



# Deer Industry News

Hawke's Bay deer farm supreme award winner

**Industry Conference**  
INVERCARGILL TO HOST  
MAY 2021 CONFERENCE  
FOLLOWED BY NATIONAL  
TECHNICAL WORKSHOP

**Introducing Felix Shen**  
MARKETING MANAGER FOR  
PRIMARY COLLABORATION  
NZ TO HELP PAVE WAY FOR  
VELVET IN CHINA

**Seasonality in deer**  
RESEARCH INVESTIGATES  
DEER PHENOTYPES FOR  
SEASONAL PHYSIOLOGY  
AND GRAZING BEHAVIOUR



# Deer Industry News

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

ISSUE 107 | APRIL/MAY 2021

ISSN 1176-0753

## Contents

Editorial . . . . . 2

### Deer Industry Conference 2021

Conference overview  
and programme . . . . . 3  
NZDFA constitutional matters . . . . . 4

### Passion2Profit

National technical workshop:  
Invercargill . . . . . 6  
North Island deer tech expo:  
Palmerston North . . . . . 8  
Coleridge Downs hosts  
rural professionals . . . . . 22

### Regulatory

VelTrak countdown begins in earnest . . . 7

### Markets

Velvet manager in China . . . . . 9  
Velvet market value maintained . . . . 12  
Venison market research in China . . . 13

### Environment

Celebrating success at  
Waipapa Station . . . . . 14  
Knowing greenhouse gas numbers . . 20  
Challenges meeting climate targets . . 21

### DINZ News

Meet the staff: Phil McKenzie  
& Nick Taylor . . . . . 23

### Research

Seasonal physiology and  
grazing behaviour . . . . . 24

### Education

Value of investment in training . . . . 27

### People

Brian Beattie passes away . . . . . 27

**Cover:** Evan and Linda Potter's Waipapa Station hosted a field day on 30 March celebrating the couple's string of environmental awards, starting with the 2019 Elworthy Award and culminating with the Gordon Stephenson Trophy as supreme winners of the Ballance Farm Environment Awards. See page 14.

# Let's keep building on good relationships



Richard Hilson.

My 30 years as a vet, much of it with deer and alongside deer farmers, covered a big chunk of the deer industry's history. I just missed the pioneering days and the early heady prices.

**HAVING NOW LEFT** much of the vet work behind so Karen and I can farm in daylight, I've started thinking about farmer-vet interactions.

I was lucky enough to be part of a vet practice that was immersed in deer work and found solutions for early deer-specific issues that now seem old hat. We enjoyed long-lasting and close working relationships with clients.

New vets, if they show a keenness for deer work, are welcomed into the local Hawke's Bay deer community. Our vets still do lots of velvetting (I've probably velvetted about 150,000 stags), scanning, problem solving and, until recently, most of the Tb testing.

But I'm often startled at the lack of that farmer-vet working relationship in some regions, and I do get around a bit. There are vets keen to get involved but who don't get the opportunities – routine vet deer work like scanning, Tb testing and velvetting is now off the diary for many. I meet farmers who are crying out for a vet to be part of their business or lamenting that their vet isn't confident handling deer.

The best farmers I work with have a team around them. Many of those team members, like the local seed or fert rep, cost nothing. Others, like the accountant, cost every time. And some, like your vet, cost a bit sometimes; other times they simply add value.

The deer industry is strong on relationships. The DFA plays a big role in this. Also, Advance Parties have grown local deer farming relationships. The way AP members interact on all manner of topics is testament to the industry, setting that part of Passion2Profit in motion. And the DINZ executive team are more visible and accessible to us blue collar workers than any other primary industry organisation's executive.

My challenge to vets and deer farmers is to get alongside each other and grow that relationship. Much of what we face in farming – FAPs, FEMPs, NAIT, HR, H&S, LUCs and more, all other people's ideas that farmers pay for – is regulated beyond our control. Veterinary involvement in farm businesses adds weight to much of that third party box-ticking, plus it adds an extra set of eyes around many vexing topics.

Vets need to be relevant. That means not just ticking boxes over animal health plans or supervisory visits, but adding value around the things that matter to farmers like genetics, facilities and feeding. Vets need time on farms, and handling animals, but can also be part of the ongoing solutions for deer farming. Many of these go well beyond disease and treatment.

Roll on the next 30 years. This industry may be retrenching a bit, but it is a fantastic one to be part of and it will continue to innovate and to build on those important relationships. ■

– Richard Hilson, deer farmer, veterinarian and former director/GM, Vet Services Hawke's Bay

*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. **All content is copyright and may not be reproduced without permission and attribution.**

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# DEER INDUSTRY CONFERENCE 2021

The 2020s: The focus is **you**

**Tuesday 18 May – Wednesday 19 May:**  
**Bill Richardson Transport World, Invercargill**

Anticipation is growing as the opportunity approaches to gather as an industry, face to face, for the first time in two years. Our busy programme has now been finalised and is detailed in the enclosed flyer.

**CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS WILL** centre around keynote speakers:

- **Lance Burdett**, WARN International: Mental resilience and wellbeing
- **Dr Jacqueline Rowarth**: In defence of meat
- **Kaila Colbin**, Boma Global

For profiles of our keynote speakers, see the February/March 2021 *Deer Industry News* at:

<https://issuu.com/cervena05/docs/din106-web>

Other conference highlights include

- Minister for Agriculture Damien O'Connor (Wed am) TBC (with luck, in person)
- Following feedback after the DFA branch chairs' conference last year we have invited Phil Wiles, Principal Analyst, Climate Change Commission, to lead a discussion on greenhouse gas regulations. Phil's presentation at the branch chairs' conference stimulated wide-ranging discussion on this challenging topic, which is becoming more real with the demand that all farmers "know their number". (See article on page 20 for further information.)
- Winter grazing of deer, cattle and sheep is a huge challenge in the southern South Island. Chair of the Winter Grazing Action Group, Dr Lindsay Burton and Rob Phillips, CEO Environment Southland, will expand on the balance between welfare considerations and meeting environmental challenges with responsible management.

- Long term conference Gold sponsor, Rabobank, will be represented by Blake Holgate, newly appointed Head of Sustainable Business Development in the Rabobank keynote speech, "Factors affecting New Zealand agriculture now and in the near future".
- Given the many challenges agriculture is facing, the DINZ Board members will provide observations on key issues. We invite questions from members which can be put to the Board (send direct to [tony.pearse@deernz.org](mailto:tony.pearse@deernz.org)).
- Before the board session on Wednesday 19 May, DINZ's Nick Taylor, venison marketing manager, and Rhys Griffiths manager, markets, will be reporting on the status and outlooks for the venison and velvet markets. Marketing companies will provide up-to-date perspectives on conditions, market development activities and prospects for the year ahead.
- The DINZ Board and DFA also have a key interest in the health and safety of farmers as well as staff and the executive team. Tony Watson, General Manager of the pan-sector Safer Farms/ Agricultural Leaders' Health and Safety Action Group will present an insight into changing the health and safety stigma away from box ticking and towards practical approaches.
- The final front-of-mind activity to be featured is exemplary industry environmental management (see feature on page 14 about Waipapa Station, and the deer industry and Ballance Farm Environment and the Gordon Stephenson Trophy winners, Evan and Linda Potter).



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continued on page 4

## Conference: continued

The conference session also features overviews of the P2P programme from DINZ manager, farm performance Phil McKenzie, and environmental work with Lindsay Fung, DINZ environmental stewardship manager.

## Social and entertainment

With an unprecedented eight entries into the Biennial Deer Industry Environmental awards this year, this face of the industry will feature in both the conference sessions and the 2021 industry awards banquet, sponsored by Alliance Group on Wednesday 19 May.

That event also features the annual Deer Industry Award and the NZDFA's Matuschka Award and we'll also preview the launch of *50 Years of NZ Deer Farming by Countrywide/Deer Farmer* journalist, Lynda Gray. (Thanks to the disruptions from Covid-19 the book won't quite be ready as planned for the conference itself.)

Conference opening night, sponsored by Silver Fern Farms, will

be held within the Bill Richardson Transport Museum, with the opportunity between courses to explore the transport museum.

The welcome function will feature an address from Joc O'Donnell, a Director of HWR Group who took on a governance role in the family-owned business on the death of her father Bill Richardson in 2005. She has spearheaded the redevelopment of Bill's truck collection and the result is Bill Richardson Transport World which opened to the public late in 2015.

DINZ and the New Zealand Deer Farmers' Association acknowledge and thank our loyal returning sponsors, and those new to this annual event, for their interest, investment and support, which adds so much value and atmosphere to the industry conference and delegates' experience.

- Full conference programme is printed on a loose insert mailed with this issue of *Deer Industry News*.
- Further information including programme, and to register: [www.deernz.org/2021-deer-industry-conference](http://www.deernz.org/2021-deer-industry-conference) ■

## Constitutional matters

# NZDFA 46th AGM: 18 May 2021

## 1. AGM: Notice of meeting

Notice is hereby given that the 46th Annual General Meeting of the New Zealand Deer Farmers' Association (Inc) will be held at on 18 May 2021, commencing at 8.30 am at Bill Richardson Transport World, Invercargill.

The Chair and Executive Committee of the NZDFA invite all members of the NZDFA, industry levy payers and interested parties to attend.

## 2. NZDFA Executive Committee Appointments

Members of the NZDFA Executive Committee are elected for a two-year term. Members retire by rotation and are eligible for re-election. According to the NZDFA constitution rules, the Executive Committee elects a Chair from among the four members, for a term that is also decided annually. This has been traditionally a 12-month term.

Nominations have been called for the two vacancies created by retirement by rotation.

### Executive Committee Member (2 positions)

1. For the vacancy created by retirement by rotation of Mark McCoard. A single nomination, **Mark McCoard** (nominated **Justin Stevens**, seconded **Karen Middelberg**) was received and he is declared appointed for the 2021–2023 term.
2. For the vacancy created by retirement by rotation, a

single nomination of **Justin Stevens** (sitting member)

**Marlborough**, (nominated **Andrew Fishburn**, seconded **Tahi Doonan**) was received and he is declared appointed for the 2021–2023 term.

The successful candidates will join sitting members **John Somerville**, **Southland** and **Karen Middelberg**, **Hawke's Bay** as the 2021/2022 Executive Committee of the NZDFA following the conclusion of the 46th NZDFA AGM on 18 May 2021.

## 3. Selection and Appointments Panel (SAP)

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

### NZSAP (2 positions)

1. A single nomination has been received for the vacancy created by the retirement by rotation policy, that of **Donald Whyte**, **South Canterbury** (nominated **Graham Peck**, seconded **Don Bennett**), who is eligible for nomination and is declared appointed unopposed for a two-year term.
2. A single nomination has been received for the vacancy created by the retirement by rotation policy, that of **Steve Borland**, **Waikato** (nominated **Hub Hall**, seconded **Ross Moore**), who is eligible for renomination and is declared appointed unopposed.

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MSD Animal Health Intelligence



continued on page 6



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**To sell your velvet for human consumption you must be registered on VelTrak**



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- It protects our growing and dynamic industry.
- It means less paperwork for farmers.
- It's what our health food customers want.
- It's easy to use.

### Here's what you need to do

- **Now** Make sure DINZ knows your email address.
- **3 May** Look out for the email inviting you to register.
- Click on the link in the email to register.
- Look for more information in the mail and in deer industry media.
- Attend a VelTrak webinar to learn more.

### From the start of the 2021/22 season:

- All deer velvet must carry a black VelTrak UHF RFID tag.
- VSDs will be generated by velvet buyers/receivers. These must be approved by farmers in VelTrak.
- Blue velvet tags and paper VSDs will no longer be accepted by buyers.



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# National Technical Workshop

There will be a local flavour to the Passion2Profit National Technical Workshop to be held at the **Ascot Park Hotel, Invercargill on 20 May**, straight after the deer industry conference, which concludes the day before.

**THE WORKSHOP IS** a great opportunity for whole-farm teams, especially from Otago and Southland, to come along and get some good practical take-home information from well-qualified speakers and farmers. It's not necessary to have gone to the deer industry conference to attend this one-day National Technical



Technical workshops like this one held in Ashburton in 2018 are a great way to catch up on the latest tools for increasing productivity.

Workshop. The workshop is free to all attendees.

The day is structured with three 90-minute sessions, offering a choice of topics and providing clear take-home messages through relatable case studies or stories. Morning and afternoon tea, and lunch, will be provided.

The workshop is funded by the Passion2Profit programme and is being put on with the involvement and assistance of the Southland branch of NZDFA.

There will be presentations from subject matter experts for the first half of each session, before attendees choose the topic of most

interest and go into a breakout room to work together to develop real-world applications in more depth with the help of a facilitator.

Session 1 will focus on the **environment**, with presentations on winter grazing, indoor wintering, animal welfare and the projects of the Southland Environment Advance Party (we featured this AP in the October/November 2020 *Deer Industry News*).

The second session features **genetics and reproduction**, with headline presentations by Sharon McIntyre (DINZ) and scientist Geoff Asher. Genomics and the new across-breed evaluation index for Deer Select will be covered.

Session 3 will zero in on **parasite management** and the CARLA breeding value for parasite resistance. (We also hope to include an update on the triple-active drench for deer that is currently going through registration.)

And if you still haven't got your head around **VelTrak**, the new velvet electronic tagging and tracing system, there will be updates from DINZ to help farmers get prepared for the new system in 2021/22. There will also be updates from the **National Velvetting Standards Body**.

There will be trade stands and company representatives on hand for the day.

The day starts with registration and welcomes from 8.30am and the first session kicking off at 9.00am. The third session concludes at 2.30pm with the day closing at 3.00pm.

- For updated information and to register:  
**[www.deernz.org/deer-farmers-national-technical-workshop-invercargill](http://www.deernz.org/deer-farmers-national-technical-workshop-invercargill)**
- Contact: Rob Aloe, Deer Industry New Zealand:  
**[rob.aloe@deernz.org](mailto:rob.aloe@deernz.org)** or **027 448 6771**
- The National Technical Workshop has been produced as part of the Passion2Profit programme, a Primary Growth Partnership co-funded by Deer Industry New Zealand and MPI. ■

*Constitutional: continued*

**Steve Borland** and **Donald Whyte** will join current non-Executive Committee elected members **Leith Chick** and **Paddy Boyd** on the 2021/22 NZDFA Selection and Appointments Panel.

## 4. NZDFA appointments to the Board of Deer Industry New Zealand (single vacancy)

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 a single vacancy for the 2021–2024, 3-year Board term, created by the retirement by rotation of sitting member, **William Oliver, Waipa** who is not seeking a further term.

Five nominations have been received:

- **Amanda Bell**, Otago (nominated, **Andy Macfarlane** seconded **Adrian Campbell**)

- **Sarah Paterson** Wellington (nominated **Edmund Noonan**, seconded **Grant Charteris**)
- **Dr Jacqueline Rowarth**, Waikato (nominated **William Oliver**, Seconded **Catherine Morrow**)
- **Martin Rupert**, South Canterbury (nominated **Chris Petersen**, seconded **Graham Peck**)
- **Simon Wright** Southland (nominated **Bruce Allan**, seconded **David Stevens**).

The nominees are invited under the NZDFA constitution to present a short overview of their candidatures at the 46th AGM in Invercargill on 18 May 2021 before the meeting's General Business session. The Selection and Appointments Panel will carry out its processes and make the appointments before 1 July 2021, as required. ■

– AJ Pearse, Returning Officer for the NZDFA, 1 April 2021



# VelTrak™ countdown begins in earnest

by Phil Stewart, *Deer Industry News* Editor



## VelTrak

The countdown to VelTrak – our industry's new electronic track-and-trace system for velvet antler – is now well under way. And it's set to make things more secure and simpler for farmers when it comes to keeping track of tags and velvet.

**WHILE IT'S STILL** a few months until button drop for the 2021/22 velvet season, the rollout for the new system has started in earnest and farmers are next out of the gate when it comes to registering for VelTrak.

**When registration opens on 3 May every deer farmer (or a trusted associate) must have an email address and access to the internet. This will enable them to register on VelTrak and when the season begins, to approve the electronic VSDs that will be generated by their velvet buyer or receiver.**

**If you don't have a computer or access to the internet, you can still register. Ring 0508 VELTRAK (0508 835872) and DINZ can advise you about the options.**

VelTrak is a website that records all the velvet tags allocated to Regulated Control Scheme (RCS)-compliant farmers. It helps put a watertight seal around the pathway from farm to market, and strengthens the safeguards already in place through the NVSB and RCS. It helps protect the velvet industry, which has been growing quickly over the last few years. In a nutshell, if facilities have failed the RCS audit, regardless of whether velvet has been removed by a veterinarian, or an NVSB accredited velvetter, access to VelTrak tags will be prohibited and the velvet cannot be sold into the human food chain.

for the 2021/22 velvet season. Veterinary practices are first to register. They started doing this from 6 April and they should all be registered by the time deer farmers start registering, which happens from 3 May.

When farmers register, part of this process will include nominating which vet practice will supply their velvet tags – that's why vet practices have been registering first.

If you are a velvet producer you (or the person who DINZ has recorded as the primary contact for the farm business) will receive an email on 3 May inviting you to register. This initial VelTrak "primary user" for the farm business will then be able to specify others who are authorised to carry out VelTrak transactions.

Another group that can start to register from 6 April are velvet buyers/packhouses.

The big difference with VelTrak tags apart from the colour is that they contain a UHF RFID chip with the tag's unique number (also printed and barcoded onto the tag).

For farmers, VelTrak will greatly simplify compliance. You'll no longer need to fill out paper VSDs (although you can of course record them for your own purposes if you want to, for your own

## Key steps for farmers for 2021/22 season

- **Now:** Does DINZ have your email address? If not, let them know what it is.
- No email? No internet connection? Talk to DINZ about your options.
- **3 May:** Receive an email invitation to register your farm on VelTrak
- **From 3 May:** Use the link in the email to register, add team members and choose your vet practice
- **Before 2021/22 velvet season:** Order the new black VelTrak tags from your vet practice, as usual
- **During 2021/22 velvet season:** Apply black tags to velvet when harvested
- Promptly check and approve draft eVSDs on the VelTrak website once velvet has been sold or has gone to the packhouse.

Leftover blue tags from previous seasons can no longer be used. From the coming season the only tags you can use on velvet are the black VelTrak tags which will be supplied through your vet.

There are three key groups involved with VelTrak: deer farmers, veterinary practices and velvet buyers/packhouses.

All three groups need to be registered on VelTrak in time



The new black VelTrak tags (top) have an RFID chip. A VelTrak tag correctly applied to a stick of velvet (bottom).

*continued on page 8*

# North Island Deer Tech Expo: “Adding Value”

If you can't make it to the national technical workshop in Invercargill in May, don't worry, North Islanders: you're covered! And South Islanders, you're welcome too.

**A NORTH ISLAND** Tech Expo will be held at the Awapuni Function Centre, 67 Racecourse Road, Awapuni, Palmerston North on **30 June and 1 July**.

Farmer-focused workshops with technical experts on hand will run over the afternoon of 30 June and morning of July 1, giving out-of-town visitors plenty of time to get to and from the venue.



Awapuni Function Centre.

With 11 planned workshop topics to choose from there will be something for everyone. Each visitor will be able to attend four of the 90-minute workshops. The final make-up of the programme will depend on registrations and interest in topics, but at the time of writing, proposed topics covered:

- Venison genetics
- Efficient feeding
- Business & strategic planning
- Feeding velvet stags

- Alternative land use options
- Farm environment planning
- Livestock class integration
- Mental & physical wellness
- Reproductive efficiency
- Understanding soil
- Deer health risk management planning

The full trade exhibition will run from 9.00am on 30 June until 4.00pm on 1 July, starting on Wednesday morning with exhibitor talks focusing on digital technology and drones. Other exhibitor talks will be made throughout the event, including added value through marketing and farm environment planning.

Following the conclusion of the workshops, attendees will be welcome to take the opportunity to stay and interact with exhibitors.

The exhibitor list is still being confirmed and exhibitors can register on the form provided (link below). Many of the exhibitors will also be directly involved by attending or facilitating the workshop sessions.

The expo is free to attend, with the option to BYO lunch or buy lunch or dinner.

All are welcome to stay for the evening meal and entertainment and to catch up with like-minded farmers from around the country.

Central Regions DFA is organising the event, with funding from the P2P programme. ■

- For more information and to register your interest, as an attendee or exhibitor:

<https://form.jotform.com/210586623056051>

## VelTrak: continued

farm management system). NVSB velvetters do still have to record the tag range numbers in their velvet record books when they begin velvetting. Individual tag numbers will be electronically recorded on the eVSDs

Before each season you'll order your tags from your vet practice as you always have done. There are two important differences here. First, the vet practice will record in VelTrak the tag numbers that have been allocated to you – you don't need to do this. And second, there will be a cost. While much of the cost for running VelTrak will still be covered by levies, users will now pick up some of that cost too. This will help ensure more efficient use of the tags, rather than simply increasing the levy to cover all costs.

Vet practices will invoice you for the tags supplied – the recommended retail price is 49c/tag but this may vary and the price will be set by your vet clinic.

You'll apply the tags to sticks of cut velvet as you always have but you don't need to record tag numbers at this stage. That is done by your velvet buyer/packhouse. They will scan the tags and generate a draft electronic (e) VSD. You'll be emailed to tell you

the eVSD is waiting for your checking and approval on the VelTrak website. Once you've done this, the velvet can be forwarded for export or processing. No paper is involved.

There is also no special computer software or equipment needed. You can operate VelTrak with a normal PC, tablet or smart phone. There's also no need to buy a scanner for the UHF chips in VelTrak tags – that's looked after by the velvet buyer.

DINZ Quality Assurance Manager John Tacon says that there is always anxiety when a new system is introduced but he's confident deer farmers will quickly adapt to the more streamlined system.

“Our velvet markets are welcoming this and it's going to do a lot to protect our strong brand. Farmers have done a lot of great work over the past three years getting onside with the RCS and VelTrak will help lock in those gains by giving secure traceability.” ■

- For more on what VelTrak means for farmers: [www.deernz.org/dinz-activity/veltrak/what-will-change-farmers](http://www.deernz.org/dinz-activity/veltrak/what-will-change-farmers)
- For frequently asked questions about VelTrak: [www.deernz.org/dinz-activity/veltrak/qa](http://www.deernz.org/dinz-activity/veltrak/qa)



# Velvet manager in China hits ground running

by Phil Stewart, *Deer Industry News* Editor

In a normal world, Felix Shen would soon be getting on a plane to New Zealand to meet producers and companies and immerse himself in the Kiwi environment and culture that produces the deer velvet destined for China.

**BUT THE WORLD** is anything but normal right now. The newly appointed senior marketing manager for Primary Collaboration New Zealand (Shanghai) Ltd (PCNZ), is waiting for travel restrictions to ease before he gets first-hand experience of this country and its deer industry.

Shen started in his new job on 8 March, and despite the current travel restrictions he's wasted no time getting to know about the product, its provenance and the intricacies of its markets in China. *Deer Industry News* spoke to Shen and PCNZ CEO David Boyle about the new role.

As reported in the February issue of *Deer Industry News*, Shen will be working on behalf of the China Velvet Coalition, or CVC (CK Import Export, PGG Wrightson and Provelco), supported

by DINZ and NZ Trade and Enterprise (NZTE), to identify and work with brand-name companies in China that want to develop and promote products using New Zealand deer velvet as an ingredient. His work is funded by the CVC companies, with a matching contribution from NZ Trade & Enterprise and some support from DINZ.

Shen, who is 38 and married with three young daughters, has extensive experience in the food ingredient business. He graduated with a Food Science and Engineering major from University of Shanghai for Science and

Technology, and started his career with Coca Cola looking at new beverage products and blends. After four years he changed tack from the technical side to a greater focus on sales, and since leaving Coca Cola has worked for Danish bioscience company Chr-Hansen, Du Pont, and Swiss company Givaudan.

His sales roles have taken him to most regions of China and he's worked with products as diverse as flavours and colourings, emulsifiers, beverages, dairy products, confectionary, dietary supplements and healthy food ingredients.

Shen says he sees a strong connection between products like these and deer velvet, where there is a big opportunity to help transition it away from its traditional commodity status to becoming an ingredient in higher-value niche products.

He's already very familiar with the New Zealand primary products that sell so well in China, among them apples, kiwifruit, beef and dairy products including specialist food ingredients. David Boyle said when he tells taxi drivers where he's from, it's milk that they're likely to mention first, so there's already good awareness of brand NZ. (After doctors in China recently talked up the value of a daily glass of milk in fighting Covid, there was a noticeable surge in demand.)

Interestingly, a small amount of ginseng grown in New Zealand is also making its way to China. Shen and David Boyle are well aware of the success of Korea Ginseng Corporation's products in China and see great potential for similar, locally produced products that use New Zealand deer velvet-based ingredients.

The New Zealand brand values around velvet that will most appeal in China will be its quality, along with this country's reputation for having a stable, well-structured and developed industry with good product traceability. High environmental standards for the New Zealand industry also appeal to Chinese consumers, but Boyle noted that New Zealand doesn't have a monopoly on these values. He said countries like Ireland and Denmark also talk a good game about green grass and pasture-fed animals.



Felix Shen sees big potential for high-value velvet-based products like this one. He's in Tong Ren Tang, a Traditional Chinese Medicine store that has a history going back more than 350 years and about 3,000 branches in China.

  
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and select 'Contact Us'  
for more information.



continued on page 10

*Velvet manager: continued*

The companies in China that make high-value food supplements potentially using our velvet will prefer reliable sources of well-traced ingredients, Shen said. “We need to attract a new generation of consumers, who want more than just traditional sliced velvet. They will want convenient products like shots, tablets, coffee or gummies.”



Shanghai: Consumer and business confidence are returning strongly in China.

As he embarks on his new role, Shen has plenty of legwork to do getting to understand the regulatory environment for imported deer velvet and its use as a food ingredient. He said there were a lot of changes to regulations covering food during 2019–2020. “The Government here treats deer as a protected animal, so there are rules about production, processing and final use. Hopefully these definitions can change.”

The deer velvet sector in China is a bit fragmented and the local industry isn’t as well developed as New Zealand’s Shen says. Interestingly, about half of the velvet consumed in China comes from New Zealand.

While getting to grips with the regulatory side, Shen is also busy researching local consumption habits and consumer willingness to pay a premium for products with health benefits such as boosted immunity. He notes that the local deer velvet industry is also exploring potential on that side.

Local conditions in China are very positive, according to Shen and Boyle. “Consumer and business confidence are very strong and there is a lot of pride in the way the country has responded to Covid-19,” Boyle said. “The Government did some quantitative easing and investment to fire up the economy. People are hiring, there is a very active labour market and everything is open.”

Shen said that apart from the need to use masks in public transport, there are no restrictions affecting daily life.

We had one final question from Felix Shen and David Boyle: Had they had a chance to try products with New Zealand velvet ingredients for themselves? “Not yet, but we can’t wait!” was the reply. “We’re looking forward to getting some samples to try!”

DINZ’s contracted representative office in Korea, who are in regular contact with Felix, are organising some samples to be sent to the PCNZ office while Shen awaits the chance get on that plane and come to sample the product and the country first hand.

## What is Primary Collaboration New Zealand?

Primary Collaboration New Zealand (PCNZ) has its origins in a 2012 brainstorming session for New Zealand food and fibre leaders at Stanford University under the Te Hono programme. The challenge was to find a way for New Zealand primary sector enterprises to get a good foothold in China without incurring undue risk or cost.

PCNZ CEO David Boyle said even the big players – including his former employer Lion Nathan – had previously endured “hiccups” getting business successfully established in China.

The ideas generated at Stanford gestated for a couple of years before six companies acted on the discussion and set up a jointly owned company to achieve this goal. Silver Fern Farms, Sealord, Kono (an iwi-owned food and beverage exporting enterprise), Pacific Pace (an umbrella company for Mr Apple, Bostock, and Freshmax), Synlait and Villa Maria are the six founding partners and equal shareholders, and formed subsidiary Primary Collaboration New Zealand (Shanghai) Co Ltd as a Wholly Foreign Owned Entity (WFOE) in China. Each of the six shareholders has one board member.

A further six organisations, including DINZ, have since joined as members while three of the original six have since “graduated” from PCNZ to become WFOEs in their own right.

PCNZ receives funding from its shareholders with some additional money from NZ Trade and Enterprise’s international growth fund.

Boyle said the collaboration works because it helps overcome the hurdle of scale and cost when getting established in China. Shared services like translation, teleconferencing and even a “hot desk” for New Zealand members visiting Shanghai all help ease the pathway. PCNZ’s deep in-market Chinese knowledge and experience of sales and marketing is supported by a full range of back-office services, including accounting, tax, IT, HR and regulatory advice.

Negotiating China’s complex regulation of food imports is one of the biggest challenges facing Kiwi businesses getting established, Boyle said. Another task for people exporting food products is to transform commodities into high-value consumer products. Synlait, for example, has enjoyed rapid growth, with sales in China quintupling over 5 years.

Boyle said Synlait has broadened its footprint, with A2 milk playing an important part in their success. “The story of the provenance of these products has also really helped.”



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Understanding consumer behaviour, especially young Chinese consumers versus their parents and grandparents, is another area where PCNZ can help. It can also give insights into the impact of Covid-19 in China, including attitudes towards health and immunity.

Boyle said another success story in China had been NZ King Salmon's use of byproducts as an ingredient in "Omega Plus" petfood, adding value to each fish processed. Felix Shen said the petfood market had exploded in China as more young couples decide to not have children and opt for pets instead, while their parents are also buying pets to fill the "empty nest" void when their adult kids leave home.

Boyle and Shen are confident that DINZ and the China Velvet Coalition partners have every chance of replicating this kind of success through PCNZ.



PCNZ CEO David Boyle (right) with senior marketing manager Felix Shen.

## Following velvet through to end product

There are more than 100 products sold in Korea branded with New Zealand velvet as an ingredient, but none in China.

Tony Cochrane, velvet manager PGG Wrightson, wants that to change and he thinks the China Velvet Coalition (CVC), working through DINZ and PCNZ, is the best way to achieve it. Cochrane is the initial chair of CVC, a three-year term that rotates between the three members (the others are Provelco and CK Import Export).

The CVC is new territory for all three partners but the joint approach is absolutely necessary to help build demand for New Zealand velvet. He says Korea is unlikely to be able to keep absorbing the big growth in production that's happened in recent years. "We want to grow a new market, not just divert product from one to the other."

He says that China, because of its scale, complexity and regional differences, needs someone on the ground who understands the markets and "help us be quick on our feet".

We need to not just keep up with market trends but stay ahead of them, Cochrane says.

"We do already sell in China, but that's at a trading and processing level. We have limited knowledge of what happens to the product after that."

The "co-opetition" between the three CVC partners will work, but it will require transparency and honesty. Cochrane said Felix Shen will be able to identify end customers and create relationships, but then it will be over to the end user company to decide who they do business with in New Zealand.

"We'll get a better idea of how it'll work as we gain experience, but with Felix in place we're starting with a clean sheet, from square one."

In the short period since Shen came on board he's already impressed the CVC partners with the amount of preparatory work he's done, his level of activity and thirst for knowledge. "He is really excited about it." ■



From left: CVC representatives Shaun Stevenson (CK Import Export), Ross Chambers (Provelco) and Tony Cochrane (chair, PGG Wrightson).

## Our deer, there

New Zealand's Ambassador to South Korea, Phil Turner, has hosted recent high-level events at the New Zealand Residence, where he has served premium New Zealand venison, not something that is commonly served in Korea.

DINZ manager, markets Rhys Griffiths says whenever he has Korean guests here in New Zealand he also selects farm-raised venison and is heartened by the positive response. "It's no wonder, given the appetite for healthy proteins and premium beef products," he says. ■



Guests at the New Zealand Embassy in South Korea are enjoying meals of NZ farm-raised venison like this.

# Velvet market value maintained

The start of the 2020/2021 velvet season set a new record, with Statistics New Zealand figures for the year ending January 2021 valuing velvet exports at \$25.5m for the four months October–January, up about \$10m on the same period the previous year.

**HOWEVER, AVERAGE PRICES** paid to farmers are reported back about 15 percent on last year's \$120/kg, says DINZ manager, markets Rhys Griffiths.

While the price drop would be disappointing for producers, the good news is that it doesn't reflect a drop in value of product in the market, Griffiths says. Rather, it reflects a risk premium buyers built in to allow for possible extra costs and the uncertainty of exporting during a global pandemic.

"The feedback we're getting is that underlying demand for New Zealand velvet is still very strong."

It was estimated about half of the season's production had been exported by the end of January, with the remainder committed, which is really good news, he adds.

However, as with other sectors, problems with port closures and container delays have disrupted the velvet supply chain.

He notes there had been reports of harder grading with more penalties for non-traditional antler, so if there is a lesson in that for next season, it is to keep close to your buyer and ensure timely removal of velvet to suit the market.

Logistics and risk aside, Covid-19 could prove a positive for velvet as consumers in South Korea and China seek foods and traditional medicines reputed to reduce fatigue and boost immune function, Griffiths acknowledges. But he stresses the velvet sector needs to be careful it doesn't appear to be trying to capitalise on something that has had such horrific consequences.

"Our highly respected partners in the markets, with close connections to consumers, are managing that messaging."

Besides, markets such as China and South Korea were already much more alert to the risks of disease outbreaks such as Covid-19, having been influenced by other recent epidemics such as Swine Flu and Mers (Middle Eastern Respiratory Syndrome).

"The healthy food strategy we have been working on in South Korea is really paying big dividends."

Now, moves are afoot to replicate that in China through the China Velvet Coalition (see more about the CVC on page 11).

"There's been a natural lift in consumption of health products with increasing wealth in the [Chinese] population and an increased focus on health and wellbeing that goes with that, as it does in every nation."

That all bodes well for ongoing growth in demand for New Zealand velvet, Griffiths says, but the tricky bit is continuing to grow supply without overdoing it.

"Velvet production is increasing but overproduction could mean there's a correction in the market," he warns.

Severe price fluctuations are not only bad for farmers, but can jeopardise the margins of companies investing in developing the high-value markets New Zealand velvet is increasingly supplying.

"Thankfully, we have had relative stability for the last 10 or so years, compared with earlier years," he notes.

Recent requirements to upgrade velvetting facilities have seen



Korea remains New Zealand's number one consumer. Photo: Joon Kyu Park, Creative Commons.

a handful of small-scale producers drop out, but others have more than taken up the slack.

"The regulations are there to protect the industry. If an operation doesn't meet the standard, then velvet cannot be exported for human consumption."

Overall, velvet has been a spectacular success story in recent years, with the farmgate value soaring from \$26m in 2009 to more than \$100m in 2020.

Griffiths says Korea is still the number one consumer, taking 55–60 percent of New Zealand's product, albeit half of that goes via China.

"China is the main export destination, taking 60–65 percent of what we produce; then half of that is reprocessed before it's sent on to Korea."

Suggestions of manufacturing more finished products in New Zealand are often made and while there are successful operators here, Griffiths believes the premium ingredient partnership strategy with big reputable companies in China and Korea is the key to moving volumes.

"Our strategy of partnering with healthy food companies really pays off. They know their customers much better than we can ever hope to."

After China and South Korea, Taiwan trails in as New Zealand velvet's third biggest user, taking a little under 5 percent of exports. It is one to watch, however, as is Vietnam with its 100m population.

"It's really growing in terms of economic wealth and they have some pretty positive attitudes to TCM (Traditional Chinese Medicine). We do need to focus on other markets to ensure we are diversified enough but if you think about where we were 10–15 years ago when we supplied one sector, through one channel, into one geographical market, we've already come a very long way." ■



# Contestable funding recipient aims at China market

Silver Fern Farms' China project was selected as the recipient of the one-off DINZ contestable fund, which is designed to support transformational projects that might have otherwise been limited by lack of substantial funding.

**"THE DINZ FUNDING** has allowed us to accelerate and expand our investigation into three different channels within China: retail to consumers, to chefs through foodservice, and premium pet food," says Claire Tan, Silver Fern Farms head of marketing, China.

With China keeping Covid-19 lockdowns to a minimum, China-based Tan and her team have been able to get projects started.

"The foodservice work is well underway with a number of chef demonstrations and training sessions already having taken place. Last week we had over 50 chefs at a workshop in Guangzhou and they were all excited to try the venison, which is a new protein for them," says Tan. More workshops are planned for this year along with venison taking centre stage next month at SIAL China, one of the country's biggest hospitality sector events.

These workshops will also help Silver Fern Farms refine the cuts that they offer to chefs in China, Tan says. Currently most products being exported are cut to European standards, but as chefs start developing recipes for Chinese cuisine, there may be a requirement for variation from these cuts.

Venison is currently not used widely in Chinese cuisine and, overall, chefs are not familiar with the product, so ongoing chef education will be important.

The consumer research project is also underway and has taken an ethnographic approach to understanding Chinese consumer barriers when they are looking at buying premium red meat and specifically venison. "We asked Chinese consumers living in large cities such as Beijing, Guangzhou and Shanghai to keep a video diary detailing their purchasing and cooking habits. This will help us to develop products specifically for Chinese consumers."

Once the ethnographic research is completed, the fund will also allow investment in "a consumer-centred design process to prototype new product development that takes venison into innovative new formats relevant to China cuisine and lifestyles".

Education on how to cook venison will also be critical for consumers and Tan has been investigating new methods for

delivering this information along with selling products to consumers. "Chinese consumers are very tech savvy and there are a lot of unique digital channels through which they will purchase products and through which we can tell the story of venison."

Tan says the pet food market project is still in its early stages. "We are gathering feedback from manufacturers and finding the gaps in the market. The pet food market could help us maximise utilisation and value out of each carcass."

Over the past few years, the amount of venison being exported to China has been increasing but Tan notes that China still takes only a very small percentage of venison compared with other countries. "There is significant opportunity for this to increase. Key to this is our ability to get more chefs and consumers to understand and try this fantastic meat."

While Silver Fern Farms is the sole recipient of the contestable funding, the project will benefit the wider industry. "It's of benefit to everyone exporting to China. The more chefs and consumers who have tried venison and know its benefits and how to cook it, then the further we can spread that message. It's better for the whole industry," Tan concludes. ■

## Retail to complement foodservice in US

**A GRADUAL RECOVERY** in the US restaurant trade is anticipated this year. The Biden administration recently announced a US\$23 billion stimulus package for the industry, meaning many restaurants that were looking at closing will be able to remain open. Restaurant restrictions are being eased across the United States, with California announcing it will be removing limitations on indoor dining and restaurant capacity in June.

The P2P marketing programme is focused this year on supporting venison marketing companies' development of their US retail programmes.

While foodservice will recover and remain an important channel for Cervena®, having retail channels helps mitigate the risk of further foodservice restrictions in years to come.

With around 30 percent of US citizens still indicating they will not get a Covid vaccine, scientists anticipate future surges of the virus. Ensuring our product has more direct channels to consumers will help lessen the impact of any renewed restrictions these could bring.

The venison marketing companies have been busy developing new retail-specific products and packaging, along with promotional material. P2P funding is being used to support product development and promotional activities, most of which are focused online.

In coming issues of *Deer Industry News*, we will profile each company's retail programme. ■



Chefs at this workshop in Guangzhou were excited to try venison.

# Celebrating Evan and Linda's success at Waipapa Station

by Phil Stewart, *Deer Industry News* Editor

The mantelpiece in Linda and Evan Potter's home at Waipapa Station, Central Hawke's Bay, must be fair groaning under the weight of trophies by now. Since winning the Landcare Trust Award and supreme Elworthy Environmental Award in the 2019 deer industry environment awards, the achievements of this couple on their productive and beautiful but also challenging property, have attracted further attention and accolades both locally and nationally.

**ABOUT 130 PEOPLE** attended a meticulously planned and run field day at the Potters' property on 30 March to look over the farm, celebrate the awards, learn more about the environmental work that's been done and drill down into some of the big sustainability challenges facing all farming.



Field day attendees stretch out to listen to presentations at one of four stops on the well-organised farm tour.

We've summarised the impressive list of awards in the box at right. These stretch back almost two years to the deer industry conference. The most recent was announced just a few days before the field day and put the icing on the cake when the Potters were chosen from among the regional supreme winners of the 2020 Ballance Farm Environment Awards, receiving the Gordon Stephenson trophy and being named National Ambassadors for Sustainable Farming and Growing for 2021.

## The trophy cabinet

### 2019 Landcare Trust Award

for excellence in sustainable deer farming through action on the ground. The judges commented on the Potters' great use of willows and poplars for soil stability, shade and shelter. Also noted was their collection of seeds to propagate plants known to thrive in their environment. Pictured presenting the award to Evan and Linda is DINZ manager, farm performance Phil McKenzie (right).



### 2019 Supreme Elworthy

**Environmental Award.** The award, commemorative plaque and kowhai were presented by DINZ chair Ian Walker (left). Walker said the industry's top award encapsulates a growing awareness of environment issues in the deer industry going back 20 years when industry founding father Sir Peter Elworthy laid out the future challenges for the industry and inspired the awards. He was delighted that deer farmers had put the industry in the national spotlight by winning the Gordon Stephenson trophy.



**Bayleys People Award:** Presented by James Macpherson of Bayleys Napier, the award recognises the "importance of staff



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management, succession, community involvement, health and safety and other practices associated with people management and wellbeing”.

**East Coast Farming for the Future Award:** Presented by Hawke’s Bay regional councillor Will Foley, this NZ Farm Environment Trust award sponsored by HBRC and Gisborne District Council recognises farming that is “profitable, advanced, environmentally sustainable with a focus on land use and innovation in land management, soil conservation, provision for climate change and engagement with local government”.

**Synlait Climate Stewardship Award:** Presented by Kate Taylor as part of the Ballance Farm Environment awards, this recognises action to reduce a farm’s carbon footprint and become more climate resilient.

**NZ Farm Environment Trust East Coast Region Supreme Winner 2020:** This award champions sustainable farming and growing and recognised the Potters’ vision for future proofing, their dedication to biodiversity and trees through a major QEII National Trust covenant of 125 hectares and their involvement with community and industry.

#### Gordon Stephenson

**Trophy:** This award was announced at the National Sustainability Showcase at Te Papa on 25 March, when the Potters were picked from among 11 regional winners from the 2020 Ballance Farm Environment Awards.

Presenting a trophy to mark the award was Joanne van Polanen (left), chair of the NZ Farm Environment Trust. She said the Potters took the judges on a half-day farm tour and performed well during an intensive 30 minute Q+A session with the panel. The judges were effusive in their praise, noting the Potters presented well and articulated positive and holistic views about New Zealand and its future as a food and fibre producer. As recipients of the trophy, the Potters become ambassadors for sustainable farming, a wish expressed by the late conservationist, Gordon Stephenson.



The Hawea stream flows through the QEII Trust-covenanted gorge, which bisects the original property.

Their first big project, inspired by a covenant they’d seen at Patoka in northern Hawke’s Bay, was to put 125 hectares of the gorge area into a QEII National Trust covenant. It was a big chunk – 22 percent – of the land area at the time. They raced through 6km of double fencing in the first year before pulling back to a more workable 3km a year.

Evan said the funding available through the Trust meant the work could be done much more quickly than they otherwise could have done it. The gorge project was completed between 1999 and 2006 and a further 3.5 hectare block was covenanted in 2015.

He said putting land into a covenant doesn’t mean any loss of control. “You still own the land; you still have access and you control access.” The Potters negotiated to include three major crossings through the covenanted area which otherwise bisected their farm.

They also successfully negotiated to include 20 hectares of production forestry in the covenant, and in return have to commit to doing wilding pine control. They negotiated hard to be able to plant a second rotation of forestry on the block, but have since changed their thinking and will probably return parts of it at least into native plantings. The potential mess left by plantation forestry was a factor in this. “There’s always some give and take when setting up a covenant,” Evan said.

## From a standing start

When the Potters were first shown the 566 hectare Waipapa Station 23 years ago, they saw a farm charitably described as “extensively run” with a big gorge that was a death trap for cattle and a long list of capex requirements. They said to the agent, “please take us home” Evan recalls, but something about the place must have got to them.

## Farm facts

**Size:** 720ha, 570ha effective, 120ha QEII/retired, 20ha forestry  
**Altitude:** 220–360m asl  
**Topography:** Flat 19ha; Rolling 155ha; Hill 280ha; Steep hill 116ha



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continued on page 16

## Waipapa: continued

Stock:	Approximately 1/3 each sheep, beef and deer
Paddocks:	73 total; 5–7ha on developed country; 10–20ha on hill
Deer block:	144ha, 28 paddocks
Climate:	Summer dry, winter wet; average rainfall 1,050mm/yr (600–1,200 range)
Deer:	200 breeding hinds and 5 sire stags with velvet focus. Approx. 240 velvetting stags (R2, R3 and MA); nearly 200 R1 hind and stag replacements. Currently producing 1.2t velvet/year, sold through CK Import Export; surplus hinds/stags sold through Firstlight Foods for venison, about 10,000kg/year. Stags average just under 5kg for first cut. 2 year cut-off for stags is 2.5kg Exceptionally good reproductive performance: MA hinds fawning 98% in 2020; R2 hinds 90%

## Relationships important

A common theme throughout the field day was the power of good relationships. The Potters themselves are a very tight team that's more than the sum of its parts, but they also work very well with outside individuals and organisations and are heavily involved in their local Elsthorpe community.

There's the QEII Trust of course, but also the Hawke's Bay Regional Council (HBRC), which came in for special praise from Evan. The council has partnered financially with the Potters in much of its conservation work. This started in 1999 when



Guests grab a good vantage point to listen to one of the en route presentations.

it completed a soil conservation plan for the farm that has underpinned much of the work that's been done since. This was followed by completion of a soil map for Waipapa Station in 2005, which identified important differences from generic soil maps of the region. In 2018 they completed a Farm Environmental

Management Plan (FEMP) through Beef+Lamb NZ. This is to be updated this year.

"HBRC have been terrific – I'll never complain about paying rates again," Evan said only half jokingly. That's not to say there aren't robust exchanges with council staff at times. One bone of contention is the definition of ephemeral versus permanent waterways. The presence or not of a defined stream bed, and whether the watercourse grasses over, are all supposed to help define waterways but the real world is messier than that.

Working out average slope is another tricky area but is crucial for determining whether or not a waterway (average slope less than 15°) needs fencing. Another layer of uncertainty comes when national guidelines conflict with local rules for a catchment. In these cases the stricter rules must apply – but there can be exceptions. For example, Tukituki catchment rules don't require a 3-metre setback from fenced waterways but national rules do. Anomalies like these need sorting.

Warwick Hesketh of HBRC said the council had tried to be clear in its Plan Change 6, but by taking out any subjectivity, the rules can get very complex and wordy.

Evan said HBRC staff had visited to help assess an area just after 100mm of rain where the water had started flowing "and the deer were wallowing". That led to some intense discussion about the need for stock exclusion, but in the end it didn't matter whether the watercourse was technically ephemeral or not because the Potters' FEMP included actions to minimise stock impacts in that area and that satisfied the council.

Linda pointed out a retired area she had recently planted with more than 800 native trees and shrubs (pictured). Some of this was from seed that she'd ecosourced, with about half supplied through Marie Taylor, Plant Hawke's Bay. Collecting and propagating the seed from existing vegetation in the area means you're planting species that have proven they'll thrive in the local



Native trees and shrubs from ecosourced seeds are starting to come away in this erosion control project.

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conditions. She'd used about 12–15 species including a rare local *Pittosporum* that needed good protection from deer. "It's like lollies to them." Linda hopes to eventually be able to provide all of their native plant needs through ecosourcing.

The area didn't technically need to be retired but it was of no productive value so Linda worked with the council who helped fund the project for erosion control. She used dags around the plants to help keep in moisture.

HBRC councillor Will Foley reminded attendees that agriculture issues aren't the only ones landing on council desks, so they need to make sure their point of view is heard. "There are a lot of urban regional councillors and ratepayers and they have different priorities, such as public transport and regional parks. We need to hear farmers' priorities for our long-term plan."

## ETS realities shared

Property valuer and forestry adviser Mark Morice gave attendees a sobering update on the implications of the emissions trading scheme (ETS) for pastoral agriculture.

He said before-tax profits for sheep and beef on Hawke's Bay Class 3 and 4 land was between \$200–\$300 per hectare in the past couple of years. But with carbon prices currently at \$39/unit (it went as low as \$1.40 in 2013) you could be earning around \$1,500/ha by farming carbon on the same country. And with five-year forward contracts for carbon increasing approximately 3 percent a year, a "carbon regime" of 450–550 stems per hectare could be worth \$3,500/ha in 40 years' time if carbon maintains the same trajectory in price.

Morice said there was no getting away from the fact that agriculture accounted for a big share of New Zealand's greenhouse gas emissions at around 50 percent. All energy production accounted for around 40 percent and, of that, transport was only 19 percent.

He explained that the Climate Change Commission wanted dairy, sheep and beef [and presumably deer] numbers to each reduce 15 percent below 2018 levels by 2030. The commission wanted some dairy to transition to horticulture, with sheep and beef genetics for lower emissions being selected, all of this to help

reduce methane.

(See article on DINZ/NZDFA submission on Climate Change Commission draft advice on page 21. DINZ is working with the Government, iwi and other partners in *He Waka Eke Noa* to arrive at a greenhouse gas pricing system that will keep agriculture out of the ETS and allow recognition of sequestration through woody vegetation.)

Between 1.15–1.4 million hectares of "marginal land" had been identified as suitable for forestry, especially native plantings. Morice said MPI had estimated 12,000 hectares was going into native forest planting in 2021 but this needed to be ramped up to 25,000 hectares/year from 2030 for a total of 300,000 hectares of new native forest by 2035 if New Zealand was to stay on track for zero carbon by 2050. Exotic afforestation would continue the trajectory expected under current policies up until 2030, averaging around 25,000 hectares per year. In total, around 380,000 hectares of new exotic forestry would be established by 2035.

Explaining the ETS, Morice described the significance of the 1990 benchmark. Basically if land was already in trees in 1990 (historical mapping can confirm this), you'd receive no carbon credits. Also with clear land, it is critical to check its eligibility as it may have had a tree cover at 1990, making it ineligible as post-1989 land. This is something that struck the crowd as a bit unfair. And if you were ahead of the game and did some land retirement and planting before 1990, you'll get no carbon credits for that either.

He also noted the international rules limiting what can count for carbon credits:

- blocks to be at least 1 hectare
- trees capable of 30 percent crown cover per hectare at maturity
- planting width greater than 30 metres on average (thin shelter belts don't count)
- can reach 5 metres in height at maturity where they are growing
- gaps between trees less than 15 metres
- fruit or nut trees don't count.

All of these mean a lot of the plantings done on New Zealand farms will miss out on qualifying under the ETS. On the other hand, a slope planted in Lombardy poplars, as the Potters have extensively done, could qualify. The main requirements are there isn't more than 15 metres between drip lines (say about 25 metres between stems) and at least 30 percent crown cover at maturity. Morice estimated about 50–60 stems per hectare would be the minimum to do the job. If trees are cut for fodder or timber a higher density of around 100 stems per hectare may be required to maintain crown cover.

Morice said a nearby pine block that was 14 years old and would be capturing about 30t of carbon a year. He said tables were available to calculate sequestration for blocks under 100 hectares. Larger blocks required field measurements to create



Mark Morice warned that demand from forestry was pushing up prices for pastoral land.

# Farm Smarter With Data

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continued on page 18



*Waipapa: continued*

tailored tables. (The Potters' carbon emissions were profiled in 2019, showing that about 46 percent of the annual emissions could be offset by carbon being stored in trees according to ETS criteria. If all woody vegetation was counted this went up to 62 percent. There were limited options for more offsets other than more tree planting.)

Of course the carbon chickens come home to roost when trees are harvested, at which point under the current carbon stock change accounting method (saw tooth) you have to pay approximately 60 percent of the carbon sequestered back to the Crown with the remainder depreciated over 10 years. This is somewhat mitigated by the new averaging mechanism, in which you receive the first 17 years of carbon from the first rotation only. You would have to repay this if you change land use after harvest, say back to pasture. This will become a default scheme from 2023. There is also a mechanism for planting of "permanent" forest where a covenant will prevent harvest for at least 50 years. If you then harvest you will have to pay back to the long run average carbon amount.

Morice said there was upward pressure on land values, with forestry companies willing to pay a 20–40 percent premium on land suitable for forestry. There had been big price inflation in steeper farm land.

"Forestry is doing well in its own right; it's not just about carbon. Foresters are starting to like the same kind of land as farmers, with low environmental risk and close to towns, mills and ports."

He concluded that the agricultural sector still had a lot to work

out, but that any drop in stock units to mitigate methane would likely mean a drop in income. Finding alternative income streams to balance this – including from trees – would be a challenge but also an opportunity.

He also noted that carbon prices were manipulated politically, but ultimately they will need to be at a level high enough to change our behaviour in relation to reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

## Ballance commits more investment

Hadyn Eade of Ballance reminded farmers that public perceptions equal reality and it was important for farmers like the Potters to tell their stories. He praised Evan and Linda for their courage and



Safety for the large convoy of vehicles on the field day was carefully managed.

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willingness to take risks and learn.

Ballance and MPI had co-invested \$19.5m over 7 years in sustainability tools to help farmers with practice change and had committed to another \$25m over the next 25 years to be co-invested with MPI.

## Around the back

The convoy of quads, side-by-sides and even an e-bike or two, continued east across the QEII covenanted gorge and up the other side to some newer blocks, bought in 2015 and 2017 (incidentally, one of these blocks was bought off a cousin of DINZ producer manager Tony Pearse, who enjoyed being back on a bit of land he hadn't visited since he was a teenager).



Look carefully and you'll see signs of the planting being done on a neighbouring property to protect this vulnerable slope. A similar slope on the Potters' place, directly facing this one, is receiving similar treatment.

The Hawea block is gnarly country on erodible mudstone and the Potters have wasted no time getting development underway to protect the most vulnerable areas. (None of it is deer fenced at this point.) They plan to fence the stream on this side and bring reticulated water to the paddocks. A 5 hectare exposed face is being retired, work that mirrors what neighbour Hugh Pearse had been doing.

HBRC's Warwick Hesketh noted that the 5,000 hectare Hawea stream catchment, which feeds the Tukituki, has the highest risk of landslides in the area. He said it was a good example of sediment loss through sheet erosion and the stream carried off an estimated 31,245 tonnes of sediment a year – making the work by those such as the Potters all the more important.

Evan Potter said another gully had been fenced on this side and there was a three-year programme of work ahead. An original plan to put much of the area in pines would have made the new block impassable. Now they are planning to lower grazing pressure and look at alternatives to either native plantings or pines. He noted that ideas about conservation can change. For example, willow plantings to stabilise stream banks can eventually choke a stream, and the Potters had used money from a biodiversity fund to spray out some of these. He also noted that unmaintained poplars from plantings 50 years ago had become dangerous and new plantings had lower branches trimmed to reduce the risk of them falling over.

## Linda and Evan

Linda and Evan Potter have four daughters, two still school age and at home. At this stage there are no set plans on succession – the two older daughters have other careers – and the family are keeping all options open about the future. But for now the couple are committed to building on the work they've already done. At the end of a busy field day they spoke to *Deer Industry News*.



*DIN:* How did it feel to see all your work bearing fruit?

*Linda:* Amazing. You stand back and look at the vision you had at the start, and all those hours of work, starting to appear in the big picture.

*DIN:* What changes in biodiversity have you seen?

*Evan:* The bush has thickened up – the kowhai used to be stick trees. Removing the stock and predators like possums has given us a lot more tree life. The other day I was out there and when I turned off the bike the noise from the bird life was incredible. You wouldn't believe it if you didn't see it.

*DIN:* Have you had to make any trade-offs or sacrifices to achieve what you have?

*Linda:* Not at all. It's made management a lot easier in some ways. *Evan:* We've been able to focus our resources better and get more bang for our buck.

*DIN:* Any lessons learned?

*Evan:* Watch and learn. Don't rush into it. Be prepared to change your plans. Surround yourself with good people. Measure what you're starting with and don't be afraid to take that first step.

*DIN:* Have your ideas been picked up within the deer industry and across the fence?

*Evan:* Certainly working within the P2P Advance Party has been great for that, but probably one of the biggest rewards has been seeing a neighbour carry on protecting a piece of the Hawea stream which they might not have done otherwise. We were probably seen as a bit mad in the early days fencing off all that beautiful water.

*DIN:* Has it been good for the farm business?

*Linda:* Yes, it's really simplified things. *Evan:* It's not rocket science – it's common sense. It saves you time in the long run and helps future proof your business, staying ahead of that tsunami of environmental [regulations]. We don't get everything right, but you've got to try.

*DIN:* What will your sustainability ambassador duties be?

*Linda:* It'll be a massive learning curve for us! *Evan:* If we can inspire someone through what we've done here to try things on their own place then that's got to be a win-win.

*DIN:* Will your work on this place ever be finished?

*Linda:* Probably not. You always have new ideas – we've made it a good place to work so we'll want to keep doing this.

*Evan:* Development is in my blood. These projects are never finished. We're one generation and there'll be a new generation that comes along with their own ideas. ■

• For a video of Evan and Linda's interview:

<https://youtu.be/349yUY2Zmnc>



# Knowing your GHG numbers

Working out agricultural greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and carbon sequestration is going to be required for farms of more than 80 hectares\* by the end of 2022.

**HE WAKA EKE** Noa: The Primary Sector Climate Action Partnership (HWEN) has developed two information sources to help industry bodies and farmers understand their agricultural greenhouse gas emissions: *Greenhouse Gases: Farm Planning Guidance*, and *The Greenhouse Gases Model Assessment Report*.

Knowing a farm's nitrous oxide and methane numbers is the first step towards managing, and knowing how to reduce, on-farm emissions.

"A range of tools have now been assessed as suitable for calculating a farm's biological greenhouse gases; more are in development and will be assessed soon," says Kelly Forster, Programme Director for HWEN.

"Every farm is different, and not every farmer is expected to reduce their operation's emissions. However, the choices each farmer makes to optimise their operation will have a collective impact on Aotearoa's climate change efforts."

*Guidance* sets out basic principles to guide farmers, growers and advisers, with practical information on opportunities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to capture carbon.

Sequestration is one of the most important pillars that the HWEN partners are working through. The partnership is developing recommendations for an appropriate farm-level

emissions pricing system, which includes recognition and measurement of on-farm sequestration. The pricing system needs to be recommended next year, and be functioning in 2025.

Seven greenhouse gas calculation methods have been assessed and classified so far: HortNZ, MfE, Alltech, E2M, Fonterra/AIM, Farmax and OVERSEER.

Other tools are in development and will be assessed and added to the list.

"All farmers knowing their numbers by December 2022 is an ambitious target," says Forster. "He Waka Eke Noa's partners are committed to supporting their farmers. This includes development of new calculators to support farmers across sectors to know their GHG footprint well before our pricing system is ready to kick in."

Farmers wanting advice are encouraged to talk to their industry representative, supply company, or other trusted advisers about knowing their numbers and incorporating GHG into Farm Environment Plans. The reports are also available on:

<http://hewakaekenoa.nz>

\* The requirement also applies to all farms that have a dairy supply number, or are a cattle feedlot as defined in freshwater policy. ■

• Article supplied

## MSD Animal Health Photographic Awards

*Let's show 'em what we're made of!*



There's just about a fortnight left to get your entries in for the 2021 MSD Animal Health\* Photographic Awards. The lead-up last year had us in the middle of Alert Levels 3 and 4, but you still responded magnificently with a fantastic selection of entries.

This year (touch wood!) we'll keep the freedoms of Level 1 to get out and about to capture the best images our industry has to offer the world.

So if you haven't already, head out and get snapping. Entries cost \$5 per photo and there is no limit on the number of entries.

**ENTRY DEADLINE: 6 MAY 2021**

Results will be announced and entries on display at the 2021 Deer Industry Conference.

For an entry form contact:

Rebecca Norling: [rebecca.norling@deernz.org](mailto:rebecca.norling@deernz.org)

or download from:

<https://deernz.org/media/deer-industry-competitions/deer-industry-photo-competition>

Photo: "Big Dog" by Steve Couper. Winner 2021.

\*And a special shout-out to MSD – this is the 7th year they have kindly supported our competition!



# Challenges for deer meeting climate targets

by Phil Stewart, *Deer Industry News* Editor

First the good news. The Climate Change Commission/He Pou a Rangi 2021 *Draft Advice for Consultation*, contains a degree of pragmatism that will have the primary sector breathing a little easier. That said, the suggested targets for livestock emissions are still problematic for the deer sector.



The deer industry submission highlighted issues of unique concern to the deer sector.

**ONE OF THE** most significant messages from the Commission – and one welcomed by the deer industry – was the separation of the more problematic long-lived gases (carbon dioxide and nitrous oxide) from the short-lived methane in the reckonings. This allows a more targeted approach to reducing or mitigating the emissions. So far so good.

In a nutshell, the Commission suggests using carbon capture through planted trees for mitigating the long-lived agricultural emissions (namely nitrous oxide), but a more challenging approach for the short-lived methane emissions: fewer but more efficient livestock.

The Commission did recognise that our livestock farms are efficient, and wholesale replacement with forests on all but the most productive land wouldn't make sense – another welcome message.

It has also accepted the benefits provided by smaller blocks of native vegetation and recognised the multiple environmental benefits including biodiversity as well as carbon sequestration from this woody vegetation.

More broadly, the Commission accepted that climate change policy should be closely linked to policies affecting soils, water and biodiversity. And of strong symbolic importance is the recognition that meeting climate change targets should be shared by all New Zealanders, not shouldered by agriculture alone.

DINZ and NZDFA made a joint submission on the *Draft Advice* document. Given that most deer farms also run sheep and beef and have similar farm systems on much the same landscapes, there was good agreement with submissions made by Beef+Lamb NZ and the Meat Industry Association. But the deer industry submission also highlighted important differences and areas of concern unique to deer.

While separation of methane was a good thing, the targets for reducing methane emissions would unduly punish deer producers. Deer farmers have little scope for reducing emissions by producing the same amount of meat from fewer animals, consuming less feed. By extrapolating past productivity gains by other livestock classes into the future, the Commission's targets could push expectations beyond the biological limits of deer.

The deer industry submission noted that emissions from deer farming had increased only modestly since 1990. Therefore the deep cuts in emissions recommended by 2050 (25–59 percent below 2017 levels), and by 2030 (down 12–26 percent on 2017 levels) would unduly punish this livestock class.

In addition, there was only limited scope for more reproductive efficiency with deer. The submission noted that without a radical management shift such as indoor housing to reduce winter feed consumption needs, or genetic advances creating animals that emitted less methane, it was going to be hard to reduce overall emissions without a serious cut in deer numbers. And that could threaten the viability of an industry that has already suffered a significant drop in numbers in the past 15 years.

The deer industry submission spoke out against the extensive use of exotic forestry to offset ongoing carbon emissions over the next 15 years. However it encouraged native afforestation on private land, with small areas being retired or planted, creating a more diversified business and landscape. This was a far more

"We'll see you right"

# GERALDINE

continued on page 26

# Coleridge Downs ideal setting for rural professionals

by Phil Stewart, *Deer Industry News* Editor

About 20 rural professionals enjoyed an intensive two-day introduction to the deer industry at Coleridge Downs Station on 10-11 February, the latest in a series of such workshops in the Passion2Profit programme, starting in 2017.

## THE WORKSHOP

**ATTRACTED** a wide range of professionals who are all involved in providing services to the deer sector in some way. The event followed a similar structure to the previous workshop that was held in Balclutha in August last year (see *Deer Industry News* October/November 2020).

Veterinarian Lorna Humm facilitated the first day, which included a tour of Coleridge Downs, a 1,734 hectare block that lies between Lake Coleridge and the Rakaia River. Humm, with DINZ producer manager Tony Pearse, gave the professionals a general introduction to the industry, with Humm covering the venison side and Pearse the velvet. The one-and-a-half hour farm tour, and a piece of real frozen velvet, were among the hands-on experiences to give the workshop more authenticity.

Humm said they took the professionals through a typical production year for deer, looking at things like growth curves and the factors that influence the crucial period between fawning and weaning. "We took a holistic approach, taking in feeding and genetics as well as animal health."

The second day, run by Jansen Travis and Luke Palmer of Tambo, was devoted to the financial nitty gritty, with attendees taken through exercises like stock reconciliations and gross margins from a deer enterprise perspective. As with previous workshops the host farm's financials were used as raw material for exploring scenarios such as breeding versus buying replacements.

While the format for the workshops has worked well, Humm said there are always opportunities to refine and evolve the way they are done. For example, she says there might be scope for



Rural professionals enjoy a farm tour on Coleridge Downs in Rakaia Gorge, on a bright but windy Canterbury day.

running in-house workshops where there was sufficient demand, and also bringing in more diverse input with brief video clips from other DINZ staff and board members.

## Coleridge Downs

The setup and purpose of Coleridge Downs Station is interesting. It's actually four separate blocks, three in the Rakaia Gorge area and one in the Waimakariri Gorge. These comprise 9,500 hectares and employ 18 staff, including cadets. It's owned by the Erdman family, who own and live on an 8,000 hectare ranch in Hawai'i. The Erdmans run sheep, cattle, elk and goats there as well as a vineyard and restaurant. They also have a cattle ranch in Oregon.

The family bought the Coleridge Downs block in 1992 and started deer fencing in 1995. Over the years they acquired the other three blocks: Dry Acheron, Annavale Station and Big Ben Station.

The 16,000 stock units on the Coleridge Downs block include all of the operation's deer. There are 35,556 stock units over the four blocks. Currently they winter 950 hinds plus 150 R2 hinds and

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*continued on page 26*

# Meet the staff

DINZ manager – farm performance, **Phil McKenzie**, joined DINZ full time in February 2019, and for the year before was contracting part time helping get Deer Industry Environment Groups up and running.



**BEFORE HIS INVOLVEMENT** with DINZ, Phil was a farm consultant specialising in farm system and environment integration, extension and facilitation, and before this he was part of the Pāmu team, with a range of different roles. “All of these helped build my knowledge and love of deer,” Phil says.

Most of his time involves working with farmers and a wider team including the Ministry for Primary Industries on the market-led, farmer-facing projects of Passion2Profit (P2P).

Phil also works closely with Solis Norton and DeerPRO, and is co-lead of the on-farm innovation R&D programme, which is helping bring farmers closer to the co-design and delivery of research. “I like to think of my job as helping to make the technical and regulatory practical, with and for deer farmers,” he says.

The job is constantly evolving, and mostly growing with the need to build knowledge and implement programmes.

“Our industry as part of the whole primary sector and *He Waka Eke Noa* has committed to help every deer farmer know their greenhouse gas number by the end of next year. There is a whole body of work involved to deliver on that opportunity for farmers.

“We are also in a really exciting phase of P2P as we finish the current funding round strongly in September next year, while building on the strengths of the programme towards something even more exciting. We have also just got funding for another separate three-year project with MPI which will help even more farmers get Farm Environment Plans completed. We’ll have more to report on that shortly.”

Phil says P2P has without a doubt been the most exciting programme he’s worked on with DINZ. “Even though my involvement has only been for a relatively short time, the breadth and progress achieved by everyone involved is impressive.”

The close-knit and collaborative approach of the small DINZ team really appeals to Phil. “When I go and visit famers, which I really love, there is a sense that we are all working as hard as we can towards a common purpose of a sustainable and profitable deer industry.”

DINZ venison marketing manager **Nick Taylor** worked in marketing roles across a range of sectors – education, financial services and with an industry body – before joining the team at DINZ in November 2017.

**THE FORMER CANTABRIAN**, who has qualifications in marketing and the Mandarin language, is now settled in Wellington’s Khandallah.

Being venison marketing manager calls on a wide skill set, starting with getting good market insights and sharing that knowledge with the industry. He supports the venison marketing companies with their own in-market work and also manages the allocation of funding and activities of venison experts like Graham Brown and Shannon Campbell.

He applies his skills to development of promotional materials such as recipes, videos and brochures while also working in the increasingly important social media space as a channel for sharing

the qualities of venison.

Nick says that in the three years he’s been with DINZ he’s seen a big increase in companies and their customers adopting digital channels for sales and promotion – including greater social media use. “DINZ has also been increasing its social media work, especially since Covid.”

Nick really enjoys the





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continued on page 26



# Seasonal physiology and grazing behaviour

by Phil Stewart, *Deer Industry News* Editor

For everything there is a season; well there is according to *Ecclesiastes* anyway. Deer certainly seem to think so too – to the point where they seem to stubbornly follow their wired-in seasonal growth plan regardless of the feed that's put in front of them.

**GETTING FARMED DEER** growth curves to better match New Zealand's pasture growth curves has been a long-standing challenge for the industry. However, a new round of research could help build a better understanding of what makes the strong seasonality of deer tick, and what influences their grazing behaviour.

The overarching aim is to match the right deer to the right landscape and ensure they are achieving their greatest potential within any given farm system. That drive for efficiency is a pretty simple aim, but there will be a lot of science behind it. Some of this work has already been done, and has already thrown some interesting light on the way deer behave and perform.

## Deer movement tracked

A hill country trial involving tracking devices on red hinds to follow their movements and grazing behaviour was carried out between 2006–2008 and published more recently<sup>1</sup>. This trial followed 7–8 hinds in a herd of about 600 giving an insight into diurnal behaviour, home range size and usage of vegetation zones. Former AgResearch senior scientist Geoff Asher was a co-author.

That work showed that hinds used a variety of environments, with their movements driven by availability of preferred feed, water, places of refuge (especially around fawning), landscape, social hierarchy and human disturbance. Not surprisingly they favoured vegetation zones with the most palatable feeds, reverting to grazing tussocks when improved pasture wasn't available. Shrubby vegetation dominated by matagouri was the least preferred vegetation zone by the tracked hinds. Researchers noted that while shrubland provided useful shelter for resting and fawning, any grazing of shrubs or tussocks potentially indicated that an area was overstocked.

## Seasonal growth pathways

An AgResearch Invermay study of seasonal growth pathways was

<sup>1</sup> Animal Production Science 59(3) 549-563 <https://doi.org/10.1071/AN17516>

presented to the former DEERResearch last year. This study looked at the growth patterns of progeny from six sires and it showed that while deer are definitely very seasonal, there's quite some genetic variation in how that seasonality plays out.

They were matched in three pairs according to their Deer Select growth eBVs (low, medium and high). The sires had varying "growth phenotypes". In other words they varied in how fast they grew during different seasons.

The progeny of the sires were fed grass ad lib so they could express their genetic potential through the seasons. The growth profiles of the progeny reflected the breeding values of their sires, and also reflected the seasonality. In other words, progeny of a sire with lower-than-average winter growth rates indeed did grow more slowly during this period. This didn't necessarily affect the end point (e.g. weight at 12 months), but it did show that there's a strong genetic component to the way an animal will get to that weight. That then throws light on how these animals could be most efficiently fed during their first full season.

## "It could help refine farm systems to take advantage of seasonal growth patterns of a particular sire line"

The exciting thing about this is that it could help refine farm systems to take advantage of seasonal growth patterns of a particular sire line. For example, animals geared to growing well throughout winter would be best suited to a farm system where there's ample quality feed through the cooler months – possibly on lower country or in warmer northern regions. Conversely, animals that tended to really shut down growth over winter might be better suited to a high country system where there's minimal pasture growth at that time.

Research thus far has helped us better understand the potential to match growth phenotypes with landscapes and farm systems, but to really make this work requires a greater depth of knowledge.



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## Seasonal physiology and foraging behaviour projects

A five-year AgResearch Strategic Science Investment Fund research programme promises to drill down much deeper into what underlies the seasonal physiology and foraging behaviour of deer.

It's built around two PhD programmes, one being run out of Lincoln University and the other at Invermay. Described as discovery projects, the PhDs are aimed at unlocking new knowledge, some of which will be directly applicable at farm level.

### Seasonality

Animal physiologist and PhD candidate **Leo Rescia** started his programme in 2019 and it is expected to be complete by 2023. He'll be looking at the rumen function, endocrinology (hormone secretions), grazing behaviour and feed intake of deer that have varying seasonal growth profiles. The aim of this work will eventually be to match the phenotype for seasonality to the actual feed resources available within a given farm system.

### Foraging behaviours

**Bryan Thompson**, research associate with AgResearch Invermay, is the second PhD candidate and is already well known to the deer industry. His programme is scheduled to complete in 2024. He'll be looking into the way foraging behaviours in deer can vary, and the impact that can have on resource use in landscapes with a range of forage types and environments.

Thompson says "foraging syndromes" actually comprise a whole suite of behaviours that define how each animal acquires feed. They're driven by a complex of factors including temperament, previous experience, health status, social interaction and diet selection and availability, among others.

He'll be running three trials at Invermay and on a yet-to-be-decided commercial hill/high country property over multiple years to see:

- what variations in foraging behaviour occur
- whether it's viable to select based on behaviours that would be a good fit for particular farm systems and environments.

The work will build on the previous research into movements of red hinds, but this time in much more detail and with bigger numbers.

Behaviours monitored in the first (validation) trial will include home range, walking distances, patterns of foraging (e.g. time of



Grazing behaviours will be monitored closely.

day) and preference for different slope or aspect. The second trial will search for variations in behaviours across a broader range of individuals and in two different landscapes (semi-intensive [Invermay] and extensive). The third trial will explore the effects on behaviour of moving animals to a new landscape.

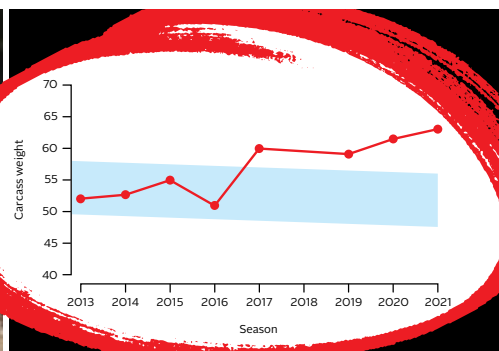
There will be three internships connected with the PhD programmes, looking into new GPS designs or collars to better track deer behaviour, terminal sire breeding systems that will also maximise maternal efficiency within a stud, and detection of major genes associated with seasonality and foraging behaviour.

### The end game

Once the different phenotypes for seasonality and foraging behaviour are better understood, this can be used to investigate whether there's an advantage having a range of growth phenotypes within a herd, where diversity helps make the herd overall more resilient to cope with variable conditions. Or it could be that more uniform phenotypes tailored to a particular farm system are better – that's still to be discovered.

Ultimately this work could also lead to development of breeding values for both seasonality and foraging behaviour, giving breeders and commercial farmers more tools to tweak their farm systems and productivity. ■

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*Rural professionals: continued from p22*

960 R1 weaners. All weaners are bred and finished on the property and venison is supplied through Alliance.

In a strong sign of confidence in the industry, there are plans to deer fence a further 125 hectares this winter and build the breeding hind herd to 1,800, with all weaners finished. The newly fenced area will be a mix of fawning country and cultivable flats.

All of the profit from the enterprise stays within New Zealand.

The family has a passion for developing and training young people into agribusiness and operates as Coleridge Downs Training Farm, running a two-year cadet programme. There are between four and six cadets at any time and they work through a two-year Primary ITO programme. Year one is a Level 3 certificate in Sheep, Beef Cattle and Deer Livestock Feeding and Year two is a Level 4 Sheep and Beef Breeding certificate.

Cadets are well looked after with an emphasis on mentoring and pastoral care during their two years. In fact one recent graduate, Carey Pawson-Edwards, is now employed as a junior stock manager. He, general manager Tony Plunkett and Coleridge Downs block manager Justin (JT) Thompson hosted the rural professionals. ■

*Climate targets: continued from p21*

“honest” way to mitigate emissions of long-lived gases than simply buying carbon credits from overseas.

It was noted that estimates of carbon sequestered on four example deer farms ranged from 7–62 percent of annual emissions, but when the more prescriptive Emissions Trading Scheme criteria were applied, this estimate dropped to 0–42 percent. The submission urged better recognition of the carbon being sequestered on farm.

The deer industry submission also warned against throwing out the baby with the bathwater when it came to choosing land to plant in native trees. It made the very good point that while some land may not be all that suitable for pasture, it nonetheless was important in deer systems for providing shade and shelter and a good fawning environment.

The Commission did acknowledge that New Zealand farmers were among the world’s most efficient food producers, and the deer industry submission concluded that “it would seem that we are requiring our farmers to do more than what is possible and certainly disproportionately more than other producers of food elsewhere. This is neither fair nor equitable”.

- The DINZ/NZDFA submission was compiled by DINZ Environmental Stewardship Manager, Lindsay Fung. The Climate Change Commission’s draft advice is expected to be finalised by 31 May and the first emissions reduction plan published by 31 December 2021. ■

*Meet the staff: continued from p23*

ongoing work to develop the growing venison market in China. “It’s exciting to be involved with developing a new market. We are working with a great team in China; all the companies that are exporting there are involved and engaged.”

Also memorable have been some of the large trade shows DINZ has been involved with in the United States and Europe. “The size of them is like nothing I had seen before.”

Nick says Covid has been challenging and things have changed all along the supply chain. “We’re working hard with the companies to shape a broader customer base for venison – that will mean a stronger future for the product.”

“I really enjoy the variety the job brings, working across different countries and cultures and making sure what we are doing fits best for that market at this particular time.”

He’s also been enjoying the opportunity to work with Graham Brown and Shannon Campbell.

“They are both very talented and do a terrific job for the industry. And as an avid home cook, I’ve learnt a lot from them.

“It is a great industry to work in. I love that my job is to share such a special product with the world.” ■

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# Value of investment in training

If you're investing in your staff's knowledge and experience you're investing in the future of not only your farm business but also the wider deer industry. Two people share their thoughts on the value of training staff through Primary ITO courses.

## Paying it forward

"It has been really good for our shepherd to get off farm and meet like-minded people. We have had great feedback from her, and all of her study is up to date. The resource that is provided is really well written and a great tool to read and be able to refer back to. As we don't expect our younger shepherds to stay with us forever, we see training staff as adding value for the next employer – 'industry good' really. Training like this helps young people grow and fits with the appraisal, reward and recognition type processes with buy in and commitment from both trainee and employers. The value to our business is us knowing we are making someone a better farmer; therefore, the returns are ongoing. Our experience with Primary ITO has been enjoyable and we would offer it again to any young shepherd coming on board. Training is great at opening doors for young people now as they move through the industry."



Richard Hilson.

*Richard Hilson, veterinarian and deer farmer*

## Increasing staff engagement and buy-in

"I train my staff to support their personal development. This increases their sense of achievement, furthers their personal knowledge and increases their drive for progression. I find their job satisfaction increases when they are developing. They understand the 'why' better and this increases their engagement in the big picture, which lifts culture and individual performance. Training your team puts the theory behind the practical and increases their chances for future higher positions and career progression – and increases their chances of success in those roles."

"Staff who understand why we make decisions, and can contribute to decision making, have a stronger drive to do well and want the farm to perform. They feel some involvement and responsibility. This in turn leads to a high-performing, engaged and positive farm culture focused on education and success."

"It is difficult at times when we are so busy. We can easily get

focused on getting the jobs at hand done rather than spending time training the team. It is a lot easier with staff who 'self push', want to be developed and ask questions; it is harder to train someone who doesn't push for it themselves. Overall, more educated staff members bring a higher value to my business. When they are feeling valued and are developing and they are higher performing."

*Sam Bunny – Rangitaiki Station (Pāmu Farms), Central North Island*

- The Government will cover training fees from 1 July 2020 until 31 December 2022. For full details, including eligible programmes:

**[www.primaryito.ac.nz/apprenticeships/government-support/free-apprenticeships-and-training-2/](http://www.primaryito.ac.nz/apprenticeships/government-support/free-apprenticeships-and-training-2/)**

- For all Primary ITO sheep, beef and deer qualifications:

**[www.primaryito.ac.nz/courses-for-you/meat-and-fibre/sheep-beef-and-deer/](http://www.primaryito.ac.nz/courses-for-you/meat-and-fibre/sheep-beef-and-deer/)**

- Contact Primary ITO on 0800 20 80 20 to talk to your local Training Adviser and see how the growth of your people can add value to your business.

- **Employers' comments supplied by Primary ITO ■**



Sam Bunny. Photo courtesy of Gerald Piddock.

## Loss of industry pioneer

Brian Beattie, who was featured in our December 2020 *Deer Industry News* (page 17), passed away on 14 March at the age of 86. Brian was a pioneer in the deer industry, starting to farm deer at South Canterbury's Dry Creek Station in the mid-1970s.

Last year Brian retired from deer farming, selling the last of his hinds and fawns. A service for Brian was held at the Fairlie Community Centre on 19 March.

DINZ and the New Zealand Deer Farmers' Association extend their condolences to Brian's family and friends. ■

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