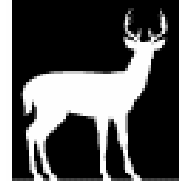
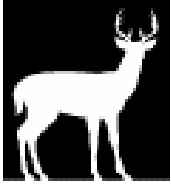


Otago Branch NZDFA

Newsletter Update May 2003



Annual General Meeting

Notice of Meeting Otago Branch AGM

When: Thursday 15th May 2003

Time: 7.00 pm for a 7.30 start.

Where: Centennial Court, Alexandra

What: **Otago's way forward**

- Clive Jermy, DINZ Board Chairman
- Tony Pearse, Producer Manager

Key Speaker

- Sir Peter Elworthy – a deer farming pioneer's market comment and discussion on the Sustainability Council.

Message from the Chairman

Otago Branch AGM

We have the Branch AGM scheduled for next week on Thursday 15 May at 7.30pm. It will be a very good chance for a full discussion on industry market issues with Sir Peter Elworthy, Clive Jermy, Tony Pearse and John Scurr attending. Please talk to your neighbours and others to ensure a good turn out.

Deer Industry Conference

The Deer Industry AGM and Conference is from 27th to 29th May in Timaru. It promises to be an excellent 2-day event with a strong Technical Day content. The latest Deer Industry News (DIN) has details or contact the organizer, Pat Johnston on 03 4771377 or e-mail pat@dcms.co.nz.

Remits

Also in the DIN were the remits to be voted on at the AGM. There will be copies of the remits at the meeting in Alexandra but please have a look at them prior. If you are unable to attend the conference or the Branch AGM there was an important proxy form with the Deer Industry News. Please note that proxies must be received in Wellington by a close off time of 12.00pm Monday 25th May to be valid. They can be free faxed to DINZ on 0800 329 442 or posted

to Tony Pearse, Producer Manager, Deer Industry New Zealand, PO Box 10702, Wellington. Please exercise your rights with the proxy form and your voting directions. A recently received remit from the Nelson Branch is copied in this newsletter.

Organic Deer Farmers

If you are a certified organic deer farmer, or are in the process of certification, Mat Moyes (Venison Marketing Manager) is keen to hear from you. Please contact Mat on (04) 381 6011 or email mat.moyes@deernz.org.

Johne's Research Group

The support of farmers through the JRG has helped considerably with Colin Mackintosh and his research group gaining funds for research on Johnes Disease from FORST. This will go to 3 areas – diagnostic testing, work on the causes and management and testing of vaccines. The JRG has put forward a remit which is supported by the Otago Branch.

Database of Otago Deer Farmers

A number of additional farmers' details have been added to the Deer Industry New Zealand database. The next step is now being taken to assess whether these additional and existing farmers' details are current or not. If there are changes please fill in the form you will have received with Deer industry News or contact Alisha Abraham at DINZ on 04 382 8626. Our mailing list is derived from this database and there will be some incorrect details with this mailout due to the merging. We apologise in advance.

CWD

CWD - Reiterating comments in a previous newsletter. We do not have this in NZ but we do need to continue to show this. MAF is compensating farmers and veterinarians who forward samples from suspect animals to increase the number of animals tested for the disease within NZ. Ring your vet and take samples in deer of any species that show signs of wasting, nervous disease or acute pneumonia solely to confirm that it is not a cause.

Weaner Survey

Ten deer properties distributed throughout Otago now have three weaners merged with their own weaner growths. These will all be carried through to February 2004 with regular weighing and recording of treatment. Thank you to all involved – the farmers, Otago Deer Transport, Big River Transport, PGG and Otago Venison. We will report on results as the survey progresses.

Mandy Bell

Otago Branch Who's Who

Current members of the steering committee are as follows:

Mandy Bell (Chairman)	03 443 4250
Paul Mutch	03 467 5479
John Scally	03 465 7375
Ken Harrex	03 485 9514
Tony Pearse	04 381 6016
Phil Hunt	03 443 1055
Peter Foster (Newsletter Editor)	03 465 7838
John Falconer	03 444 7501
John Scurr	03 443 7555
Mike Scurr (Treasurer)	03 443 7780
Craig North (Secretary)	03 488 4899
Adam Whaanga	03 415 7662

DINZ

DINZ	04 382 8626
John Scurr (Board)	03 443 7555
Stewart Barnett (Board)	03 477 3980
Clive Jermy (Chairman)	03 465 1022
Tony Pearse (Producer Manager)	04 381 6016
Tony Pearse, Invermay	03 489 9221

RAHC

Core Members

Stephen Woodhead, NZ Fed Farmers Meat & Fibre (Chairman)	03 417 4733
Stephen Korteweb, NZ Fed Farmers Dairy	03 413 9556
Doug Brown, Otago Regional Council	03 439 5693
Mandy Bell, NZ Deer Farmers Assn	03 443 4250
Peter Foster, NZ Deer Farmers Assn	03 465 7838

Area Members

Peter McNab, South Otago (Clutha District)	03 415 8390
Phill Hunt, Central Otago (Queenstown Lakes District, Deputy Chairman)	03 443 1055
Michael Lord, East Otago (Dunedin City)	03 486 2730
Phillip Smith Central Otago (Central Otago District)	03 444 9626
Bill Pile, North Otago (Waitaki District)	03 431 3768

This newsletter is kindly sponsored by Superior Minerals.

Contact Bruce Hore 0292 760 303 for more information on their products.



Comment from John Scurr

It is almost a year now since the changes to the DFA constitution were ratified at the last AGM in Wellington, in order to allow the reforms to be implemented and have the DINZ and the DFA operating as it is today.

The focus has been on the performance of DINZ particularly at this time of an undesirably low venison schedule.

The hallmarks of pressure on the value of venison were evident a year ago, yet weaner prices remained stronger than they should have. The ultimate result being a significant reduction in profit for farmers intending to finish the animals and trade them on 6-12 months down the track.

The rhetoric of the combination of reasons of where venison values are today, is now probably well understood as the reality of this year's on farm financial position crystallises.

Over reaction to the current position in terms of structure and in market issues is not beneficial to industry stability. The fundamentals of DINZ are soundly based and are functioning well. We have the best platform that the industry has ever had, to work through the issues and continue the development of the industry and build on the cornerstones laid in the past.

There are a number of industry good programmes in place, as outlined by the DINZ chairman in the latest Deer Industry News. Programmes such as extending seasonal consumption and changing culinary habits must not be interrupted. It is essential to keep long term goals in place and to add new initiatives that clearly adds value to both ends of the spectrum.

The call to remove DINZ appears to be a knee jerk reaction to current prices and seems ill founded, given that price is a commercial issue and not a DINZ responsibility. GIB/DINZ's non-commercial roll was established through industry consultation about three years ago.

Some people are still confused about their representation and consider the DFA has been absorbed into DINZ. This is not the case. The DFA still exists as a separate entity. What was implemented was a simple transition addressing the duplication of the representative organisations. Reducing the DFA to a four person executive committee, extending DINZ to a ten-person board, as an interim measure, and adding the position of Producers Executive. Setting the DFA commodity levy at zero will have saved the industry about \$700,000 during this twelve-month period.

The communication and linking with the branch network have never been stronger due to the activities of the Producer Executive and his reporting to the board providing a direct conduit. The grass root issues are well articulated and clearly understood at board level.

I look forward to attending the local branch AGMs in the near future and also the national AGM in Timaru during the last week of May.

John Scurr

Deer Numbers Announced

Last week Statistics New Zealand released a second round of provisional numbers from the 2002 Census of Agricultural Production. The provisional results indicate

deer numbers as at June 2002 of t 1.7 million, including 0.9 million hinds. While this represents an increase of 35% since the last Census in 1994, it suggests that deer numbers have remained basically static since the 1999 survey.

Deer Industry New Zealand is currently reviewing its forecast models based on this new data. Even though the Census numbers are thought to underestimate actual deer numbers, Deer Industry New Zealand's revised herd and production forecasts are expected to be significantly lower than earlier estimates.

Remit: Otago Branch, in support of Johne's Research Group Remit

Remit 4 – Johne's Disease research support

(1)"That the Johne's Research Group, Deer Industry New Zealand and the NZDFA, through DEEResearch, should develop a comprehensive programme of research to address Johne's disease and seek proposals from researchers to undertake projects aligned with this programme, in addition to those currently funded.

This research programme should be part of a broader industry strategy to address Johne's disease and should be run in collaboration with other industries where appropriate; and

(2) in its next budget-setting round, increase the levy by an amount, and for a time necessary (based on research proposals received and accepted) to provide specific funding for the costs of the research, extension and administration work required relating to developing solutions to mitigate the effects of Johne's disease in deer, which has emerged as a major health and productivity issue."

Notes to Remit 4

This remit arises from the lack of a significant committed funds that can help ensure the continuation of a comprehensive and coordinated programme of research to:

- develop a JD vaccine for deer
- provide a reliable diagnostic test for JD in deer
- advance awareness of JD's epidemiology; and
- put forward programmes for farmers outlining practices that can mitigate the impact of JD.

DEEResearch has identified JD as the research issue of greatest concern to deer farmers. Research programmes on JD in deer are being undertaken by several organisations but the most comprehensive work, notably on vaccines and diagnostic testing, is being carried out by AgResearch. It has sought FoRST funding to continue this work.

However its allocation is not guaranteed and requires from the deer industry a substantial funding commitment. Some of this is being provided through the Johne's Research Group and DEEResearch but a significant and continuing financial commitment is needed to ensure that the research is given priority and the focus required to meet the specific concerns of deer farmers. JD solutions are not expected in the short term and it is envisaged that research programmes, subject to review outcomes, will need to continue over at least the next three years.

Remit: Nelson Branch

“That the NZ Deer Industry finish restructuring and that Deer Industry New Zealand become part of a “Pastoral Board” and that the Deer Farmers Association become a sub section of Federated Farmers”.

Moved: Gordon Hope
Seconded: Warwick Gregory
Carried: Branch AGM 2/05/2003

Supporting Comments

The Deer Industry New Zealand Board should take immediate steps to approach and lead the negotiations with the meat wool and dairy sector organisations to form a “Pastoral Board”.

Because the deer industry has gone a long way down the restructuring path, it should take the leadership role.

Leadership is not about individual gratification, it is, in this case about setting up a body to represent farmers.

In the future, there will be fewer farmers than now and that a collective approach and one strong rural voice and lobby group will be imperative if we are to have any influence at all.

The latest approximate figures that are-	
4.787M beef cattle and 38M sheep	15750 farmers
4.494M dairy cattle	13650 farmers
1.8M deer	4500 farmers
Horticulture and life style farmers	46000 farmers
Totals	80400

Is it reasonable to ask the 4500 deer farmers to support a Deer Industry New Zealand structure? One only has to compare the deer farmer numbers with the sheep and cattle farmer numbers to see that Deer Industry New Zealand is unsustainable and that a “Pastoral Board” has to come sooner than later.

The DFA should initiate immediately talks with Federated Farmers, with the view to come under the Federated Farmers umbrella and become a sub section. Already there are approximately 700 deer farmers or 17.5% who belong to Federated Farmers.

The benefits they receive are access to:

- 2 main offices-Wellington and Hamilton
- 10 Regional offices
- Legal representation
- 25 policy analysts some of whom are part time
- 9 field officers
- An 0800 number where one can seek information

The present deer industry DOES NOT and CAN NOT support this kind of service.

Because of urban sprawl, lifestyle blocks and other land use we have to unite and now is the time.

DEERResearch Report

The Venison Processors / Exporters Research Group (VP/ERG) was set up this year to better identify research needs for that sector and to feed this into DEERResearch deliberations.

In difficult years such as we are experiencing it is important that we do not lose sight of the objectives of research. The funding formula for DEERResearch is dependent on kill numbers, there will never be enough money for research.

Having said that, DEERResearch is functioning smoothly and efficiently. Funding dependent, it is a vehicle that can deliver the results of the research required by the deer industry while allowing everybody including producers, processors and researchers, to have input into what is required.

DEERResearch has a Board of directors who are both knowledgeable and dedicated to the deer industries needs. Noel Beatson will add value to the mix when he joins the board in July.

The total portfolio that DEERResearch is funding covers the following areas:

Deer Health and Welfare

- Leptospirosis, bovine tuberculosis, Johnes Disease
- Trace elements deficiencies

New Technology for Wealth Creation

- Pastoral genomics

Sustainable Production of the Environment

- Methane mitigation
- Deer and the environment

Productivity Gains

- Deer work force, demands and supply, reproduction in young red hinds, pasture quality, bruising measurement, processing advances- (colour etc)

Market Access and Development

- TB resistances, TB test development,
- Clostridia in venison packaging

Accelerated Learning Technology Transfer

- Production benchmarking
- Web site
- Stag selection

Support for Post – Grad Operating Costs

- Methane production red deer
- Forage herbs for natural mineral

There was criticism from some producers that there was nothing being done by way of research towards solving the “tick problems”. There was an amount of work done by Doctor Peter Wilson in the mid to late 1980’s (1986-87), those publications are available and farmers have a huge amount of knowledge and practises in handling this problem. Is a review needed?

Summary

With this years decisions DEERResearch has a ‘balanced portfolio’ – across goals and on – and off – farm, and has achieved considerable leverage by prudent, small investments into two consortia (Pastoral greenhouse Gases and Pastoral Genomics), plus some postgrad education. Producers and processors alike should bring pressure on DINZ Board to ensure adequate funding is maintained and increased if possible.

I have gained a large amount of pleasure and knowledge from my time as Research coordinator and latterly DEERResearch Director for the NZDFA. I wish DEERResearch well in the future.

John Cusdin

Scanning of deer

(material summarized from several sources)

The number of deer being scanned on deer properties over the past years has increased dramatically.

Reasons for scanning can be varied. The majority of farmers scan to enable them to cull dry or very late hinds. Other reasons can include:

- Identification of problem stags
- Investigating poor calving performance
- Identification of late calvers
- Confirmation of pregnant animals for sale
- Confirm AI/ET results
- Sire verification
- Specific mobs or hinds with poor weaning results

Methods of scanning will be either by rectal probe or by the use of abdominal ultrasonography (flank scan).

Rectal probe – can scan from 30 days to 130 - 150 days. Scanning earlier in pregnancy will provide more information. Foetus's can be aged to within 5 days or hinds grouped as early, mid or late calving.

Abdominal scan – scan from 90 days through to calving. Useful where the calving span is spread out over a longer time frame and if scanning hinds over 130 days of pregnancy.

Costs will vary between operators and properties. Some operators will charge a per hour fee so that a well organized farmer with good facilities will not subsidise the less organized. The average per head fee is around \$1.60.

Preparation depends on the operator re time to empty or not. Talk to your scanner about this. Ensure that the date the stag was pulled out is recorded for each mob and is available.

Summary; For those farmers where their weaning rate is not where they would like, this is the first essential step to improve things. Are the conception rates for red deer around 97% for MA hinds and 85% for first calvers? If scanning gives a result lower than this then there will be some management changes that could be made to increase the conception rate and directly reflect on the final weaning %. If results from scanning are around the national average then you can spend more time looking at possible causes for loss at calving time. Average losses from scanning to calving are in the vicinity of only 2%.

RAHC news

Consultation time is due again. All farmers should have received notice of the meetings in their area.

They are as follows:

12 May	1.30 pm Outram Hotel
12 May	7.30 pm Maheno Tavern
13 May	10.00 amRanfurly Hotel
13 May	7.30 pm Golden Gate, Cromwell
14 May	10.00 amTapanui Community Centre
14 May	7.30 pm Telford Rural Polytechnic

Infected herds in Otago as at 30 April stand at 22. This time last year they were 23. Most of these fall in Central Otago(11 herds) with a recent problem in the lower Cardrona and in East Otago(8 herds). The comment from Agriqual is that the deer are remaining static and that all of the deer herds are outside current vector control

operations. This will change in the coming year. There is also an increase in Suspect Tb cases due to an increase in Johnes lesions seen at slaughter. These cases have to be held in detain until cleared by culture – a frustration for farmers due to the time involved.

A proposal has been put to RAHC by the Deer Branch for increased Technical support for producers with Tb Infected herds. The primary aim is to increase the rate of decline of TB in deer herds to the benefit of all parties by taking a co-ordinated and proactive approach. We are looking to help individual farmers manage issues on farm to ensure that every time there is disease that maximum technical input is given to help eradicate Tb as effectively as possible.

With most infected farms coming under AHB vector control next year, they will be eligible for financial support for the second test within a year. It has been proposed that the farmer will have financial support and access directly to the experts who could include:

- DDCM, Veterinary Practitioner / Testing agency representative, Specialist epidemiologist, Diagnostic Laboratory and Vector Control Staff.

LIPS meetings will be happening in the next couple of months. Any member of a LIPS group can contact the new facilitator Colin Kelly on 03 441 8308.

Overdue herds

Note was made at the recent Otago RAHC meeting about the high percentage of deer herds overdue for Tb testing. 90% of the total cattle and deer herds overdue were deer – a disproportionate number. If you are one of these, please make contact with your local Tb tester.

Ferret Control

Southern Pest Management is investigating working with a Doc dog handler to locate ferrets. This could be major breakthrough in control of ferrets on movement control herds all year round. We will keep you posted.

Mandy Bell

Sunny aspect hill country legumes at Mt Grand Station, Lake Hawea

D.R. Power, Wanaka (03) 443 9281

Objectives at Mt Grand were to identify and characterize the performance boundaries of subterranean clover and other annual clover communities in sunny aspect non arable hill country.

History of sub clover at Mt Grand

No oversowing of sub for close to 50 years, present populations persisted for that period. Seed came from Australia 'Mt Barker' predominant cultivar although some small pockets of 'Tallarook'. Over the last decade white clover has been regularly oversown with sulphur superphosphate. During this period it would have had ample opportunity to occupy the drier sites.

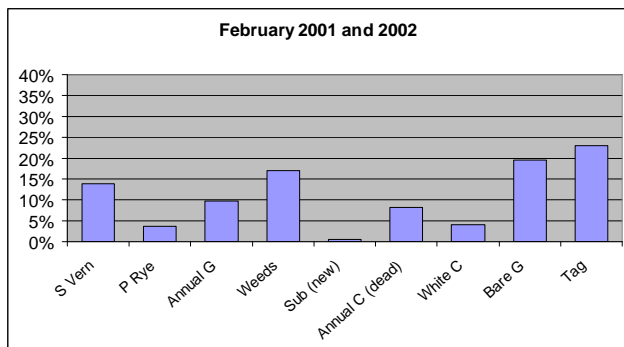
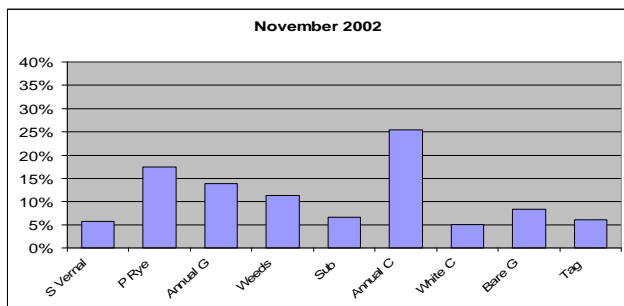
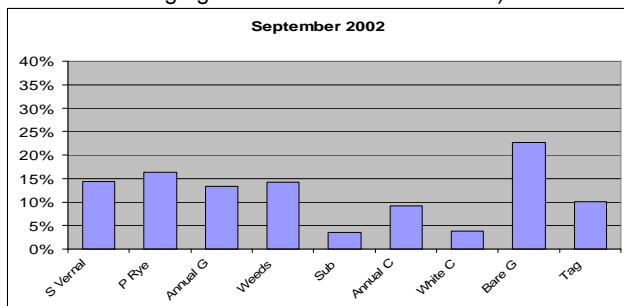
Results and Discussion

- Growth of legumes and grasses in hill country pastures is strongly influenced by topography, aspect and slope, soil type, fertility and climate. Decreases in temperature depending on aspect and season were 0.3 to 0.6°C per 100 meters of altitude.
- Growth of clover species is limited below 10°C but annuals such as sub clover are considered to be cool season active with a lower temperature requirement.

- Most important role of sub clover at Mt Grand is in providing a high quality legume at lambing and for the first 10 weeks of lactation. In several years of observation at Mt Grand it was always the most preferentially grazed clover. Also because of its physiology the plant is geared to be producing at optimum in early spring when other hill country clovers are just getting started.
- Proven ability of sub clover to persist but populations due to no over sowing or specific management practices to enhance seed production is not at optimum. The plants deep tap root allows plant to utilise available water in spring beyond that of other clovers present.
- New sub clover cultivars 'Denmark and 'Campeda' established at all sites 920m asl appears to be the upper limit for establishment and survival.
- White clover has been extensively oversown and would have occupied these sites if it were able.

Mt Grand Cover Score

(Average 4 sunny face sites ranging from 450m asl to 920m asl)



- From the cover score it is important to note that when you analyse the species present the majority of plants on offer are adventives i.e. they have made their own way there to occupy available niches. Also the majority

of these have similar origins to sub clover (Mediterranean).

- White clover populations are stable and are ready to maximise any opportunity of summer autumn rains.
- Other annual clovers such as striated (*Trifolium striatum*), cluster (*Trifolium glomeratum*), suckling (*Trifolium dubium*) and haresfoot (*Trifolium arvense*) play a major role in legume production, problem is there growth is later when there is an abundance of feed options (November cover score). However all of these annuals fix nitrogen in proportion to their dry matter production. Once they die in summer this nitrogen becomes freely available to improve the quality of any neighbouring grasses that take it up.

The hypothesis of this research project is that sub clover introduction could occupy some of the area that these other annual clovers occupy. By occupying more area in sunny aspect non arable hill country a strategically higher percentage of available legumes will be on hand for lambing/calving/fawning and lactation.

Web site addresses

- www.DEERResearch.org.nz
- www.deerfarmer.co.nz
- www.deernz.org
- www.agresearch.co.nz

Events

Otago Branch AGM – 15th May – 7.30pm

Centennial Court, Alexandra. Sir Peter Elworthy will be our guest speaker and be talking about the industry today with the benefit of hindsight and also enlighten us on the Sustainability Council.

Deer Industry Conference 27th – 29th May

Caroline Bay Hall – Timaru. The Conference Registration form can be downloaded from the Deer Industry New Zealand website: <http://www.deernz.org.nz/?id=37>

NZ Society of Animal Production 27th June

Deer Production day with speakers discussing nutrition and the most recent developments in deer production. Venue is Queenstown. For the calibre of speakers, this day will be exceptionally good value. Be quick to register.

Registration forms can be obtained from either: Conference Secretariat, Dunedin Conference Management Service Ltd, Phone 03-477 1377 Email: pat@dcms.co.nz or website: www.nzsap.org.nz.

See next page for programme.

Otago Branch NZDFA, August

Field-day looking at how to maximise and sustain pasture production on deer properties. This will involve experts speaking on soils, fertilisers, pastures and growth rates.

NZSAP - Contract Session - Deer Production

Copthorne Hotel, Queenstown

Friday 27 June 2003

Itinerary (Revised 7/4/03)

(G.W. Asher, A.J. Pearse)

Morning: Theme – Venison and Velvet Production

(Chairperson: Geoff Asher)

08.30 – 09.10 am	Keynote Address	<i>MJ Loza (DINZ)</i>
	Reflections and Visions: the last 10 years and the next 10 years	
09.10 – 09.40 am	Optimising weaner growth in summer and autumn	<i>David Stevens and Ian Corson</i>
09.40 – 10.10 am	Hybridisation and venison production systems	<i>Alistair Nicol, Glen Judson and Andrew Taylor</i>
10.10 – 10.30 am	Morning tea	
10.30 – 11.00 am	Wintering systems for weaners in Otago and Southland	<i>David Lawrence</i>
11.00 – 11.20 am	Genetic improvement of red deer	<i>Jason Archer</i>
11.20 – 11.40 am	Maintaining product quality from the farm gate to the processing facility	<i>Jo Pollard et al.</i>
11.40 – 12.00 pm	Reproductive productivity of yearling hinds	<i>Geoff Asher</i>
12.00 – 12.30 pm	Optimum calving environments	<i>Jo Pollard</i>
12.30 – 1.30 pm	Lunch	

Afternoon: Theme – Productivity and Health

(Chairperson: Tony Pearse)

1.30 – 2.10 pm	Keynote Address	<i>David Wells and Debbie Berg</i>
	Exploring the potential applications of Assisted Reproductive Technologies in deer farming	
2.10 – 2.30 pm	Approaches in developing a successful trans-cervical AI programme for farmed deer	<i>Lynne Rhodes, Tony Pearse and Geoff Asher</i>
2.30 – 3.00 pm	Impact of diseases on the NZ deer industry	<i>Colin Mackintosh and Peter Wilson</i>
3.00 – 3.30 pm	Withholding anthelmintic treatment: effects on weaner growth and parasitism	<i>Simone Hoskin</i>
3.30 – 3.50 pm	Afternoon Tea	
3.50 – 4.20 pm	Designing pastures for deer systems	<i>Simon Moloney</i>
4.20 – 5.00 pm	Workshop discussion	<i>Tony Pearse</i>
	The dilemma of intensification of deer farming - Panel discussion	
5.00 – 7.00 pm	Field trip - Visit Alistair Porter's Remarkables Park Stud and in-wintering system	<i>hosted by Prof. Peter Wilson</i>



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