

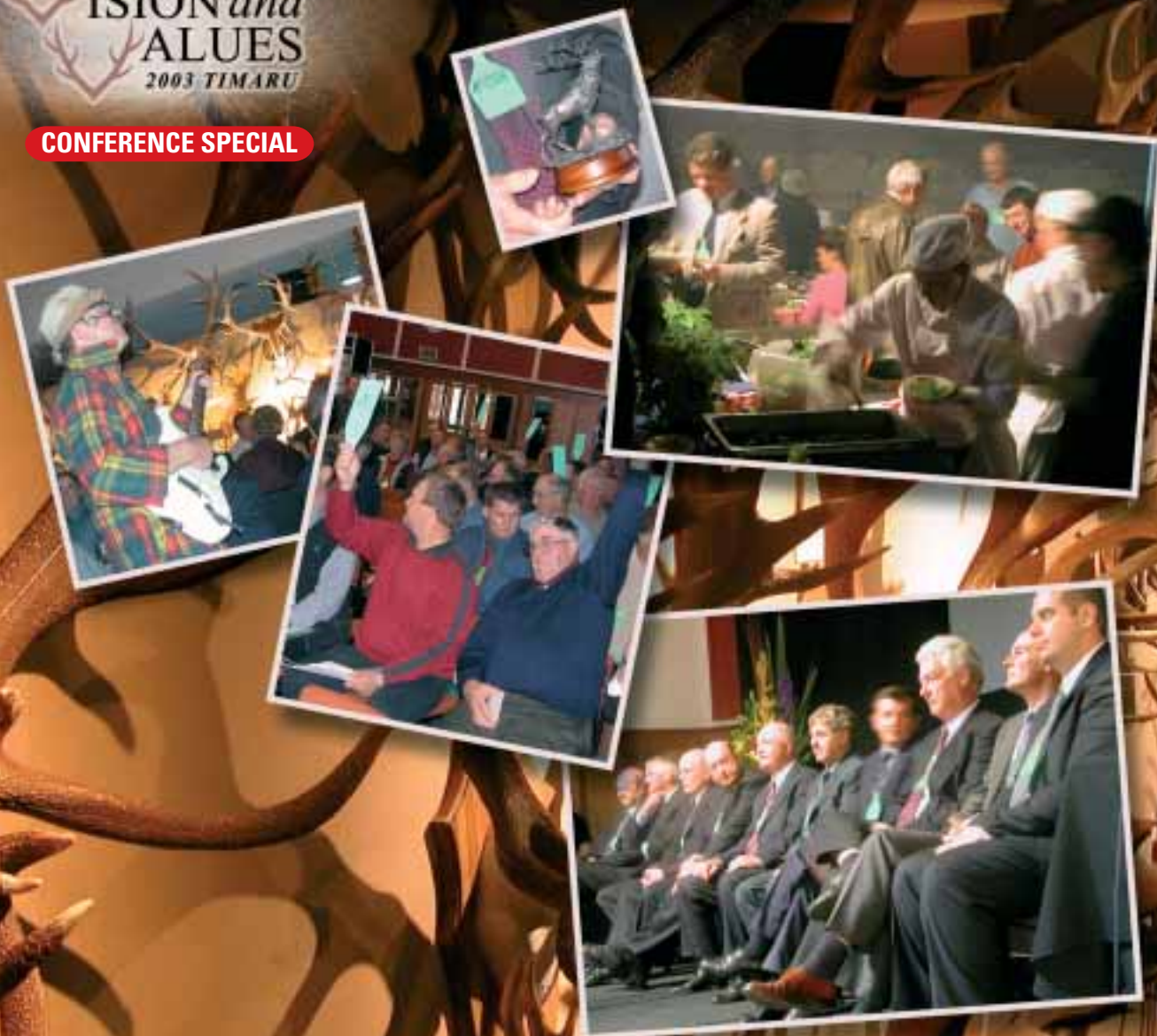
DEER INDUSTRY NEWS

Incorporating **STAGLINE** and **Market Report**

Issue 5 • June 2003 • Official magazine of Deer Industry New Zealand and the NZDFA

**VISION and
ALUES**
2003 TIMARU

CONFERENCE SPECIAL



Also in this issue:

- Co-products feature
- Science-based nutrition guide for red meat
- Bill Taylor joins Executive Committee
- Reducing impact of deer on waterways
- QA in the deer industry
- Use of SCI Scores in advertising



**DEER INDUSTRY
NEW ZEALAND**

TOWER FARMS HIND SALE

Wednesday, 2nd JULY 2003 • 2:30PM

INTRODUCING NEW SIRES



KING

Son of Colin • Pure Festle
13.9kgs H/A (refer centrefold)

SPECIAL EMBRYO ENTRIES:

- King x Alfie - 62
- King x Adonis Baron
- Chancellor Peel x Heathrow
- Brusnik x Adonis Mrs Antlers
- 1070 x Brusnik-Dick
- Motdonis x Brian Baron
- Austin x The Sultan

FEATURING: Embryos and daughters of, or hinds mated to the following sires:

- BUCCANEER
8.8kgs SA2
- REMBRANT
8.07kgs SA2
- PACQUIN
8.2kgs SA2
- MR FLUGIN
4.1kgs SA2 @ 2yrs
- MOTDONIS - Mega Spiker
(Motsumi x Adonis)
- CHANCELLOR PEEL 536 S.C.I.
(Peel Forest)
- ADONIS 523 S.C.I.
(Deer Genetics)
- BRUSNIK 501 S.C.I.
(H&C Waghorn)
- AUSTIN - Warnham
8.3kgs SA2 @3yrs
(M&A Dempsey)



1070

Son of Maximilian
8.55kgs O.G. velvet @2 yrs • 46" wide

Producer Manager's role develops new dimensions

Last month's conference expressed the culmination of nine months of work and activity from all sectors in making the Deer Industry New Zealand concept a conclusive working reality. As part of that process, it was gratifying indeed to experience the positive reaction the NZDFA AGM and the Deer Industry New Zealand FGM created, and experience both speakers and the audience alike contributing to significant and pivotal events in the industry's development.



Chairs and producers themselves. Within the Deer Industry New Zealand executive staff there is great pride in that positive response from throughout the industry as all Branches have responded to the increased workload asked of them, and for their unqualified support of the directions and activities.

The ongoing themes of better communication and a better understanding of all the forces involved in establishing a mature future for the industry are common in this support. We have seen a clear advance in debate and development of remits prior to conference that have allowed better responses, development of better information and a greater

There seemed little doubt that the conference themes and outcomes were successful and in turn, that can be taken as a strong vote of confidence in the new structures.

The resulting powerful communication included one of the conference highlights, the high impact and no nonsense presentations from the companies that clearly defined the integrated and interdependent relationships between industry partners. These presentations also showed a farsighted view of the venison market and New Zealand's position within that.

The overall discussions gave renewed strength to the pivotal "Three partners: One vision" strategy that has set future goals as programmes in Europe develop to account for the growth in production and a long term stable return. The conference, if it achieved nothing else, certainly reinforced how critical that plan is, and how successfully the partners are working together within the Deer Industry New Zealand structure for the future.

This has been a review time for the effectiveness of the Producer Manager position, with the best outcome being endorsement of this role and direction from the Branch

examination of issues.

The process has also identified that Branch meeting structures and support and effectiveness of AGMs and producer service are due for an upgrade. The challenge to attract further membership, and service that with the quality and value of information provided to the nearly 300 conference goers this year is a priority. It is clear that the commitment of leaders and committees within the branches is as great as ever and these dedicated people have embraced the new concepts with an extremely positive attitude at a time when the industry most needs it.

The conference identified additional issues that will emerge as themes over this year for action at Branch level. Significantly, many of these were related to production and function on farm. Issues that ask, "Where are the young people in the deer industry?" "How do we encourage branch membership", "How do we overcome the current reproduction limitations in deer farm profitability" were as common as the market-related focus and the debates on sustainability and GE issues.

I believe that the Producer Manager position, (the most challenging job in agriculture?) has developed some new dimensions as a result of conference and the nine-month settling in period. These were further defined by the attitudes and support expressed in Timaru. We can look forward to the renewed energy of an industry with some significant mountains to climb, but with more strength, more cohesion and teamwork and a combined shared vision and working partnerships in all sectors. The individual producers' role and contribution from Deer Industry New Zealand cannot be understated. It is going to be another significant and progressive year.

Tony Pearse, Producer Manager, Deer Industry New Zealand

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Deer Industry Conference: SCNODFA do us proud

On numbers alone, this year's Deer Industry Conference was set up to be a good one. There were 211 listed delegates plus another 30 or so partners – the biggest gathering by far since the landmark Queenstown conference in 2000. And it wasn't just locals. There was a healthy scattering of new faces, and many had made the trek from the furthest reaches of both islands.

But this conference delivered far more than mere numbers. Peter Aitken, Andrew Fraser and their many supporters in the South Canterbury/North Otago DFA Branch put together an excellent mix of information sharing, provocative issues, sponsor participation and a breakneck social programme that left delegates weary but well pleased with their three-day sojourn in South Canterbury. After last year's constitution-focused event in Wellington, this was definitely a return to the grass roots.

Special mention should also be made of the excellent planning and management of Producer Manager Tony Pearse – many delegates swear he was present in several locations at once – and the thoroughly professional Pat Johnston and her team at Dunedin Conference Management Services.

The only bum note of the whole three days was a lack of time management of the morning "Vision and Values" session on the final morning by the professional facilitator, which left no time for the much-anticipated "burning issues" forum (more on this later).

But in the context of the entire conference this was a minor niggle. The 2003 Deer Industry Conference set new standards and pointed the way for future gatherings. (Next year's conference is tentatively scheduled for Taupo.)

In this report we'll cover the main activities including:

- NZDFA AGM
- Welcome function and food festival
- Two of the DEEResearch technical sessions (more to follow in later issues)
- Awards night
- Vision and Values forum

The proceedings of the Deer Industry New Zealand Formal General Meeting are presented as a separate publication with this mailing of *Deer Industry News* and summarised on page 19, and we pick up on some of the news highlights in this report. 📄

NZDFA Annual General Meeting

The 2003 AGM featured the usual mix of serious issues and trivia, spiced with some challenging but unsupported rhetoric from Waikato Branch. Overall, the meeting demonstrated a good level of unity within the NZDFA, with members adapting easily to the structural changes implemented last year.

The remits were given a good going over at the morning's Branch Chairmen's meeting. There were useful contributions from a number of new Branch Chairmen, who included Mike McCormick (Hawke's Bay), Eddie Brock (Southland) and Craig Bryant (Taihape) and a return to Branch leadership by Eric Clark (Waikato).

Unfortunately the problem of "remit inflation" persisted this year. The eight remits posted in time for the publication of the Annual Report became 12 remits. This is partly a result of timing, with many Branches not having their AGMs until after the cut-off date. As a result, some remits were rather under-done by the time they reached the conference floor, with little or no chance for the ideas to have been discussed at Branch level prior to the AGM.

There was a degree of intransigence on the part of one or two Branches, which doggedly persisted with remits that were clearly unsupported and unpopular.

Despite this, the business of the Association was rattled through in around four hours – much crisper timing than the all-day sessions of earlier years. Here are the highlights:

Dedication

In his opening address, Sir Peter Elworthy dedicated the 2003 conference to the family of Andrew Orbell, whose life "defined

the conference theme of Vision and Values".

Chairman's report

Errol Croad's report was presented and accepted. Peter Elworthy congratulated Errol and the Executive Committee for the smooth transition to the new NZDFA structure.

Financial statements

These, and the 2004 budget, were accepted with no debate. Andrew Mitchell noted some minor amendments to the budget which will have the net effect of increasing the operating surplus to around \$9000.

The 2004 budget was made on the assumption that delegates would accept a 50% increase in the voluntary subscription to \$45 + GST. This increase was indeed accepted on a voice vote. The extra \$15 per member will be channelled to the national organisation (now to receive \$30 + GST per member) with the Branch capitation remaining at \$15 + GST.



Executive Committee Chairman Errol Croad speaking to delegates.

A motion to again set the NZDFA venison and velvet commodity levies at zero for the 2003/4 year was carried.

Remuneration for the Executive Committee Chairman and Committee Members was set unchanged at \$7,500 and \$5,000 respectively.

Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu were elected as auditors for 2003/04. Deer Industry New Zealand Finance Manager Susan Gee (Susan Watson until her marriage in April) was pleased to announce an audit fee of just \$1500 has been negotiated with Deloitte – less than a third of the fee charged for the previous year.

Branch remits

Remit 1 – Membership categories (Rotorua)

“Amend Rule 5.1 to include deer farm managers/workers as follows:

Full Members: persons who own deer and those bona fide deer farm managers/workers who have paid to the Association during the Association’s financial year, a full membership subscription.”

This remit was sensibly **withdrawn** by Rotorua in favour of the more effectively worded Tongariro Remit No. 6 (below), which achieved the same outcome.

Remit 2 – Subscription rule (Rotorua)

“Amend Rule 7.2 to include the additional sentence:

One reminder notice shall be sent to all members failing to pay the appropriate annual subscription after two months, and their membership shall be terminated as allowed in Rule 9.2 if the subscription remains unpaid after a further month.”

This remit was designed to turn up the heat on those who ‘forget’ to pay their voluntary subscription. It was **withdrawn** by Rotorua after an assurance that less emphasis would be put on the word ‘voluntary’ in future subscription invoice mailouts.

Remit 3 – Environmental awards (Rotorua)

“That this AGM endorses the importance of the annual NZDFA Environmental awards to the industry and requests the commitment of Deer Industry New Zealand to the long-term funding (through an annual grant from levy income) of an agreed budget for the organisation and annual running of these industry good awards.”

JOHN PATERSON/MANDY BELL



Card voting was the order of the day with proxies playing a big part.



The Executive Committee look on as Peter Aitken (South Canterbury/North Otago) welcomes delegates.

There was mixed support for this remit at the earlier Branch Chairmen’s meeting. Some wanted more commercial sponsorship of the awards, but its mover, John Paterson argued strongly against this on the grounds that by giving away naming rights, the NZDFA would lose its ownership of a prestigious award. Some Branches had suggested changing to a biennial award and there was concern about the plethora of other environmental awards. One Branch was opposed to the award on the grounds that environment issues were ‘flavour of the month’.

At the AGM proper Lloyd Thayer (Southland) was concerned that Deer Industry New Zealand funding support for the awards could trigger a flood of applications for support from worthy projects. Bill Taylor (Southland) noted that funding for the award would be part of Deer Industry New Zealand’s next round of funding consultation. Thomas Beuker (Waikato) noted that deer farmers shouldn’t need the incentive of awards to practise good environmental management.

The motion was **LOST** on a card vote by 195 votes to 103.

Remit 4 – Johne’s Disease research support (South Canterbury/North Otago)

“That the NZDFA make a determined case to Deer Industry New Zealand that, as a collaborative exercise, it should:

- (1) through DEERresearch encourage research proposals on Johne’s disease (JD) in addition to those currently funded;
- 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.”

This was one of the better thought out and constructive remits and was strongly supported. However, the prospect of an unspecified levy increase spooked some delegates, and there was a concern that the deer industry might be over-committing to research that other sectors should also fund.

Johne’s Research Group stalwart Peter Aitken pointed out that some challenges from JD – such as vaccine development – were unique to deer, meaning the industry needed to develop its own solutions.

A re-worded remit which softened the funding aspects was presented as an amendment:

“That the NZDFA makes a determined case to Deer Industry New Zealand that as a collaborative exercise it should:

- (1) through DEERresearch, develop costed research proposals on

Rabobank rides out highs and lows

Donald Kennedy of Rabobank noted that his bank is the only specialist rural bank in New Zealand, with a AAA credit rating that equips it to ride out the highs and lows of agriculture. Rabobank was an industry partner for the Deer Industry Conference.

Johne's Disease in addition to those now funded, through national and international investigation and collaboration;

- (2) explore every potential option for onshore and offshore sources of funding for research; and
- (3) at the next budget-setting round of Deer Industry New Zealand, subject to the success or failure to attract sufficient funding for promoting research, that required funding be provided for in the budget for industry consultation."

CLIVE JERMY/JOHN SCURR

The amended motion was **CARRIED**.

Remit 5 – Cervena® promotion within New Zealand (Southland)

"That the New Zealand Deer Farmers' Association recommends to Deer Industry New Zealand that it develops and implements a positive strategy in promoting and encouraging the consumption of venison/Cervena® within New Zealand, especially the tourist areas."

At the earlier Branch Chairmen's meeting it was noted that venison can struggle to compete within New Zealand against competition from beef and lamb. However, the motion was strongly supported and CARRIED at the AGM with no discussion.

In a Q and A session the following day, Deer Industry New Zealand Board member Chris Newton noted that Richmond was promoting venison within New Zealand as part of a re-designed Gourmet Direct. Andrew Duncan of Duncan & Co. and Stewart Barnett of PPCS also acknowledged efforts to promote sales within New Zealand.

Remit 6 – Membership status (Tongariro)

"That the NZDFA Constitution be changed as indicated: New Member Status – Elected Member: Is a person who has paid the Association during the Association's financial year a full membership subscription and is voted by simple majority to full membership status by the Branch who has elected that person. An Elected Member shall have full member entitlements upon approval of an application in writing to the Executive Committee."

CHRIS PARKINSON/JOHN PATERSON

Chris Parkinson, Branch Chairman of Tongariro, sponsored this remit. He had found himself to be no longer technically qualified as a DFA member while he was "between farms". While his fellow committee members gladly gifted him a deer each (grazing provided) to retain Chris's membership, this case highlighted the fact that being a deer farmer doesn't necessarily admit you to membership of the DFA.

The main concern of Tongariro Branch was not Chris Parkinson's case, but the situation for the growing number of full time and highly skilled deer managers (for example on Landcorp's central North Island farms). It was argued that these professional deer people were fully committed to the industry and had plenty to offer, but were shut out from full membership of the DFA. By contrast, some deer owners – and DFA members – had little to do with day-to-day deer farming.

The remit required a two-stage process for membership of non-deer owners to the DFA: election at Branch level, followed by endorsement at Executive Committee level.

In discussion on the conference floor, Parkinson argued that the remit would safeguard against any corporate agenda to take over control of the DFA. John Paterson (Rotorua) argued that this remit would bring "young,

intelligent and vigorous young people" into the association – not just from Landcorp, but also from the many trusts and large farms that employ skilled deer managers.

The alternative, Paterson argued, could be a stagnating old-boys' club of deer owners.

Some delegates argued vigorously against the admittance of people to the association who did not have their own capital invested in the industry. Others wondered about the rights of industry associates such as scientists and vets.

The debate went down to the wire and the remit was **CARRIED** on a card vote, 197 to 132.

Remit 7 – Winding up of DINZ (Waikato)

"That this meeting instruct the New Zealand Deer Farmers' Association (NZDFA) to wind up the Deer Industry New Zealand (DINZ) and the New Zealand Game Industry Board (GIB) Boards starting immediately following this 2003 NZDFA Annual General Meeting.

"The New Zealand Deer Farmers' Association be reconstructed to handle the winding up process and to handle all matters political and otherwise on behalf of levy-paying producers.

"The New Zealand Deer Farmers' Association set levies to cover annual costs.

"Winding up costs and all costs relating to the reconstruction of the NZDFA to come from reserves."

ERIC CLARK/GEORGE THOMAS

Despite a hostile reaction⁸ from all other Branches at the earlier Branch Chairmen's meeting, and intensive lobbying by individuals in the leadup to the AGM, the Waikato Branch delegates refused to withdraw this remit.

The nub of Waikato's argument was that the low schedule was the fault of the Deer Industry New Zealand Board, and that they should be punished for poor performance or at least "threatened with the sack".

In an ideal world, Clark argued, the vote would be lost by a margin of 1 percent, thus sending a clear

message to Deer Industry New Zealand that they could do better. But it is not an ideal world. The discussion that followed revealed that most farmers, while unhappy with returns, don't blame the Board and are generally happy with the way they're performing.

Apparently satisfied that they'd made their point, Waikato Branch attempted to withdraw the remit. Chairman Errol Croad would have none of it, and insisted on a vote, as the motion had been put and seconded and the right of reply had been exercised.

The remit was **LOST** on a voice vote.

Remit 8 – Market information (Waikato)

"That the DINZ Board urgently releases the following information to producer levy payers:

1. The current CIF price range of the various cuts of venison being exported to Germany.
2. The current German wholesale prices to restaurants and retailers.
3. The current retail/restaurant prices for these cuts in Germany.
4. The current level of stock being held by exporters in Germany.
5. The strategies that have been agreed to by exporters (through DINZ) that will raise the current schedule levels in the near future."

ERIC CLARK/GEORGE THOMAS



Former NZDFA President, John Scurr raises a question from the floor.

Deer Industry New Zealand Chief Executive MJ Loza pointed out that the information in points 1 and 4 of the remit was commercially sensitive and unavailable for publication, while points 2 and 3 were answered in *Market Report*. Discussion was kept mercifully short and the remit was **LOST** on a voice vote.

Remit 9 – Pastoral Board (Nelson)

“That the New Zealand Deer Industry finish restructuring and that Deer Industry New Zealand become part of a ‘Pastoral Board’ and that the NZDFA become a subsection of Federated Farmers.”

SIMON VINCENT/RICHARD VALENTINE

Like the previous two remits, this one was never going to fly. And like remits 7 and 8, it had the opposite effect to that intended – it rallied support for the new structures and highlighted arguments against the NZDFA merging with larger pastoral organisations.

Nelson Branch Chair Simon Vincent was conciliatory, however, and cast the remit as a means of keeping other options open. Both Rotorua and Canterbury Branches reported useful working relationships with Federated Farmers on issues such as the RMA, but there was a feeling that the Feds have drifted away from the grass roots focus of the DFA, while the DFA has a more positive working relationship with environmental organisations.

Clive Jermy pointed out that the deer industry is all ‘reformed out’, and now runs a ‘tight, lean ship’. He noted that individual dairy farmers pay, on average, about \$2000 each to support Dairy Insight, while the much smaller deer industry fronts only \$790-\$860 per head for industry good activities.

The motion was **LOST** on a voice vote.

Remit 10 – Access to minutes (Fallow Society)

“That the NZDFA release the Executive Committee meeting minutes and conference calls to all members, branches and affiliated societies on request.”

RICHARD VALENTINE/ERIC CLARK

This was something of a time-waster that could have been settled outside an AGM with a five-minute phone call. Executive Committee member Andrew Mitchell confirmed that such records are already available, the only requirement being that the request for the information be made in writing. For some reason this remit went to a card vote, and was **CARRIED** 182/75.

Remit 11 – GE moratorium (Otago)

“That the NZDFA recommends that the moratorium on GMOs be continued for another three years and that any GMO research be contained in the lab and not enter the food chain.”

MANDY BELL/ PAUL MUTCH

Mandy Bell noted that there had been inadequate time to consult with other Branches about this important issue, due to the timing of the Otago Branch AGM. She was at pains to point out that Otago was not pro- or anti-GM, but was simply saying, ‘not yet’.

Andrew Duncan called the remit a no-brainer: “Our customers would be unanimous in support,” he noted.

Mark Acland said that supporting use of GMOs in deer farming did not necessarily mean venison products had to be genetically modified. “ERMA needs to be told we don’t want GM deer – but that shouldn’t close the options on use of the technology for solutions to things like Tb or Johne’s Disease.”

An amendment to the original motion was proposed and accepted as follows:

“That the NZDFA facilitates consultation and education before 31 July 2003 on whether the moratorium on GMO release be continued for three years, and whether research should be contained within the laboratory and not allowed to enter the food chain.”

BILL TAYLOR/RICHARD VALENTINE

Jim Scorgie noted that the proposal was not intended to stop all research, but to exercise caution. Mandy Bell said that as a vet she also supports R&D. “Market perceptions are a problem for this technology now – we need time for more education while maintaining market access.”

The amended motion was put and **CARRIED**.

Remit 12 – Land access (Waipa)

“That the NZDFA and Deer Industry New Zealand be proactive in watching developments and submitting our views and needs as landowners to the Land Access Reference Group.

“Actions must include going as far as supplying directly submission forms and information to all deer farmers for their signature and return to the appropriate Land Access Reference Group or other bodies that may be developing new regulations relating to land access by the public.”

CAMPBELL CLARKE/LEITH CHICK

This remit was inspired by concerns about public safety on deer farms, especially during the roar. There’s a worry that over-aggressive promotion of land access by outdoor groups could leave deer farmers in an invidious situation. Although submissions on the issue are now closed, the remit was **CARRIED**.

End of business

Remit 12 marked the end of business for the day, and a well managed AGM that gave a large number of deer farmers the opportunity to air their views. An in-house discussion on proposed changes to the proxy forms to allow the position of Branch Chairman to be nominated as a proxy will present as a constitutional change next year. 📄

Deer Industry New Zealand Board appointment

The Selection and Appointment Panel is recommending to the Minister of Agriculture that Warren Moyes will be appointed to fill retiring member vacancy on the Board of Deer Industry New Zealand.



Members of the Deer Industry New Zealand Board field questions from the floor after the FGM on day 2.

Former DFA Councillors acknowledged

Executive Committee Chairman Errol Croad expressed special thanks for the contributions of former DFA Councillors and Executive Committee members during the welcome night function in Timaru.

Deer sculpture mementos were presented as a mark of appreciation to:

- **John Scurr**, former NZDFA Councillor, NZDFA President and now Deer Industry New Zealand Board member.
- **Peter Fitzgerald**, former NZDFA Councillor, NZDFA vice president, and Executive Committee member.

The contributions of two other men with national roles were also acknowledged. Both were presented with beautifully hand-painted saws (artist Murray Matuschka) as a mark of thanks for their work:

- **Eric Clark**, former NZDFA Councillor and Executive Committee member, now Branch Chairman (Waikato).
- **Tony Pearce**, former NZDFA Councillor and Executive Committee member who stood aside when he took up his present role as Producer Executive, Deer Industry New Zealand.

(And yes, there were plenty of jokes about falling on one's saw.) 📺



Eric Clark



John Scurr



Tony Pearce



Peter Fitzgerald

Brownie shows how it's done

Deer Industry New Zealand Executive chef Graham Brown showed guests at the conference welcome function just how good he is at shifting large quantities of venison through chefs and shoppers around the world.



With the aid of two large screens, Graham showed how leg cuts can be so effectively and economically be broken down into usable portions. "A lot of housewives buy whole pieces of venison but don't really know what to do with them," he explained. "Even some chefs have problems."

But whatever Graham tells them, it certainly boosts sales. One store he visited in Berlin has been selling 20-50kg of venison a week. When Graham's show hit the store, they sold 550kg in two and a half days.

That frontline work is essential to get chefs and consumers on side, Graham said. He noted that because shelf life is reduced once venison is processed into cuts, much of this work needs to be done at the retail end - hence the need to educate within our markets.

He said supermarkets don't sell venison, only shelf space. "We have to generate the sales. If we can't move the volumes, we'll lose our space to a competing product like pork." 📺

Food festival hits the spot



Guests at the Deer Industry Conference welcome function were treated to a some top-line venison cuisine in the historic Landing Services Building in downtown Timaru.

Restaurants from Timaru to Dunedin, as well as students from the Southern Alps Hotel School, presented dishes ranging over French, Italian, Korean, American, German and Kiwi cuisine - with wines and beers to match each.

Recipes were thoughtfully provided in the conference handbook, and guests - as if they still needed convincing - were reminded what a damned fine product they farm.

Pictured above: Staff from the Benvenue Hotel, Timaru, hard at work serving up venison vol-au-vents on mesclun salad leaves with Hollandaise sauce and blueberry coulis. 📺

Pilot genetic evaluation scheme under way

The holy grail of effective sire referencing has come a step closer with the establishment of a genetic evaluation scheme at AgResearch Invermay. Senior deer scientist Jason Archer explained the scheme to farmers during the DEEResearch technical morning at the Deer Industry Conference.

Archer said that with a stag's female progeny being around for 15-20 years, their influence on herd performance will linger for some time – for better or worse.

He took farmers through a basic introduction to genetic evaluation, explaining how genetic factors can be separated from environmental influences. Three inputs: performance records, pedigree information and scientific knowledge are used, with the assistance of a statistical method called BLUP, to generate estimated breeding values (EBVs).

AgResearch currently offers a within-herd genetic evaluation service which focuses on weight, growth rates and velvet, but Archer said the ability to reference the performance of sires between herds would be far more valuable.

“This would help stag buyers look across herds and identify stags that are going to best meet their needs,” he said.

Achieving true cross-herd evaluation requires standardised recording and identification protocols, processing facilities and genetic benchmarking between herds. The last of these – the benchmarking – was the hardest to achieve, he said.

The important information is the performance of stags' progeny relative to each other, rather than absolute performance statistics, Archer said. This is only achievable if performance of progeny from a number of stags can be measured within the same herd.

“It's a good system, but breeders may be unwilling to release their genetics to other herds in this way, or conversely they might be reluctant to use other genetics within their own herd.

“The way around this is to establish a sire reference herd to establish benchmarks for stags from other herds.”

This is where Invermay is stepping in, setting up its own herd as a reference herd for six breeders: John Bates




Jason Archer.

(Canterbury Red Deer), Robert Bruce (Taihape Red Deer), Trevor Currie (Black Forest), Lindsay Doncaster (Doncaster Deer), Simon Harris (Hurunui Red Deer), and Landcorp.

Archer said that the structure of the scheme will allow each breeder to maintain control over their own programme and it's hoped other breeders may join in future years.

Performance records for at least 30 progeny of a sire within the breeder's herd are analysed together with records from progeny in the sire reference herd.


The project got under way in April this year with a successful AI programme; 84 percent of the 240 inseminated hinds were scanned pregnant, with measurement and recording of the progeny to be the next step. 

Velvet research breakthroughs; patent applications filed

Velvet antler scientist Jimmy Suttie had some good news for farmers at the Deer Industry New Zealand Formal General Meeting in Timaru last month, with the announcement of a series of research breakthroughs.

The research team has developed specific extracts from the growing tip that stimulate angiogenesis, or blood vessel development – a key factor in wound healing. This is a huge step along the road to hard scientific backing for claims about the efficacy of velvet. Two patent applications have been filed and commercial development for these discoveries are next on the agenda.

Suttie and his team have also developed a Velvet Activity Index™, an essential precursor to carrying out dose response studies, because they allow for standardisation of test materials, and which can be used to help standardise products.

In a related development, the researchers have developed a protein 'fingerprint' using chromatography. Suttie explained that this technique can be useful for analysing unknown samples and detecting adulteration with proteins such as blood. The fingerprint technique also reveals how a velvet product was processed. 

Arawata

PARTNERSHIP **ELITE HIND SALE**

Wednesday 23rd July 2003 at 1.30pm

Offering of outstanding capital hinds
Bloodlines: Warnham Park, German,
Eastern, Furzeland & Danish
Unequaled for size, velvet & Trophies

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Geoff or Diane Gill Ph 03-235 2620 or your agent



9.23kg SA2 velvet @ 6 years

Stuart Barnett outlines 'ready meal' innovations

Although he has a reputation for keeping a low profile outside the realm of PPCS members, CEO Stuart Barnett emerged as a garrulous and popular speaker at the Deer Industry Conference in Timaru – the first since his appointment to the Board of Deer Industry New Zealand.

Venison marketing aside, he also proved to be a good sport, rising to the challenges of entertainer 'Len the Loser' at the awards night bash by whipping up the crowd in a sing-along.

During his FGM presentation, Barnett gave the audience a quick look at some of the product lines being developed for overseas markets, with an emphasis on quick-to-prepare convenience meals through retail and the cash and carry trade which services restaurants.

The ready meal solutions include marinated, pre-cooked products that can be on the table in less than 5 minutes. Ready meals combining venison with pasta, noodles, red cabbage, chestnuts and other ingredients are also being developed.

Barnett noted that the introduction of the Euro had disturbed the market, with some traders exploiting the confusion to increase mark-ups. Cheap South American beef had pressured venison in the restaurant market, and the depressed economies in Europe had also hurt sales of top-end products, he said.

On the prospects for a Cervena presence in Europe, Barnett

was his straight-talking best. "Forget Cervena for Europe. New Zealand is the brand we should be developing."

PPCS is using the New Zealand venison logo to push this image, and is also driving its Silver Fern brand in Europe.

He is concerned about the slow development of the United States market, and said it is unsustainable to have so little product going into such a large market.

Maximising returns to suppliers and breaking the influence of the European game traders were key objectives for PPCS, he said. But restoring those returns was going to take 12 months of hard work. He did not think any more levy funding for marketing would achieve much. "We need to work harder, not spend more."

With the announcement of the spring contract still three weeks away, he was unwilling to pre-empt the likely schedule for the new season, but said he would like to see it eventually get back to within the \$5 to \$7 tramlines. 📺



Stuart Barnett.

Lifting the bar on reproductive performance

A ten percent improvement in weaning rates spread over ten years. It sounds modest compared with the leaps and bounds in sheep reproductive performance over the past couple of decades, but AgResearch, Invermay, Deer Systems Leader, Geoff Asher reckons it's a realistic one given that deer reproductive performance has been stalled for the past 20 years.

Speaking at the DEEResearch technical morning at Timaru, Asher reminded farmers that what hinds can produce is the main driver for industry productivity and profitability.

While twinning is not an option for deer, there is considerable potential to peg back the average 16-17 percent reproductive wastage that constrains production now, he said.

"There is a huge variation in performance, of between 40 to 95 percent," he said. "That means some farmers are getting near to the biological maximum, so there is obviously room to lift the average performance.

"Perhaps the returns have been too good over the years, and there hasn't been the incentive to increase efficiency – the current low schedule might be just the kick in the pants the industry needs."

Asher said most of the barriers to improved performance were manageable. He highlighted three key areas: hind nutrition, herd health and the calving environment.

Hind nutrition is particularly important in the lead-up to conception and again in late pregnancy when there is a big



Geoff Asher.

drain on the hind's system, he explained. "Under-nutrition at this stage extends the gestation, which is itself undesirable."

Herd health management should target key mineral imbalances, particularly copper, selenium and iodine, he said. Also important was mitigation against infection by Cryptosporidia, Salmonella and Leptospira.

On calving environment, Asher wondered whether we adapt our environment to the behavioural needs of deer as we should, or bend deer to fit our farming systems.

"Without the opportunity to separate from the herd for calving, and without places for calves to hide, calf mortality will be higher than it should be.

"It is possible to provide a good calving environment within intensive systems," Asher noted.

He added that irrespective of how easy it was to market the additional product achieved through better performance, greater reproductive efficiency would always win the day for producers. 📺

Tick alternative in pipeline?

Deer industry partner, Ancare, is in the process of registration of a new product for use against ticks in deer. This will be welcome news for farmers who have been lobbying hard for agricultural remedy companies to come up with an alternative to the only registered product available in New Zealand (Bayticol).

Richmond and Duncan & Co report on marketing activities

Richmond puts considerable effort into educating consumers in the marketplace said Richmond Chief Marketing Manager Chris Newton during his presentation at the Deer Industry Conference. The company uses a specially designed mobile kitchen for market promotion work through its subsidiaries and key customers in Europe. They do the rounds of the big food fairs as well as some less traditional areas, promoting venison with complementary products such as New Zealand wines.

Newton, a Deer Industry New Zealand Board member since 2001, said he was relaxed about the upcoming Cervena review, which he sees as healthy.

On the upcoming spring trade, he predicted a slow improvement, noting that all alternative proteins, not just venison, had been affected by the schedule slump.

Andrew Duncan, former Game Industry Board member and

Cervena Co. Director said Duncan & Co. remains a staunch supporter of Cervena. "We are now selling into unstable, variable markets," he commented.

"Our challenge is to create stable, premium priced markets. We achieve this by building demand in growth areas across several regions to avoid over-dependence on single markets. To do that we need to identify niche opportunities, especially the high income, health-conscious consumers across all age groups and work the appropriate distribution channels."

He said Duncan & Co. does up to 30 food shows a year, consumer and trade education activities, product samplings and trade and consumer advertising in magazines and newspapers. They use generic Deer Industry New Zealand point of sale material and cutting tips charts, which are "well received in the marketplace," Duncan said.

Telford boosts Johne's research funding

Deer conference industry partner, Telford Rural Polytechnic, has given the Johne's Research Group a major boost with a \$7,500 donation for research into the disease. Telford Farm director Mike Stephens told deer farmers at the conference that Telford had access to community education funding sources to help deliver the right information and knowledge, through events such as the Duncan & Co. Southern Deer Farmer of the Year.



Telford Rural Polytechnic Farm director Mike Stephens (right) presents a cheque for \$7,500 to Peter Aitken of the Johne's Research Group.



INGOR DEER FARM

CAPITAL & ELITE HIND SALE

TO BE HELD ON THE PROPERTY WAIMATUA, SOUTHLAND
ON THURSDAY 31 JULY 2003 COMMENCING 1.30PM

We will offer approximately 130 Hinds including NZ Red 50%, 75%, 87.5% and Pures. All Hinds have been mated to Pure German, Warrnam, Woburn, Fuzeland and Pure European Stes. **All Hinds will be sold with a positive preg. scan.**

Ingkor Deer Farm's 2 year old stags are cutting up to 4.0kg of A Grade velvet.

SIRES

INGOR II in 1988, 89, 90, 92 and 1995 won the Imported Red Section at the New Zealand National Velvet Awards.

Ingkor II at 13 years cut 8.40kg SA2 Velvet and gained 2nd place in the Southland Red Section at the 1997 awards. **Ingkor II** 14 yr. Velvet 9.7kg SA2. Live weight 303kg at 27/2/99. Died June 2002.

DEVON - Pure Woburn. Son of Allie (World record holder for antler spread, 63 inches). Dam is the famous Woburn Hind No. 62. 8 year, 9.1 kg SA2. Live weight 268kg at 28/2/2002. Died April 2003.

EGON - Son of Ingkor II, Dam Festi Green 18. 9 year, Velvet 7.4kg SA2. Live weight 289kg at 27/2/2000. (Sold Feb. 2000)

WHITE 187 - Son of Johann, Dam White 169. 8 year, Velvet 6.3kg SA2. Live weight 296kg at 28/2/2002.

DAN GOR (White 115) - Son of Ingkor II, Dam White 12. 11 year, Velvet 6.6kg SA2. Live weight 316kg at 28/2/2002. Died November 2002

WHITE 444 - Son of Rommel, Dam Orange 222. 6 year, Velvet 6.6kg SA2 + 4.2 kg regrowth. Live weight 291kg at 26/2/2001. (Sold Feb. 2002)

WHITE 424 - Son of Ramesses, Dam White 92. 7 year, Velvet 5.8kg SA2. Live weight 329kg at 28/2/2002. Died July 2002

WHITE 518 - Son of Purple II (Fuzeland), Dam White 295 (Ingkor II/White 136). 7 year, Velvet 5.6kg SA2. Live weight 286kg at 26/2/2003.

HENSHAW - (Pure Fuzeland) Son of Kerry. Dam Daughter of Jamie. 5 year, Velvet 6.8kg SA2. Live weight 294kg at 26/2/2003.

WILLIE - Son of Ingkor II, Dam Yellow 323 (Ramesses daughter). 6 year, Velvet 6.9kg SA2. Live weight 301kg at 26/2/2003.

STEIN GOR (Yellow 289) - Pure German. grandson of Rommel. Dam Cee Gor daughter. 5 year, Velvet 6.8kg SA2. Live weight 297kg at 26/2/2003.

KAIZA - Pure German. Son of Herman. Dam Pure Schultz 5 year, Velvet 5.8 kg SA2. Live weight 276kg at 26/2/2003.

HARRY - Pure Warrnam Son of Ramesses II, 5 year, Velvet 5.3kg A2 Live weight 279kg at 26/2/2003.

GALAHAD 98-176 - Pure Warrnam Son of Lancelot. Dam Jonathan/Rose daughter. 4 year, Velvet 5.8kg A2. Live weight 267kg at 26/2/2003.

BLACK 976 - Son of Francis (Woburn). Dam Dougal-Brian daughter. 3 year, Velvet 3.8 kg A2 Live weight 219kg at 26/2/2003.

SPIKERS USED - were all pure sons of Galahad

NEW SIRES

WHITE 448 - Son of Ingkor II, Dam White 136 (European). 7 year, Velvet 6.5kg SA2. Live weight 307kg at 26/2/2003.

WHITE 437 - Son of Ingkor II, Dam White 237 (European). 7 year, Velvet 6.3kg SA2. Live weight 309kg at 26/2/2003.

WHITE 370 - Son of Razim. Dam Pure European (Warrnam/German). 2 year, Velvet 3.45kg A2. Live weight 186kg at 26/2/2003.

Ingkor Deer Farm is QA accredited and TB accredited (C10) No. R96046. Catalogues available mid July. Please direct all enquires to - Allan Wilson: Waimatua No.11 RD, Invercargill. Phone/Fax 03-216 7999, Mobile 0274 748 901
Joe Wilson: Phone/Fax 03-217 1090, Mobile 0274-748 912 Brian Duggan: Phone 03-218 1969, Mobile 025-324 212

Awards night a cracker

By the time entertainer Len the Loser had strummed his last chord – where did they find that guy? – it was gone 1am and a buoyed-up crowd at the deer industry awards night showed no sign of wanting to stop. It was a brilliant night, and plaudits must go to the SC/NO Branch hosts, conference organiser Pat Johnston and team, and the indefatigable Tony Pearce for making it all happen. And so to the awards:

Ian Spiers Memorial Award

This award – originally set up to promote research – has not been made for a year or two, but was brought back this year with a \$5000 award to former Hawke's Bay Chair **Tim Aitken**. Tim will be using the grant to partly fund involvement in the 10-day Kellogg Rural Leadership course at Lincoln.

Warnham and Woburn Society Photographic Awards

After a slow start, a good range of entries was received for this, the fifth year of the awards. Once again, Merial has generously supported the awards. Society member Andrew Mitchell (deputising for an injured John Carter) said the focus for the judges this year was on images of healthy, happy deer in a quality environment.

As happened in 2002, the same entrant cleaned up first and second places in the Open Category: **Dave and Christine Mackie**, for their photo "Weaners on southern swedes" (1st) and "Deer in winter mist" (2nd). Highly commended was **Chris Petersen** for his photo of a hind and fawn.

Dave and Christine Mackie made it almost a clean sweep for the Open category by also winning the popular vote, with their entry, "Stags at sunset".

Winner for the Humorous and Unusual section was **Diane Bristow**, with her entry "Happy hour". (This photo also won the popular vote for the category.) Second place was taken by **Keith Prendergast**, with "What do you mean no?"



Brian Managh, winner of the Matuschka Award

Matuschka Award

Very popular winners for this year's Matuschka award for contribution at branch level were **Brian and Ann Managh** (Rotorua Branch). Brian's only comment was, "I wondered why John Paterson was so keen for me to get down to conference!"

Rumpole Cup

Winner of the award for best Branch newsletter was **Rachael Mitchell (Wairarapa)**. The judges praised Rachael for a newsletter that did the simple things well, with a good mix of

local and national news, items of genuine interest to members, and an injection of enthusiasm and passion.

Deer Industry Award

Although there were only two nominees this year, John Scurr and Jimmy Suttie, there was no denying that either man would be a worthy recipient. But judges must judge and the award went to **Jimmy Suttie** for his personal commitment and loyalty to the industry and the huge contribution he has made to the development of knowledge about the properties of velvet as a natural health product.



Jimmy Suttie, winner of the Deer Industry Award.

The announcement by Jimmy earlier that day of several important developments in his team's velvet antler research only served to underline the significance of his award. 🇳🇿



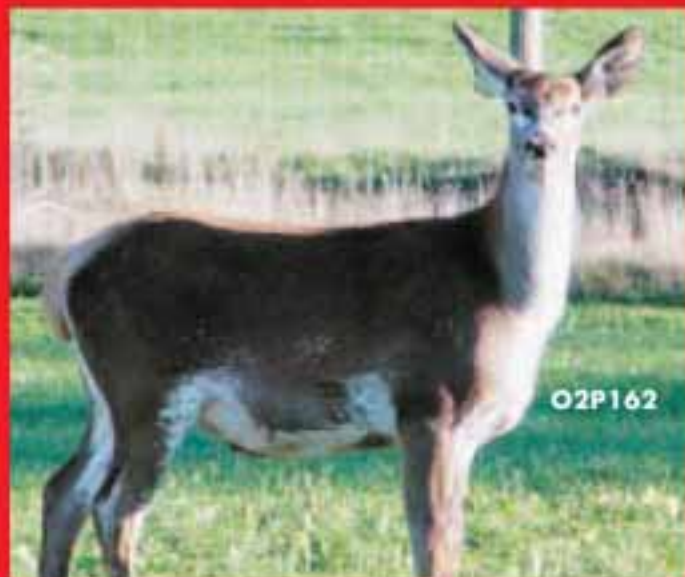
"Weaners on southern swedes" by Dave and Christine Mackie, winner of the open section, Warnham & Woburn Award.




"Happy Hour" by Diane Bristow, winner of the humorous and unusual category, Warnham & Woburn Award.

WIN 10 straws from our leading New generation Sire **KABUL** worth \$7500

conditions apply



cut out and post 

Guess the weight of our Four outstanding weaners

as at 15th April approx 5mths & 30th May. And Win Semen to the value of \$7500

	5mths 15th April	6mth 30th May	
02P162 male by KABUL	<input type="text"/> kg	<input type="text"/> kg	natural birth @ Outram
02P707 male by ROMEO	<input type="text"/> kg	<input type="text"/> kg	by ET Clinton
02P712 male by ALEKSIN	<input type="text"/> kg	<input type="text"/> kg	by ET Clinton
02P090 female by ALEKSIN	<input type="text"/> kg	<input type="text"/> kg	by AI Outram

HINT - the 15th April weight can be found on our Web Sites News Page www.blackforest.co.nz
 The calves will be weighed on the 30th May and the weights verified by Wrightson Deer agent Peter Crowle. Results will be published in the August issue of The Deer Farmer and posted to our website. Competition not open to Studs and prize is not transferable. Entries by email fax or mail to reach Black Forest Park by 30th June and to include name address and phone number. The Judges decision is final.

Name

Address

Phone



BLACK FOREST PARK
 Trevor Currie
 No 1 Rd Huntly Road,
 Outram, Otago, New Zealand
 Phone/Fax 64-3-486 1148
 Mobile 0274 326 466
 Email: trevor@blackforest.co.nz

■ Member Agresearch ■ DBV programme Agresearch ■ Sire referencing programme.

We are committed, and passionate about developing the World's finest Red deer Genetics for the NZ Deer Industry.

Visions and values: if we'd only had time!

It was always going to be a tall order to expect five high-achieving individualists to unburden themselves in just 20 minutes each, but a lack of time management by the facilitator and an untested format certainly didn't help matters.

The result was that the scheduled 90-minute session for the five 'Visions and Values' presentations on the final morning blew out to more than three hours.

There was time for some useful audience participation via 50 high-tech remote control voting units, giving instant feedback on response to presenters' suggestions and challenges. The results were probably a bit unscientific, with some very leading questions in the mix, but the 'audience power' technique shows promise.

In the end, a much-anticipated open forum to discuss burning issues identified at the conference had to be abandoned, in part an unfortunate consequence of the required 2 day conference format and time constraints. That was a shame, but organisers of future conferences will hopefully improve the model and schedule the forum-type sessions earlier in proceedings. Keep the high-tech voting gear, get an assertive facilitator and it'll be a winner.

So to the presentations and feedback. Here are the highlights:



Graham Carr, Peel Forest Estate

This transplanted Englishman had a few provocative shells to lob over the parapets. Carr's main points were somewhat historical, but included:

- We've become complacent and vulnerable. We're good at growing things but not so good at marketing them.
- German traders are recovering their losses from 01/02 by driving down prices. We're guilty of putting our fate in the hands of commodity traders instead of gourmet marketers.
- No-one really knows how much venison production is coming on stream. If prices stay level, watch out for a 'bow-wave' of product to come through.
- We could learn from the old NZ Meat Board which used a crude but effective system of incentives to get people selling lamb outside the UK when EU quotas tightened.
- The big effort to sell chilled venison into Germany doesn't match the small quantities actually sold.
- We're not working hard enough to promote the excellent health qualities of venison – why should meats like ostrich steal the limelight?
- More work is needed to promote New Zealand as the country of origin. Ireland has done this very successfully and they have far less to brag about than we do. Frodo and Bilbo should be leading the charge to bring New Zealand to the world!
- Give tourists a high quality experience of venison when they're here and they'll search it out at home.

- We need another 10 Graham Browns – he's the venison industry's single-most important marketing tool.

Jock Allison, Abacus Biotechnology

Previously the youngest-ever Director of AgResearch Invermay, the mercurial Jock Allison was, with Ken Drew, instrumental in the establishment of deer research at the campus. His main points were:

- It should be possible to increase growth rates by 20-30 percent through genetic gains rather than the use of hybrids.
- Considering velvet accounts for only 13.8 percent of the industry's export earnings, velvet antler research seems to consume a disproportionate share of product research spending.
- There's a great deal of uncertainty about how much venison is waiting in the wings. Industry numbers need to be clarified.
- Antioxidant vitamin technology could help improve venison colour on retail shelves, increase iron uptake, and delay the onset of unacceptable brown colouration by up to two days.
- There are regulatory hurdles to overcome for this technology – more research funding is required for this step in the value chain.

William Rolleston, Chairman, Life Sciences Network

A medical doctor, William Rolleston was founding chairman of the Biotechnology Industry Organisation. He runs a large South canterbury farm and has a business marketing blood products. The Life Sciences Network advocates the use of GM technology in New Zealand. Rolleston's key points were:

- The end of the moratorium in October marks the end to a ban on **applications** for release of genetically modified organisms (GMOs). No GMOs would be released until risks and benefits on economic, environmental and cultural grounds had been assessed.
- A number of organisations including the Royal Society, National Academy of Sciences, WHO, FAO, American Medical Association, BMA and others have stated there are no safety issues with GMOs.
- A Treasury report into the economic impacts of GM technology on New Zealand's GDP did not predict any significant impacts, positive or negative. However, there is a degree of uncertainty about this.
- Although there is a de facto moratorium in Europe, around 2300 GMOs have already been released there.
- Europe continues to import GM stock feed because of concerns about ruminant proteins.
- About 60 million acres of GM food crops are grown in the United States, which also exports organic produce to Europe.
- GM cotton, flowers and beef feed are grown in Australia.

- GM corn was grown in New Zealand in the mid 1990s, GM feed has been used for poultry, and GM-derived enzymes are used in cheese making.
- There can be a gap between consumer concerns expressed in surveys, and actual consumer behaviour (Rolleston cited the case of Lotto – 90 percent of New

Putting the GM issue to the vote

Following his presentation on GM technology, Peter Elworthy put a number of questions to the audience, who used their remote control voting units to register their opinions. There were only 50 of these units, so they were shared in groups of three.

Here's how the questions played out:

1. Do you think the moratorium on GMO should be extended for at least 3 years?

Yes: 54%
No: 32%
Don't know: 14%

2. Should we confine research to laboratory or in containment?

Yes: 89%
No: 7%
Don't know: 4%

3. Rank the importance of "Assurance of markets for NZ Inc" (1 = low, 5 = high)

Consolidated result: 4.1

4. "This will be one of the most important issues for NZ's future" (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree)

Consolidated result: 3.7

5. Do you think the only source of advice for deer farmers should be the Life Sciences Network, of which DINZ is a member?

No: 98%
Yes: 2%

William Rolleston was clearly exasperated with the slanting of some of these questions, and may well have wanted to frame some of his own. On question 2 (lab containment) he said he also would have voted 'yes', on the grounds that this is the necessary first step in any programme leading to release of a GMO.



Let's talk: William Rolleston (left) and Peter Elworthy deep in conversation following their presentations at the forum.

Zealanders said they'd never buy a ticket before the game was launched.)

- It is unlikely that our key primary food products such as venison/velvet, sheepmeat, beef or kiwifruit would themselves be genetically modified because of marketing constraints.
- More likely applications in farming include use of immunocontraception in possums; more palatable fodder crops that require less fertiliser, water or pesticides; vaccine development for Johne's Disease and Tb; gut bacteria that will help reduce methane emissions; biopharmaceuticals, bio-feeds, biodegradable plastics; development of pest and weed resistant crops like onions that are now heavily sprayed.
- Effective tools exist that can facilitate coexistence of GM and non-GM production systems. These include buffer zones, management of flowering times, use of sterile males or sterile seeds.
- An anti-GM stance risks loss of scientific credibility and loss of good scientists overseas.
- Over-zealous liability provisions could stifle all new innovations, not just GM technology.
- Our market access stance is science based, and an unjustified restrictions on the technology could threaten our credibility in world markets.
- Denying ourselves GM technology could see us lose our competitiveness.
- The next generation of GM technology will focus on product quality and health, e.g. low-cholesterol pork.

Sir Peter Elworthy, Chairman, Sustainability Council

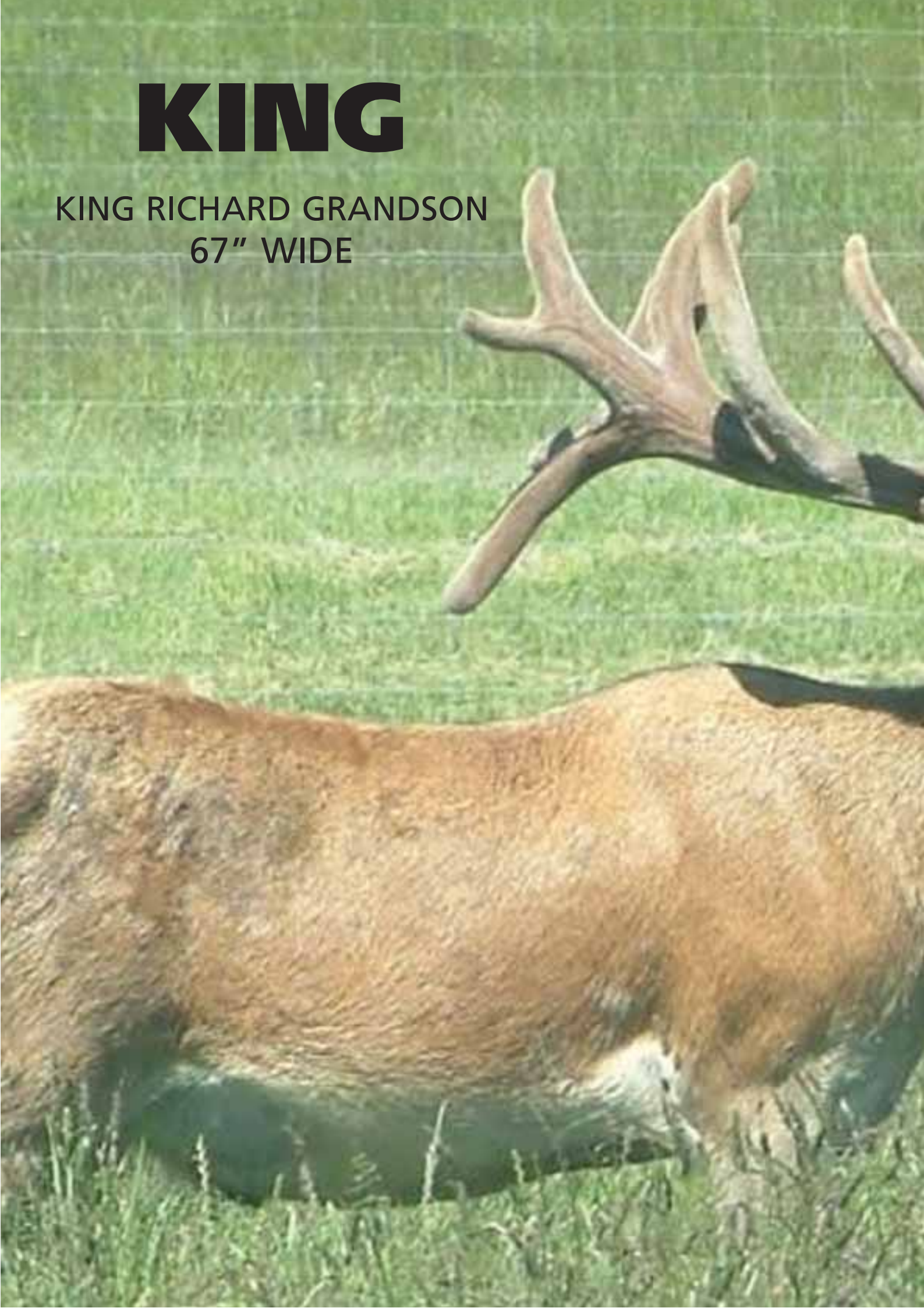
This was the first time Peter Elworthy's roles as a deer industry leader and leader of a group advocating an extension to the GM moratorium had come together in a deer industry forum. Not surprisingly, his views were in stark contrast to those of William Rolleston. Points included:

- Contrary to William Rolleston's portrayal, a number of Australian states have agreed on a GM moratorium.
- The Treasury's GDP impact report noted a worst-case scenario of a 43 percent fall in farm income from the impact of GM technology.
- While he is 'pro-choice', Peter Elworthy sees the release of GMOs as segregating producers into GM or non-GM categories, within a GM-contaminated environment.
- The choice of farming organically or 'clean and green' would be gone if GMOs are released.
- The Sustainability Council was established to provide a balance to the views espoused by the Life Sciences Network and the biotech industry.
- The Sustainability Council is not linked to the Greens or any other political party.
- The council has a good team of researchers, funded by people like Hawke's Bay organic orchardist Johnny Bostock.
- GM is a consumer issue, and whether rational or not, the consumer is always right.

continued on p18...

KING

**KING RICHARD GRANDSON
67" WIDE**





J & A Crowley
Ph: (07) 823 3309
Fax: (07) 823 3380,
Mob: 0274 727 436
Email: tower.farms@clear.net.nz

...continued from p15

- It is unlikely this technology will be needed for the next 3-5 years, so why lift the moratorium now?
- The deer industry should show leadership within the farm sector on this issue.

Alistair Betts, Chairman AgMARDT, Zespri, Primeport Timaru

No stranger to the primary sector, Alistair Betts had the unenviable position of last speaker in a crowded schedule. But what he had to say kept the audience captivated. Betts is a former global marketing manager for the Dairy Board, spent four years on the Cervena Co Board, was Chairman of Agmardt and chairman of Zespri.

His focus was on the right marketing vehicle for New Zealand venison, but he also threw in some provocative comparisons between the deer sector and the performance of kiwifruit, sheep and beef producers.

Farmers at the forum almost unanimously supported the idea of using Cervena as a revitalised brand (not appellation) vehicle for New Zealand venison.

Among the points Betts made were:

- Cervena helped take the emphasis of venison marketing away from the game meat category.
- Proper DNA-based traceback technology is essential to get quality product onto European retail shelves.
- Zespri spends about \$21,000 on advertising and promotion per New Zealand kiwifruit orchard,

compared with about \$900 spent on generic marketing per deer farm.

- New Zealand venison marketing overseas is hamstrung by brand fragmentation.
- Game meat accounts for only 1% of total red meat consumption world wide; it accounts for 2% of New Zealand meat export volumes and 4% by value.
- Venison farmgate returns are only 57% of FOB value, compared with 65% and 62% for lamb and beef respectively.
- Deer farmers don't need to own the structures, but must own the customers and consumers. This means that farmers must manage their participation of the distribution chain properly.
- New Zealand venison is a generic brand, but it is not enough – Cervena promoted as an umbrella brand for all exported venison would do the job.
- A consumer and customer-driven, high-value venison business, integrated from the consumer backwards through the chain to the farm, will produce the consistently superior returns that farmers and processors want.
- By 'acquiring' the Cervena brand, an exclusive vehicle is available to provide this link with customers.

Feedback on these points raised by speakers and further discussion on the "Burning Issues" will be circulated via the Branches and other fora over the year as part of the programme that was curtailed by time constraints. 📧

Willow Creek Deer

HIND SALE: 10th JULY 2003

1.00pm - INSIGNIS PARK CHRISTCHURCH



- Brusnik at 8 years
- 500 7/8 SCI

Scored - Gary Joll. SCI Master Measurer

South Island

Harry Waghorn
Phone 03 312 9856

Pyne Gould Guinness:
Ron Schroeder
Mobile 0274 321 299
Max Bensemann
Mobile 025 322 617

Canterbury Deer Brokers:
Terry Beardsmore
Mobile 025 203 7566

Wrightson:
Jon Waghorn
Mobile 025 321 872

North Island

Allen White
Mobile 025 422 944

A selection of hinds mated to BRUSNIK plus SALVO, a full brother to Stanfield's MAXIMILLAN

Deer Industry New Zealand FGM Proceedings

A copy of the Proceedings of Deer Industry New Zealand's Formal General Meeting (FGM) is enclosed with this issue of Deer Industry News. The Proceedings booklet contains speeches and presentations made at the FGM. Highlights are summarised below:

Access has been obtained for sliced velvet exports to Korea. This will take effect on 1 April 2004. Export protocols and plant registration systems still need to be worked through, but this is an important development which will allow NZ to export velvet closer to the end user, with country of origin labelling, quality assurances and avoiding adulteration. This has been achieved after more than 8 years of work and sets the stage to seek access for other velvet products including tonics.



MJ Loza, CEO Deer Industry New Zealand.

Year-round access for venison in France is reportedly close to implementation after more than 10 years of lobbying. This is yet to be confirmed, but if access is not officially confirmed in the near future, Deer Industry New Zealand has the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade to escalate the actions by taking the issue to the European Commission. Access to France has illegally been restricted to the winter game season, making investment in year-round promotion pointless up till now. In spite of these restrictions, France is already our 4th largest market and has significant potential.

A proposed **Industry Planning Project** was announced involving Deer Industry New Zealand and companies working together on an industry production and supply model. Its aim is to assess market implications of different supply scenarios so that potential issues can be identified and prevented. Producer input via the Producer Manager is a feature of the proposal with the main objective of assisting sectors to work together to help address some of the causes of volatility.

Deer Industry New Zealand is dealing with an increasing number of important **industry-good issues** on behalf of the deer industry: Biosecurity, Animal Welfare, Environmental Sustainability, Animal Health, Trade Liberalisation, GM issues, Labour and Workforce issues, Food Safety, Dietary Supplement Regulation and the Kyoto Protocol to name a few. Market development, promotion, research and QA remain Deer Industry New Zealand's focus.

Deer Industry New Zealand's industry good activities are shown to deliver measurable value – more than \$10m in funding has been leveraged through research joint ventures, joint promotion and the impact of generic promotion. This has been achieved from total levy income of \$4.4m.

While the venison levy has almost halved from 19c in 1998/99 to 10c in 2001/02, the **total venison promotion**

spend went up 26% to \$2.9 million through the leverage achieved by joint promotion. Companies and their in-market partners contribute \$2.30 for every \$1 of levy funding. Company specific promotional investment is on top of this.

PPCS, Richmond and Duncan & Co presented information about their **company specific promotional and market development activities** including a strong focus on year round consumption, diversification into new markets outside Germany and new sectors in Germany, retail market development and product development to support new HRI and retail markets.

Presentations by these companies and Deer Industry New Zealand illustrated the intense level of co-ordinated activity going into **building demand for venison**.

New velvet research results were presented indicating velvet's potential for wound-healing. Patents have been filed for a specialised and highly refined extract which is being investigated for would-healing properties.

Based on science currently available, a proposal on **Compression Analgesia** for velvet removal will not be submitted to NAWAC and MAF this year. More research work is required on application and ensuring welfare device


and so the compression technique will not be available this coming velvet season. Current removal methods lapse in July 2004 and their availability after that date appears unlikely at this point. Identifying new velvet removal techniques that address animal welfare and residue requirements is a priority for the coming year.



Clive Jermy, Chairman Deer Industry New Zealand.

Deer Industry New Zealand will be conducting a **review of Cervena** on behalf of the Cervena Trust and also a

review of the DeerQA On-Farm

Programme. Consultation on these programmes will involve all companies and the DFA Executive Committee and Branches. Individual farmers are welcome to comment - See future issues of *Deer Industry News* for more information. 

Ravensdown news

Alan Thomson, General Manager of Ravensdown, brought conference delegates some cheering news to offset the general gloom around the low schedule and high dollar. Apart from urea, all other products (DAP, Potash, Ammonium sulphate) have dropped in price – thanks in part to the same high dollar. Superphosphate has remained unchanged.

Thomson also announced that Ravensdown is investigating a nitrification inhibitor, to help minimise the progress of nitrates into waterways. Ravensdown is one of this year's industry partners for the Deer Industry Conference.

Venison

A 2.5% rise in the number of deer processed has been offset by a drop in the average carcass weight to 54 kg. Average schedule prices are low, with continued difficulties in the market, especially driven by buyer caution and concerns with Germany's economy.

Schedule

- The average schedule (week 22) is \$4.08, 24% below that in 2002 (\$5.34) and 31% below the 10-year average (\$5.91).
- The average schedule has remained relatively stable for 15 weeks, albeit at low levels between \$4.00 - \$4.20.

Production

- Venison production for the 12 months to April 2003 was 492,010 animals, an increase of 2.5% compared with the same period to the end of April 2002 (479,982).
- The average carcass weight for the year to end April 2003 was 54 kg, a drop of 1kg from the average carcass weight on the previous year.
- Overall, this means that kg venison production for that period is almost the same as last year.

Exports

- The total volume of venison exports for the year to March 2003 was 16,208 tonnes - 0.9% down from the previous year (16,357 tonnes).
- Export value has dropped 26% from \$229.6m to \$169.1m - a 25.7% drop in average FOB prices from \$14.04 per kg to \$10.43 per kg.

- The appreciation of the New Zealand dollar against the US dollar (up almost 40% since 2001) and the Euro (up 4%) is a factor in decreasing export returns.
- Venison exports for the year ended March 2003 to Germany dropped 1.2% to under 8,000 tonnes.
- Exporters report difficult market conditions and the continued hesitancy of import partners to commit to significant volumes.
- The German economy continues to cause concern, with unemployment estimated at over 10% and negative 1% economic growth.
- Exports to the US for the year to March 2003 fell by 9.1% to 971 tonnes, compared to the previous year.
- While the US is seen as a comparatively stable market, average FOB prices fell 12.5% from \$22.96 for the year to March 2002 to \$20.10.
- Exporters to the US report slow sales as this is typically the quietest period for US consumption and the economy is soft.

Promotion

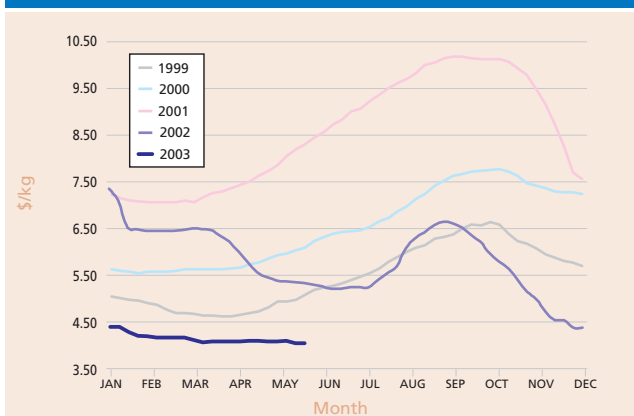
- A new mobile kitchen is en-route to Europe, earmarked for promotional work including retail tasting and major food fairs.
- The first of a series of supermarket tasting promotions in partnership with Villa Maria Wines was held in Auckland at one of New Zealand's busiest supermarkets.
- Salespeople with 10 distributors in the US are involved in a summer Cervena® venison sales programme designed to up-skill and incentivise salespeople.
- Graham Brown's European programme for July includes in-house trade fairs promoting venison to chefs and distributor conferences.

MARKET INDICATOR PRICES (BONE IN HAUNCH)



Source: PPLS

WEEKLY AVERAGE SCHEDULE - 60KG AP STAG



Source: Agrifax

Market Talk

Revitalised US Interest in Cervena®

US Cervena importer, Rich Flocchini of the Sierra Meat Company, talks to Deer Industry News about the future for the product in his market.

Rich has moved his wild game operation from the Durham Meat Company in California to one of his other companies located in Nevada. That firm, Sierra Meat Company imports Duncan & Company's Cervena® and sells an extensive array of game products to distributors, restaurants, hotels and retailers throughout the United States. Rich Flocchini has been selling New Zealand farm-raised venison since 1985.

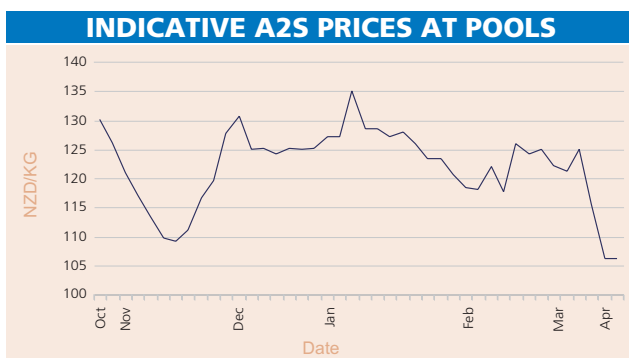
Rich is adamant that continued price stability, increased promotional spending, maintaining New Zealand's disease-free status – especially with recent concerns about CWD - and building credibility for the product and the New Zealand deer industry are the four key factors that will determine the success of Cervena in the US.

Velvet

Weighted velvet pool prices have risen slightly over last year. Exports are down. Slower offshore sales mean there is a danger that stocks remain unsold in market.

Velvet Pools

- As the season winds down to the last two pools, weighted average velvet pool prices appear to be slightly up on last year's at around \$100 per frozen kilogram, compared to \$96 last year (up 4%).
- Prices dropped from the beginning of the season until mid-November and rose until the end of November. From there, prices stayed in a fairly narrow band until dropping significantly in March until the end of the season. The following graph tracks A2S prices at pools throughout the season:



Exports

- Export volume to year-end March 2003 is 172 tonnes dried equivalent. That is a decrease of 27% over year ending March 2002, in which the volume of exports was 218 tonnes dried equivalent.
- Exporters report sales have been slower this year compared to previous years. There is a danger that stocks could remain unsold, which would impact negatively on next season. In April, exporters reported that business was very slow, but the situation has improved since then.



Rich Flocchini of
Sierra Meat
Company

"Historically stable US prices mean customers and distributors can add the margin they need and still offer an acceptable price to restaurants. In turn, restaurants can put Cervena on the printed menu and be confident the price will remain the same."

Rich says that the closure of the Cervena New York office a few years ago led to a perception that the New Zealand commitment to Cervena was being reconsidered. A US office is not necessary but a renewed push to revitalise interest in

- Exports for the year-end March 2003 amounted to \$30 million – down by 20% over year ending March 2002.
- Frozen velvet continued to account for a higher proportion of exports. According to Statistics New Zealand figures, frozen velvet accounted for 24% of total exports. However, this figure is estimated to be closer to 50-65% of the total.

Korea

- The opening of the Kyung Dong Market Festival took place on 2 May 2003. This festival is a celebration of Korean oriental medicine in Seoul's oriental medicine district. The New Zealand Ambassador and representatives from Trade New Zealand visited the show on behalf of the New Zealand deer industry.
- The New Zealand Ambassador was presented an appreciation plaque during the opening ceremony for his efforts to promote the Korean oriental medicine industry by supporting the Kyung Dong Market Association and participation in its festival.

VARNZ Update

- In the area of wound healing, a patent application has been filed for a new extract that has a particularly high content of low molecular weight proteins. The extract is currently being used in trials at the Wellington School of Medicine. Early indications appear promising.
- VARNZ is also conducting work to identify genes with beneficial properties from the velvet Expressed Sequence Tags (EST) library. Several candidates of particular interest have been identified and are undergoing further examination.
- VARNZ also hopes to announce completion of a Velvet Activity Index™ that will provide a means of comparing different velvet products to compare activity.

Cervena would help to get it back up on some of the 'radar screens', he says. "Some of the best market opportunities have not switched onto Cervena yet, citing concerns over CWD, supply continuity and industry volatility."

His customers always ask him about production methods, what Cervena means, what it tastes like and the kind of shelf-life they can expect.

Cervena means quality in his market. "Quality assurance from pasture to overseas port, with systems in place in our organisation for the continuation of these assurances to our customers. So, we can then guarantee the quality of the animal itself to the meat that is sold to the end-user. Our customers know and can rely on these facts and can in turn be confident when promoting Cervena."

For now the US economy is on hold, Rich says, and people and businesses are in a conservative mode. Smart chefs are creating new dishes with costs in mind - with Asian spices and tastes the trend of the times. "Cervena, being a versatile meat, can easily fit in with this trend, or any others that emerge."

Taking the pizzle...

After venison and velvet, the sheer range of products that can be created from the deer carcass is stunning – everything is used but the ‘roar’ (and even that can be ‘canned’ by tourist video-cams). Here Deer Industry News spares a thought for what happens to the co-products that account for approximately seven percent of the carcass value – the sinews/tendons, tails, pizzles and dried blood products.

In a market worth over \$7 million, over 1.8 million sinews and tendons, 479,000 tails and 864 tonnes of pizzles were exported to Hong Kong in the year to end March 2003 – mostly for on-trading to China – while Korea received 187,000 sinews, along with a small quantity of dried blood. Much smaller quantities of various of the items went to Austria, Australia, Taiwan and the USA, mainly for consumption by the Asian communities and tourists in those markets. The New Zealand market is also significant for processors with the large number of Asian visitors coming here, but this has fallen back recently as SARS has affected travel from that region.

“In Asia, the whole deer is considered a source of medicine,” says Deer Industry New Zealand’s Velvet Manager Mark O’Connor explaining that different regions have varying beliefs about the effect of the various items.

Murray Hamer, Alpine Deer Group’s Oriental Trade Manager, who has been in the deer co-products business for over 34 years, explains that Asian customers are very particular about what they are buying and have to see what they are buying before it is processed. “The price is governed by a perfect shape and size, which requires precise product grading by the exporters and a careful eye kept on average box weights.”

Take the pizzle – the deer penis. “There are four grades: under 10 ounces (oz), 10-12 oz, 12-14 oz and over 14 oz. For men, the belief is that the larger the pizzle, the stronger their own will be,” Murray explains. “Generally, pizzles are boiled for hours with herbs, then sliced and served in a soup. As a sideline, they can also be found whole in alcoholic drinks like wine – similar to the mesquite worm in tequila.”

A common delicacy, sinews and tendons – taken from the base of the deer leg – are again boiled for hours with a huge range of recipes, some handed down through the generations, and served as a food in a soup or on their own with a sauce. Their medicinal strength is believed to be the effect on the muscles and tendons.

To achieve the top prices, deer tails have to be fat and a perfect rounded shape. A few decades ago, these would have been made into small balls, nowadays they are processed dry to a perfect shape, then sliced and served in a soup.

Mark O’Connor explains that there are glands around the tail of some deer breeds which gives some scientific credence to



Rosanna Yang, Alpine Deer Products’ representative in Hong Kong trades most of the company’s deer co-products into China, alongside a variety of other items.

Alpine’s Happy Pet Product.

the Asian belief that they are effective medicinally for kidney ailments and back pain. Murray Hamer says “it really works” and adds that the red deer tail is “just one big black gland”, while the fallow deer does not have any.

Dried deer blood, in contrast, is a very new market, Murray says. “Traditionally, drunk raw in Korea in wellness tonics, New Zealand has come up with the idea of presenting it dried in a soft gelatine capsule for the incoming Asian tourist market. These are designed to be used in tonic type drinks, usually served with a little alcohol.”

The co-products are mainly consumed in the winter months so as the northern hemisphere moves towards summer, export prices naturally drop in the market at this time of year, Murray says, adding it is too early to gauge whether there has been any effect on sales from the SARS outbreak.

“Co-product prices are the lowest they have ever been. They came down to a level about a year ago but, with New Zealand’s lower kill this year, these are holding steady. In fact, prices for sinews have risen over the past three months as a supply of Chinese wild sheep sinews – that are almost indistinguishable from deer sinews but are not as prized – that had been flooding the market dried up.”


Most of Alpine’s business is export of commodity co-products but it also draws off product for it’s New Zealand factory in Wanaka, where it further processes a whole range of products. These are mainly for the Asian tourist market here in New Zealand and also in Australia and the USA.

“We were totally reliant on velvet until about six years ago when we branched out into co-products,” Murray explains. The

company now also produces velvet powders, freeze-dries velvet and blood through Enzac Agriculture in Blenheim, and has recently had MAF and export approval for a new pet product – Happy Pet – a 320 mg velvet tablet for dogs.

SARS has badly affected the Asian tourist market however and New Zealand business has slowed almost to a standstill, which Murray believes is temporary. After several very busy years though, it gives them the opportunity to clean up the premises and plan for the future.

Murray Hamer believes co-products will always be an Asian market and he doesn’t see further opportunities here in New Zealand. “The next logical step probably for the industry is to research the products more to add value.”

Mark O’Connor says that not much research has been done to date on the various co-products, apart from some compositional analysis, and promotional activity has been minimal as it is treated predominantly as a commodity. 



Range of New Zealand deer co-products.

New scientifically-based nutrition guide for red meat

A 40-strong group of world leading nutrition scientists has just produced a scientifically endorsed guide to red meat nutrition.

They were drawn from all over the world in March to work collaboratively at an Auckland workshop organised by the New Zealand Beef & Lamb Marketing Bureau. The scientists have produced one scientifically-based and endorsed

Catering for the masses

Consistent quality, reliability of supply and pricing are all just as important to New Zealand chefs serving Cervena as they are to those overseas.

Steve Morris, Spotless Catering's Executive Chef at the Westpac Stadium in Wellington, manages a considerable ingredient budget and asks his meat suppliers for reliable product quality and consistent pricing.

"Because of the quantities we are handling, price is also a big issue," he says.

Catering for over 10,000 people a month, his extremely busy kitchen handles the whole scale of menus from the top formal corporate dinners, through to mid-scale buffets in the restaurants and down to the retail operations offering rugby-goers burgers, hot-dogs and fries.

"Our middle-range buffet menus change every event and each one has two or three meat dishes. We use the lower grades of venison for stews and ragouts balanced in the buffet menus against, say, a lower-priced chicken or beef dish."

As the venison price has dropped he might consider including it more often but warns that other proteins, such as ostrich, have also been offered at competitive prices.

"Because of its price level, it's been very difficult to use Cervena for some time now, most restaurants are still charging what they did 10 years ago and sudden price hikes on the raw material cost cut into our margins. What it does, effectively, is cut out the middle market and restrict sales to the top of the market."

Keeping labour costs down in a very busy kitchen is important: "Generally, everything is bought ready prepared – if we need diced, we will buy diced. We have been paying about \$6-8 a kg for diced beef or lamb, compared to about double that for diced venison.

"For special formal dinner functions, we buy venison cuts, such as Denver leg, and portion in-house as required," Steve says, adding that he might consider chef-ready portion-controlled cuts, "But, only if the price is right."



He says that spectators at the All Blacks/England test in June will enjoy a warm and satisfying Cervena casserole with cinnamon and cherry in the lounges of the aptly-named "Cake-Tin".

A Cervena Plates winner from 1995, Steve Morris is now catering for 10,000 a month as Executive Chef at Wellington's Westpac Stadium.

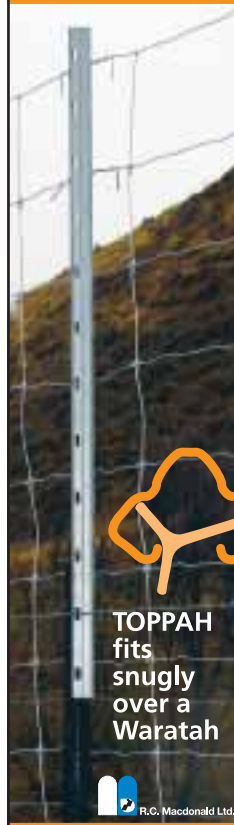
document for use by the wider red meat industry, including pork and venison.

Red meat was reaffirmed as an important source of dietary iron and of essential nutrients such as zinc, selenium, copper and vitamin B12. Other key findings were:

- High protein diets are beneficial in terms of weight loss – compliance levels are better too as dieters possibly find it more manageable and more satisfying.
- Absence of meat from the vegetarian diet has been associated with significantly lower bone density and vitamin D status.
- Lifestyle – especially lack of exercise and overall dietary patterns – is now thought to be much more significant in causing cancer, than individual foods such as red meat.
- Lean red meat contributes about 14 percent of iron in the New Zealand diet but because of its high bioavailability it increases to 35 percent of absorbed iron.
- A 'meat factor' in red meat affects the absorption of iron and possibly other nutrients from meat itself and other foods. So, supplements do not fully compensate for a diet low in red meat.

A copy of the executive summary from the workshop is available from Fiona Carruthers, Nutrition Manager, New Zealand Beef & Lamb Marketing Bureau on 0800 733 466 or fiona@nzbeeflamb.co.nz.

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“Straight talker” Taylor joins Executive Committee

The continued support of Deer Industry New Zealand will be the best chance of improving returns to growers, rather than trying to disband or remove it, according to newly appointed NZDA Executive Committee member Bill Taylor.

Bill replaces outgoing member Peter Fitzgerald on the four-person Committee.

Having recently stepped down from a three-year stint as chairman of the DFA’s Southland Branch, Bill has embraced his new role, which involves promoting the views and concerns of deer farmers and supporting Producer Manager Tony Pearse.

“I’m a practical, grassroots farmer so the issues that affect ordinary deer farmers are never far away,” Bill says.

Known as a straight-talker, Bill’s appointment brings a southern perspective to the Committee.

Bill is passionate about environmental sustainability, although readily admits he doesn’t always practise it, and anxiously



Bill Taylor on his Lora Valley home turf.

awaits the release of the Deer Farmers’ Landcare Manual.

“I want to make sure it gets out to farmers on time and that it is in a format that farmers can use,” he says.

“Although the deer industry is still relatively young, it is proactive in adopting an environmental stance and is held in high regard with Fish and Game, and other environmental organisations.

“Dairy farmers have had more than 50 years to get their act together environmentally, and they’re only just doing so now.”


Bill says venison’s future depends on encouraging year-round consumption in export markets, combined with greater promotion within New Zealand, especially to overseas visitors.

“It (venison) has never been well promoted in New Zealand. It should be classed as an affordable healthy, white table dining experience.”

Bill says it is too early to judge the success of Deer Industry New Zealand, but says the restructuring of the organisation is unrelated to the low venison returns.

“The best chance of improving returns is if we support Deer Industry New Zealand, rather than disband it,” he says.

He is disappointed that the NZDFA had to spend more than \$10,000 last year on legal fees to resolve ‘nonsense’ disputes brought about by those suffering from sour grapes over the reform process.

“The strength of the NZDFA lies in the Branches. They give individual farmers a voice and I encourage people to support the organisation through continued membership.” 

Branch Chair profile: Brian Wellington – Waipa

Brian Wellington’s family have been on the Owaraka Valley (about 25 km from Te Awamutu) farm for over 80 years, since his grandfather started farming there in 1921.

For over 55 years, it was a traditional beef and sheep farm, but in 1978 Brian went to a sale where his friend only wanted three from a pen of five deer and Brian ended up buying the other two. Growing up, he had been a very keen deer hunter.

Twenty five years later those two deer have become a herd of 2000 on the family farm. Now having purchased an adjoining farm, Brian farms 1500 acres from easy rolling to steeper hill countryside. He runs 350 mixed age velvet stags and 130 rising 2-year-old stags. Last season he put just under 1000 hinds to the stag, 550 to wapiti stags for finishing and 350 to red stags with strong velvet genetics to provide red hind replacements and velvet stags. He also grazes 800 dairy heifers for the full year, and grazes 500 calves over the summer/autumn period.

Brian is in his third year as Chairman of the Waipa Branch. In his younger days he had been Chairman of the local YFC and has chaired the local Deerstalkers Association.


The Waipa Branch has a busy programme of activities for its members each year. As well as the popular velvet competition, discussion groups visit different farms every couple of months. This February a big group went up to the



Brian Wellington with stag awaiting the (copper) bullet.

Sheerwater Field Day and on another occasion they went over to Hawke’s Bay to look at the Landcorp operation.

The schedule aside, this past year has been an excellent one for his Waipa branch members, with stock doing well, Brian says. With winter approaching, grass levels are great and they are looking forward to another good season.

His Branch had had mixed feelings about the proposal for restructuring the deer industry. After a year of the new structure, he says the majority seem to be more in favour of it, but they believe it needs to be allowed a reasonable amount of time to prove itself. 

Branch Chair profile: Paul Rutland – Poverty Bay

Paul Rutland, best known to his mates as Pip, has had a long involvement in the deer industry.

It started out as a hobby for him, as a recreational hunter as a teenager. From that, his love of hunting grew into a job, and resulted in him spending 12 years in deer capture, deer trapping in the central North Island, and deer shooting from helicopters during the heyday of that exciting but risky profession.

In the late 1980s he and his wife Giselle bought a small farm at Ormond, near Gisborne. They run around 150 velveting stags as well as fattening about 40 bulls each year. Soon after setting up the farm, he established a deer transport business in Poverty Bay, carrying deer to the venison processing plant or moving them from farm to farm in the region..

This is Paul's third year Poverty Bay DFA Branch Chair. The Branch covers the whole of the East Coast down to Wairoa and up to the Bay of Plenty. There are about 55 paid up members of the Branch, which Paul says is a breeding region, with most weaners sold locally to finishers and the excess going to the Hawke's Bay. He is one of the few who farm for the velvet.

He says Poverty Bay deer farmers are pretty lucky, as the region is free of both Tb and Johnes Disease. "We have been Tb free all

the time, and it is matter of keeping it free," he says.


Outbreaks in neighbouring branches are watched closely and with some concern, the closest in recent times in northern Hawke's Bay.

On other problems facing the branch and its members, Pip says "Being coastal country, we do have a lot of erosion problems, but we are all aware of it, work it out and address the problems."



Paul Rutland: Association with deer goes back to teenage hunting days.

One of the most popular branch events held each year is a weaner weight gain competition held in conjunction with the Wairoa Branch. Weaners are bought and distributed among interested members, who finish them, weighing them on specified dates. They are slaughtered in February the local Wairoa deer slaughtering plant, Venex Ltd, and results announced at a combined field day. (See *Deer Industry News*, October 2002 issue.)

The Poverty Bay branch had been strongly behind the concept of restructuring the deer industry into Deer Industry New Zealand, Paul says, with a very supportive shed meeting held in Gisborne. A year after the new structure was put in place the support is still there, and Paul says the Branch is pretty happy with the outcome at this stage. 

Events Calendar

25-27 June 2003: NZ Veterinary Association, Deer Branch Conference, Queenstown, in association with Society for Animal Production.

27 June 2003: Deer Production Seminar (part of NZ Society of Animal Production Conference), Queenstown.

24-27 February 2004: Second Antler Science and Product Technology (ASPT) Symposium – Millennium Hotel, Queenstown. Co-hosted by AgResearch and Deer Industry New Zealand. Following on from the successful ASPT Symposium in Banff, Canada in 2000, this symposium will update all key areas of velvet antler science and product technology.

Hind sales

25 June, 2.00 pm, Netherdale Deer Stud, Balfour

26 June, 1.30 pm, Foveran Park, Kurow

27 June, Canterbury Red Deer, Tai Tapu

2 July, 11.30 am, Pampas Heights, Rotorua

3-4 July, Springlands Deer sale: hinds on 3 July and weaner stags and hinds on 4 July

3 July, 1.30 pm, Ingor Deer Farm, Waimatua

10 July, Willow Creek, Insignis park

4 August, 1.00 pm, Windermere, Hamilton

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Reducing the impact of farmed deer on waterways

New Zealanders expect that our streams, rivers and lakes should be maintained in a natural and clean state. They expect that the nation's waterways should be inherently usable for their recreation be it for fishing, swimming, boating and in some cases drinking.

Recently one of the North Island's most popular lakes, Lake Rotoiti, was officially shut down by the Medical Officer of Health for two months during the peak of the summer recreation season due to excessive levels of cyanobacteria caused by high nutrient levels in the water. There followed a storm of protest from users and the general public for the local authorities to "do something about it".

A fair amount of the subsequent blame has been directed at the surrounding land users – the farmers. These alleged causes tend to attract more attention than the impact of other landowners and recreational users, particularly in the areas of human waste disposal and septic tank outflow. Needless to say all factors contribute, and deteriorating water quality is a shared responsibility.

There is little doubt that all types of pastoral farming can have a detrimental effect on waterways. This may be directly from the effects of animals in and around waterways, or indirectly through fertiliser application and other land user effects.

Damage and change to the water quality and stream ecology can result from increased nutrient and bacteria loadings, causing blooms of unwanted algae and aquatic weed. These impact on the indigenous life of the affected waterway as well any lakes downstream.

The important streamside vegetation which contributes shade and keeps the water cooler in summer can be damaged by the animals themselves, which can also cause increased sediment in the streams through their physical activity.

Such events are also part of the longer term natural cycles of water quality changes that operate in response to lowered water levels, higher temperatures or other natural interventions. Farm effects certainly add to the rate and extent of deterioration; equally, remedies applied can have a rapid healing role.

Most official documents addressing rural water quality issues (e.g. regional plans) that discuss the perceived effects of farming and particularly the impacts of animals on streams, refer to the farmed animals as "stock". There is rarely any differentiation between the type of stock e.g. cows, sheep or deer – just plain stock!



Waterway protection work on Graham Carr's Peel Forest Estate.

Are deer different from other stock?

Do all stock have the same potential to effect water quality? Deer farmers should not be complacent because Fish & Game New Zealand appears to have targeted another sector and not us. The infamous "Dirty Dairying" campaign has been part of a concerted lobbying and publicity drive to preserve water quality and the recreational use of rivers.

We are now seeing regional plan rules developing for *Stock Crossings* (really meant to apply to cow crossings) and more significantly some real issues with rules being developed for *Stock in Waterways* with increased proposed requirements to fence off designated streams from classes of stock.

Is it fair to use a blanket word like 'stock' in regulations? The various farmed species may have vastly different behaviour patterns in and around water and also be under different management regimes and levels of intensity.

Sheep, for example, have a real aversion for water. It is very difficult to drive sheep through water, while deer and cattle of course have no such fear.

What about the direct faecal contributions of various farmed animals to water? Not an issue with sheep as they don't dwell in water but apparently research has been done on the toilet habit of cows confirming that contact with water stimulates cows to release their excrement as they cross streams.

Are deer habits any different to cattle?

Deer farmers report that deer behaviour in the vicinity of water is considerably different from other species in habit and effect. There are the obvious physical difference in excreta form. Do we know if that produces significant differences in subsequent effects on water quality?

We need investigation that defines differences in nutrient and bacterial loadings between deer and cattle excrement. Maybe there are differences in the triggering of the excrement. Deer spend less time eating than cows, they spend half their time resting up and when

they do arise we believe they are most likely to drop their drier and more compact dung pellets. This tends to be adjacent to where they rested or camped which more often than not is nowhere near a stream as they prefer higher ground with commanding views when resting. Do deer excrete more or less material (in terms of dry matter) in relative terms than cattle? Logic would suggest less, but it will help the industry to define the differences if they exist.

Deer love water

Deer are known to love water and, unlike sheep, have no aversion to taking a complete bath and virtually submerging. On-farm observations suggest that this is particularly the case if relatively still water is available to them. They seem to be less interested in flowing streams and will not wallow in them. A simple analogy is the known damage deer do to the border dykes and head races on irrigated properties and the protection that most farmers instinctively build to conserve head races.

However deer playing around stream banks and wallowing in adjacent wet and muddy areas can result in a significant amount of sediment subsequently washing into the waterway itself and must signal some type of remedial approach, particularly if there are significant downstream consequences.

Any unprotected woody vegetation in stream areas is also likely to be eliminated by deer, removing the shade benefits that these plants and trees may have had on the stream.

Avoid stock access to water where ever possible. Is that achievable?

As an industry with a developing Environment Management System (EMS) and credible environment ethic, we can not condone open access for deer to streams. There also needs to be an equivalent reasonable approach taken by statutory authorities to the practicalities and feasibility of achieving the ideal of keeping "all stock out of all streams".

Ideally we should try to prevent free access for deer in waterways. That's difficult in many cases. With the average New Zealand deer farm having at least three streams (Landcare Manual Survey) it may not always be economically feasible or in fact ecologically necessary to prevent this access. While some deer farms are situated on lowland country, many more tend to occupy a significant amount of the rolling and higher country where small seeps, springs and creeks abound and have not yet combined into larger creeks that are more typical of the lower easier country. Fencing costs are around \$10,000 per kilometre and with some deer farms, especially the higher country ones, having a myriad of waterways, fencing them all off is just not going to happen due to both economic and practical reasons – and perhaps there really is not the need.

Do what you reasonably can – "Anticipate risk and fix it"

One practical solution to get the most environmental advantage from a limited budget is to prioritise your water



As deer love water, management is a challenge (photo by Gail Simons, 2002 Warnham & Woburn Society Photographic Awards.)


protection. The lower parts of your farm, particularly swamps and streams near the boundary are where you can moderate any effects your farming may have had to the water quality and should be a priority.

The lower reaches of a creek near your boundary may be protected with exclusion fencing and riparian planting and perhaps contain a settling area (your duck pond) or wetland/swamp area. This acts as a filter and ensures you are not delivering reduced water quality to your neighbour. A recent research project undertaken in Southland showed that a 600 metre completely fenced stretch of waterway that was filled with aquatic plants removed the vast majority of sediment, nutrients and bacteria from the dirty water initially flowing into the protected area from a large deer farming catchment.

The water quality is restored before it leaves your property. Once this priority work is achieved you may choose to shift your water protection efforts to other areas as time and funds permit. Many of the regional authorities around New Zealand have funds available to help you with this riparian protection work – give them a call.

Deer Industry QA on Environment

A practical and prioritised approach has been taken with the new Environment Section in the revised DeerQA manual currently being reprinted. It advocates that you classify all your natural resources (land, water and indigenous bush) to three levels with high, medium and lowest risk classifications. You can either designate these areas yourself or call in the experts.

A key principle is that you contain and remedy any possible **effects** of your deer farming operation within the boundary of your property. With a little professional advice on waterway engineering and planting (your local regional council land management officer, or Fish & Game representative would love to help!) these parts of your farm may well become one of the most attractive features of your property and more of an asset than a liability. 

Landcare Manual Committee

Environment award winners pointed in the right direction

The Sir Peter and Fiona Lady Elworthy Environmental Award stayed in the North this year. Winners were Wayne and Patricia Aspin of Awhitu Peninsula.

The former dairy farmers are also keen orienteers, and their passion for the sport kept them away from the award ceremony in Timaru. However their daughter Leone, also a keen environmentalist, was on hand to accept the award from the Elworthys on her parents' behalf.

Admitting to not having visited the South Island since the 1980s, Leone said deer had added richness to her parents' lives, as they were integrated with the plants, birdlife and waterways on their property. Her own ambition is to set up a conservation trust to assist those keen to carry out environmental protection work on the land.


The judges' citation for the Aspins' award noted that more than 40 local native plant species were fostered on the property, which also featured use of Norfolk pines, pohutukawa hedging, cypress and kauri. They have promptly repaired bare ground and wallows, and have brought reticulated water to all paddocks. The farm is not just a conservation project – it also produces well, with 90% plus fawning achieved.



Leone Aspin (right) accepts the award from Fiona Lady Elworthy (left) and Sir Peter Elworthy (centre).

The Aspins, who are keen to create a pest-free 'island', were also winners of the ANZ Bank Merit Award for excellence in biodiversity enhancement.

Other merit award winners were:

- Graham Carr, Peel Forest Estate: Velpool Environment Merit Award, excellence in animal welfare management.
- Paul and Pam McDowell: Fish and Game New Zealand Environment Merit Award, excellent riparian management.
- John and Jill Needham: Summit Quinphos Environment Merit Award for an innovative and holistic approach to sustainable land management.
- Murray and Graham Hazlett: Duncan and Co Environment Merit Award for excellence and innovation in planning a sustainable deer farm. 




"President"
4 yrs

"Embarrassment of Riches"
STUD ENGLISH

HIND AUCTION

Wednesday
2nd July 2003
at 11.30am

at Pampas Heights
Red Deer Stud
240 Te Waerenga Rd,
Hamurana, Rotorua

Contact the owner:
Bryce Heard
Ph: 07 349 3013
Mob: 021 926 812

Agents: Wrightsons

Quality Assurance in the deer industry

The deer industry is facing a range of new and increasingly important issues as a result of rapidly changing international markets. Food safety, animal welfare, bio-terrorism and environmental sustainability are all key customer concerns.

Increasingly, international food retailers are demanding greater levels of evidence that these issues have been addressed. Nobody can say unchallenged any more that “we know we do things the right way”. More and more it has to be proven, transparent and auditable.

Quality Assurance (QA) is not an end in itself but a critical tool to help the industry achieve its vision and its potential throughout the supply chain linked intimately to market needs. To achieve our vision we need to continue to use this tool to its full potential and lead the food export industry.

The beginnings of QA programmes

QA programmes in the deer industry began with processing plants developing firstly PIC (problem, investigation and control) programmes in the 1980s. These quickly evolved to be a set of industry agreed standards and out of this developed defined quality systems to meet the internationally recognised ISO 9002 standard.

This was followed closely by both the transport and then the farming sectors developing and implementing their own quality assurance programmes. DeerQA became the overall ‘brand’ for all these deer industry QA programmes demonstrating an integrated pasture-to-plate QA approach.

The DeerQA strategy dramatically increased the awareness of quality requirements within the deer industry and contributed to an increase in the quality and consistency of deer industry products. In addition, the DeerQA programmes also supported customer systems for following up any quality issues from bruising, tough meat, animal welfare issues or inadequate cold chain management.

Rapid improvements in transport

Losses were lowered significantly in a short space of time after the programmes were implemented. An early example was the greatly reduced insurance claims against transport operators from losses in transit. However, this wasn’t attributed solely to transport, because at the same time many farms had improved their handling facilities and took a new look at how animals were handled throughout the farm environment.

The Industry Agreed Standards for venison processing currently encompass most New Zealand plants. These industry standards are being revised to reflect new science, modern practice and requirements.

Processors incorporate DeerQA

The DeerQA On-Farm Programme has been adopted by five exporting/processing companies who use these standards as the base line for their own company QA programmes. They have incorporated all aspects of the industry QA system and are auditing their own farmer suppliers for accreditation to

their own additional standards. This is critical for credibility with off-shore customers. All of these processes were features of the original DeerQA concept.

High standards for the transport of animals have become a major part of customer expectations and these expectations continue to increase, not only for deer, but for all animal species. Transport is probably the most visible activity in the food supply chain. As such, it draws attention from the public and needs continual review. For example, MAF and SPCA receive regular complaints about stock left on trailers parked on the side of a road while the truck is away somewhere loading. We have started a complete review of the DeerQA Transport Programme. This will involve a full re-audit of all companies accredited to the programme and an audit of all crates being used for deer cartage.

Foundation for welfare code

The DeerQA programmes have laid the foundation for the writing of the new Code of Welfare for Deer which is presently being compiled. Minimum standards and recommended best practice have been easily identified in this way. As well, the DeerQA On-Farm standard forms the basis of education and training programmes for organisations such as AgricultureITO (Industry Training Organisation). These courses are offered through tertiary institutions and aimed at farm workers, and particularly those interested in pursuing a career in deer farming.

The DeerQA On-Farm programme is now linked to the Landcare Manual being developed by the NZDFA as a best - practice manual for environmentally sustainable deer farming. The DeerQA programmes have been held in such high regard by organisations such as SAMS (Sustainable Agricultural Management Systems Network) that they are used as a model for developing new sustainable agriculture programmes operating within New Zealand. 

Janice Attrill, Quality Systems Administrator, Deer Industry New Zealand.

Deer Code of Welfare available for review

The first draft of the Code of Welfare for deer is now available for anyone connected with the deer industry to review and comment on.

The draft is the work of a code writing team made up of representatives from across the industry – farmers, processors, stock and station agents, transporters and veterinarians.

The team has met half a dozen times over the past year to get the document to a stage where it can be used as a basis for a round of industry consultation. However, Deer Industry New Zealand’s John Tacon says recent advice indicates that a lot more work has to be done to include measurable quantities or levels against the standards.

The draft is based on guidelines provided by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry to help animal sectors prepare codes

continued on p30...

Incorrect use of SCI scores in advertising concerns

Gary Joll of the Professional Hunting Guides Association has written to Deer Industry New Zealand expressing concern at the use of unauthorised SCI scores for advertising for stags.

He writes: "Our collective concern is that the antlers advertised might have been measured by a person who is not a duly authorised and certified person to measure under the Safari Club International System of Scoring. SCI exclusively owns this system of measuring antlers and horns, it undertakes regular two to three day workshop [sic] for the training of Official Measurers, and each person who finally qualifies is issued with a personal measurer's number.

"In addition SCI has a classification of Master Measurer,



If you want to brag about your stag with an SCI score, use an SCI-accredited measurer and provide their name. (Photo: Chris Petersen, 2003 Warnham & Woburn Photographic Awards.)

...continued from p29

to meet the requirements of the Animal Welfare Act 1999. The Act provides industry groups with the option of drafting their own Codes of Welfare or having one written for them. Deer Industry New Zealand took up the challenge of coordinating a code on behalf of the whole deer industry.

"What we have done so far has basically come from our QA programme, based around minimum standards for on-farm activities and normal farming best standard practices," John Tacon says.

Over the next two months, individuals and groups involved in any aspect of the deer industry have the opportunity – in fact, will be encouraged – to study and comment on the draft. After these comments are reviewed and incorporated, experts will be invited to help set specific, quantifiable minimum standards.

"These minimum standards have to be very robust, so they can stand up to scrutiny should they ever be used in court," he explains.

The draft Code is a comprehensive document, which sets out the basic principles of animal welfare: food and water, shelter and other facilities (taking into account housing,

persons who are considered to be highly skilled and practised in SCI Scoring complex set of antlers and horns...All sets of antlers and horns which are likely to place in the top 10 of the SCI Record Book Listings are required to be re-measured by a Master Measurer no less than 60 days from the date of securing the trophy."

Joll notes a Foveran Park advertisement in the April issue of *The Deer Farmer* as the **correct** way to validate SCI score claims. The ad cites the name of the SCI Master Measurer responsible. He asks that all advertisers follow this lead, by naming the SCI scorer and making a copy of the score sheet available with the submitted advertisement.

He is concerned that some SCI scoring is being done by unqualified persons and incorrectly scored.

"The rule for scoring antlers in velvet is that after measuring is completed and the measurement tallied up, it is required that there then be a deduction of 5% for the velvet covered [sic] the antlers, for that velvet 'enhances' the SCI score."

Joll contends that because many live stags with antlers in place are scored by unauthorised persons, these scores are probably misleading.

"If SCI measurements are part of an advertisement, let the SCI measurer be named in the advertisement," he concludes.

Deer Industry New Zealand Producer Manager Tony Pearce says the request from Gary Joll is perfectly reasonable, to protect the integrity of a system that deer farmers see as a valuable aid in their own marketing programmes. He suggests a measurement qualification may be of use to some deer farmers interested in gaining the skills of SCI measurers. 📧

**Gary Joll can be contacted at: Gary.sue.joll@xtra.co.nz
The Professional Hunting Guides Association website is: www.nzphga.com**

ventilation, yards and races), husbandry practices (including physical handling and expressions of normal behaviour) and disease and injury control.

For each of these, specific and detailed minimum standards need to be included, right down to kilojoules of dry matter or daily water requirements. However, John Tacon says in most cases the figures would show an average daily requirement for a maintenance base for various sizes and age groups rather than a production base.

Given the amount of input expected from the industry in the initial consultation round, then the detailed input from the experts establishing the minimum standards followed by further consultation, John Tacon expects it will be the end of the year before the document is ready to present to the National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (NAWAC). NAWAC will conduct a further public consultation process to ensure that community views are reflected in the document. Once NAWAC is satisfied, the Code will be presented to the Minister of Agriculture who will issue it. 📧

Anyone wanting a copy of the draft Code of Welfare should contact Janice Attrill at Deer Industry New Zealand; ph 04 3816014 or email janice.attrill@deernz.org

Frank Griffin honoured

Bob Geldof isn't the only Irishman to have been honoured by a foreign nation. Our very own Prof. Frank Griffin – an Irish citizen although he's spent more than half his life here – became an honorary Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit in the Queen's Birthday honours list.

An immunologist and director of Otago university's deer research laboratory, Frank's Irish citizenship necessitated permission from the office of the Irish president, Mary McAleese, before he could receive an honour from another country.

According to the *Otago Daily Times*, The New Zealand honour citation states that Prof Griffin is "an internationally recognised immunologist who has made a particular contribution to the understanding of tuberculosis infections in animals".

Research from his laboratory has led to the development of new immune technology to control tuberculosis in deer, and improved diagnostic techniques for cattle and sheep, the report says.


Frank was quoted as saying that he was touched and excited that his name had been put forward for the honour and that people had also gone to the trouble to gain permission from the Irish authorities on his behalf.

Frank has been on the staff of the university microbiology department since 1973.

The honour also acknowledged the work of other researchers working on ruminant animals, including at the department's disease research laboratory.


The award also reflected the contributions of his wife, Violet, and family, and Frank said he was grateful for their support.

Since 1990, he has been a consultant to the royal family of Saudi Arabia on tuberculosis in oryx and gazelles.

A member of the World Health Organisation working group on tuberculosis vaccines, he has published more than 80 papers and a book. 



Frank Griffin brings deer farmers up to date on his work on Mycobacteria at last month's Deer Industry Conference.



NETHERDALE RED DEER

David & Lynley Stevens, Balfour

ANNUAL HIND SALE - ELITE RED DEER

Wednesday 25th June 2003, 2pm on the property - Balfour, Southland

Approximately 150 mixed aged recorded Red Hinds

Vetted in fawn to:

Maximus - 8.38kg SA2, Supreme Champion open section, NZ Velvet Competition

Armani - 5.80kg SA2, Champion 3 year old section, NZ Velvet Competition 2000


Friar Tuck - Pure Warnham, Cranbrook Park

Offering will also include semen from Maximus and Armani

ENQUIRIES WELCOME

David Stevens Ph/Fax 03-201 6330 Mobile 0274 331 363	Brian Duggan Wrightson Ph/Fax 03-236 0802 Mobile 025 324 212	Peter Crowie Wrightson Ph/Fax 03-415 9060 Mobile 025 905 786	John South Pyne Gould Guinness Phone 03-206 6084 Mobile 025 357 364
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MAXIMUS



ARMANI



Canterbury
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Warnham Park

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Canterbury Imported Red Deer Stud • Cossars Road, Tai Tapu, Christchurch

1:00pm 27 June 2003

Introducing four Elite new Sires



Sir Peter

Shown at 2yrs, 175kg, 6.6kg HA stripped and 22pts at 2yrs. Pure Warnham by The Sultan.



The Commodore

Son of Taylor x Sultan sister. 6kg SA II at 3yrs. Heaviest velvet in 3yr red section of National Velvet Competition.



Tana

Sintana x Romany 211kg and 3.5kg SA II at 2yrs. 7.5kg hard dry stripped antler at 3yrs.



Arad

x Heinrich V Pure Eastern, shown at 2yrs. 230kg and 4.5kg stripped, dry hard antler.



Thomas Albert

(Shown at 5yrs, 8.2kg SA II, 8.8kg at 6yrs) Sire of Peter Fraser's 'Enoch' (5.5kg SA II at 3yrs), John Hunter's (Springs Junction) Tom (5.5kg SA II at 3yrs), Alf Kinzett's 'Batesy' (5.97kg SA II at 3yrs).



The Sultan*

9.63kg SA II National velvet supreme champion in 2000.



Nicholai

325kg 9.9kg HA Sire of Stanfield's Maximillion, Jock and Pip Foster's Nicholas and Hurunui's Max.



Heinrich V

335kg 10.0kg HA 405 SCI. Sire of Pampas Heights' Vihar (430 SCI) and Hurunui's Janos.

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Jon Waghorn, Wrightsons Christchurch. Ph: (03) 307-0429, Mobile: 025-321-872

* Owned by Bill Payne