



New Zealand Deer Farmers' Association

November 2003

# Otago Branch NZDFA

## Chairman's Report

The end of 2003 and spring has finally for us in the Upper Clutha been generous. There is as usual a lot of variation in Otago and hopefully the rain keeps coming where needed.

The branch has been well supported through the year by a lot of people and we have seen some excellent field days with large attendances. The last one for the year is on 11 December and has a focus on stags. There is a lack of information out there to support stag purchase on objective performance which breeders and Invermay scientists are looking to address with various initiatives. These will be discussed during the field day. It will be practical, aiming to help farmers work through the options beginning with considering requirements and ending with management on farm to maximize conception rates.

Livestock Improvement have kindly donated \$3000 towards a genetics programme to be drawn on the day. They will enlighten us on their thoughts and involvement in the industry.

Superior Minerals have been extremely supportive of the Branch this year through providing the resources for the newsletter. Bruce Hore will be at the field day with information and will be available for farmers to discuss any requirements.

I would like to thank everyone who has helped the branch out this year – in particular the steering committee, speakers including AgResearch who are always only to pleased to be involved and Tony Pearse. The Branch is becoming more vocal and I hope providing farmers with what they want to hear. In Otago we seem to be focused primarily on what I think are the important issues of production and the bottom line. As far as the schedule is concerned and in brief, producers must keep reiterating to their processors that a \$4.50 to \$5.00 schedule is not sustainable or acceptable. This message also needs to be heard and acted on by our NZDFA executive committee and chairman.

We wish everyone a Happy Christmas and holiday season.

**Mandy Bell**

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# Otago Branch Who's Who

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Current members of the steering committee are as follows:

|                               |             |
|-------------------------------|-------------|
| Mandy Bell (Chairman) .....   | 03 443 4250 |
| Paul Mutch .....              | 03 467 5479 |
| John Scally .....             | 03 465 7375 |
| Ken Harrex.....               | 03 485 9514 |
| Tony Pearse.....              | 04 381 6016 |
| Phil Hunt .....               | 03 443 1055 |
| Peter Foster .....            | 03 465 7838 |
| John Falconer .....           | 03 444 7501 |
| John Scurr .....              | 03 443 7555 |
| Mike Scurr (Treasurer) .....  | 03 443 7780 |
| Craig North (Secretary) ..... | 03 488 4899 |
| Adam Whaanga .....            | 03 415 7662 |
| David Stevens.....            | 03 489 9035 |
| Jason Archer.....             | 03 489 9138 |
| Jane Mitchell .....           | 03 444 9584 |
| Geoff Asher.....              | 03 489 9048 |
| Chris Johnson.....            | 03 489 6191 |

## **DINZ**

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

## **RAHC**

### **Core Members**

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

### **Area Members**

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

## Coming Events

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### **South Canterbury/North Otago Branch Velvet Antler Competition - 29 November**

**Velvet - Sputh Otago competition - 3 December**  
Greenfield Tavern, Clydevale at 5.00 pm. For more information contact:  
Ken Harrex - 03 485 9514.

**National Velvet & Trophy Antler Competition - 9 December**  
Entries close - 5 December  
Velvet to be received at

Wrightson Invercargill - 1.00pm, 7 December.

- Judging Day - 8 December
- Awards Dinner - 9 December, velvet on display from 6.15 pm.

### **World Veterinary Deer Congress, Queenstown - 21-24 February 2004**

For more information contact Sue Bastiaansen - 03 756 9002, email: [bastiaansens@maf.govt.nz](mailto:bastiaansens@maf.govt.nz). Sunday 22nd is a field day that all farmers are welcome to attend. There is a visit to Alpine Deer Group to view their historical

displays, the velvet processing plant at Luggate and also Criffel Station.

### **Antler Science and Product Technology Symposium - 24-27 February 2004**

Millennium Hotel, Queenstown. For registration information see [www.aspt2.co.nz](http://www.aspt2.co.nz) or email [linda.murray@agresearch.co.nz](mailto:linda.murray@agresearch.co.nz), ph (03) 489 9011.

### **Upper Clutha A & P Show 12/13th March 2004**

## Snippets

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### **Winners**

The ODFA survey at the last field day (Invermay) offered a fine wine /whisky to encourage farmers to fill in the survey form. Winners were form numbers 12 and 43 which were:

Peter Foster from Merton and Tom Stevenson from Roxburgh.

### **Chronic Wasting Disease**

CWD sampling numbers for the September quarter reached 120 bringing the Sept year end figure to 150 off-farm. Well done! There is no cause for complacency however, as we need at least 300 per year, but let's keep the momentum going.

### **Calendar sales boost John's research funds**

Everyone on the Deer Industry News address list was sent a free copy of the 2004 Deer Industry Calendar and an order form for purchasing extras to use as gifts for family, friends and overseas contacts. Sponsors' support for the calendar has already boosted the research war chest of the John's Research Group by \$2000 - profits from sales of additional calendars will also go to the JRG.

If you would like to order copies and have mislaid your order form, visit [www.wordpict.co.nz/calendar](http://www.wordpict.co.nz/calendar) to download a new form - or call Lorraine Clark at Words & Pictures, on 04-384-4688

### **Weaner Survey**

All weaners/yearlings should be really putting the weight on now.

We are planning to kill them at Duncan and Co plant in Mosgiel either late the first week in February or early the second week with a field day tentatively booked for around the 11 February at the Otago Venison plant in Mosgiel.

Just a note to farmers with the weaners that the next weight is due on the 1st of December. I still haven't got all the September weights so if you could have those handy when I call early December that would be great.

### **Velveting**

Just a reminder to put the tourniquet on first before injecting the local anaesthetic.

### **RAHC**

The change in TB testing from AgriQual to Assure and the change in the TB laboratory work has had some teething problems as might be expected but

by the same token many farmers are finding it OK. It has to be remembered that the change is a result of a national tender process conducted by the AHB, the purpose of which is to lower the costs of testing to the farmer. If you have problems though, you should contact your local RAHC member. Members and phone numbers are on the back of this newsletter.

While cattle TB numbers are tracking down nicely, not so with deer. There are still 24 infected deer herds which is one third of all infected herds in Otago.

### JRG

Things are moving along well with a person appointed to carry out the research programme. The team from Massey will begin the initial investigations in the New Year. Five farmers from Otago along with 10 others have indicated interest in being involved at this stage which will help define the parameters for Stage 2.

The latter stage will require 80 properties with JD and 80 without JD – if you would like to be involved please contact Mandy Bell or Tony Pearse. There are a lot of variables that need to be considered for their impact on the disease so please seriously consider putting your name forward.

Frank Griffin at the DRL has developed a new test that is now recognised by the AHB as a secondary test for the diagnosis for Tb. It also will determine if there is any JD present. It is a useful test and economical to use if you wish to investigate JD on your farm. People at DRL or your vet can help you work through various scenarios using the best available info to date.

The Johnes Research Group intends to put out a booklet early in 2004 with an update on the progress in research to date and with any management tools. The tools are difficult to be definite about due to the lack of info on epidemiology (hence the urgent need for the research work) but are a start to help work through options in managing the disease on farm.

### OFDA Farmer Survey

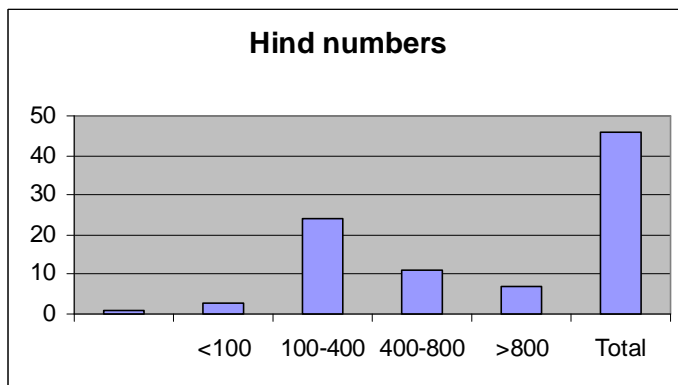
A big thank you to those of you who returned your survey forms. There has been some interesting info and feedback.

The newsletter is well supported with some useful ideas to include in future editions.

A wide range of topics for field-days were supported the most popular being nutrition, pastures and venison production. Visits to top operations were also requested. Make sure you are at the field-day coming up.

Production info showed a wide variation in systems and size of operations. 20% of farms are deer-only. Farm size ranges from 8-10000 ha. 50% of production systems are breeding/venison with a wide variety within the rest. The most common farm topography is flat/rolling (50%). Location of farms is 44% coastal, 44% inland and 12% high country.

Graphs for stock-type and numbers are shown below.



What would be really great would be more members completing the survey to give us more robust information. You still have an opportunity to win a bottle of quality tippie. Fill in the enclosed survey form and post to: Loganburn Station, RD4 Ranfurly or fax 03 444 9584. Or hand it in at the up-coming field-day.

### Ballance Farm Environment Awards Otago

Lets make sure deer farmers are well represented.

We need all sizes and types of farms

- Still developing' is no excuse!
- The awards are a positive and enjoyable to be part of (speaking from experience).
- The prizes are good. The feedback from the judges is constructive.
- No one expects you to have the perfect farm.
- Judging is at a time convenient to you.
- Closing date for entries is Dec 15 2003.

### Call us before we call you!

Contact the convenor:

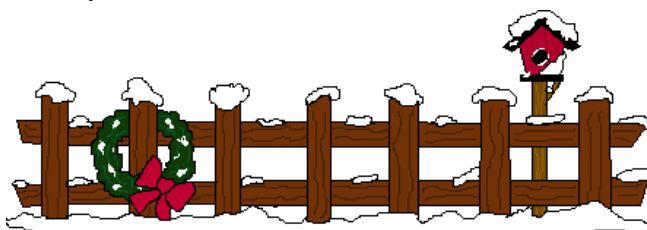
Sue Clarke Ph 03 218 1654 Fax 03 218 1646

Or contact:

Jane Mitchell 03 444 9584

Paul Mutch 03 4675479

Mandy Bell 03 4434250



## Articles

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The following article was supplied by our sponsors, Superior Minerals who pay for the printing and distribution of this newsletter. Please support them.

### **Fertiliser & Animal Health**

Sick animals are the result of sick soils and sick soils are the result of inadequate fertility.

The nutritive value of a food depends upon the fertility of the soil.

Animal health and performance and your profit, depend upon the nutritive value of the food your animal eats.

The soil is a dynamic, complex, living environment. To develop fertile soils, cultivate healthy crops and grow healthy animals, the soil must have the correct physical structure, biological properties, chemistry and fertility within that soil to support the particular species of plant being grown.

### **What is soil fertility?**

The amount of N,P and K, is not the measure of soil fertility. Soil fertility is better assessed by its aliveness, or biological activity and ability to supply all the necessary elements in the correct proportions for full cell development and healthy plant growth, the ratio of elements required being determined by the species of plant. For instance ryegrass and clover require a base saturation level of 68% calcium, while Lucerne requires 72% and pine trees 42%.

### **What is fertiliser?**

Fertiliser is "a substance added to soil to make plants grow more successfully" (Oxford dictionary). The development of a plant cell requires 16 essential elements; when the soil is deficient or depleted of any one of these essential elements no matter what the proportion it is required in, cell development will cease. "Any response will be proportionate to the most limiting factor" (Liebig's law of minimum) No element, no plant cells! No plant cells, no plant!

You can't bake a cake with flour alone.

### **What are the 17 essential elements?**

C (Carbon), H (Hydrogen), O (oxygen), N (Nitrogen), P (Phosphorous), K (Potassium), S (Sulphur), Cl (Chlorine), Ca (Calcium) by volume the largest required element, Mg (Magnesium), Mo (Molybdenum), B (Boron), Fe (Iron), Mn (Manganese), Cu (Copper), Zn (Zinc), Ni (Nickel).

An element not essential for cell development in the plant is Selenium (Se). However it is essential in the diet for animal health.

### **What are Nutrients?**

Dry matter, energy, protein, minerals and vitamins, there are over 130 known nutrients; of these we are aware of the function and interaction of only a minority. The influence of fertilisers on the growth, nutritional value and toxicities

of plants has a significant impact on the nutritional value of food the animal eats. High nitrate levels in plants for instance causes a myriad of maladies and deaths in stock.

The nutritional requirements for animals at certain stages of growth and production is well documented and a comprehensive wet chemistry laboratory analysis of your feeds will put you in the picture in regard to your animals supplementation requirements.

### **What fertiliser should be used?**

In the course of growing a plant and in the transfer of nutrient all the 16 essential elements are removed from the soil, not just one or two.

Determining which fertiliser's should be applied for your particular crop and in what proportions can only be established from a comprehensive soil analysis based on the buffering capacity of the soil and in turn supported by an unbiased and understandable recommendation for fertiliser.

We must not forget that we grow the grass for the animal not the animal for the grass.

Superior Minerals Ltd. offers the service of prescription blending complex solid fertiliser mix's in accordance with recommendations and your requirements.

Based on your feed analysis Superior Minerals also

specialise in as formulating and supplying custom made supplements to balance the nutritional requirements of your stock.

**Richard Woolley**  
*Agronomist & Nutritionist,  
Superior Minerals Ltd.*

The following information is provided by L.I.C who are sponsoring prizes worth \$3000 to some lucky farmer at the next eld day.

A message from Livestock Improvement

Livestock Improvement views the deer industry as a spectacular example of innovation in New Zealand agriculture. Enormous progress has been made in a short period of time and this is especially true in regard to farming practices. The major opportunities now involve market development and genetics. It is the latter that is of particular interest to us.

It is significant that New Zealand now has most of the world's valuable deer genotypes represented in our national herd. The raw material is available, but must be harnessed via a substantial genetic improvement programme involving objective assessment of important economic traits. The application of the science of quantitative genetics is Livestock Improvement's core competency. While we have much to learn about deer and deer farming, the principles of genetics are transportable. So too, we believe, are the

capabilities we have in semen technology and commercial AI. The benefit of this is to put elite genetics within reach of commercial farmers, because unless this happens, the industry will never achieve its potential.

Livestock Improvement is grateful for the opportunity to attend your forthcoming field day and we look forward to feedback on how we can contribute to your future success. If there are specific issues you would like addressed on the day, please email or give me a call.

**Peter Gatley**  
*General Manager - Genetics  
Livestock Improvement  
pgatley@lic.co.nz  
Phone 07 856 0700*

#### **Telford**

Telford is pleased to be associated with the New Zealand Deer industry nationally and locally, through events such as local field days. On our 800ha farm attached to the Polytechnic we have a 155ha deer farm carrying close to 1000 deer this last winter. We focus on intensive breeding and finishing, with the usual challenges such as targeting an improved fawning percentage. Our manager Mike Blair is good with pasture and stock management, but more importantly is not fazed by the prospect of seeing one or two new faces arrive for a week's work each Monday morning. Also it can be demanding hosting students at key times in the yards, such as velvetting.

The deer component of the one-year certificate course is increasing as deer farming becomes more widespread. Our focus and facilities are aimed at providing young people with some hands-on experience combined with the necessary theory to make them highly employable. Much of our effort goes towards encouraging the right attitude towards working on the land.

We are offering a free fees scheme to students from within the Clutha District in 2004. Also there are many bursaries and scholarships available to help reduce the size of the investment required to complete a year at Telford. Feel free to contact us on 0800 835 367 to find out more about the options for 2004.

**Mike Stephens**  
*Director, Telford Farms  
Contact: 03 418 4703  
Mobile: 025 968 336  
Email:  
mike.stephens@telford.ac.nz*





**NZDFA**

New Zealand Deer Farmers' Association

## Otago Branch NZDFA Field day

11 December 2003

### **Sire stag selection, management and performance Maximising \$\$ from stag inputs**

- Where:** Eric Thomson's property, Rapid 410, SH 8, 4km south of Alexandra
- When:** 12.30pm
- Cost:** \$5 for members of NZDFA, \$10 for non members
- Format:** Property viewing, talks, Xmas drinks and BBQ
- Registration:** Contact Mandy Bell on 03 4434250 or Craig North on 0272414179 or 034861612 (important for catering purposes)

#### **Programme**

- 12.30 pm: Mandy Bell - Introductions followed by a tour of the property
- 1.30 pm: Jason Archer - Selecting Sire Stags - Step 1. Analysing your breeding directions and stag requirements
- 1.50pm 'Deer South' - understand where you are at and where you want to go with your animal performance
- 2.20pm Jason Archer - Selecting Sire Stags - Step 2. Information sources available to aid stag selection e.g. breed reputation, breeder reputation, pedigree, performance records, visual appraisal, EBVs.
- What should the farmer be asking of breeders?
- 2.50pm 'A breeder' - stag selection from their perspective
- 3.00pm Afternoon tea
- 3.30 pm: Geoff Asher - managing stags to maximise reproductive performance
- 4.00pm Livestock Improvement - Thoughts on their involvement in the deer industry
- 4.20 pm: General discussion– Where does the deer industry need to go with genetics
- 5.00 pm: The afternoon will finish with an opportunity for informal discussion with the speakers and drinks organised by the Otago Branch (open bar provided – drinks at your own cost). Plus Xmas BBQ provided

#### **WIN \$3000 GENETIC IMPROVEMENT PACKAGE**

Attend on the day to go in the draw to win the package  
kindly donated by Livestock Improvement

*Make sure you get*

# ***the Best yield***

*from your farm*



*Leaders in the field of:*

- Co-ordinating soil, plant & animal nutrition* ●
- Independent and comprehensive soil, herbage and water analysis* ●
- Recommendations for fertiliser & animal nutritional needs* ●
- Personal on-farm consultancy* ●

*Prescription- blended Solid Fertilisers*

*Supreme Animal Nutrition Products*

## ***Whole Farm Nutrition Solutions***

***Phone Bruce Hore:***

***(03) 484-7721 or (029) 276-0303***

# Otago Branch, NZDFA, SURVEY

## August 2003

Name : \_\_\_\_\_ Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

a. Property location: District \_\_\_\_\_ Nearest town/settlement: \_\_\_\_\_

b. Land location (*please circle*):  
Coastal (0 - 20 km)      Inland      Mountainous (High Country)

c. Main land topography (*please circle*):  
flat / flat & rolling hills / rolling hills / rolling hills & steep / steep /  
other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

d. Number of breeding hinds (*please circle*):  
<100 / 100 - 400 / 400 - 800 / >800

e. Number of velveting stags: \_\_\_\_\_

f. Main species (*please circle*):  
red / red x wapiti / elk - wapiti / fallow

g. Main production system (*please circle*):  
breeding/weaner sales / breeding/venison / venison / trophy / tourism  
breeding/velvet antler / venison/velvet / other

Please write your approximate farm area in hectares \_\_\_\_\_ or acres \_\_\_\_\_.

h. What proportion of your farming operation is deer? 20% / 40% / 60% / 80% / 100%

i. Circle other enterprises: beef / sheep / cropping / tourism

j. What would you like to see in seminars organised by the branch? (*Please circle*):  
Nutrition / Velveting / Fertilisers / Feed Conservation /  
Venison Production / Reproduction / Pastures  
Other \_\_\_\_\_

k. Branch Newsletter – Is it of interest? Yes / No

What would you like to see more of / less of? \_\_\_\_\_

**Please fill in as much as able or comfortable. Add any other comments on the back if you wish.**

Please return survey back to:  
Otago Branch NZDFA Survey  
Loganburn Station, RD4 Ranfurly or fax 03 444 9584 or hand it  
in at the up-coming field-day.