



# Deer Industry News

Mapping the future

## **A Challenging Season**

BUMPS AHEAD BUT  
THERE'S ALSO ROOM  
FOR OPTIMISM AMID  
THE TURBULENCE

## **New Advance Party**

TARARUA ADVANCE  
PARTY KEEN TO LEARN  
DESPITE EFFECTS OF  
EAST COAST DROUGHT

## **NAIT Workshop**

OSPRI STAFF GET OUT  
INTO REGIONS TO  
ANSWER PRACTICAL  
QUESTIONS ON NAIT

# Deer Industry News

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

ISSUE 101 | APRIL/MAY 2020

ISSN 1176-0753

## Contents

**Editorial** . . . . . 2

**Markets**

2020 will be challenging . . . . . 3

**NZDFA News**

Conference cancelled – constitutional matters progressed. . . . . 7

**Industry News**

NZ deer milk hero of the day . . . . . 10

**Passion2Profit**

New entrants keen to learn . . . . . 11

**Animal Health**

Autumn reminders . . . . . 14

**DINZ News**

DINZ working from home offices . . . . . 15

We're digital only this time . . . . . 20

**Regulatory**

NAIT workshop answers questions . . . . . 16

**Environment**

Gas emissions lower than thought . . . . . 19

Winter grazing workshops . . . . . 23

Waikato decision pleasing . . . . . 24

**On Farm**

Strong vision, clear values . . . . . 21

Feed budgeting service available . . . . . 25

**Supplied Content**

Healthy returns from ginseng . . . . . 24

**People**

Obituary: Frances Swann . . . . . 25

**Cover:** The world is going through a tough time right now, so we thought it would be nice to have a picture of something we can all look forward to seeing in about 230 days' time – and a reminder that whatever the future holds, the deer industry can be proud of what it does. Photo: Aimee Stodart.

*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.

**EDITOR** Phil Stewart, Words & Pictures

# Talk about your most important asset

One of our challenges with mental health is that many see it as something we can only have special conversations about – not everyday ones, like we might with our physical health and fitness.



Hugh Norriss.

**THERE IS STILL** a fear out there of being seen as weak or a needless burden on others, leading some to soldier on silently when stressed to the eyeballs, overwhelmed or reaching a state of despair.

Even though there are good places to get help (see contact numbers below), if someone has got to the point where they are really struggling, just calling up a helpline can seem difficult.

One of the ways to improve this situation is to normalise conversations about mental health. This is what we do at Farmstrong, where farmers share with other farmers the things they do to look after the most important asset on the farm – themselves and their mental health.

Mental health isn't just about illness and struggle, it's also about keeping mentally strong. The good news is that mental fitness, like physical fitness can be strengthened. Develop small, regular habits such as keeping in touch with friends, practising healthy thinking to counter negative thoughts, learning how to wind down after work, getting enough sleep, exercising and eating well. These all help to increase your wellbeing.

The benefits are huge – a mentally healthy farmer will make better decisions on the farm, have better overall health and be a better person to be around.

Investing in your wellbeing is even more important given that farming can be incredibly stressful at times, particularly when dealing with things outside your control – things like weather, regulation and now Covid-19.

Too much stress can cause mental and physical illnesses. Therefore building the mental skills and social support to cope with the ups and downs of farming is key to being a successful farmer. If you take your mental health for granted and don't invest in it, you run the risk of needing to do something about it because you have become unwell.

For ideas from farmers on how to keep mentally healthy, visit the Farmstrong website [www.farmstrong.co.nz](http://www.farmstrong.co.nz) to find out what might work for you and "lock it in".

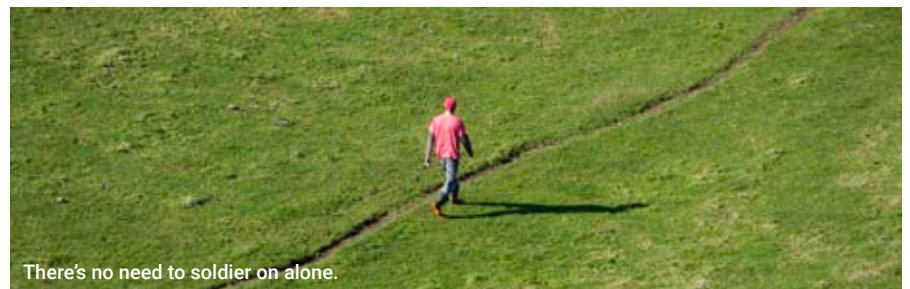
If you feel like you are not coping right now, don't delay in talking to someone you trust, your GP, or contact one of the helplines below. ■

– Hugh Norriss, Farmstrong content adviser

Rural Support Trust 0800 787 254 • Need to talk? Freephone or text 1737 •

Depression helpline 0800 111 757 • Drug and Alcohol Helpline 0800 787 797 •

Lifeline 0800 543 354



## EDITORIAL AND ADVERTISING ENQUIRIES

Words & Pictures, 89 Mills Road, Wellington  
Ph 021 620 399, email [phil@wordpict.co.nz](mailto:phil@wordpict.co.nz)

## CIRCULATION ENQUIRIES

Deer Industry New Zealand, PO Box 10-702  
Wellington, Ph 04 471 6114, [info@deernz.org](mailto:info@deernz.org)

# 2020 will be a challenging season

These are unprecedented, rapidly-changing times with some bumps occurring in our overseas markets. *Deer Industry News* writer **Ali Spencer** looks ahead at prospects for our main products.

## Industry feeling Covid-19 effects

On 23 March, the New Zealand Government moved our population into a four-week Level 4 lockdown, mirroring similar efforts in markets in Asia, North America and Europe.

Because food production and processing is an Essential Business, the deer sector can continue to supply a high-quality food product. Deer farmers are able to continue to look after livestock, vets are able to keep working and so are venison and velvet processors, albeit with some adjustments.

Meat companies have been revising working practices to keep workers safe, taking into account new requirements for physical distancing, increased cleaning/disinfection, use of personal protective equipment and closing of sites to non-essential staff (see more below).

The Government is also working to keep supply chains and critical infrastructure such as sea and air ports open. Recently Canada, Australia, Chile, Brunei, Myanmar and Singapore all committed, with New Zealand, to keep their trade links open, a welcome development. The DINZ Executive is meanwhile keeping alert to potential non-tariff barriers to trade.

It will be some time before normality resumes for travel and business. As DINZ chief executive Innes Moffat has said: "This is clearly not business as usual."

## What's happening in the markets?

Venison and velvet processors and marketers are dealing with disrupted routes and capacity issues. On the plus side, the situation has happened towards the end of the venison production season and at the tail-end of the velvet season.

Foodservice and hospitality have been taking the most strain initially, including in European and US markets. Venison and velvet buyers are placing orders for delivery later in the year, but conditions remain very uncertain. The probability of a global recession is growing, along with a likelihood of a negative impact on consumer spending across all our markets.

Marketers are working with their partners on options for reaching consumers, exploring channels such as e-commerce, home delivery and processed foods, DINZ Chief Executive Innes Moffat has reported. There is also increasing emphasis on existing retail options and they are looking at the logistics and timing of shipments. Some orders are being deferred until there is more certainty about how foodservice and retail customers are coping.

While global financial markets find their new levels, the New Zealand dollar had fallen 10 percent against the US dollar and euro since the beginning of the year. This is helping buffer some of the impact of weaker prices in foreign markets, says Moffat.

China and Korea were the first to deal with disease outbreaks. China appears to be on top of things now and there are positive signs coming from South Korea, reports DINZ Market Manager Rhys Griffiths.

Some Korean velvet importers reported increased velvet consumption during the SARS outbreak in 2003, due to the perceived immune function properties, he says (see *Korea: Bad impact but some positivity for velvet?* below).

## Health and wellness

Farmers' and processors' minds are also on the health and wellness of their own workforces and families.

"They have put measures in place to minimise the risk of introducing Covid-19 into their workplaces and will be asking for suppliers and service providers to abide by these. We must acknowledge the contribution our processing workers are making to keeping trade flowing," Moffat says.

The decision to cancel all DINZ events and DINZ-organised meetings was not taken lightly, he says.

"Some of the networks we have helped create are important for your connection and motivation. We encourage you to reach out to your networks to share news and support, and to use the networking technology available online," he says.

"Stay strong, stay connected and follow official advice on the measures to protect your family's health and that of your staff and friends."

## Game season

With the closure of restaurants and bars across much of Europe in March 2020, New Zealand venison marketers have wound back shipments for European summer consumption to most markets. But the well-entrenched game season will still ensure a demand for New Zealand venison in 2020. Over the past 5 years New Zealand has reduced its reliance on the European game market as exporters have diversified production to new and non-seasonal markets. However the autumn consumption season for game meats remains the main sales period for New Zealand and the main venison consuming period across a range of European countries.

New Zealand exports to Germany have rebounded at the start of 2020, assisted by lower pricing. Major customers have placed orders for a larger volume of New Zealand venison at the beginning of 2020 as prices eased down from the historic highs of previous years that took venison out of the price range for many traditional retail and manufacturing items.

For the five months from October 2019 to February 2020, 2,936 tonnes of New Zealand venison worth \$43.8 million was exported

*continued on page 4*

Market update: continued

to Germany. That was a lift of 16.6 percent in volume, but a fall of 3.3 percent in value, says DINZ Venison Marketing Manager Nick Taylor.

“For the period ending February, chilled venison volumes dropped by 2.5 percent from 2019 to 2020, he notes.

“Frozen volumes are up by 400 tonnes, reflecting the cheaper prices, with the total value down \$1.5 million.

New Zealand venison exports to Germany for the October–February period for the past three seasons are shown in Figure 1.

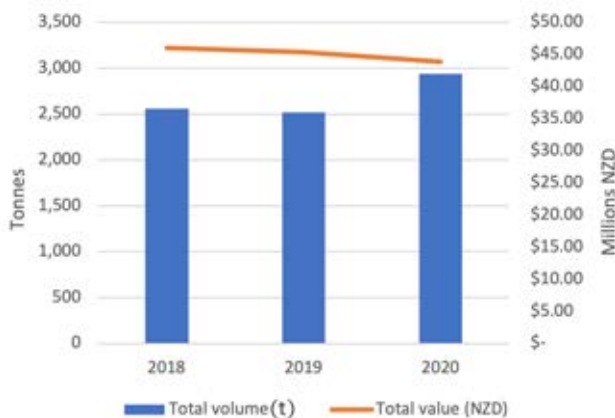


Figure 1: Total combined value and volume of chilled and frozen venison exported to Germany for the five months October–February 2018–2020.

DINZ is putting together a research project to refresh understandings of the drivers of venison consumer demand in Germany, says Taylor.

“It’s been 10 years since we undertook consumer research in Germany and having a better understanding of German consumers’ game preferences will help us focus our marketing efforts.”



Nick Taylor, alongside venison exporters and importers, is looking ahead at what’s needed for the next post-Covid19 season.

Covid-19 restrictions in a rapidly escalating global situation are further affecting the market (see more on this below).

Germany-based DINZ Consultant Chef Shannon Campbell reports the upheaval has had a massive impact on foodservice as all bars, restaurants and shops have been required to shut down in the market.

“Major retailers, delivery services, importers, and cash and carry are all currently holding their breath and moving back payment schedules.”

Government support for businesses/small operators and self-employed people has been promised, he says. He can see the possible closures of hospitality outlets and a significant period of rebuilding ahead.

Taylor predicts the foodservice sector will be significantly changed after the emergency is over. DINZ will continue to work with exporters and their importers on New Zealand venison

promotion in the market to undertake activities with them for the upcoming game season, he says.

At the time of writing, Campbell was contacting the German importers to find out about their situation and seeing what DINZ can do to help them.

Taylor says DINZ is keen to work more closely with them to help move any excess stocks.

“We are working with importers to help identify specific cuts that could benefit from additional promotion. Then we will be developing promotional support tools such as recipes or videos, using these in demonstrations and identifying new, or novel customers within their markets.

“We also continue to encourage and work with companies to identify alternative markets to reduce our exposure to a single market.”

### New opportunities emerging

Shannon Campbell has spotted a number of potential opportunities already, including a shifted focus onto modern cuisine and new forms of dining and ingredient choice.

“But it’s questionable whether the market will have the cash to eat out,” he concedes. “I envisage a period of depressed trade in hospitality, especially in the mid-to-high price range.”

For New Zealand venison/Cervena®, Campbell suggests reintroducing it onto the menus of high-volume foodservice deliverers to provide a base of sales, while supporting a rejigged hotel and restaurant trade as it re-emerges in a changed gastronomic landscape.

“Couple this with supporting new consumer demand for quality sustainable meats and healthy living,” he says.

“Another focus could be on supporting the green shoots of the new hospitality culture with fresh, interesting and innovative recipes and an extensive competitive backstory that gives them an edge, and aiming to grow up alongside that rebirth.”

### Venison processing effects

**Silver Fern Farms has been dealing with Covid-19 challenges, including the temporary closure of its Kennington deer processing plant in early April, and its processing plants working at 80 percent capacity for up to six weeks for venison.**

The Invercargill plant was closed for 14 days as a precaution after a number of staff tested positive for Covid-19 and its tight plant layout could not ensure others were not exposed because of close contact. After a period of recovery at home for the workers, who are all well now, it reopened on 8 April as scheduled.

As with all other meat processing companies, Silver Fern Farms had completed a 10-stage registration process for essential businesses so it could continue to operate safely, showing the safety controls it has in place created no additional risk of spreading Covid-19 amongst its staff. All plants now have new protective guarding, two metre distancing, new sanitisation stations and information in place for workers, says Silver Fern Farms Chief Executive Simon Limmer (see photo).

The meat processing company is acutely aware of the pressures on-farm that Covid has caused due to its revised capacity, he said, explaining the company needs to balance capacity against the needs of its people and keeping them safe. For venison, the



Simon Limmer.

company has revised its processing capacity nationwide to around 80 percent.

“This is a long game and we all need to plan to these levels for up to six weeks,” says Limmer.

SFF teams are working on an operational recovery plan, taking into account the lift in livestock numbers waiting to be processed as suppliers attempt to avoid congestion and also because of colder weather and diminishing feed levels, plus

the two short working weeks over the Easter period. It will also review its medium-term capacity levels, taking into account global market conditions for venison.

When there is more clarity, Silver Fern Farms livestock representatives will be in touch with deer suppliers to let them know what is happening.



Some of the new operational changes brought in by Silver Fern Farms as a result of Covid-19. All plants now have new protective guarding, two metre distancing, new sanitisation stations and information in place for workers.



Everyone in the deer industry has a responsibility to manage risks for all involved in the supply chain. Keeping our own workforce healthy is vital to ensure we stay ahead.

- Stay at home and stop all interactions with others outside your households.
- Regularly wash your hands thoroughly with warm water and soap for 20 seconds and dry your hands thoroughly.
- If soap is not available, use hand sanitiser.
- Sneeze/cough into a tissue, the crook of your arm/sleeve and away from people.
- Throw the tissues into a closed bin.
- If you develop a new dry cough and/or fever, or have difficulty breathing, stay away from others.
- Ring your GP before you visit or call Healthline on 0800 358 5453.

Further details at [www.covid19.govt.nz](http://www.covid19.govt.nz)



### China: No quick fix, but restaurants getting back to business

In February, Rabobank noted that the first-round impact of Covid-19 would be felt by any business that relies heavily on the foodservice channel in China, especially if the product is perishable, like venison or velvet, and requires quick distribution.

While demand slowed there, as consumers were unable to go out to eat in restaurants, Rabobank expected to see a bounce back later in the year.

A sign that this is being borne out came from early reports from that market, which had been in lockdown since the end of January and recently reported a cessation of new cases.



## Consistent, Reliable and Competitive

Contact Ross Chambers General Manager ph: 03 348 5080 or email: [ross@provelco.co.nz](mailto:ross@provelco.co.nz)

[www.provelco.co.nz](http://www.provelco.co.nz)

continued on page 6

Market update: continued

Hunter McGregor of Shanghai Rata Company works with Mountain River Venison supplying white tablecloth restaurants.

McGregor's one-week holiday for Chinese New Year lengthened to over eight weeks but he, his family and friends were unaffected by the virus.

"The only things you could not buy were facemasks and hand sanitiser. There was never a mad run for food or toilet paper here in Shanghai, though other parts of China had issues early on with food supply," he says.

At no point did they feel unsafe. "We were concerned, but felt OK," he says. "At the start, people were wanting to get out of China; now people are keen to return."

As his customers are restaurants and hotels, his business was massively affected, he says.

"Our February 2020 sales were 98 percent down on last year. March was not much better, but we are seeing some positive signs that April should be OK. Places are re-opening, people are heading out and the weather is getting warmer, so things are heading in the right direction."

While hotels will take a while to recover, he expects restaurants to pick up more in April as people are keen to go back out again. "There will be a new normal."

Shipping lines are shifting schedules and reducing shipments which was making things difficult, but the ports, operating since the middle of February, were not the major issue in Shanghai.

"The main issue has been with trucking to and from the ports. This took until the end of February to resolve. As drivers were mostly from outside Shanghai, they had a 14-day quarantine before getting back to work," he explains.

Another issue was cashflow for Chinese companies. "With Chinese New Year not happening, a lot of food was not sold. This meant a carryover of stock. So with more arriving, product cashflow is an issue and some companies leave containers at the ports until they can pay the tax and import charges."

While there is no quick fix for the current business environment, McGregor says things move fast in China. "As long as the virus remains under control, things will pick up and there will be plenty of opportunities to sell high-quality Mountain River Venison."

"We feel like we are starting our business again, but this time round we know what we are doing!"



It's a thumbs up from Hunter McGregor in Shanghai.

### Lockdown in Europe

The EU closed its borders completely to visitors from non-EU countries for 30 days from 18 March and gatherings had been cancelled across the region.

DINZ Consultant Chef Shannon Campbell reported the situation in Germany – where isolation was being requested, but not enforced – was changing rapidly.

His family life has been severely impacted, with schools closed, shopping "difficult" and going outside "an uncomfortable experience," he says.

"It is not normal to wear latex gloves when you use the bank machine."

On the upside, he has had a lot of long phone conversations with friends and spent a lot of time with his two daughters, who were home-schooling. Psychologically, his family are very positive.

"A shift towards thinking for the collective good rather than personal gain may do us all a favour."

Meanwhile, Campbell has been busy speaking to German importers to find out what their promotional needs are likely to be for the coming season.



"Whatever, still cooking," says Shannon Campbell on Instagram @Shannon.campbell2018

### Korea: Bad impact but some positivity for velvet?

South Korea has been badly affected by Covid-19, but at the time of writing new cases were slowing and many had made a full recovery.

YG Shin has been working with New Zealand velvet in Korea for more than 24 years. He worked with New Zealand's Trade & Enterprise office in Seoul from 1995 to 2018 and now his company, Latitude, represents DINZ in the market.

"My mother took me to Oriental medicine clinics for deer velvet prescriptions almost every year until I got married," he says. He's a big fan of health food products that use New Zealand deer velvet, buying them for himself, family, friends and relatives.

"Compared with past epidemic cases like SARS or MERS, Covid-19 has had a much bigger, negative impact and placed uncertainty on the Korean economy," he says. "The domestic economy has already displayed signs of contraction and the country's growth outlook for this year is now forecast to be under zero percent. The stock and forex markets are fluctuating greatly."

He has had mixed initial feedback from Korean partners about the disease's impact on deer velvet.

"Some companies specialising in retail sales are suffering greatly. In the past, many Chinese tourists bought Korean health food products containing New Zealand deer velvet from duty-free shops. It is difficult to see any tourists these days," says Shin.

However he notes that cable TV home shopping sales are doing really well. "These channels air deer velvet sales programmes more often nowadays as the product is well regarded as one of the best immunity and energy-boosting products."

Oriental medicine clinics are reported to be suffering a decline in patients. "Elderly people refrain from visiting clinics in fear of infections at hospitals," Shin explains.

However, he shares some optimism for deer velvet in general.

"More people might want to try deer velvet products as a virus-infected world might become the new normal, and most Koreans know that deer velvet strengthens their immune system!" ■



YG Shin representing New Zealand velvet in Seoul, Korea.

# Industry conference is cancelled but constitutional matters are progressed

As announced on 19 March, the 45th Deer Industry Conference has been cancelled as a result of risk to health caused by Covid-19. The decision to cancel was made jointly by NZDFA and DINZ and was announced four days in advance of the Government's notice that the country would enter Alert Level 3 on 23 March and Level 4 on 26 March for a period of 4 weeks.

**THE DECISION WAS** not taken lightly but is necessary when weighed up against the risk to the health and safety of our industry family. We apologise for the inconvenience incurred by this decision, but trust that this will be understood in light of the huge challenge facing all New Zealand.

At this stage is our intention to postpone the Invercargill conference for 12 months and return to the Bill Richardson Transport World venue and to the heartland Southland, Fiordland and Otago regions for a full conference on 19–21 May 2021.

We believe that the planned conference theme of resilience and celebrating the deer industry's achievements remains important.

Although the industry can no longer meet in person this year, it is planned to nonetheless foster connection by working with keynote speakers, staff and Sarah Perriam Media to create podcast video content that will stream live and also provide a permanent record that will be shared mid-year. This will be in an interactive form so people can still engage with speakers, NZDFA and the DINZ Board and Executive. The timing and format for this is still to be determined and will be announced as soon as it is finalised.

## NZDFA Annual General Meeting

It had been initially hoped that the AGM could be run in conjunction with the October branch chairs' meeting but this does not fit with the constitution and plans are now being made to run the AGM earlier, via video conferencing. We'll make a further formal announcement about how DFA members can take part as soon as these arrangements are in place.

In the meantime we will be compiling the DFA annual report for the year ending 31 March 2020. Given the disruptions to travel and normal work practices, this may present some challenges this year, so please bear with us while we bring together the necessary financial data and commentary.

While Covid-19 means that we cannot gather in person as we normally do, appointment processes for the NZDFA Executive Committee, Selection and Appointments Panel and DINZ Board have been able to continue unimpeded.

## NZDFA Executive Committee

Nominations were called for two vacancies. Current members **John Somerville** (Member at Large) and **Grant Charteris** (North

Island) retire by rotation at the next AGM. Grant Charteris did not seek a further nomination.

## Executive Committee Member at Large (1 position)

For the vacancy created by retirement by rotation, a single nomination of sitting member **John Somerville, Southland**, (nominated **David Stevens**, seconded **Bruce Paterson**) was received and he is declared appointed for the 2020–2022 term.

## DFA Executive Committee candidate statement: John Somerville

I have been on the DFA Executive Committee for the past 8 years, the last 2 as chair. During that time it has been a privilege to be part of a team that shares the same philosophy on the DFA role in the industry. That is, to be the link between farmers and DINZ, which gives our industry a strong ability in lobbying or ensuring that internal industry initiatives work as they should.

In these uncertain times, it is important that the deer industry has a strong organisation that understands its farmers' concerns and issues and can represent them through the branch structure at national level. Improving branch strength and activity is one of our top priorities, along with initiatives to nurture future leadership in the DFA and other industry positions.

The Next Generation programme has been a huge success in connecting with younger people involved in deer farming. We have to ensure that we can capitalise on that connectivity and carry it on to strengthen our organisation and the future of deer farming.

I am pleased to have the opportunity to represent you on the DFA Executive Committee for another term and continue the work of ensuring that the DFA is a relevant and strong organisation that plays an important part in our industry.

– John Somerville



*continued on page 8*

*Conference cancelled: continued*

### Executive Committee North Island (1 position)

For the vacancy created by retirement by rotation of Grant Charteris, Hawke's Bay, who has announced his retirement, the single nomination of **Karen Middelberg, Hawke's Bay**, (nominated **George Williams**, seconded **Grant Charteris**) was received and she is declared appointed for the 2020–2022 term.

### DFA Executive Committee candidate statement: Karen Middelberg

I have been deer farming in Central Hawke's Bay with my husband Richard Hilson for 22 years and am also farming deer in partnership with my sister. Both are breeding, finishing and velvet operations, with 1,700 deer as part of a total 9,000 su.

I have been part of the Hawke's Bay Originals AP group since its inception, am a committee member of our local DFA branch and also a Trustee for the Central Hawke's Bay Consumers Power Trust.

I am passionate about our industry and what we produce, and excited about the opportunity to represent farmers on the DFA Executive Committee. I want to see our industry continue to grow in strength and reputation and the DFA is integral in being the farmers' voice. The collaboration and relationship between the DFA, DINZ and industry bodies is key in negotiating our way through these fast-changing times. It is important that we keep this communication going to position deer farming for the future.



### NZDFA Selection and Appointments Panel

The SAP consists of the four-person Executive Committee and four non-Executive Committee elected members. Two of the non-Executive Committee elected members of the Panel retire annually by rotation.

#### SAP South Island (1 position)

A single nomination has been received for the vacancy created by the retirement by rotation policy, that of **Paddy Boyd** (nominated **Graham Peck**, seconded **Duncan Peck**), who is eligible for nomination and is declared appointed unopposed for a further two-year term.

#### SAP Member at Large (1 position)

A single nomination has been received for the vacancy created by the retirement by rotation policy, that of **Leith Chick** (nominated **Jacqui Wellington**, seconded **John Hunter**), who is eligible for nomination and is declared appointed unopposed for a further two-year term.

### NZDFA appointments to the Board of Deer Industry New Zealand

Producer-appointed Board members are appointed directly to the DINZ Board for a three-year term and that appointment is advised to the Minister for Primary Industries as a formality.

There is one vacancy for the 2020–2023 Board term, created by the retirement by rotation of sitting member, Kris Orange.

A single nomination for this position has been received, that of current member, **Kris Orange, South Canterbury/North Otago** (nominated **Hayden Roberts**, seconded **Kelly Bennett**).

He is invited under the NZDFA constitution to present a short overview of his candidature to the 45th NZDFA AGM. The Selection and Appointments Panel will carry out its processes and make an appointment before 1 July 2020, as required.

### DINZ Board candidate statement: Kris Orange

As we get set for our third week in Lockdown Level 4, much of New Zealand and the world is reeling from the thought that this phenomenon, that has only existed since November 2019, could bring global business to its knees. Many businesses have had to completely stop and many will not re-open.

Deer farming is certainly not immune to the fallout; it has some significant challenges ahead.

Being classed as an essential service, deer farmers are in the privileged position to carry on day-to-day life. In some instances, not much has changed on farm. For others, the world has been turned on its head.

It has been a real privilege for me to have been a member of the DINZ Board for the past three years following on from being part of the NZDFA Executive Committee for six years.

The DINZ Board structure is the envy of other primary industries, having producers and processing/marketing all sitting around the table for the betterment of the deer industry. This is highlighted by the makeup of the current Board and its members with their diverse backgrounds and expertise. Our collective passion for the deer industry is greater than us all as individuals.

It has been a real highlight to follow on from the beginnings of P2P and getting that across the line, to now seeing some of that come to fruition, such as industry carcass weight averages rising by nearly 5kg. Farmers spending more time thinking, talking with other deer farmers through Advance Parties, to enhance their breeding programmes through Deer Select and gradually formulate robust animal health plans are other examples.

Our vision for venison:

- Inspire the New Zealand deer industry to profitably grow and market the world's best red meat.





Our vision for velvet:

- New Zealand deer velvet is recognised, valued and sold as the best in its class in Asian markets.

These two visions remain our focus and in light of what the world has just witnessed, New Zealand deer products with their traceability and integrity have a great future, unparalleled by our competitors in terms of hygiene standards and animal welfare.

A silver lining to the Covid-19 global shutdown is the dramatic change in perception of food producers. Even in these uncertain times, people have to eat. In times of adversity, people quickly realise they need farmers. Some of those attributes such as safe, sustainable and ethically raised, still remain. We will have to think differently, market differently and likely farm differently, but New Zealand is well placed to answer the call. Farming will evolve along with ingenuity.

Stay safe everyone.

Kia kaha.

- AJ Pearse, Returning Officer for the NZDFA,  
1 April 2020

## ***Thank you, Grant Charteris!***

**With the cancellation of conference this year in May due to the Covid-19 crisis, the NZDFA Executive Committee (EC) won't have the opportunity to publicly thank Grant for his eight years' service. In lieu of a public thank you in person amongst our peers in the industry, members of the EC have contributed the following tributes to Grant for his service to the NZDFA.**



Grant and Sally Charteris.

Grant and I came onto the EC at the same time, at the 2012 Wanaka conference. Grant's passion for his deer farming and his relentless drive to improve his own farm's performance and profitability was replicated in his role on the EC. Always a team player but never afraid to get his view across, Grant was an integral part of the EC. During his time, the committee developed a closer role with DINZ activities like the Passion2Profit Advance Party programme and developed our own leadership and outreach initiatives like the Next Generation programme

and involvement of New Faces at branch chairs' meetings. Being involved in these and other industry activities was a natural fit for Grant.

Grant has a great sense of humour and is a natural when taking the stage, whether enthusing the next generation or asking the hard questions at conference. His passion for the DFA and the industry was obvious and rubbed off on people around him. Grant also has an ability to relate with people of all ages, which is a huge asset when in that position.

Being on the EC, especially for so many years, involves a lot of commitment and time away from farm and family. Grant can now concentrate on activities closer to home and take a well-earned rest.

It has been a pleasure working with Grant. He will be greatly missed for his contribution on the Executive Committee and we wish him all the best for his future plans.

- John Somerville, Chair, NZDFA Executive Committee

It has been an absolute pleasure to have worked with Grant Charteris on the NZDFA over the past three years. Grant is passionate and dedicated to all things related to the deer industry, from helping and encouraging new entrants into the industry right through to his passion for the animals themselves. Grant has always been able to find the positives in any situation. When some would give up, Grant just keeps going and works harder. He is a very proud family-orientated person who has been able to juggle eight years on the NZDFA EC while raising a young family alongside his best friend Sally. Grant has been very open and ready to share the projects that he and Sally have completed around Forest Road Farm, so that the deer industry as a whole can benefit. It has been wonderful working with Grant and I look forward to catching up and seeing how all his hard work has turned out.

- Justin Stevens, NZDFA Executive Committee

Grant's in-depth knowledge, ability to communicate and long-term commitment to the deer industry has been huge and will be missed. Having now been a member of the DFA Executive Committee for nearly twelve months, I have benefited greatly from his input and can now appreciate the passion and energy the role requires, and that Grant has given over the past eight years. I want to thank him for his efforts and wish him well as he now takes those skills into the education sector. ■

- Mark McCoard, NZDFA Executive Committee



"Why the long shadows?" Photo by Ange Blair.

# New Zealand deer milk hero of the day

New Zealand deer milk was the hero of the day last month at the final of the first ever Pāmu & Cuisine Deer Milk Ice-Cream Competition.

**COREY HUME, NEW** executive chef for Queenstown's The Rees Hotel, scooped the win on 16 March after competing against two other top chefs for the award: Makoto Tokuyama from Auckland's Cocoro restaurant and Paul Limacher of Wellington's Chameleon.

The three finalist dishes, whittled down from 24, included "doe-nuts" and an interpretation of the deer milk farm in spring. Hume's "Pāmu Deer Milk and Vanilla Ice Cream, Pretending to be a Lemon" dish blew the judges away, however. It gave a taste experience with the deer milk, a delicious waft of lemon mist and also came with music.

Ice-cream legend and judge Giapo joined *Cuisine Magazine's* Kelli Brett to make the final decision.

"Deer milk is such an innovative product so we wanted to look for innovation in the winning dish," says Giapo. "All three dishes were incredibly delicious, but Corey came to us on a different level. It was incredible."

Hume, a former Culinary Olympian and top 20 best young chef in the world, was happy because the judges got the whole concept, not just the actual dessert itself.

"I believed it was such a unique product, it deserved an equally unique presentation beyond just a dish, and that was exactly what I was trying to achieve," he says, adding he was quite humbled to be representing The Rees Hotel cooking alongside some of New Zealand's best restaurants.

What impressed him most about the deer milk was that it was so creamy and rich, he says.

"It was quite unlike what you'd expect, unlike goat or sheep milk which have particular flavour profiles. The rich neutral taste was a great asset as it allowed more scope with what I was trying to portray."

The Pāmu product will be quite popular shortly in many high-end restaurants, he predicts. "Its versatility lends itself well to sweet and savoury applications due its richness."

Its powder format also made sense owing to the limited quantities and time to milk throughout the year, he says.

"It reconstituted very well considering, and had no disadvantage, especially as I was making the ice cream without eggs to let the deer milk speak full volume through its profile enhanced by the vanilla."

As part of his prize, Hume will get the opportunity to collaborate with Giapo at his legendary Britomart ice-cream shop



Corey Hume (centre) discusses his dish with Kelli Brett (left) and Giapo (right).

in Auckland to create the first deer milk ice-cream on the menu. He will also be visiting the Pāmu deer milk farm in Gore to learn more about deer milk and where it comes from.

The competition saw 24 chefs from across New Zealand submit their ice-cream creations using deer milk, as well as adding their entries to their menus for the public to try.

Pāmu chief executive Steven Carden believes deer milk is destined for a bright future. "For Pāmu, deer milk is a tangible demonstration of our commitment to being a leader in innovation that benefits not just our company but also, eventually, the industry." ■



Deer milk as you've never seen it before, presented in Hume's deceptively simple dish: Pāmu deer milk and vanilla bean ice-cream, lemon sorbet, confit lemon and mint.

# New entrants keen to learn amidst summer dry

by Phil Stewart, *Deer Industry News* Editor

Despite battling the worst drought conditions in fifty years, members of the industry's newest Advance Party (AP) are still showing strong enthusiasm for learning and sharing what they know about deer. The Tararua AP draws its members from Central Hawke's Bay and the Tararua district and is led by facilitator Tim Hogan, a vet from Vet Services' Dannevirke clinic.



Tank-half-full people: Tararua AP members from left Carl Lynch, Nick Lansdown, Joanne Scholfield, Tim Hogan (facilitator), Guy Hindmarsh, Mike Thomas and Rik Wallace look over the top of the Pukenui Station's Makaretu block.

**DEER INDUSTRY NEWS** joined the group for their fifth meeting, held at Pukenui Station, Ashley Clinton, in mid February.

Many in the group are quite new to the industry and probably none moreso than Pukenui Manager, Guy Hindmarsh and his head shepherd, Rik Wallace. They've had deer on the property for just on a year and were preparing to wean their first batch of fawns.

It's an interesting setup and one that shows how well deer can fit in with an existing drystock operation.

But first some background. Pukenui comprises two properties: The original 1,131-hectare station block (929 effective) was bought in 2009 by Canterbury's O'Sullivan family, who had a background in sheep. It's up towards the Ruahine ranges, a combination of steep and easier country and usually summer safe. Guy Hindmarsh said winter growth stops for about 6–8 weeks there.

The O'Sullivans bought a second, lower and easier block a few kilometres further east three years ago, and that's where the AP meeting was held. The 156-hectare Makaretu block is primarily intended as a finishing property for lambs bred on the home station and for running winter trade cattle on crops.

Guy Hindmarsh said it had been used as a dairy runoff in recent years and was a bit run down. They piled on 1 tonne/ha of fertiliser for the first two years and have now got the pH and Olsen P levels where needed, so are now back to maintenance levels of 300kg of super and 60kg of potash.

As well as having quite good stock water infrastructure, the Makaretu block had another great thing going for it: most of it

is deer fenced and there is a deer shed. This has created a great opportunity to take advantage of the good spring growth for deer, with lambs coming down from the main station block for finishing in December, once the young deer have gone to the works, and then the lambs going off to the works around March, before the next crop of weaner deer arrives.

The two stock classes should complement each other very well this way. While the plan on this block is to cut back on trading cattle in favour of the deer, the cattle do provide a useful cleanup service and will remain part of the mix. Hindmarsh said cattle are bought and sold on the same market, which removes some of the risk.

There are about 100 "docile" mixed age hinds in the initial bought-in herd, sourced from Maranoa, plus four sire stags.

They've planted 40 hectares of Raphno with 300kg of DAP down the spout with the seed. Although not used for the deer thus far, it has been a great success for the sheep and cattle. It's more expensive to establish than rape but also delivers about 2–3 tonnes more dry matter (about 15–16 tonnes in total).

Guy noted that the stock preferred the Raphno to the Pasja that had been planted with it. He said the stock love it, and it needs to be grazed hard. Scald was one downside that had to be watched for though. The Raphno was the only patch of green in an otherwise beige landscape in February. It will be likely followed by chicory and clover.

Guy is planning a pasture renewal programme with Winter Star II, a short rotation Italian ryegrass for winter and spring, and then Lush, another tetraploid Italian ryegrass for summer production.



The hinds and fawns were still doing okay in February but it was getting bone dry.

*continued on page 12*

Tararua AP: continued



The race leading up to the deer yards has a couple of useful chicanes to improve stock flow but the addition of shade cloth or mill felt to the fences was suggested as a way to help further calm stock.

The plan is to have no pasture older than three years, which will help maximise production. Chicory, plantain and clover are also being considered to help boost finishing.

And while the first breeding season has gone well (the deer are “all right”, head shepherd Rik Wallace was happy to concede), they have been considering a change to finishing only. This way the good growth at Makaretu could be channelled straight into finishing stock rather than supporting breeding hinds.

The elephant in the room for this question, though, is how to find a reliable source of weaners. With the secure deer-fenced area of 50 hectares currently available, they should be able to accommodate up to 300–350 weaners per season – an exciting but daunting prospect.

With the bigger number would come more work, especially cutting velvet before venison animals go off the works. Guy said he hadn’t budgeted for any velvet income, so would be happy to use that to pay for additional labour on the sheep operation to free him up for velvetting work with the vet. (All going well he will look to get accredited himself after a year or two.)

He was advised to get velvetting done in decent-sized batches rather than dribs and drabs, to minimise handling and time needed, and will do it in the cooler parts of the day.

The group said hind and stag weaners can be run together over winter, but that they should be separated in spring, partly so stags can be brought in separately for velvetting without having to shift the hinds.

There’s another 50 hectares of deer fencing at Makaretu that needs more work and subdivision to get it up to scratch.

An animal health plan has been done for the deer. Guy said one issue they’ll need to watch is internal parasites and resistance; they’re a bit concerned about finishing lambs from Pukenui introducing worms at Makaretu.

## Advice from the team

Guy and Rik were keen to learn, since this was their first season with deer. The group offered some useful suggestions including the following.

### Race leading up to deer shed

Use some shade cloth or mill felt to cover the netting, keep young stock calmer and prevent injuries. It also helps break up the wind

(it blows a lot here). Alternate stretches of blocked-out netting on either side can work well.

### Loading race

This is connected directly to an internal pen in the shed. A race built within the pen could make loading smoother and easier.

### Choice of weaners

High-BV red weaners were suggested in preference to hybrids, which can be slower to get going, especially in spring. Members of the group warned that there are “a lot of velvet genetics out there”, meaning some animals available as stores may not have the best venison growth credentials.

### Getting weaners started

Guy was considering maize grain supplement in the drought conditions and the group urged him to introduce it before weaning so the fawns could get habituated to it, starting with about 50g/head/day, building to 300–400g/day after weaning. Mixing “educated” weaners with naïve animals means the newbies will soon learn how to eat the grain supplement.

For weaners bought-in to the property, good pasture covers of 1,500–1,700kg DM/ha were suggested, to give them a good start and make the most of their autumn growth potential.

### Mob size

Weaner mobs of about 150 were suggested as ideal. With potential capacity at Makaretu for 300 or more, this would work out well. However, if mobs get too small a paddock may not be grazed down properly and they will just browse out the most palatable feed.

### Stocking rate

A conservative weaner stocking rate of 6–7 animals/hectare (about 11–12.5 su) was suggested for a start point.

### Weaning technique

Leave gates open for a day or two before weaning starts, to get them used to the idea of moving.

### Animal health

Treatments recommended included Yersiniavax (two shots) and 7-in-1 vaccinations, drenching and possibly copper and selenium supplementation. Tim Hogan suggested liver biopsies or testing for copper at the works should be done first before adding any mineral supplementation. Shifting stock between the two blocks could have implications for parasite control and maintaining refugia (a population of drench-susceptible parasites) on pasture was recommended.

## Update: A bit of rain to wet the whistle

*Deer Industry News* caught up with Guy Hindmarsh at the end of March to check on progress. The dry had continued for a few weeks after the February AP meeting. “We were getting desperate,” Guy says. But they’d just received a very welcome 30mm of rain and MetService was forecasting more.

He’d delayed pasture renewal work at Makaretu until March and had just worked up some paddocks to plant Winter Star II,



Guy Hindmarsh, manager of Pukenui station, is enjoying the introduction of deer to the property. He's been considering a move from breeding and finishing to finishing only, to better fit deer with the other stock classes.

lost some condition but with a good diet of grain and baleage they were picking up in time for mating.

His goal of changing to finishing only with the deer after this season is on the back burner for now. "I actually had some weaners lined up to add to the ones we'd bred, but we've decided to hang onto the hinds through this winter now. They're good animals but we probably wouldn't get much for them right now anyway. Also, I'm realising they're not too demanding through the winter."

an annual ryegrass, so the timing of the rainfall was welcome. It will be followed by an Italian ryegrass.

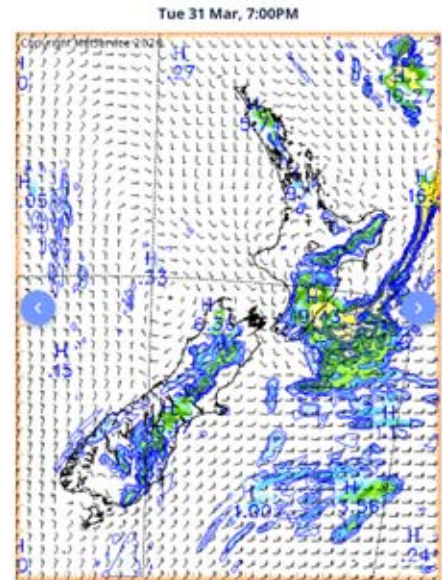
The feed situation with the deer wasn't too bad. They bought 150 bales of baleage in January before the prices took off and have good supplies of maize grain. Guy said they'd followed the advice from the AP meeting and got the weaners started on grain, which they'd taken to very well.

While he would have pre-rut weaned in a normal season they've decided to post-rut wean this year. He'd been worried the hinds had

He's holding off on buying trading cattle possibly until June, but they are still part of the plan.

Although he's sticking with the breeding and finishing with deer for the time being, Guy is committed to a flexible system that allows more trading to take advantage for feed when it's there, or quit stock when it dries up. "We were heavily stocked with [sheep and cattle] capital stock in the bad drought eight years ago and were forced to start getting rid of some of them. That takes a while to recover from."

Guy found the discussion at the AP meeting very helpful. "We've taken on board some of the recommendations from that day. We still plan to pre-rut wean in future seasons when the conditions are right and we are very keen to build up the deer side if they still stack up. It's a great way to diversify the business." ■



Metservice was forecasting more good rain for Hawke's Bay.

**RESEARCH  
PROVEN**

**(PREVIOUSLY  
FORAGE PLUS)  
FOR SUCCESSFUL  
DEER FEEDING ALL  
YEAR ROUND.**

## CATTLE BOOSTER

- Ideal for weaners post weaning to balance the nutrient deficiencies missing from their mothers milk
- Maintains condition in hinds in fawn on lower quality forages and crops
- Packed full of Protein, Energy, Vitamins, Minerals and Trace Elements, essential for improved rumen function, digestion, immunity and general health

### HOW TO FEED

- Place Crystalyx tubs in or next to troughs to encourage shy feeders
- Ensure more than one tub is available in large paddocks to avoid bullying
- Entice deer to Crystalyx bocks by including grain, palm kernel or deer nuts on top of the product so animals get used to something new in their paddock
- Bury tubs in the ground slightly

Jamie Taplin - North Island Tel: +(64) 027 6550 089 Brian Ferns - South Island Tel: +(64) 027 5970 198  
admin@crystalx.co.nz www.crystalx.co.nz

Crystalyx NZ

# Autumn health reminders

by Pania Flint

This summer's drought has seriously affected deer farmers throughout most of the North Island and parts of the South Island. Even "safe" areas such as Southland have struggled to grow enough supplement for winter.

**IT IS A** stressful time seeing baleage intended for winter being hoovered up and the window for autumn growth or sowing closing. The worst thing to do is "nothing". These are some things that can help minimise the damage and maintain animal health.

## Pasture covers

Following the recent rains in much of the North Island, we now find ourselves in a "green drought" with temperatures dropping. There is still enough warmth to get growth in most areas before winter though, but the trick is to capture as much energy from sunlight as possible while the grass has the potential to grow. This will mean allowing higher pasture covers to establish, i.e. shutting gates and rotational grazing. A bit of strategic supplementary feed and nitrogen might help grow significantly more grass to carry into winter. Consult with your local agronomist as to whether annual ryegrass or forage cereal is an option for winter feed, but you will need to get onto it smartly!

## Weaning, mating and feeding

Pre-rut weaning will be completed by now. This can be a tough decision where there has been little decent feed for weaners. Nobody likes to see a hungry young animal taken away from its source of good-quality, high-protein natural milk. We need to look at the whole picture, including next year's production.

By taking the fawn off mum pre-rut you have immediately relieved the hind and will have been able to back off the supplements going into her. Provided she had enough to slowly regain weight, she should have been fine going to the stag.



Some strategic nitrogen could help boost covers in time for winter.

A red hind requires about 4.5kg DM/day with a fawn at foot and about 2.5kgDM/day without. If you fed baleage and PK or maize or barley to the hinds with fawns at foot, continue with the supplements post weaning. They should know what the feed is and be getting into it fairly quickly. This helps their rumens adapt too.

With supplements for weaners it is important to get a good balance between high ME, enough protein and good palatability. Top quality baleage with high clover or mixed sward is adequate but Advance Party members have found it is highly advisable to get it tested!

Do some research into what is available locally and consult an experienced farmer, vet or feed specialist on the best mix. Supplements should preferably be continued onto crop and tapered off slowly. A recent case of weaner deaths reported in *Surveillance* found an excess of phosphorus in the diet, so balancing the diet is important.

If you have chosen to wean post rut, the hinds need to keep being really well fed.

## Vaccination

High stress increases the risk of disease.

**Leptospirosis:** All fawns should be vaccinated for leptospirosis because it is a common disease and very serious if people catch it. In light of current events with Covid-19, it is timely to think about simple practices that will protect human (and animal) health against preventable disease, even if it seems a hassle to give two injections to deer. Leptoshield® is registered for use in deer. Two doses are required 4–6 weeks apart and replacement hinds should also be given a booster before going to the stag. An alternative, although off-label, is to use a 7-in-1 vaccine (e.g. Ultravac®) that covers leptospirosis and clostridial diseases. Talk to your vet about the options.

**Yersiniosis:** A yersiniosis outbreak is difficult to predict but stress is a major predisposing factor even if we often can't identify the exact stress that caused an outbreak. A sudden turn in the weather can be enough to disrupt the gut function allowing yersinia to flourish. Consider vaccinating fawns against yersiniosis but if you have never had a problem and do not intend to change anything in the way weaners are managed, the cost, stress and nuisance of vaccination may outweigh the benefits. If you choose not to vaccinate, be sure to check animals regularly and act swiftly if some develop diarrhoea, lethargy and dehydration.

Your veterinarian may advise mob treatment with antibiotics to halt the disease. Although this may have implications for those supplying animals to an antibiotic-free standard, animal health and welfare must always take precedence.

# DINZ office closed – work continues from home

The escalation of the Government's Covid-19 response to Alert Level 4 from 26 March meant that the Deer Industry New Zealand office has had to be closed. It will remain so until the Alert Level has been reduced to Level 2 or less.

**ALL STAFF ARE** now working from home, each within their own “bubble”. While this change has meant some inevitable disruption to the way we work and interact with each other and members of the industry, we are maintaining all services as best we can. Phone, internet, email and video conferencing are a big help in this regard.

DINZ Executive staff can still be contacted by phone or email. Full staff contact details are at: [deernz.org/contact](https://deernz.org/contact)

At this stage we don't know when the Alert Levels will be reduced, but it would be safe to assume there will be some disruption to our normal ways of working for at least some weeks to come.

DINZ wants people to keep safe and well and recognises that Covid-19 poses a serious health threat. Minimising personal contact is an essential means of reducing infection rates.

A set of event and meeting procedures designed to minimise face-to-face contact and infection risk was agreed on 19 March and endorsed by the NZDFA Executive Committee but these are fast-moving times and they were superseded within days by the implementation of the Government's Alert Levels for managing Covid-19.

In the meantime we're committed to maintaining services as best we can with the tools at our disposal, while prioritising the health and wellbeing of our staff and the people we work with.

I'd urge all those in the deer industry to follow the guidelines that will help get us safely through this event. There is excellent advice on what the Alert Levels require us to do, and keeping yourself, your families and staff safe. This is to be found on the official website: <https://covid19.govt.nz> ■

– Innes Moffat, CEO, Deer Industry New Zealand

*Health reminders: continued*

## Parasite control

By now, everyone on a regular drenching programme should have given weaners their first anthelmintic drench and anyone who is on a limited drenching programme should be doing some form of monitoring, either through measuring weight gains, regularly checking for coughing (lungworm), or doing faecal egg and larval counts.

The current recommendation is to use a combination drench with as many highly effective actives as possible (e.g. Matrix®, Trimox®, or a combination of a Cydectin® injection or oral plus Scanda® or Oxfen® C +, all at higher dose rates than the label dose for cattle and sheep). Consult your veterinarian for advice on products and dosing. To slow the development of a “super worm”, this should be in combination with pasture management and refugia. If you are unsure about what this means, please sign up for a deer parasite management workshop.

The current programme of workshops is on hold due to Covid-19, but we hope to resume these when the current Alert has been reduced to the appropriate level. In the meantime we are working on developing online delivery of workshop material. For now, see the parasite management workshops link on [www.deernz.org/events](https://www.deernz.org/events) to register your interest.

If the grass is short and crispy and there are faecal pats remaining on the ground and not breaking down, there will be parasites hiding out in there just waiting for the rain. The first autumn rains bring a very high risk. These little nasties hatch out and move onto the small amount of grass that wants to grow, and the hungry deer Hoover up all that precious new growth along with the larvae.

At this time of year faecal egg counts and larval counts will indicate what the deer are putting out onto the pasture from adults established in the gut following infection 3 or more weeks ago. These are very useful at this time of the year. ■

- For further information contact Pania Flint on 027 718 1076 or [paniaflint@gmail.com](mailto:paniaflint@gmail.com)



Parasites could be hiding in here, waiting for the rain.

# NAIT workshop answers many questions

If you were looking forward to fireworks from a meeting between OSPRI staff from NAIT'S senior management and a group of drought-stressed central North Island deer farmers, you'd have been disappointed, writes *Deer Industry News* Editor, **Phil Stewart**. It was a plain-speaking but positive event with all attendees leaving better informed about NAIT and the concerns shared by farmers using the system.

**THE MEETING ON** 21 February was organised by the Taihape Branch of DFA, led by Executive Committee member, Mark McCoard and hosted at the local golf club. It was the first such event arranged specifically for deer farmers and aimed to bring them up to date with the changes under the National Animal Identification and Tracing Amendment Bill, which came into effect last December (there's more detail on that in the February/March *Deer Industry News*, page 21).

Although it was ultimately a constructive meeting, some of the comments from the 15 or so farmers did lay down a challenge: "Most farmers don't give a rat's arse about what animals have what tags – we're running farms," said one. "The next thing you'll be NAIT tagging sheep and then you'll be using that information for a fart tax," fretted another. And on a slightly more positive note: "If you want cookies on board, you're going to have to admit your own shortcomings first."

The four OSPRI staff who attended the meeting were indeed happy to concede that communications on NAIT hadn't been as effective as hoped. They're making a concerted effort to put that right, getting alongside farmers to help them get the system working properly as they prepare to roll out an improved online interface. That includes getting out to numerous field days and other local events like this one.

To give an idea of the scale of their ongoing task, OSPRI reported that the previous week across New Zealand there had been 28,345 individual NAIT movements, covering 235,380 animals. That weekly volume is more or less the same over the entire year.

The messages repeated throughout the afternoon were that you must, as part of the NAIT rules:

1. **Tag and register (within 7 days of tagging) all cattle and deer within 180 days of birth or before they leave the farm (whichever comes first).** That is the rule. To activate the tags in the system once you've put them in cattle or deer ears, you must register them to make them operable. Registration of NAIT-tagged animals is 'activation'. That was the key theme for much of the day.
2. Record all cattle and deer stock movements on and off farm with NAIT **within 48 hours.**
3. If you have any questions or concerns please call NAIT between 7am–6pm on **0800 482 463.**

After the formal presentations, OSPRI staff were available with laptops to help individuals get into their accounts and sort out any issues, one-on-one. Representatives from Gallagher and Allflex



Mark McCoard (left) and OSPRI contact centre operator Caleb Mitchell talk over NAIT issues.

were also on hand to give deer farmers a look at the technology for reading and storing NAIT data.

OSPRI programme extension officer Sarah Campbell emphasised that NAIT is purely a biosecurity and traceability system and not connected with other programmes such as the emissions trading scheme. She was also at pains to point out that OSPRI's role is purely educational. Enforcement of the rules is the preserve of the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) and there is more about penalties in the February/March *Deer Industry News* article. Campbell did add that if you had been having problems with NAIT compliance but it was clear you'd been working with OSPRI to sort out issues on your account, your situation would likely be viewed in a more favourable light.

The presenters didn't go through every clause of the changes to NAIT, but did cover the most common issues, while busting a few myths along the way.

## Pick a PICA

The PICA (person in charge of animals) needs to be registered with NAIT. They are the people who interact with NAIT regarding a particular location. The PICA isn't necessarily the herd owner and they can nominate someone else – a delegate – to do the day-to-day work on their NAIT account. The PICA is responsible for recording animal registrations under NAIT, recording tag updates and animal movements and keeping all information about the property up to date.



A PICA can delegate the job of providing information to NAIT for a registered property, say to a stock agent or a system like FarmIQ that's an integral part of the system. These delegates need to be accredited to NAIT and will be audited to a high standard. This doesn't incur any additional cost from the NAIT side. Campbell said it's a good idea to ask for an automatic email notification each time an information provider is working on your account. "We are very tight with NAIT information and need to be assured that you are the PICA or their delegate."

## Location, location

The PICA also registers with NAIT the location/s where the animals are kept. If there is more than one farm within a 10km-radius (20km-diameter) circle on a map, they can be registered under the same NAIT number, although you can choose to register them separately.

The **advantage** of having the same NAIT number for two neighbouring farms is that movements of stock between them don't have to be recorded and entered in the system. The potential **disadvantage** of sharing the NAIT registration is that if one farm is shut down, so must the other/s be. If there are few or no stock movements between two neighbouring farms, it's probably better to register them under separate NAIT numbers.

If another farm falls outside a 20km-diameter circle, the PICA needs to register it separately.

It is actually possible to register two herds on the same farm under separate NAIT numbers (e.g. beef and deer herds) if they are run completely separately and you choose to do that.

When you're registering locations on NAIT, the system will show you the distances between land parcels, so you can see if they can be registered under the same NAIT number or not.

## Tag and register!

Campbell explained that you can no longer just buy a bunch of tags and use them where and when you please (e.g. flicking a few off to a neighbour who has run short). Tags purchased now must be allocated to one registered location and used on young stock born there before they reach 6 months of age or before they are moved off the farm, whichever comes first.



OSPRI programme extension officer Sarah Campbell urged farmers to get in touch with NAIT with any suggestions or queries.



**ALLIANCE**  
FARMERS' PRODUCE

SINCE 1948

Supporting New Zealand deer  
farmers for 20 years

Please contact our livestock  
team for all your deer  
processing requirements.

**BEDE CREAN**  
Livestock Representative  
027 229 9341  
bede.crean@alliance.co.nz

**JASON RHODES**  
Livestock Regional Manager  
Area: Northern South Island  
027 666 0004  
jason.rhodes@alliance.co.nz

**DAVID EARL**  
Livestock Regional Manager  
Area: Central South Island  
027 271 6854  
david.earl@alliance.co.nz

**GRANT MITCHELL**  
Livestock Regional Manager  
Area: Eastern Region  
027 207 6989  
grant.mitchell@alliance.co.nz

**JAMES ALEXANDER**  
Livestock Regional Manager  
Area: Southern Region  
027 510 1154  
james.alexander@alliance.co.nz

Or visit: [www.alliance.co.nz](http://www.alliance.co.nz)  
and select 'Contact Us'  
for more information.

*NAIT workshop: continued*

The crucial thing to remember here – and the OSPRI staff couldn't stress this enough – is that when an animal is tagged with its NAIT tag, this has to be registered on the system **within 7 days**. Once tagged, a bovine or deer has started its lifetime traceability journey, where its date of birth and movements are known. For every animal, the NAIT system will record:

- species
- production type (only applies to cattle, e.g. beef or dairy – this is related to the different levels of NAIT levy for beef and dairy). The tag order form for most companies gives a deer production option (Venison/Velvet/Trophy) but it is not mandatory to return that with your order.
- the RFID tag number
- month and year of birth
- NAIT number of the farm where it was born.

OSPRI is allowing a 12-month transition period ending December 2020 where previously purchased tags, not allocated to a particular location, can be used up.

Removing or re-using NAIT tags isn't allowed.

If you send an animal with a non-registered NAIT tag in its ear to live sale or slaughter there is now a potential \$400 penalty per non-registered tag/animal.

Fines for sending or transporting unregistered animals can now reach up to \$800 per head.

## How many do I need each year?

The OSPRI staff admitted that it's not necessarily easy to guess how many tags you might need each year, because fawn survival can vary and you don't know how many animals from a given cohort you might need to re-tag each year. The more conservative you are (allowing plenty), the likelier you are to have bought unnecessary tags.

## Stock movements

If you're a PICA, you need to make sure all movements of NAIT-tagged animals on or off the property are registered within 48 hours. The exception is animals going to a registered saleyards or meat processor – they take care of registering the movement at their end, on behalf of the PICA.

Your transport driver is liable if untagged animals are transported from the farm. However, starting in May this year, drivers are exempt if the farmer signs a declaration (to be on the ASD form) that all animals are tagged.

## Scanning

When NAIT was launched, one of the selling points was that farmers didn't need to have a scanner – that was all taken care of elsewhere.

OSPRI has admitted that is no longer tenable. All farms need to be able to scan stock on and off the property. OSPRI does have scanners available for farmers to hire free of charge (the only cost to the farmer is return postage) but ultimately it's an investment herd owners will need to make.

It's not uncommon for some tags to fail to read when a line of tagged animals arrives at a processor. That's another reason why it's a good idea to have a scanner on farm – if you want to, you can scan works-bound stock onto the truck (even though you don't have to) and verify that they all had readable tags in their ears when they left. It was noted that a dud tag can still be manually verified at the processor, so animals won't disappear from the system.

## Unsafe to tag (UTT)

This issue causes a lot of angst. One farmer at the meeting gave an emotional account of having been hospitalised and off work for



Farmers from the Taihape DFA listen intently during the OSPRI presentation.

*continued on page 19*

# Deer greenhouse gas emissions lower than previously reported

by Lindsay Fung, DINZ Environment Stewardship Manager

**A NEW APPROACH** to estimating nitrous oxide emissions (a potent greenhouse gas) that more accurately reflects New Zealand farming conditions has resulted in lower emissions for deer than previously reported in the national greenhouse gas inventory.

The new findings come from an AgResearch study commissioned by the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI), which involved a meta-analysis of over 1,200 emission factors and data measured from 139 field experiments (covering sheep, beef cattle, deer and dairy cattle) over the past decade.

The study found that urine emission factors are higher for gentle slopes than for steeper slopes – in essence, hill country farms with steeper slopes emit less nitrous oxide than farms on gentle slopes or flat land. Using data from Beef + Lamb New Zealand, MPI estimates about 80 percent of the land used for sheep, beef and deer farming is on rolling or steep hill country but this land produces only about 20 percent of the direct nitrous oxide emissions for the drystock sector.

While the new emission factors for hill country farms do not mean farmed livestock are emitting less nitrous oxide, it does provide a more accurate calculation of their emissions. These new findings support the DINZ view that deer farming in the hill country is an appropriate land use and that matching livestock species, stock classes and stocking rates to land classes is an environmentally responsible approach to good farming.

A more detailed description of the approach and findings is provided at: [www.agresearch.co.nz/news/hill-country-farm-emissions-drop](http://www.agresearch.co.nz/news/hill-country-farm-emissions-drop). Deer are not mentioned, but the new nitrous oxide measurement will reduce total reported deer greenhouse gas emissions – including methane and nitrous oxide emissions – by 8.2 percent in the national greenhouse gas inventory (last updated to 2017).

The improvement in the calculation of emissions results in a 4.4 percent reduction in the agriculture sector's overall emissions for 2017; and a 2.1 percent decrease in New Zealand's overall emissions. ■



Not as gassy as first thought. Photo: Jamie Ward.

## NAIT workshop: continued

weeks after being hit by bulls spooked at the scent of blood (from dehorning done in the same yards) as they were being loaded. “There’s no way I’m going to try and check to see if those animals have got their NAIT tags in place,” he said.

Danny Templeman, OSPRI programme extension manager, said the NAIT rules now allow for situations just like this.

OSPRI’s acting NAIT programme manager Julia Parr said if you identified an animal that had lost its tag and it was too dangerous to re-tag, it could stay on the property for as long as necessary, but could only be sent direct to slaughter with a declaration that it was UTT. It cannot be sent to another farm or a saleyard.

Fallow deer are exempt from being tagged, as are trophy animals being transported from a farm to a game estate, safari park or zoo.

However for red deer and elk/wapiti, while they are on your farm as young animals either through birth or purchase, they must be NAIT tagged and compliant, except for the last journey to a game estate, etc. NAIT tags may be removed at that point, but you must advise NAIT of the tag number at removal and the final destination of the trophy animals.

UTT animals being transported must be clearly marked as such. How they’re marked is up to you, but OSPRI suggests paint sprayed

down the back. UTT animals attract a \$13+GST levy at the works, a price most seem happy to pay.

Of course UTT animals can be killed on farm, but if they do go alive to a processor, you need to record the movement via NAIT, noting species, gender, approximate age and the processor it’s going to.

## When tags go missing

NAIT tags can and do go AWOL, for example when they haven’t been applied correctly or when stropo hinds bite them out. It’s OK to re-tag them with a new NAIT tag, but you need to let NAIT know it’s happening and why. Ideally – if the NAIT tag had been paired with a visual tag – you’ll have a record of the particular NAIT tag number lost for that animal. That way the lifetime traceability is preserved and a new tag number is registered for a known animal. If that’s not possible, it can still be retagged but the traceability clock is effectively reset to zero.

Campbell said buyers may be getting increasingly fussy about lifetime traceability of animals they are bringing onto their property – something that’s been highlighted during the *M. bovis* outbreak. She said that strengthens the case for double tagging to help preserve traceability.

*continued on page 20*

# We're digital only this time

What a funny old year it's turning out to be. In our first issue of *Deer Industry News* for the year we celebrated publishing our 100th issue.

**FEBRUARY NOW SEEMS** a very long time ago. This, our 101st issue, marks a very different kind of milestone. It is the first-ever digital-only issue.

We've made this change for our April/May 2020 issue because we have to.

Under the Government's Covid-19 response, strict rules now apply to news and media while we are at Alert level 4. The good news is that news and broadcast media are regarded as essential services. The bad news is that this doesn't extend to printed magazines.

To quote the Ministry for Culture and Heritage guidelines, "The physical delivery of printed magazines is not considered to be an essential service, as magazines are not considered to provide up-to-date critical news."

The rules were relaxed slightly at the end of March to allow "distribution of news publications that serve hard to reach rural communities with reduced digital connectivity". We've been advised that, unfortunately, this doesn't apply to the deer industry. Never mind, we're determined to make some lemonade out

of these lemons we've been served up, so we hope you enjoy perusing our first digital-only *Deer Industry News*. We'll make the best of this by providing easy links from within our articles and advertisements to places where you can get more information online.

While this issue has the same look and layout as a printed version, we're also going to start making individual articles available separately so that you can link to a particular item that interests you without having to download the whole magazine. This will be particularly useful if you have a dodgy internet connection.

So please enjoy our first-ever "digital DIN". Hopefully we will be back in print in time for the June/July issue, but we're quickly learning that it's unwise to make confident predictions. In 2020 those can turn around and bite you on the bum.

We'd love your feedback on our digital-only issue and any suggestions for how it could be made better – just in case... ■

– Phil Stewart, Editor

## *NAIT workshop: continued*

You're entitled to get the movement history of any animal that's come onto your farm. As long as you have the tag number/s you can either request the history from NAIT via the OSPRI call centre or go into the system and get the information yourself.

If an animal dies, goes missing or is killed on farm, you also need to let NAIT know (but don't worry – you aren't expected to crawl down a 50-metre cliff to retrieve the tag details from an animal that's fallen to its death). The OSPRI staff said it's a good idea to regularly (annually perhaps) scan all the stock on farm so that missing or dead stock will be revealed and can be recorded, reconciling and keeping the system as up to date as possible.

If you're about to send an animal off to slaughter and find its NAIT tag has gone missing, retag it and register the animal before it leaves the property.

And if a missing-presumed-dead animal does miraculously reappear and re-enter the NAIT system after it's been written off, don't worry. You won't be punished. Weird things happen, especially with deer and the NAIT people understand this.

Some meat processors will take the precaution of removing an untagged animal, and the one each side on the chain, from an export consignment – a decision outside the control of NAIT.

## And about those tags

As most will know, you can't use NAIT cattle tags (white) on deer, or NAIT deer tags (orange) on cattle, partly because they are funded differently.

Choice of supplier and tag type (HDX, more expensive but reads better, or FDX, less expensive) is up to you.

OSPRI is keen to hear from farmers if they've been having

problems with any particular tag type, but it does help to apply them in the right part of the ear and the right way around (see guide on <https://ospri.co.nz/our-programmes/nait/guides-and-tutorials/tagging-animals/>).

There was comment at the meeting about previous problems with one tag brand that had a too-low shear strength but a representative there said the issue was largely related to older dairy cows and had not been a problem recently. ■



Gallagher territory manager Mike Ward (right) goes through the detail on an EID tag reader with Raetihi farmer Paddy Chambers.

# Strong vision and clear values for Kiri and Josh

by Ali Spencer, *Deer Industry News* writer

One young second-generation deer farming family is mapping out its business future. They recently added a new enterprise to their operation and have given their family space to grow, thanks to a simple and clear vision and business plan.

**WHEN SPEAKING TO** *Deer Industry News*, Kiri Rupert was “knee high in mating” at her and husband Josh Brook’s three mid-South Canterbury properties in Peel Forest, near Geraldine: Leamington, Scotland and their newly purchased farm, Woodbury Downs. With help from Kiri’s parents – well-known velvet pioneers Martin and Hendrika Rupert – they run 680 mixed-age (MA) velvet stags and 670 MA hinds, over 600 hectares.

The energetic mother of two small children, still in her early thirties, graduated with a Bachelor of Agriculture from Lincoln University. She’s also had dairy experience, having worked on the dairy farm next door to her parents for a year after high school and during university holidays.

She left for her OE, returning to with partner Josh at the age of 23, where she started deer farming in partnership with her parents. At that point, Josh was not involved in the farm business and was working as an engineer in Geraldine. That changed in 2015, when their eldest son Liam was born.

“At the beginning, I thought I’d just put Liam into care and carry on working, but in practice I couldn’t do that,” she relates. The family realised quickly, “it was not a long-term option”. Josh joined them formally on-farm in a paid position covering Kiri’s role, to be reviewed when she was in a position to return to the farm.

## Courses led to greater understanding

During her time at home, she embarked on an “It’s All About You” course with the Agri-Women’s Development Trust (AWDT). Part of that led her to understand what her drivers were.

“Once you understand your personal values and goals, it’s easier to make decisions,” she says, adding she is now convinced that

while most farming women have a great understanding of the business, they do not have a handle on their own personal values/drivers. That is why so many farm women are frustrated, she believes: “Because they are not sure what they are up to.”

Another element was business planning, which gave her a template to work from that she filled in and held for later.

“That really struck a chord with me,” she says.

She has since participated in another AWDT course, “Understanding Your Farm Business”, and she and Josh took one more together – the Red Meat Profit Partnership’s “Future Focus” course – designed for husband and wife partnerships.

In the meantime, Josh had proven to be a natural farm manager. He graduated from the Rabobank Farm Managers Programme in 2017 – the year the couple married. He later won the bank’s Farm Management Project award in 2018, after highlighting the changes the couple had made to the Rupert Red Deer business as a result of his study.

In 2017, the pair formed a partnership and bought the livestock and plant from Kiri’s parents, who still own the land and are still actively involved as mentors, “and unpaid labour,” adds Kiri.



Kiri Rupert and Josh Brook have the future for children June (2) and Liam (5) in mind with their plan.

## Benchmarked production and Johne’s disease info on your deer

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

### Deer PRO

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

DPO712

continued on page 22

*Kiri and Josh: continued*

## The Brook & Rupert plan

Kiri's parents already had a successful velvet business in place when they took over, she says, and they expected to build on that.

As a result of their initial brainstorming, based on their joint experience and her template, she and Josh formulated the overall Brook & Rupert business plan. This distilled all of their visions for the whole operation, including their personal life, onto a single sheet of A3 paper.

She quotes a familiar adage: "Failing to plan is planning to fail."

That exercise led them to realise there was an opportunity to add a stud brand to the operation – Rupert Red Deer – through which they now sell top sire animals and surplus young stock. Later, they decided to buy Woodbury Downs, giving them suitable land to further improve their returns. Nick Hislop was recently employed as farm manager there.

## Vision, 5-year plan and six Ps

Their overall vision of "A family that enjoys deer farming and improving the world we live in", is underlaid with the values they want to run throughout their business and lifetime goals. The five-year plan is divided into six critical focus areas:

1. Planet (environment)
2. Private life (quality family time)
3. Performance (deer productivity)
4. Progress (profit)
5. Personal (health and wellness)
6. People (the whole team).

Each focus area has sections for:

- purpose – two-to-four goals "so you know what you're aiming at"
- two-to-four key performance indicators (KPIs) for one-to-three years "so you know you're on track"
- three or four key actions required to achieve the goals, including regular staff functions to celebrate the team.

Every year the couple devote an overnight child-free stay off-farm to focus on reviewing the plan. Last May, it was in Oamaru.

"It's important, mentally, to get off the farm. The deal is there is no tea if there is no plan," says Kiri, who doesn't waste a minute of that time, taking a pad and paper with her in the car, so that ideas can be jotted down en route.

"It's really hard to be honest with your views, but, often we've already come up with the plan on the way."

Those ideas then make their way into the template. When it is finally decided about a month later, it is printed out and pinned on the board on the office wall for all to see. Amendments to the plan are made in pen as it develops over the year.

"When you have the goal written up on the board, it gives you something to aim for," says Kiri.

Aside from the financials, they have not shared it with the bank in total at their annual meetings, "but they know it's there," she adds.

Improving the world they live in and leaving a good



Caring for the environment is one of six critical focus areas.

legacy for coming generations, along with quality and excellence and commitment are the strong values driving everything the couple do. They were highly commended finalists in last year's Deer Industry Environment Awards.

"We had a go," she says, adding it was useful to get the feedback. "One of our main objectives is to improve and protect the environment and we wanted a little bit of recognition for that."

Kiri attends and actively contributes to the P2P Deer Industry Environment Group at Woodbury. Her vision is to eventually have the Rupert & Brook Farm Environment Plan up online where it can be "open to the world," she says, and amended as needed.

Since late last year, the couple have been working with life coach Corene Walker ([www.corenewalker.com](http://www.corenewalker.com)), after Kiri heard about her at a Next Generation field day, and they plan to become involved with other industry committees.

## Deer farm business planning drives productivity

Effective business planning helps to drive improvement in farm productivity, which is what the P2P programme is all about, says DINZ Manager Farm Performance, Phil McKenzie.

"It's because deer farmers think about these things every day, but don't necessarily commit them to a written, bigger plan. It's easy to say, but not do," he's found.

While Kiri Rupert and Josh Brook's farm plan is an excellent example of a clear vision and supporting plan, every deer farm business plan will look different, he says.

According to McKenzie, a good plan should include:

- a clear, **strategic view** of where you want the business to be in five, 10, 20 or even 100 years
- **relevant data** on resources, livestock, environment and performance (such as kg of production, weights, feedback from DeerPRO and processors)
- **family goals**
- **risks or challenges** – environmental, financial or physical – that could trip your operation up
- **strengths** – what are we good at and what can we do now that will lead us to improve? These could include personal, physical inputs, productivity and even getting feedback.

"It starts with having strategic intent, then it goes down to what steps are needed to take us there," McKenzie says. "This should be cut down to a one-year, three-year and five-year plan and then measuring as you go. The areas of environment, productive performance, people, biosecurity, health and safety and animal health might all find their place in the template."

If you haven't already, take time out now to think about it and put it down on paper, he urges. "DINZ is here to help you with that." ■

- For further information: Phil McKenzie, [phil.mckenzie@deernz.org](mailto:phil.mckenzie@deernz.org), or 0274 997 809



Phil McKenzie is urging deer farmers to start thinking about their business plans.

# Winter grazing workshops

Regardless of the uncertainty around the world now, there some things we know will happen. Winter is still going to arrive. At some stage it will be cold and wet and our deer will need feed and shelter. DINZ manager – farm performance, **Phil McKenzie** shares the results from two recent deer farmer design workshops on winter feeding.

**WAY BEFORE COVID-19** even had a name, we had been working with groups of farmers on ways to make better use of the tools and resources that have been developed to help get us through winter.

In January and February we had two farmer design workshops, one in Southland and one in South Canterbury. They were facilitated by Nicola McGrouther from Creekside Consulting, and by me, and were a follow-up from two workshops held late in 2019.

One of the positives noted by one farmer is that “it doesn’t matter when you have these things, there is hardly a month when we aren’t thinking about, planning for, or debriefing about wintering”.

The high-energy workshops focused on what we are doing well now, a five-year vision for further improvement, our strengths and the barriers holding us back. We finished with some actions and prioritised them into things we can do in the next three months, and things that might take six months or longer to develop.

The “six months and longer” actions were more related to potential system changes and investment, and the analysis that farmers would need to help with those decisions.

Looking at the shorter-term changes for this winter, there are things we can work on now. Some of the actions will be constrained until we can have group meetings again. The workshops revealed a lot of good things are already happening on farm. While they may not be happening on every farm, and farm systems vary, there were ideas on how we can frame for better understanding and communicate more widely.

I’ll focus on just one short-term action which was perhaps the most practical identified. This was to create 10 deer-specific visual examples of what “good” looks like and 10 examples of things that could go wrong, why they were wrong, and what to do about them. Farmers commented that descriptions of Good Management Practices (GMPs) were often mostly pages of text, when a visual example with fewer words might have more appeal and impact.

The groups acknowledged that the industry was being proactive in addressing these issues, and while it will be important to dovetail with industry and catchment initiatives, it was also good to discuss things as groups of deer farmers.

Intensive winter feeding had a national focus last year, and the deer industry contributed to the Winter Grazing Taskforce report. These design workshops played an important part in continuing to improve practices, with farmers helping design the solutions that they want to see used across our whole industry. ■



Participants at the South Canterbury workshop.

## MSD Animal Health Photographic Awards

*Yes, it’s still on – and we’ve given you more time!*

While the Covid-19 response has put a stop to many activities, the 2020 MSD Animal Health Photographic Awards can still go ahead. That’s because the event is now entirely electronic, so you can enter and submit your pictures online.

But please remember to respect the rules of the Covid-19 Level 4 Alert when you are taking photos – no unnecessary travel off the property, stay in your “bubble”, observe social distancing guidelines and please don’t put yourself at unnecessary risk when getting photos.

So bearing all that in mind, gather up those great shots you have buried, or head out (safely!) onto your farm with your camera and get snapping. Entries cost \$5 per photo and there is no limit on the number of entries.

For an electronic entry form contact:

Rebecca Norling, Deer Industry New Zealand

Phone 04 471 6110, email [rebecca.norling@deernz.org](mailto:rebecca.norling@deernz.org)

or download the form from [www.deernz.org/MSD-photo-competition](http://www.deernz.org/MSD-photo-competition)



# Waikato decision pleasing for drystock farmers

While the Government grapples with the practicalities of its *Essential Freshwater* proposals released last year, a landmark decision by the Waikato Regional Council has shown a pragmatic and sensible way forward that is being welcomed by the region's drystock farmers, including the deer industry.

**ON 18 MARCH** the council voted to notify a decisions version of the proposed Waikato Regional Plan Change 1 following a report by a hearings panel of five independent commissioners.

The version includes several modifications to the plan change that recognise the realities of drystock farming and fit well with the deer industry's approach to environmental management.

A major and welcome change has been the removal of "grandparenting" from the plan, which had the effect of rewarding high nutrient-emitting farms and penalising low emitters such as sheep, beef and deer operations.

Key changes for deer and other drystock farmers in the plan change include:

- Farm environment plans will remain a key tool in reducing the diffuse discharge of contaminants from land.

- The need to establish a nitrogen reference point has been removed and replaced with a set of actual nitrogen leaching numbers for each Freshwater Management Unit.
- Farming activities are incentivised to have a lower nitrogen leaching loss rate so they can be a permitted activity.
- Overseer® is not the only decision support tool able to be used.
- Stock exclusion from water bodies has been linked to slope and the number of stock units (waterways on land steeper than 15° will not have to automatically be fenced).
- Dryland farmers generally under 18 stock units/hectare over winter are recognised as having a low environmental impact and as such are a permitted activity.

Beef + Lamb New Zealand's Environmental Policy Lead, Corina Jordan said the decision recognises that the issues and solutions

*continued on page 26*

# Ginseng shows healthy returns

by Paul Charteris

It may take a team of foragers an entire day to find just a handful of wild ginseng roots in the mountainous forests of north eastern China and North Korea. Decades of high demand and chronic over-harvesting have left the perennial herb clinging to the edge of extinction in the wild.

**TO FILL THE** supply gap, farmed ginseng grown under shade houses is a high-volume but low quality crop. This practice is common in China and Korea. Wild simulated ginseng is grown in commercial forests and can be harvested from 8 to 18 years of age. It has the benefits of looking identical to wild ginseng but grown in commercial scale quantities under a managed forest. Ginseng seed can be broadcast or seedlings planted when radiata pine is 10-12 years of age and has been thinned and pruned.

A published Massey University study (Chen W et al 2019) compared ginsenosides (the active ingredients) from New Zealand-grown wild simulated ginseng with those of its original native locations (China and Korea). The average content of total ginsenosides in New Zealand-grown ginseng was 40.1 mg/g, which was significantly higher in concentration than that of China-grown ginseng (16.5 mg/g) and Korean-grown ginseng (21.1 mg/g).

The Central North Island is the same latitude south as the natural habitat of wild ginseng in Asia. Apart from the similar growth conditions to ginseng's natural habitat, including the cold

winter and temperate summer, the volcanic pumice soil and high-intensity light radiation may have contributed to the higher ginsenoside content of the New Zealand-grown ginseng.

Glen Chen from KiwiSeng, New Zealand's largest ginseng grower, says the financial opportunities for ginseng match the hype.



KiwiSeng's Glen Chen digging ginseng in a pine forest.

*continued on page 26*



# Feed budgeting service for farmers

Climatic challenges coupled with significantly reduced processing capacity due to the Covid-19 crisis has farmers in many parts of the country staring down the barrel of feed shortages.

**TO SUPPORT FARMERS**, the Ministry for Primary Industries together with Beef + Lamb New Zealand, DairyNZ, AgFirst and Federated Farmers is providing remote feed planning support to farmers including a feed budgeting service and professional farm systems advice.

In the first instance, farmers will get a free assessment of their feed planning needs by their relevant industry or levy organisation. From there they can have access to an adviser who can discuss management options and avenues for practical support.

Farmers who require more in-depth support will be referred to a farm systems consultant, but there will be a cost to this service.

Mark Harris, who is leading B+LNZ's response in this initiative, says farmers are dealing with compounding factors including keeping themselves, their families and staff safe during the

Covid-19 crisis while trying to run their businesses, keep stock flowing and setting their farms up for winter and spring in the face of climate-driven feed shortages.

He says reduced processing capacity along with the cancellation of traditional stock sales means many farmers are carrying more stock than they anticipated going into winter.

This is putting a huge strain on already stretched feed resources and farmer morale.

A feed budget can help farmers consolidate their thinking and plan for the weeks and months ahead, taking into account various scenarios, Harris says.

"This is a service that the Government and farmer organisations can provide to farmers who may struggle to do one on their own, particularly given this time of stress and uncertainty."

*continued on page 26*

## Obituary: Frances Swann

Tributes have flowed from all quarters following the death after a short illness of Frances Swann, aged 89, on 7 March.

**THE NEW ZEALAND** Deer Farmers' Association, DINZ Board and executives acknowledge with sadness the recent loss of DFA life member, Frances Swann following a life well lived.

Bob and Frances formed one of the industry's great partnerships in the establishment of the young deer industry. The Swanns and their family were pioneers in terms of practical

innovation and transfer of knowledge to new entrants. That practical knowledge was invaluable to the credibility of early deer farming under public scrutiny.

As founding members of the NZDFA in 1975, as a founding councillor and very much a couple in the public eye, Bob and Frances made a huge contribution to the confidence of new entrants. Standards of care and welfare of deer on farms were critical in this new industry and the Swanns provided sound advice in this area.

The deer industry has been characterised by many great husband and wife teams, but few have been more enduring and active than Frances and Bob Swann, who became DFA life members in the mid 1980s.

The family's contribution in the world of velvet antler remains one of the great industry stories, from the time the memorable Rakaia red "Big Dad" first scooped the pool at the national velvet awards in Southland 39 years ago.

For most, the enduring memory of Frances will be the cheerful, quiet and loyal partner and friend who attended so many industry events. She would always enquire after your own family, and had such a passion for South Canterbury with strong loyalty to Bob and family, and the wider deer farming community.

The industry is grateful to Frances for her support, contribution

*continued on page 26*



Frances Swann.

*Waikato plan change: continued*

are different in hill country than for lowland farms where stocking rates are higher.

Waikato Regional Council chief executive Vaughan Payne noted that the plan allowed an 80-year horizon for water quality improvement. He said while that may be too long for some, it recognised the complexity of the issues and the time needed to effect change.

The council's decision to notify the plan change has been welcomed by lobby group Farmers for Positive Change, whose membership included a number of prominent deer farmers. The group used an advocacy approach, embracing a "can-do attitude with positive engagement with the search for workable solutions that offered pragmatic reasonableness yet still securing the desired outcomes for water quality".

The Waikato and Waipa branches of NZDFA submitted extensively on the plan change with support from DINZ environmental stewardship manager Lindsay Fung. One point taken up by the independent panel reviewing submissions was the prohibitive cost of extensive waterway fencing for deer farmers.

The deer industry submissions also pushed back against proposed limits on the number of stock crossings of water bodies, noting this was impractical for busy times such as velvetting or Tb testing. The report by the hearings panel settled for a recommendation to minimise water crossings to no more than once a week, but stopped short of regulating this.

The deer industry also supported Beef+Lamb NZ's submission.

The decisions version of the plan change was notified in early April. Submitters to the plan have 30 working days in which to lodge their appeals with the Environment Court from the time they are notified. Appeals will close mid-late May. ■

- For further information: [www.waikatoregion.govt.nz/community/whats-happening/news/media-releases/decisions-version-of-healthy-rivers-plan-change-to-be-notified/](http://www.waikatoregion.govt.nz/community/whats-happening/news/media-releases/decisions-version-of-healthy-rivers-plan-change-to-be-notified/)

*Ginseng: continued*

KiwiSeng exports a range of whole ginseng–deer products, mainly to Hong Kong. These products include ginseng plus velvet, deer bone and deer pizzle. For KiwiSeng, the main priorities are working with the Ministry for Primary Industries to open market access to China and developing ginseng beverages that appeal to younger consumers.

Returns of \$300,000 per hectare are achievable for ginseng grown to 16 years of age and of medium quality grade. Higher-quality ginseng and higher volumes attract higher returns. Glen encourages farmers with a retired forestry block to give ginseng a trial. Even a couple of hectares can be an interesting and potentially lucrative side investment.

[The author notes that plantings of ginseng in a radiata forest would need to be pest-proofed against wild deer or pigs, but says the financial returns would justify the costs. He says forestry blocks with deer fencing on one or two boundaries would already have a head start in containing establishment costs. Ed.]

More information is at [kiwiseng.com](http://kiwiseng.com) ■

**Reference**

Chen W, Balan P and Popovich DG (2019) Analysis of Ginsenoside Content (*Panax ginseng*) from Different Regions; *Molecules*. Sep 26; 24(19). pii: E3491. doi: 10.3390/molecules24193491.

- Article supplied

*Feed budgeting service: continued*

As well as crunching the numbers, they will act as a sounding board and offer practical advice and support decision making.

To access this service there are three toll-free numbers:

Dry stock sector: Beef + Lamb New Zealand: 0800BEEFLAMB (0800 233 352)

Dairy sector DairyNZ: 0800 4 DairyNZ (0800 4 324 7969).

AgFirst: 0508 AGFIRST (0508 243 477).

This service will be available until 30 June 2020 at which time farmer need will be revised.

Farmer-specific tools and resources about Covid-19 and feed and stock management are available on the B+L NZ website:

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

- Article supplied jointly by Beef + Lamb New Zealand, DairyNZ, Deer Industry New Zealand, AgFirst, and Federated Farmers



A feed budget can help consolidate thinking.

*Frances Swann obituary: continued*

and legacy of community engagement. That is still very much in evidence today through the family's commitment to deer farming, their exceptional animals and companionship.

Our respect and sympathies to the Swann family. We share your loss and extend our warm and sincere condolences.

– Ian Walker, Chair Deer Industry New Zealand on behalf of the Board and staff

– John Somerville, Chair New Zealand Deer Farmers' Association.

– Fellow NZDFA life members and DFA members throughout New Zealand

**Murray Matuschka adds this personal reminiscence**

"We remember Frances at every conference since the first one held in Te Anau as a tiny lady attached to a big guy called Bob Swann.

"Frances was born in Gisborne. She would have made the perfect nurse and sure enough, that's what she did. Bob played as a lock for Otago and after damaging a leg spent time in hospital where Frances was a lovely young nurse. Bob must have made out he had severe pain as she spent a lot of time looking after him.

"They married and had four children: Ian, Robert, Pete and Christine. Losing Ian was a body blow to the family. Frances was a great mum and kept those big boys under control, while finding time to make a house into a home. Barbara and I, along with so many in the industry, will miss Frances so much and we extend to Bob and the Swann family our deepest condolences, love and support." ■