property with his parents in about 1968. The senior Stewarts and McNutt were discussing farm tourism opportunities – McNutt was flying tourists into North Island back country for hunting and fishing at the time. Phil recalls the tame hind at McNutt's farm, that went on to live a very long life, dying in 1992 aged 27. He says it was a privilege to spend time with the industry pioneer some 40 years later to learn more of his exploits.

Deer Industry News published Phil's extensive two-part profile on Goodwin McNutt in its February and April 2008 issues (bit.ly/2UcM9dF). ■



This meat safe constructed at Boyd airstrip by McNutt was used in the 1960s to hold deer carcasses before they were flown out.



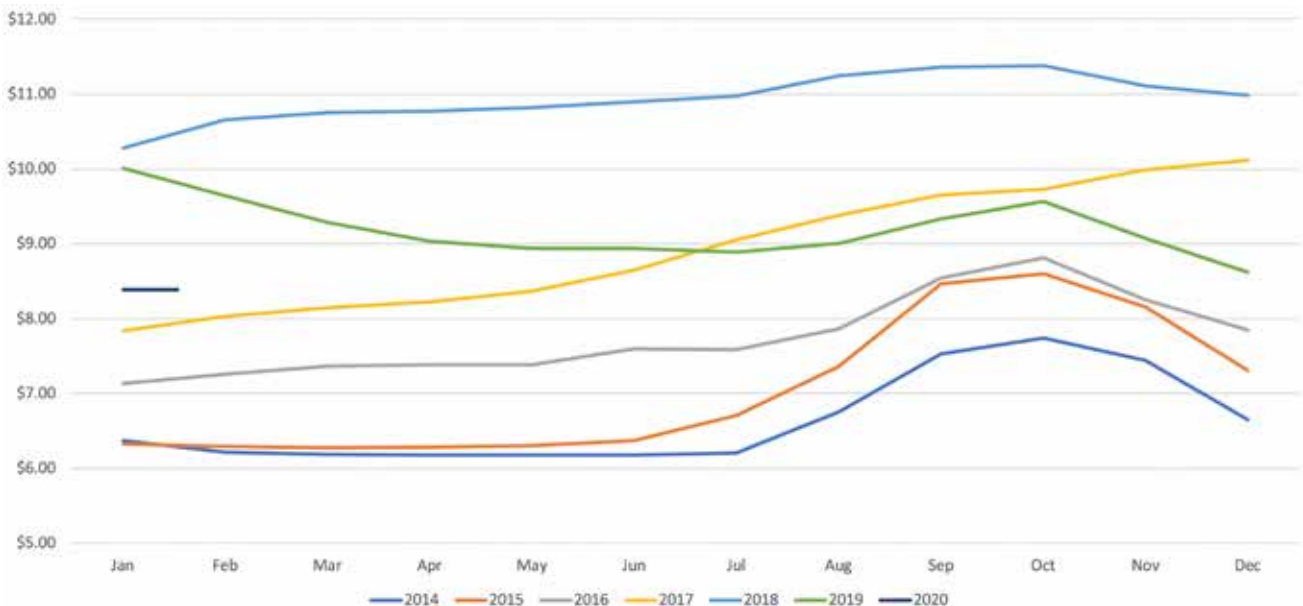
Goodwin McNutt (left) in the 1950s with hunting companions at his "Northern arm" camp in the central North Island, two hours' walk from the Boyd airstrip. McNutt and companion Mick Fogarty carved the airstrip out of the tussock and pumice with picks and shovels, opening up the area for venison recovery using a fixed wing Auster.



This three-seated Hiller was McNutt's first helicopter, purchased in 1964 for £7,250. It was underpowered but a big improvement on the small fixed wing planes he'd been using for deer recovery.

Venison schedule

Figure 1: National published schedule 2014–2020 (monthly averages).



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for Selection and Appointments Panel and National Velveting Standards Body contacts, see page 15

Pulling genetic levers at Waihi Pukawa

by Phil Stewart, *Deer Industry News* Editor

With a breeding herd now topping 6,000 hinds, Colin Gates has been in a unique position to watch the effects of his breeding policies unfold on a large scale since he took up the farm manager's position for Waihi Pukawa Station near Turangi eight years ago.

THE DEER HERD was recently boosted with the addition to the system of nearby Taurewa Station as part of a Treaty settlement (Waihi Pukawa Station is owned by the Waihi Pukawa Maori Trust). The additional land and herds will allow them to focus more on finishing at Waihi Pukawa.

While the elevated central North Island situation can be cold, the station can easily grow enough to support breeding and finishing, so Gates buys both terminal and maternal sires. When he came to the station the hind herd was lighter than ideal and he's been using Eastern genetics to bring the size up. That's been so successful that he's now able to take the foot off the pedal on the Deer Select Mature Weight breeding value (BV) for the hinds. Gates said too strong a focus on growth BVs such as weight at 12 months (W12) could have the unintended consequence of producing hinds that are too big, and he's interested in a range of BVs.

"We've now got some R2 red hinds at 130kg, which is probably more than we need. You don't need a 110kg red R2 when they go to the stag – somewhere in the 95–100kg range still gives us good results." That said, while the hind herd has been going through an expansion phase, Gates says they had been putting out some of the lighter R2s with the stag and saying "good luck". Fortunately they are still valuable animals by the middle of the year, in fawn or not, but Gates says that as they reach optimal herd size they will be able to be more selective and cull overly light and heavy hinds.

He said with their R2s the absolute weight is not as important as growing them out well, to their genetic potential. The deer manager at Waihi Pukawa uses the Passion2Profit growth charts to plot weights of growing replacement hinds and is proud that he's able to keep ahead of the recommended growth curve. Gates cautions that this is just an average and the range is also important. "You need to watch the ones at the bottom of the range."

He's also very interested in temperament and that trait – although yet to be quantified on Deer Select as a BV – informs some of his buying decisions. "I've noticed that flighty cattle are always the slowest to finish. They've always got their heads up, worrying about what's going on in the world. The quiet, doughy ones are always first on the truck. I'm pretty sure it's the same with deer and we've got the numbers and technology now to look at temperament more closely."

They use wapiti terminal sires as well as

high-growth red sires and source stags from a number of places, including the former Deer Improvement (now Melior Genetics), Peel Forest Estate, Wilkins Farming and Ruapehu Red Deer.

The station has Eastern sires with a BV for 12-month weight as high as +34kg, and the average BV for their single sire stags of +26kg. He said their weaning weights for fawns from terminal sires was the same as for the high-BV red stags. Although that differential can change over the following months, it does show fawns getting a good start from the superior genetics.

Gates said the station had traditionally multi-sire mated but last year they single-sire mated 11 mobs, some with Eastern genetics and others with velvet genetics, so they will be able to get a better idea of what lines are performing well in this environment. With a new deer shed and TSi setup they're well placed to track the performance of progeny from individual sires.

Their conception rates have been pretty respectable, averaging in the low 90s for R2s and mid-90s for mixed age hinds, but they would like to improve overall reproductive efficiency.

Gates said they study their DeerPRO reports and were interested to find they had been holding on to finishers longer than they needed to, which was less efficient use of available feed. Also, getting deer off to the works earlier also opens up opportunities to use trading lambs to utilise the remaining feed over summer.

He said they have been undergoing a big programme of subdivision and pasture improvement to help capitalise on the better genetics they're introducing into the deer herd. "Deer are our most profitable stock class," he says. ■



Breeding hinds at Waihi Pukawa Station.



“We’ve single-sire mated six mobs with Easterns that have an average BV for 12-month weight of +26kg.

“Using EID we’re going to see how the progeny for each one of those sires turn out.”

Colin Gates, Waihi Pukawa Station, Turangi, on the importance of breeding values in venison production

See what leading deer farmers like Colin have to say about the role of good genetics at:

<https://youtu.be/sLoB-BVRSvg>

To learn more about picking the right genetics to suit your breeding objectives: deernz.org.nz/deerselect



NZDFA contacts: continued

Selection & Appointments Panel (in addition to NZDFA Executive Committee)

The SAP Chair is traditionally selected from the non-Executive Committee members and is for a 12-month renewable term.

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Sales back on last year's highs

by Phil Stewart, *Deer Industry News* Editor

A record-smashing \$390,000 paid for 3-year-old son of Rockafella bred by Crowley Deer set the 2019/20 sale season off on an exciting note, confirming that antler – especially trophy antler – is still the main act in the auction ring. Three sires cracked the \$100k mark this season.

WHILE MOST SALES were solid, many averages were back a little on last year's exceptionally strong results, however.

Todd Crowley's record-setting stag is a half brother to a 5-year-old sire he sold last year for \$155,000, then a record for a stag sold at auction. Crowley said the new record-setting stag was among the first line of stags from Rockafella and he's excited about the future for this sire.

He said Lot 1 this year was something special, with a very wide set of antlers that set him apart from the others. He set an ambitious reserve of \$175,000 but was stunned ("I didn't know whether to cry or throw up!") when the bidding pushed on beyond the \$300,000 mark. The stag was bought by Rural Livestock on behalf of an anonymous buyer.

The rest of Crowley's offering also sold well, with the 12 sires sold averaging \$51,500 and a small group of yearling hinds averaging \$9,400.

The record for a two-year-old stag sold at auction still stands with Raroa Red Deer, which sold Banks to Bob Atkinson in 2002 for \$142,002.

There was also a new auction record for a velvet sire, set when Grant Charteris and Jeremy Deardon teamed up for a winning bid of \$102,000 for a three-year-old son of Joseph at Brock Deer's auction. Their bid eclipsed the previous record for a velvet sire of \$90,000, set at Netherdale.

The third six-figure sire to go under the hammer was a five-year-old son of HildericDG at the Deer Genetics auction, bought for \$100,000 by Mount Cecil. The trophy sire's dam was a daughter of Morpheus.

Venison sires also attracted good support. The opening sale of the season for Peel Forest Estate's maternal Forrester sires saw the entire offering of 55 stags sold for an average of \$10,118, 36 percent up on last year's average.

Wilkins Farming also had a complete clearance for its North Island sale, with averages up 13 percent to \$8,177. Forest Road Farm was another to enjoy a boost in average prices. All 19 of the 3-year-old velvet sires on offer went under the hammer for an average of \$7,200 and a top price of \$19,000.

Not counting private treaty sales, a total of about \$7.5 million changed hands, a little down on the nearly \$8m last season. The offering for sale by auction of 751 sires was slightly up on last year.

Clearance rates at auction were high, although slightly back on last year's very strong showing. This season it was 91.7 percent for red sires and 94.8 percent for elk/wapitis.

Rises and falls compared with previous sales were evenly split: 13 sales saw improved results and 13 were down on their last auction (see tables). (These figures can be taken with a small grain of salt when there is a big swing in average – sometimes caused when there has been one high-priced sire.)

Sale results showed there is strong demand for good velvet and trophy genetics especially, although high-BV venison sires (red and terminal) were also keenly sought.

Our thanks to those who submitted sale reports, and to those who provided photos used in this report. ■

ALTRIVE RED DEER 16 January, Waipounamu, Southland

Stags sold	25 of 26 on offer	
Top price	\$32,000	
Average	% change from last year	\$12,456 -14.7%
Other animals sold	48 surplus yearling hinds sold for an average of \$2,140, top \$6,800 (2 animals). Further enquiry for hinds after the sale.	
Comment	Prices overall back on last year but still our second best sale result.	

ARAWATA DEER FARM 16 January, Pine Bush, Southland

Stags sold	20 of 21 2-year-olds on offer	
Top price	\$36,000	
Average	% change from last year	\$9,235 -23.5%
Other animals sold	24 yearling hinds, average \$1,870, top \$4,500 32 velvetting stags, average \$1,176.56 35 straws semen, average \$353.57	
Comment	Good crowd and, like all sales, buyers were discretionary in their buying with tidier velvet sires selling better. Probably more realistic prices for most sires this year.	

BLACK FOREST* 14 January, Outram

Stags sold	19 of 26 on offer	
Top price	\$37,000	
Average	% change from last year	\$6,821 +4%
Other animals sold	12 of 12 hinds on offer, top \$5,000, average \$1,758 (-16% on last year).	

BROCK DEER
15 January, Merino Downs, Gore

Stags sold	25 of 26 on offer		
Top price	\$102,000		
Average	% change from last year	\$16,600	-4.8%
Other animals sold	16 yearling hinds; average \$2,200, top \$7,000 93 2-year velvetting stags; average \$1,510; top \$3,500		

Comment Very big gallery. Sire averages very similar to last year. Joseph sons and daughters with quality velvet very popular. Many thanks to all bidders and purchasers.

CLACHANBURN ELK*
21 January

Bulls sold	64 of 70 on offer		
Top price	\$8,200		
Average	% change from last year	\$4,422	-16.9%

CONNEMARA
19 January, Manapouri

Bulls sold	30 of 30 on offer		
Top price	\$12,000		
Average	% change from last year	\$5,885	-6.6%

Comment

A little down on last year but pleased to have a full clearance again

CROWLEY DEER*
14 December, on farm

Stags sold	12 of 14 on offer		
Top price	\$390,000		
Average	% change from last year	\$51,500	+71%

Other animals sold 5 of 6 yearling hinds sold – top price \$25,000, average \$9,400 (+7.9% on last year).



The record price for this \$390,000 stag sold by Crowley Deer is likely to stand for many years to come.

continued on page 18




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Sire Sales: continued

DEER GENETICS

12 January, McKeown Rd, Woodbury

Stags sold	14 of 14 on offer
Top price	\$100,000
Average	\$31,785
% change from last year	+142%
Other animals sold	1yr hinds: 10 of 11 sold, ave \$2,200 MA Hinds: 14 of 14 sold, ave \$1,428
Comment	Great sale with increased number of attendees & 40 registered buyers.

EDENDALE WAPITI*

23 January

Stags sold	30 of 30 on offer
Top price	\$6,800
Average	\$5,464
% change from last sale (2018)	+26%

FAIRLIGHT STATION

11 December

Stags sold	17 of 21 on offer
Top price	\$8,100
Average	\$4,400
% change from last year	+25.7%
Comment	Prices up on last year. The quality of Fairlight venison stags is improving annually; the proof is the carcass weights of our commercial spikers have improved around 800g per year for 14 years, now killing over 65kg at the same average kill date.

FOREST ROAD FARM

13 December on farm, Gwavas Road

Stags sold	19 of 19 on offer
Top price	\$19,000
Average	\$7,300
% change from last year	+14%
Other animals sold	113 of 113 yearling hinds: average \$820
Comment	Great sale with big turn out and great support! A lot of return buyers, and new buyers! Really excited about what we will have to offer in the coming years and appreciate the feedback.

FOVERAN DEER PARK

11 January at Foveran

Stags sold	38 of 42 on offer
Top price	\$62,000
Average	\$6,000
% change from last year	-2%

Comment

Lot 11 \$41,000; Lot 1 spiker \$10,000; Heaviest 3-year antler cut was over 20kg. Sale average similar to last year. Very pleased with the stags on offer and prices achieved. Good gallery of buyers.

LITTLEBOURNE

20 January, Winton

Bulls sold	20 of 21 on offer
Top price	\$8,500
Average	\$3,883
% change from last year	-31%

LOCHINVAR WAPITI*

19 January, Te Anau

Bulls sold	23 of 24 on offer
Top price	\$20,000
Average	\$6,078
% change from last year	+26.1%

NETHERDALE RED DEER

15 January, Balfour, Southland

Stags sold	26 of 29 3-year sires on offer
Top price	\$38,000
Average	\$14,250
% change from last year	-27.3%
Other animals sold	90 2-year old velvet stags, ave \$1,654. 39 13-month hinds, ave \$2,561. 15 straws of Bronx semen, ave \$2,620.
Comment	A good steady sale with good buyer support from throughout New Zealand. The sale was back on what was an exceptional sale last year, but there was still very good demand for good animals. Strong demand for Bronx semen. Bronx cut 22kg first cut and 5.86kg regrowth velvet this season. The first of Bronx 3-year sires will be available next year.

PEEL FOREST ESTATE

6 December: 3-year Forrester sires (English/German venison genetics)

Stags sold	55 of 55 on offer
Top price	\$28,000
Average	\$10,118
% change from last year	+36%



Strong velvet genetics in these maternal sires helped underpin prices at this season's Peel Forest Estate Forrester sire sale.

Comment (Peel Forest, continued)

Despite gale force winds, power cuts and heavy rain, the sale was well attended with plenty of strong buying power. We had a few exceptional velvet heads in this sale which did bump the average up compared with last year. If these couple of high-priced stags were excluded, our average was the same as the previous year. (Top-priced stag was bought by Ken Ferguson, Blackball.) We are finding a few of these top-end Forresters are being used as multi-purpose animals in both the velvet lines and venison lines of some operations where the male progeny are going into velvet herd and female progeny being used as venison replacements.

**PEEL FOREST ESTATE
12 January: Velvet sires**

Stags sold at auction		23 of 30 on offer	
Top price (sale day)		\$25,000	
Average (sale day)	% change from last year	\$9,674	-0.6%
Average (including post-auction sale of Lot 1)		\$11,354	+16.6%
Comment		Lot 1 was sold at a later date for \$50,000.	

**RAINCLIFF STATION*
23 January, Pleasant Point**

Bulls sold		35 of 35 on offer	
Top price		\$8,500	
Average	% change from last year	\$4,702.86	-17%

**ROTHESAY RED DEER*
13 January, Darts Road, Methven**

Stags sold		8 of 13 on offer	
Top price		\$10,500	
Average	% change from last year	\$5,000	+30%
Other animals sold		20 of 20 velvet stags on offer, average \$975 (+5% on last year). 8 of 10 hinds on offer, top \$1,650, average \$818.75	

**RUAPEHU RED DEER
11 December, 37 Pukenua Road, Taihape**

Stags sold		34 of 34 on offer	
Top price		\$11,500	
Average	% change from last year	\$5,700	-17.4%
Other animals sold		Average price back on last year but average 12 month BV over 24kg so buyers achieved very solid value. Virtually all repeat buyers so great to see them getting such good stags at such reasonable prices.	

**RUPERT RED DEER
13 January, Scotland Farm, Geraldine**

Stags sold		17 of 20 on offer	
Top price		\$37,500	
Average	% change from last year	\$10,352	-4.2%
Other animals sold		30 2-year velvetting stags, average \$1500.	

Comment Our third annual sale went pretty well with prices comparable to other years. Bidding was slower and Lot 1 Zinzan Brook was initially passed in, but sold after the auction. We are pleased to send him up to the North Island. We are very grateful for the continued support of our loyal clients and wish everyone all the best with their purchases.

**SARNIA
15 December, Cambridge**

Stags sold		14 of 14 on offer	
Top price		\$13,000	
Average	% change from last sale (2018)	\$7,200	+75%

Other animals sold 10 of 10 hinds on offer, average \$2,250, top \$6,500. 8 of 8 3-year velvetting stags on offer, average \$2,125

Comment Full clearance from the sale. Very pleasing result.



Buyers got good value for high-BV red venison sires at Ruapehu Red Deer's sale.

continued on page 20

Sire Sales: continued



These four bulls from the Tikana auction have gone to new homes in Tuatapere, Winton, Wairarapa and Pleasant Point.

TIKANA WAPITI
20 January on farm at Browns, Winton

Bulls sold	19 of 21 on offer		
Top price	\$20,000		
Average	% change from last year	\$8,900	+6.5%
Other animals sold	15 Wapiti cows (yearling and in calf MA) were offered. Despite good interest pre-sale just 2 MA cows sold for \$2,500 each.		
Comment	Good crowd in attendance, resulting in bulls finding new homes across New Zealand once more. The sale saw the best quality of sires we have yet put on offer. Seventeen of the 21 bulls on offer had eBVs for meat and/or growth in the top 10% of all wapiti of their age. The entire yarding grew EWSupreme velvet. The star lot Legend at 3yrs cut 13.1kg EWSupreme as well as being a top 2% bull for growth and meat traits. Next Generation deer farmers Jesse and Traci Saunders are the proud new owners of Legend.		



Potential buyers, young and old, contemplate the offering at Tikana's auction.

TOWER FARMS DEER
14 December at 188 Discombe Road, Tauwhare

Stags sold	17 of 23 on offer		
Top price	\$65,000		
Average	% change from last year	\$14,970	-9.3%
Other animals sold	50 hinds, average \$2,066 (+6.0% on last year); top hind \$10,000		

WILKINS FARMING
13 December, North Island: hosted at Te Maire, Hawke's Bay by George and Laura Williams

Stags sold	30 of 30 on offer		
Top price	\$15,000		
Average	% change from last year	\$8,200	+13.1%
Comment	30/30 stags sold, a complete clearance again this year. An excellent crowd, with plenty of new faces as well as regular clients, thank you. We would like to acknowledge the support of George Williams and Laura Billings for hosting our North Island sale once again. Many thanks to our bidders and under bidders. We look forward to presenting an excellent line up of animals for the 2020 sale later in the year. Keep an eye out for our March newsletter for more photos and updates.		



The large gallery of buyers at Wilkins Farming's South Island sale bought 60 of the 63 stags on offer.

WILKINS FARMING
17 January, South Island: 65 Harvey Road, Athol

Stags sold	60 of 63 on offer		
Top price	\$17,000		
Average	% change from last year	\$8,300	-5.3%
Comment	60 of 63 2-year stags on offer sold. Thank you for the strong bidding from the purchasers and under bidders. We had an excellent line up of stags on offer with very good 2-year liveweights of up to 267kg. The sale was enjoyed by a large crowd with plenty of new faces as well as our regular clients who had travelled from both Islands to attend – thank you for your attendance. We are looking forward to presenting another excellent lineup once again at our 2021 sale. Keep an eye out for our March newsletter for more photos and updates.		

WOODTOWN WOBURN STUD (Private treaty)
Crown Range, Queenstown

See page 22

*Source: PGG Wrightson Deer, <http://deer.agonline.co.nz>

Tagged deer must be registered

Just say “*M. bovis*” and it should take no more persuading that good animal traceability is a pretty vital cog in our biosecurity apparatus. But farmers need to do their bit to make the system work. Neglect an essential NAIT step, and farmers are taking the avoidable and unnecessary risk of a \$400 fine – or multiple fines if they’ve really dropped the NAIT ball.

THAT SIMPLE BUT crucial step is that the tagged animal must be **registered**, not just tagged. Just buying and inserting your NAIT tags isn’t enough. The next step – registering the animal with NAIT – is not happening as much as it should be, even though NAIT has been around for seven years.

The legal obligation to do this is being brought home to those farmers in the form of infringement notices issued by the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI), which has increased the resources allocated to NAIT enforcement to process infringements and warnings.

Compliance manager Peter Hyde hopes that by “getting a few tickets out there”, the message will get around and compliance will improve.

“If an animal is not registered, it is incredibly easy for us to detect when it reaches the DSP. Potentially this can cost a farmer \$400 an animal.”

Hyde says MPI is being notified of whole lines of deer that have not been registered, but to cushion the blow it is limiting the number of infringement notices issued for a single consignment to five. “Issuing five notices is not uncommon,” he says.



It’s not enough to just buy NAIT tags and insert them. If you don’t then register tagged animals you’ll be liable for a fine up to \$400 per affected animal.

The encouraging news is that the message has started getting through. MPI officials have told DINZ that compliance levels with NAIT are steadily improving. Most farmers now understand their obligations and are making efforts to comply. Support and information for farmers from OSPRI and organisations like DINZ has improved significantly and has no doubt helped increase awareness.

But we aren’t there yet. From February 2020, MPI anticipates the number of infringements issued to rise, with between 30–50 PICAs (persons in control of animals) receiving up to four infringements every fortnight. That’s a lot of \$400 fines.

Aside from issuing infringements, MPI will also be issuing formal warnings to PICAs who have a small number of non-registered animals. These warnings will be followed up and, if the desired change hasn’t been made, they will be issued with infringement notices.

- **Once NAIT animals are tagged, they must be registered with NAIT within seven days, or before their first off-farm movement, whichever comes first.**
- **If an animal loses its NAIT tag, it must be given a special replacement tag and re-registered with NAIT as soon as practicable. If it is found to have lost its tag before going on the truck for slaughter, the replacement tag must be registered with NAIT before the animal leaves the farm.**

Deer farmers urged to comply

NZDFA Chair John Somerville says that until recently the need to register deer after tagging them was neither communicated well to farmers by OSPRI, nor enforced by MPI. “Farmers who are being fined for non-compliance will not be happy,” he says.

Somerville urges deer farmers to comply. “It’s in our interests both as individuals and as an industry to have an effective animal traceability scheme that underpins our biosecurity and market quality assurance. We need NAIT to work well.”

Widespread non-compliance with NAIT in the dairy and beef industries led to long delays in tracking infected animals and has greatly added to the cost of *Mycoplasma bovis* control.

NZDFA is meeting with OSPRI, which operates the NAIT scheme, this month.

“Despite the benefits of NAIT, aspects of the scheme and its enforcement are a source of ongoing irritation for deer farmers. I share that irritation, but let’s not forget the big picture. It will be easier to make the case for change if our members are complying with NAIT rules, particularly those to do with tagging, registering and recording movements to and from the farm,” Somerville says.

The OSPRI contact centre is currently reporting an average phone call response time of 1 minute 39 seconds. The role of the staff at the centre is to help farmers meet their NAIT obligations, answer any queries and to do this in a timely manner.

OSPRI also plans to increase on-the-ground regional assistance for NAIT users in 2020.

The NAIT Bill is now law

The National Animal Identification and Tracing Amendment Bill does not change the fundamentals of the NAIT system. It amends the National Animal Identification and Tracing Act 2012 to ensure cattle and deer can be accurately traced to better manage biosecurity and human health risks. The Act is based on the

continued on page 22

NAIT: continued

recommendations of the OSPRI-led NAIT Review of 2016–18 and issues identified during the biosecurity response to *Mycoplasma bovis*.

- After a 12 month transition period, NAIT tags will only be able to be used at the location for which they were issued.
- The “impracticable to tag” exemption (ITT) has been renamed “unsafe to tag” (UTT) so that the focus is on worker safety. All untagged animals must be visibly marked. This exemption will be reviewed in five years.
- Farmers now need to declare at the foot of each Animal Status Declaration that the animals leaving the farm are tagged and registered, or legally exempt from tagging. If stock transport operators accept deer or cattle without this declaration, they are at risk of prosecution. There is a six-month transition period before this obligation will be enforced.
- NAIT data will be able to be used by government agencies to respond to inquiries about stock theft, wandering stock and dead stock in a public place.
- Before buying stock, purchasers will be able to request a NAIT report on the animals’ location history.
- Penalties have been brought into line with the Biosecurity Act 1993 and Animal Products Act 1999:
 - Infringement fees for NAIT non-compliance are now \$400 for each offence (previously \$150).
 - The fee for not registering as a PICA is \$800 (previously \$300).
 - A judge can now impose a fine of up to \$100,000 for an individual, and up to \$200,000 for a body corporate.

NZDFA

and NAIT are running a “NAIT Health Check” workshop for farmers in Taihape on 21 February, to be attended by NAIT staff and technical experts from Gallagher and TruTest. If successful the



NZDFA Chair, John Somerville: If deer farmers want to agitate for changes to NAIT, they first need to be complying with the rules as they stand.

workshops will be rolled out in other areas. We hope to carry a report on this inaugural workshop in our next issue.

Farmer responsibilities under the National Animal Identification and Tracing Amendment Bill (No 2): bit.ly/2U5ceLB ■

Woburn: Chapter closing but contribution endures



THE WOODTOWN STUD of Woburn red deer on the Crown Terrace, Queenstown, has had very nearly its last sale of Woburn stud stags by the Bedford family.

Woburn red deer produce impressive antlers in a very classical form. The two-year-olds this year convinced us that as their heads developed we should keep just a few

to offer in 2021 as three-year-olds. Therefore we will probably be offering four or five three-year-olds next January/February.

Being that much more mature, the three-year-olds also thrive much better when relocated. This year our stags made their way to destinations from Southland to North Canterbury.

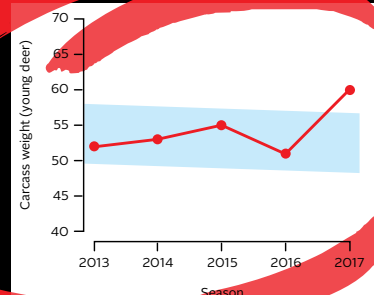
My husband Robin and I first became involved in breeding red deer in New Zealand about 25 years ago at Stanfield Oaks, where they were produced on our behalf by Clive and Elsie Jermy.

It is sad in many ways that this chapter is coming to an end. I have really enjoyed having a small purebred herd here on the Crown Terrace. However we are proud of the contribution that Woburn deer have made to the deer industry in New Zealand, and pleased that our Woburn bloodlines will carry on with other studs, including new genetics from England by way of semen.

As I now live for much of the year here in New Zealand, I feel proud of the noticeable contribution Woburn and the Bedford family have made here. This has been not only through the red deer, but also the impressive and unique tahr. All the tahr in New Zealand are descended from a gift made to the country by the 11th Duke of Bedford in 1903. The tahr were released near The Hermitage Hotel near Mount Cook village. There were three males and three females, with five animals surviving the journey.

– Henrietta Bedford

Benchmarked production and Johne’s disease info on your deer



Deer PRO

To help make and assess your deer management decisions contact **DeerPRO** for your report – **0800 456 453** or info@deerpro.org.nz

DP0717

Parasite management workshops

DINZ, with support from the New Zealand Deer Farmers' Association, is running a series of workshops focusing on parasite management on deer farms. The pending arrival of a new anthelmintic for deer, combined with weaning just around the corner, makes these workshops very timely.

THEY ARE BEING held in two parts. A morning session for veterinarians focuses on a technical discussion and sharing suggestions for best practice. The afternoon session is for deer farmers to work through practical parasite management. Vets are strongly encouraged to attend the whole day as the afternoon session will provide a good opportunity to work directly with farmers in conversations that go beyond drenching dates and products.

The programme kicked off earlier this month in the South Island, with workshops already having been held in Te Anau, Cheviot, Methven, Winton, Timaru and Balclutha.

There is one further South Island workshop planned, plus a series in the North Island. Upcoming workshop dates and locations are:

Feilding:	Tuesday 3 March
Taihape:	Wednesday 11 March
Wairarapa:	Wednesday 18 March

Rotorua:	Wednesday 25 March
Nelson/Marlborough:	Wednesday 15 April
Hawke's Bay:	Wednesday 22 April

If you are a vet or farmer wishing to attend, please contact Rob Aloe, Project Manager, DINZ (rob.aloe@deernz.org) with your preferred workshop location.

Numbers are capped for each workshop on a first-in-first served basis. A waiting list will be made for anyone who misses out. A full programme including the workshop venue and materials will be provided to registered attendees.

For more information on the workshops contact Pania Flint: paniaflint@gmail.com or 027 718 1076

These workshops are funded by the Passion2Profit Programme, a Primary Growth Partnership between Deer Industry New Zealand and the Ministry for Primary Industries. Funding is also provided by the New Zealand Deer Farmers' Association and Ian Spiers Memorial Trust. ■



Above: Venison farmer Tony Chittock and Deer Select Manager Sharon McIntyre

Genetics is one of the biggest productivity drivers on your deer farm. Understanding how to unleash that potential to take best advantage of your farm system is vital if you want to earn more dollars from your deer.

Award-winning broadcaster Susan Murray talked to the deer industry's most widely respected experts on deer genetics to bring you the good oil on the subject. She also talked to a commercial venison farmer and a processing industry livestock manager to get their point of view.

Listen to Susan's interviews in a series of short, entertaining podcasts on: deerindustrynz.podbean.com

If you prefer some pictures with your sounds, watch the interviews on YouTube, at:

deernz.org/media/video-gallery/keen-genes-videos

Keen on Genes has been produced by Susan Murray and Phil Stewart as part of the Passion2Profit programme, a Primary Growth Partnership co-funded by Deer Industry New Zealand and the Ministry for Primary Industries.



Farm performance role for McKenzie

by Phil Stewart, *Deer Industry News* Editor

Phil McKenzie has been appointed DINZ manager – farm performance, a new role that takes primary responsibility for delivery of the Passion2Profit production programme.

FOR THE PAST 12 months McKenzie has been working part time for DINZ as P2P environment project manager. In that role he's helped set up 14 separate Deer Industry Environment Groups, several of which have already achieved their objective of developing farm environment plans.

He'll continue with the P2P environment project work, but will also be taking on board all farmer-facing P2P work. That will include responsibility for the Advance Party programme and working on the P2P Feeding, Environment, Genetics and Animal Health themes. McKenzie will be working closely with DINZ producer manager Tony Pearse and environmental stewardship manager Lindsay Fung in his new role.

He says that in addition to running the existing programmes, he'll be taking a strategic look at ways deer farmers can be helped in future to better understand their own farm systems and realise untapped potential to improve productivity and sustainability.

“Leading farmers are already showing what can be achieved, and there is still potential for a much larger group to make further gains using tools that are already available,” he says.

He will also be exploring ways that the success of Advance Parties and the Environment Groups can evolve once the current Primary Growth Partnership winds up in 2022.

“We will be wanting to manage the end of the PGP-funded programme and look at ways we can transition to a new phase to keep up that momentum. At a practical level that might mean finding ways for groups like the Advance Parties to operate, how they could be funded or sponsored and in what form. For environment groups the focus remains on ensuring all deer farms have an active environment plan.

Two workshops with small groups of farmers in the South Island on improved wintering systems and the tools and resources

that could help all deer farmers was another example of the way collective experience could be tapped into and spread further afield.

McKenzie is looking forward to working with DeerPRO manager Solis Norton and seeing how data such as that provided through DeerPRO can be further leveraged to identify opportunities to address productivity issues.

“I've been impressed by the spirit of innovation among deer farmers, their ambition to excel and their willingness to collaborate. There is of course much still to be done, which is what excites me about this new role – working with others to design practical on-farm solutions that work.

“We've already got plenty of runs on the board. I'm looking forward to helping deer farmers build on that progress.”

McKenzie, who lives in Wellington, was originally from a farm in Southland and has worked in many regions throughout New Zealand and overseas. He has deep farm systems knowledge and extensive agribusiness experience, including valuable experience with Pāmu, where in his most senior role he was a general manager with responsibility for environment.

- The position of manager – farm performance was created following the appointment late last year of former P2P manager Innes Moffat as DINZ chief executive. Moffat's previous P2P venison marketing responsibilities have been taken up by DINZ venison market services manager, Nick Taylor. ■



Phil McKenzie: Looking forward to helping farmers build on progress already made.

Deer farmers among biggest private landowners

Deer farming entities feature in a list of New Zealand's top 50 private landowners according to an article published by Radio New Zealand (see <https://bit.ly/2NlacvW>).

THE LIST, WHICH doesn't include landowners such as Pāmu (Landcorp) and Maori Trusts, is dominated by forestry interests. Six of the 10 biggest private landowners are foreign forestry

companies, a figure that will do nothing to allay concerns about the wholesale conversion of productive pastoral land to trees.

The research for the feature, part of a series on land ownership

Venison burgers with sweet and sour pepper salsa

by Sophie Wright

THIS IS THE perfect summer dish – one for all the family!

It's great on the BBQ or cooked indoors. The sweet peppers go amazingly well with the sumptuous New Zealand farm-raised venison and make a fantastic change to the same old boring beef burger.

Top tip: make the salsa a few days in advance to really intensify the flavours. It will keep well in the fridge.

Serves: 4

Preparation: 30 mins

Time to cook: 30 mins

Ingredients

Venison

- 750g minced New Zealand venison
- 2 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp ground coriander
- 2 tsp smoked sweet paprika
- 50g chopped fresh coriander
- 2 tsp Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tsp salt and pepper
- 2 tbsp vegetable oil for cooking

Sweet and sour pepper salsa

- Olive oil
- 2 red peppers
- 2 yellow peppers
- Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
- Thyme sprigs
- 2 tbsp white wine vinegar
- 2 tbsp water

To serve

- 4 sesame seed burger buns
- 1 baby gem lettuce
- Mayonnaise



Method

Mix the minced venison with all the spices, seasoning and the chopped fresh herbs. Once well combined, make the individual patties by dividing the mix into four round patties. Press each one tightly together, making sure you have no gaps in the meat that may fall apart while cooking.

Leave the patties to rest in the fridge while you make the salsa.

Heat a large heavy-based sauté pan and add a drizzle of olive oil. Remove the core and seeds from the peppers and slice thinly. Add them to the hot pan with some seasoning, then throw in the thyme. Cook for 8–10 minutes or until just softened.

Deglaze with the vinegar over a high heat, until the vinegar has almost completely evaporated. Add a splash of water, and cook for a further 2–3 minutes, until you are left with syrupy juices. Leave to one side until ready to serve.

To cook the burgers, heat a large frying pan with 2 tbsp of vegetable oil. When the oil is nice and hot, lay in the burger patties. Cook 3–4 minutes per side until nicely browned for a rare burger, or 5–6 minutes per side if you prefer it more medium or well done.

Once cooked, allow patties to rest while you lightly grill the burger buns. Spread the bottom bun with mayonnaise and lay on a few lettuce leaves. Place the venison pattie on top and spoon over the peppers before placing the top bun. ■

and forestry by RNZ's Kate Newton and Guyon Espiner, revealed that 56 percent of New Zealand's land area is privately owned. Within that, 3.3 percent is in foreign hands and 6.7 percent is Māori owned. The five biggest Māori/iwi land holdings account for about 630,000 hectares, although about one-third of that is land from Te Urewera National Park passed to Ngāi Tūhoe.

The top 50 private landowners between them own more than 1 million of New Zealand's 26.8 million hectares.

Newton reported that the third-largest private landowner, Australia-based New Forests Asset Management, has snapped up more than 77,000 hectares in just four years.

Five well-known deer farming interests are among the top 50 private landowners. The Whyte family, with 17,240 hectares is 18th

on the list. Next at 23rd is Gary Rooney (15,137 hectares).

The "Christian Church" is 24th on the list with 14,694 hectares. This group includes Gloriavale on the West Coast, whose 2,400 hectare farm includes deer.

Canadians Doug and Mari Harpur, owners of Fairlight Station and Cainard Run are 31st on the list with 12,512 hectares and the Klisser family, long-standing owners of Haldon Station are 34th with 11,907 hectares.

Two other entities that appear on the DINZ database also feature in the top 50 private landowners: Ngatapa Station, Hawke's Bay (9,580ha, 45th) is owned by Swiss national Anthony Czura and Fox Peak Station (46th, 9,546ha) is owned and farmed by Laurence Williams. ■

Detainment Bunds^{PS120} helping prevent sediment loss

Capturing phosphate and sediment in water spilling off farm catchments has been made easier, thanks to work done by a Rotorua farmer group, the Phosphorus Mitigation Project, who have validated Detainment Bunds^{PS120} (DBs).

THE PROMISE OFFERED by DBs was first reported in *Deer Industry News* in our April/May 2018 issue (page 14). This article explained how the bunds work and described field trials set up in the Bay of Plenty to assess how well they trap phosphorus, nitrogen and suspended sediments during intense rainfalls.

The research findings from this work were released at a public field day in the Rotorua catchment late last year. Over the past nine years this deer-relevant research has largely been under the radar, but now offers a practical, farmer-focused solution to improving water quality.

While nitrogen mitigation has occupied the minds of most regional councils and many farmers, phosphorus, sediment and pathogen losses are also required under the Government's latest water quality rules to be measured and curtailed. Nitrogen is largely lost by leaching through soil but other water quality contaminants leave the land only during brief, high-intensity rain run-off events. So why not grab that opportunity and try to intercept and treat these contaminant-laden run-off flows? That's what the new design of bund does.



John Paterson (Photo: Richard Rennie).

Mitigating runoff losses has focused on riparian margin plantings to filter sediment and phosphorus from runoff on the margins of waterways. The Rotorua Phosphorus Mitigation Project, managed by deer farmer and sustainable farming adviser John Paterson, has gone a step further with its efforts to capture the deluge of high phosphate and sediment runoff generated by rainfall events. Their purpose-built on-farm Detainment Bunds^{PS120} intercept flood water and the bund treatment enables phosphorus and sediment loads to settle back onto pasture before any remaining captured flow is released.

“Twenty to thirty years ago the council was building ‘detainment dams’ to help reduce peak run-off flows and address erosion issues. Nine years ago I started looking at how these might

be re-designed to also work for phosphate retention. It's been my baby ever since really,” Paterson says. The new structures now have twice the storage capacity and much more pond residency time, hence the new name – Detainment Bund^{PS120}. Paterson is adamant these structures should not be called “dams” because the ponding is temporary and the land occupied remains productive.

Support from the Sustainable Farming Fund, Lake Rotorua Primary Producers' Collective and eight other agriculture industry co-funders (including the deer industry), helped kickstart the latest phase of the project. This was a PhD study with three farms used for the trials and setting up sophisticated (and expensive!) measuring equipment on the bund trial sites.

The PhD work is revealing that the relatively simple earthen bunds are capable of capturing around 60 percent of annual phosphate losses and 70 percent of suspended sediments contained in storm water runoff, depending on soil drainage conditions.

The bunds are built as low earth mounds across gently sloping land on valley floors, usually on prime pasture, where stormwater paths occur during intense rainfall events.

The bunds temporarily detain storm water runoff in a ponding area for up to three days, providing time for the trapped water to soak into the soil but not compromising pasture growth. Because sediment particles and their attached phosphorus cannot infiltrate the soil, they settle onto the flooded pasture instead of running off and passing through to streams, rivers, estuaries and lakes to potentially exacerbate water quality.

Now the phosphorus- and sediment-capturing ability has been proven, Paterson says their capacity for capturing *E. coli* and associated bacterial pathogens contained within the runoff water also needs to be investigated with further applied research.

If successful, it means the bunds would help mitigate three of the key water quality parameters under the new proposed national standards.

DINZ Environmental Stewardship Manager Lindsay Fung, who attended the field day last October as a deer industry sponsor representative, agrees that in landscapes where the bunds can be fitted appropriately, they have the potential to significantly reduce contaminant losses to water exiting farms.

Paterson says it was critical the bunds be built with a storage capacity that is accurately matched to the contributing catchment area. If not they will spill too readily, defeating their purpose. This requirement is reflected in the suffix (^{PS120}) of the name – the “120” denotes a minimum recommended requirement of 120m³ of ponding storage per hectare of the contributing catchment area. (The “PS” refers to phosphorus and suspended sediments.) Precision interpretation of the farm landscape is needed and each

potential site is found and assessed using advanced Geographic Information Systems (GIS) supported by LiDAR data.

While more than 20 DBs have now been built, Paterson cautions the new design is by no means a silver bullet. The trial farmers are also working hard on incorporating adjusted wintering methods, stocking rates, cropping and fertiliser application into management plans to help retain P on the farm.

“A proactive management approach is best, but a certain amount (of P and sediment) still gets through and these bunds are just the final scrubbers to intercept and collect that.” Attention to upstream critical source areas is still required.

He acknowledges the bunds may not be suited to all farm landscapes. “You need a broad valley floor with a relatively small catchment area – ideally less than 50 hectares – and good soil infiltration rates.” Rolling topography is usually the most suitable but sometimes quite hilly property still presents valley floor opportunities, revealed by the GIS LiDAR scoping search process.

The Phosphorus Mitigation Project group is awaiting the final thesis from Massey PhD student Brian Levine, due in February



A detention bund at full capacity and skimming off excess storm water. Photo: Dylan Clarke.

2020. After this a “how to” guide for farmers wanting to integrate bunds into their farm system will be written and made freely available. ■

For further information on DBs:
john.patersonPMP@gmail.com

Obituary: Bernard Lewis Splitt 21 December 1941 – 31 December 2019

It is with sadness we note the passing of long-time deer farmer, deer agent, helicopter shooter and all-round good bugger, Bernie Splitt of Taupo.

BERNIE WAS BORN in Hamilton, married his school girlfriend Gloria and moved to Taupo to work for Jim Ridley who owned the Mitsubishi franchise. After a few roars later they moved back to Hamilton to manage the farm his father owned. The draw of the sika deer eventually became too strong, so they returned to Taupo and purchased a motel. They did well there, as anyone who knew Bernie and Gloria would acknowledge.

Deer farming was just starting in the early 1970s when I had a visit from Bernie. At the time my herd was about 40. He bought a few and we farmed them, learning together how to deal with the wild animals they were in those days. Bernie was never one to sit back, so started jumping out of helicopters flown by local pilots Peter Masters and Lyall Mumford. He and Gloria meanwhile sold the motel and bought a small farm in Taupo and converted it to deer, later on buying a bigger property.

He was a founding member of the Tongariro branch of NZDFA in the late 1970s.

Bernie was a deer agent for AFFCO and then Silver Fern Farms, and was the ultimate agent – straight as a gun barrel. No matter what time the truck arrived to collect deer, he was there to help the farmer and the driver to back in and make sure the pins were in and deer safe, well prepared and in top form for their next role on a new farm or for venison.

Bernie had a heart bypass operation in 1989 but it never slowed him down.

In 2005 he won the Matuschka Award, which recognises a quiet, committed grassroots contribution to the DFA at branch level. In his commentary supporting Bernie’s nomination,

Tongariro Branch Chair Geoff Burton, said Bernie “epitomises the pioneer spirit of the industry”. He noted Bernie’s enormous experience that went back to the first days of deer capture and farming. “He is always ready to share his knowledge and help others, but is not one for the limelight.”

Brian Managh, Chair of the Bay of Plenty DFA in 2005, recalled Bernie as “a stalwart of the local DFA ... nothing is too much effort for him. For events and activity, he just turns up and gets stuck in. He is noted for his generosity and good humour, and being the best cook of barbeque venison. There is not a deer farmer in the area that has not received advice and help from Bernie Splitt.”

The Splitts eventually sold the farm and moved to Hawke’s Bay, later returning to Taupo once more, where Bernie died. He is sadly missed by all who knew him. Bernie is survived by his wife Gloria, son Karl and daughter Desiree. On behalf of the NZDFA we extend our sincere condolences to Bernie’s family. ■

– Contributed by Murray Matuschka, Taupo



Winter grazing taskforce

by Phil Stewart, *Deer Industry News* Editor

The report of the government-appointed Winter Grazing Taskforce, released in late November, has identified better access to information, better intelligence on current practices and better attention to animal welfare throughout all stages of the production chain as priorities.

WHILE THE REPORT does not single out deer farming for special attention, it's clear that this industry does share some of the challenges faced by cattle and sheep farming when it comes to managing winter grazing.

Having farmer buy-in to any recommendations and practice changes around winter grazing is crucial, and the close involvement of experienced NZDFA members in the taskforce consultation has provided a great start in this process.

The taskforce was more focused on animal welfare than environmental issues, but did acknowledge the close links between these, as well as with areas such as market demand and supply chains. Awareness of welfare risks around winter grazing should be high throughout the entire supply chain, the report said. People such as regulators, veterinarians, contractors and meat processors all had a role, and animal welfare should be at the heart of all management and planning.

It identified several baseline requirements for animal welfare in relation to winter grazing:

- access to a dry surface to rest on
- scope to be able to shift stock to dryer or more sheltered areas during adverse weather
- access to clean water
- adequate nutrition in terms of both volume and balance.
- The report emphasised that these are bare minimums and noted standards needed to far exceed these requirements.

With nearly three-quarters of the country's winter brassica crops grown in Canterbury, Otago and Southland it is predominantly a South Island issue, although the report noted the growing importance of winter crops in other areas.

It also noted there are considerable gaps in knowledge about winter grazing current practices, the needs of different livestock species and the current extent of problems. (The issue of calving onto mud, for example, is more relevant to dairy farming than to deer.) The report said the livestock industries need to settle on agreed standards for winter grazing and ensure the tools are there to support uptake of changed practices.

The role of peer-to-peer support among farmers was recognised in the report. This is one area where the deer industry is already well placed, through NZDFA branches and P2P Advance Parties and Deer Industry Environmental Groups.

Interestingly the report steers away from recommending livestock housing or other off-paddock systems for wintering, but does accept that these may have a role in future.

While the report doesn't get into detailed practice change recommendations it does note several areas that could help, including:

- smaller, more uniform mobs on crop
- more accurate calculation of crop yields

- better matching of crops and supplements to nutritional needs
- better matching of farm systems and land capability.

The Winter Grazing Taskforce made 11 recommendations.

Among the most pertinent to deer farming were:

- more work to understand and mitigate the long-term animal welfare consequences of intensive winter grazing practices
- expand knowledge of barriers to adopting improved animal welfare practices
- more active surveillance to ensure animal welfare standards are being met
- the establishment of a pan-sector action group to implement the recommendations.

NZDFA Executive Committee member Mark McCoard, who was part of a group to meet with the taskforce and explain winter grazing in the deer industry, says the association is looking forward to staying involved in the process as improved practices and standards are developed and implemented.

DINZ is also looking forward to participating in the a pan-sector action group and notes that while winter grazing carries environmental and animal welfare risks, species-specific good farming practices can greatly reduce these. "The challenge will be to ensure that all farmers are aware of these risks and have the knowledge and confidence to manage them," says DINZ Environmental Stewardship Manager, Lindsay Fung.

DINZ and NZDFA are currently developing deer-specific information for intensive winter grazing, working closely with Environment Southland and Environment Canterbury to ensure that this information is incorporated into future winter grazing monitoring activities. DINZ and NZDFA are also evaluating how they can support farmers wanting to ensure that animal welfare and environmental footprints are not compromised from intensive winter grazing by deer.

The NZDFA ran a workshop during the 2019 Branch Chairs' meeting and came up with a number of recommendations for improved winter grazing practices (see *Deer Industry News*, December 2019, page 44). ■

For the Winter Grazing Taskforce report: bit.ly/2OotoRa



Good farming practices can greatly reduce the environmental risks from winter grazing.