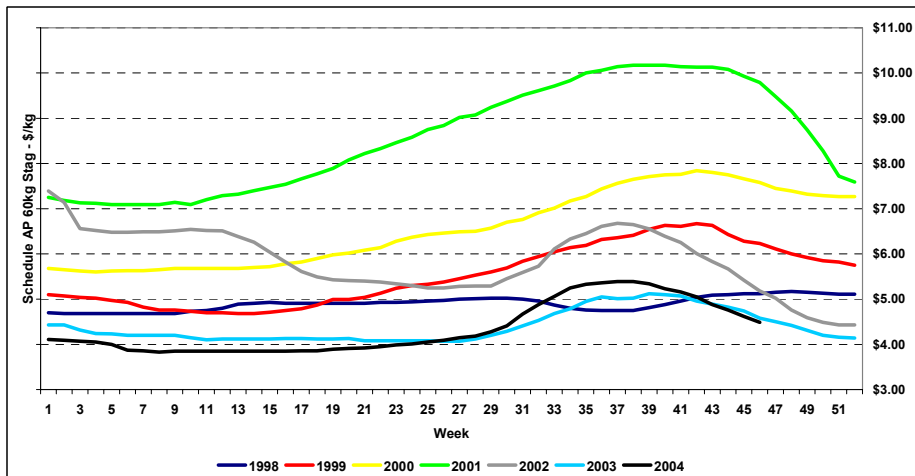


## >>> VENISON SCHEDULE

This week (week 46): \$4.49. Down 13 cents from last week. Down 2% on the same time last year (\$4.58).

Down 29% on the 10 year average for this time of year (\$6.32)

*60kg AP Stag – Published National Average Schedule. (Source: Agri-Fax)*



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## >>> NEWS & UPDATES

### INDUSTRY POLL

Poll documents relating to the consultation process to determine Deer Industry New Zealand's role and function for the next 5 years were posted on 5 November to all known deer farmers, venison and velvet processors and exporters.

Please complete and return your poll document as soon as possible – they must be received no later than noon on 22 November.

Results will be published as soon as possible – expected by 29 November at the latest.

Please call the Deer Industry New Zealand office on (04) 473 4500 if you have not received a poll document or if you would like an additional copy of the Consultation Document. Otherwise email [info@deernz.org](mailto:info@deernz.org).

*Look out for your poll document – please complete and return it to be received no later than noon on 22 November.*

### VELVET FOR JOINT HEALTH

Major US natural health industry publication *Natural Products Insider* ([www.naturalproductsinsider.com](http://www.naturalproductsinsider.com)) published a feature on Bone and Joint Health in its October 2004 issue. The article cites velvet antler as a natural source of collagen, hyaluronic acid and chondroitin (which may all be beneficial for joint health) and refers to 2 studies using elk velvet antler (1 with 40 Rheumatoid Arthritis sufferers and 1 with 13 dogs) which both showed positive results.

*Natural Products Insider* reported that total costs associated with arthritis health care amount to US\$86 billion a year in America alone.

*Velvet cited in leading US natural products publication as beneficial for joint health.*

# Deer Notes

## CHINA BANS VELVET IMPORTS

Deer Industry New Zealand has had rumours officially confirmed that China has banned all imports of velvet.

While official access is not in place for exports of velvet to China for consumption in China, we have been able to export velvet into China for processing and re-export. For the year to June 2004, official export stats indicate a significant trade in velvet (51 tonnes frozen) into China.

Advice from New Zealand's Embassy in Beijing and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) is that:

- There is a ban on all velvet being imported from all sources (ie not NZ only) for processing and re-export
- The announcement of the ban came as part of a broader ban on 55 products which have been banned from import into China for a range of reasons; environmental (used computers), strategic (coal) and "to avoid revenue fraud (eg deer velvet)".
- The rationale for the deer velvet ban appears to be that tax inspectors have not been able to correlate the volumes of velvet imported (for processing and re-export, imported free of tariff and VAT) with the volumes exported.

Deer Industry New Zealand has been in contact with MAF, MFAT and the Minister about this issue since unconfirmed reports of the ban were received early last week. The details of the ban were only able to be officially confirmed late on Tuesday afternoon.

Deer Industry New Zealand Chairman and CEO have an urgent meeting with the Minister next week to discuss this and other velvet issues and to seek the Minister's support to get the issue addressed with all possible urgency.

While unconfirmed, the ban is understood to have been in place for several weeks now, possibly a further reason for the current extremely soft velvet market.

Deer Industry New Zealand will keep the industry advised of progress via *Deer Notes* and other industry publications.

*Ban on imports of velvet into China.*

**PLEASE RETURN YOUR INDUSTRY POLL IF YOU HAVEN'T DONE SO ALREADY  
POLL CLOSING NOON 22 NOVEMBER.**

## WE WANT YOU: FOR VELVET REMOVAL RESEARCH

Want to help the industry move forward on knowledge about antler removal? Massey University's Deer Research Group is calling for farmer volunteers to assist with research into the use of local analgesia for velvet antler removal in stags. What is needed are:

- Four or five large velveting farms are required, preferably – but not necessarily – with more than one operator, that use ring block analgesia and crush for restraint (no xylazine).
- The name and contact details of the supervising vet for that farm.
- Names and contact details for other farmers, prepared to participate in the study either by travelling to the larger farmers or on their own property.
- Participation in the study will not affect status within the NVSB programme – it is the ring block method that is being analysed and not individual operators - and confidentiality will be strictly observed.

Letters have gone out to all DFA branches giving more specific details of the study but we urge you to consider assisting this important research.

*If you want to be part of this important research project or to find out more, contact the Massey research veterinarian Pania Flint, BVSc on 06-356 9099 ext 2854, mobile 027-490 99 77 or Tony Pearse, Producer Manager, Deer Industry New Zealand on 03-4899221 or 021-719 038*

*Looking for velvetters to assist with velvet removal research.*

# Deer Notes

## INCREASING MEAT INSPECTION COSTS

Consultations have been held with NZFSA Regulatory Authority (RA) and NZFSA Verification Agency (VA) concerning their financial outcomes for 2003/2004 and cost recovery proposals for the new contract period (from 1 November 2004).

### NZFSA Regulatory Authority (RA):

A combination of over-recovery and under-expenditure resulted in the RA having a substantial surplus for 2003/2004. For the new cost-recovery period a significant reduction in expenditure has been forecast. For the deer industry it has been determined that the surplus achieved is sufficient to fully meet costs for the first eight months of the new period (from 1 November 04 to 30 June 05). Therefore, for deer there will be no charge for this period. The RA is going to realign its cost-recovery period with the MAF financial year. To achieve this there will be further consultations early in 2005 to set a rate to apply from 1 July. This new rate is expected to be less than the present \$0.83 per deer processed.

### NZFSA Verification Agency (VA):

The report from VA is not as positive. During the past year resourcing of vets has reached crisis point. There have been additional costs from "stop-gap" measures needed to maintain service plus recruiting / training costs for new staff. Some of these costs are on-going. There are significant increases in overhead costs feeding down from MAF Corporate and employment agreements are also due for renegotiation. The effect is that the total hourly rate for Supervising Vets (SV) is increasing by 13.4% (from \$80.74 to \$91.58) and for Meat Vets by 15% (from \$76.29 to \$87.72).

It can be seen from the figures below that this year's increases are not an isolated occurrence. There has been a pattern of on-going growth in the VA's costs and this is extremely concerning.

YEAR	MEAT VET	SV	PROGRAMME
99/00	\$38.19	\$40.70	\$0.66 per deer
00/01	\$51.98	\$53.47	\$1.76 per deer
01/02	\$48.45	\$53.59	\$18.50 per hour
02/03	\$48.45	\$53.59	\$21.00 per hour
03/04	\$50.81	\$54.81	\$25.48 per hour
04/05	\$55.29	\$59.15	\$32.43 per hour

The situation for "Circuit Inspection" is similar. Requirements being placed on inspectors are changing and this is apparently causing stress problems in an ageing workforce. There are also on-going training and recruitment issues plus employment agreements to be renegotiated. The effect is that hourly rates for a Travelling Technical Supervisor have increased by 13.6% (from \$85.59 to \$97.27) and for Circuit Vets by 14.7% (from \$99.63 to \$114.30).

On 28 September 2004 we wrote to the MAF Director General (Murray Sherwin) expressing extreme concern at the increases in the VA costs that the Deer Sector is being asked to pay. We have noted that over three contract periods the agency's programme charge alone has increased by more than 54%. We have posed a series of questions and have suggested some new initiatives plus the need for public funding to meet restructuring related costs for which we feel the government should be responsible. At the time of writing this report we have had no reply to our letter. The terms of the NZFSA contract have not been agreed but we understand that they are now being imposed – including the rates detailed above.

It should be noted that the VA's cost recovery period is also being realigned with the MAF financial year. This means that the terms of contract that are now being imposed will apply for twenty months - that is from 1 November 2004 until 30 June 2006.

*Concerns at increased costs for meat inspection services being passed on to the industry.*

# Deer Notes

## STAG REACTIONS FOLLOWING VELVET REMOVAL

Adverse stag reactions post-velvetting are an animal welfare and financial concern to the deer industry and individual farmers alike. Recognising the issue, the industry has commissioned research to identify risk factors contributing to adverse reactions. Identification of these factors should enable farmers and veterinarians to avoid adverse reactions from happening in future.

Farmers and veterinarians are asked to notify adverse reactions as soon as they occur (within 24 hours). All information collected will be treated in strict confidence. No information will be used for purposes other than this research. It is vital that adverse events are reported to understand and eliminate this costly and frustrating problem.

IF YOU EXPERIENCE AND ADVERSE STAG REACTION FOLLOWING VELVET REMOVAL, PLEASE CONTACT YOUR VETERINARIAN IN THE FIRST INSTANCE. THEN PLEASE CONTACT EITHER:

- Rob Gregory, NVSB Manager: Wellington. Phone: (04) 473 4500, Fax: (0)4 472 5549, email: [rob.gregory@deernz.org](mailto:rob.gregory@deernz.org), or
- Sithar Dorjee, Researcher, Massey University. Phone: (06) 350 5855, Fax: (06) 350 5716, email: [S.Dorjee@massey.ac.nz](mailto:S.Dorjee@massey.ac.nz)

*Please let us know if you have any adverse stag reactions post-velvet removal.*

**PLEASE RETURN YOUR INDUSTRY POLL IF YOU HAVEN'T DONE SO ALREADY  
POLL CLOSING NOON 22 NOVEMBER.**

## ASD ISSUES BEING PURSUED WITH NZFSA

At one of the recent shed meetings we were asked to look into a problem concerning Animal Status Declarations (ASDs). This relates to NZFSA rejecting deer shipments where the number of deer on the ASD is different to the number on the truck. We agreed to investigate whether NZFSA would consider extending a miscount allowance that applies to sheep to also include deer.

We subsequently confirmed that deer (and larger animals in general) cannot be processed where the number of animals presented differs from the number declared on the ASD. The situation for mobs of smaller animals (goats, sheep and lambs) is different. Where there is a "small" variation over or under the number declared on the ASD, they can still be processed. The NZFSA Technical Directive (TD) says that as a guide, a 3% tolerance is acceptable.

For deer, if the number shown on the ASD is incorrect, the NZFSA has been allowing processing to proceed when the processor produces a fax version of an updated (corrected) form. However, it has still been necessary for the processor to follow up and in fact receive and keep on file the original hard copy of the corrected form. Complying with this requirement has been a source of ongoing frustration for all concerned.

Since our raising the miscount problem with NZFSA, they have issued a new Technical Directive. For deer (and other generally larger animals) faxed copies of updated ASDs are now wholly acceptable. It is no longer necessary for processors to chase suppliers to obtain the original hard copy. This is a major improvement on what applied previously.

We are continuing to pursue with NZFSA the possibility of getting a "small" variation allowance for deer similar to that applying to goats, sheep and lambs. We have pointed out that deer can be difficult to count accurately because of movement and also loading in reduced light environments.

We have also noted a new "discrepancy allowance" for pigs. Processing of pigs is now able to proceed if there is a discrepancy of one pig in batches of over 30. However, although processing is allowed there is still a requirement to obtain the corrected ASD as soon as possible either using the email system or by fax. In all other circumstances of discrepancy the corrected ASD must be obtained before processing the pigs commences.

We will keep you informed of any further progress on this issue.

*Working with NZFSA to try to implement some common-sense improvements into the ASD system.*

# Deer Notes

## >>> UPCOMING EVENTS & IMPORTANT DATES

<p><b>Waikato Velvet Competition. Awards and Christmas Dinner</b>            Velvet Competition at Icepak, Tamahere. Christmas function at Sarnia Deer's Wedding Reception Centre, 151 Maungatautari Road, Cambridge            Contact Bob Dunn 07 829 5899</p>	19 November
<p><b>Hawke's Bay Branch Velvet Competition</b>            For more information: Mike McCormick (06) 858 9127</p>	19 November
<p><b>Waipa Velvet Competition</b>            Contact Brian Wellington 07 872 1867</p>	20 November
<p><b>South Canterbury – North Otago Branch Velvet Competition</b>            Organiser: Kelly Hudson (03) 686 1967</p>	26 November
<p><b>North Island Velvet Competition</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Velvet Viewing will be at Otaki Cold Storage from 3-5pm on the 27th</li> <li>• Dinner and the Awards Ceremony will be held at the Waikanae Golf Club from 7.30pm at the price of \$35 per head.</li> </ul> <p>Further Information: Pete Adlam on (04) 2936300</p>	26 - 27 November
<p><b>Wairoa Branch Velvet Competition</b>            More information: Ian Pickering (06) 837 5977</p>	27 November
<p><b>Marlborough Velvet Competition</b>            Contact Kevin Hayes for details 03 578 6923</p>	30 November
<p><b>Eastern Southland Velvet Competition</b>            Riversdale Tavern. Contact Lloyd Thayer for details 0274 366 558</p>	30 November
<p><b>South Otago Velvet Competition</b>            Greenfields Tavern, Clydevale 5.00pm Barry McCall 03 415 92532</p>	1 December
<p><b>Taranaki Branch Velvet Competition</b>            More information: John Cusdin (06) 762 7852</p>	2 December
<p><b>Wanganui Velvet Competition and Christmas Social Function</b>            Contact Dave Johnston 06 342 9831</p>	3 December
<p><b>Southland Branch and National Velvet and Hard Antler Competition</b>            More information: Eddie Brock (03) 207 6822</p>	6 - 8 December
<p><b>Elk and Wapiti Society</b>            Millennium Hotel Queenstown, Contact Tracey MacLean 03 318 3101</p>	22 January
<p><b>National 2 y/o Velvet and Hard Antler Competition</b>            Rooms are available at the Copthorne Solway. For further details contact Anne Allen, Secretary, Wairarapa Branch – (06) 372 7706, <a href="mailto:allens@wise.net.nz">allens@wise.net.nz</a></p>	19 February 2005

<p>Deer Notes is published by Deer Industry New Zealand PO Box 10-702 Wellington, New Zealand</p>	<p>Tel: +64-4 473 4500            Fax: +64-4 472 5549  <a href="http://www.deernz.org">www.deernz.org</a>  <a href="http://www.velvet.org.nz">www.velvet.org.nz</a>  <a href="http://www.nzvenison.com">www.nzvenison.com</a></p>	<p>While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of its content, Deer Notes alone is not to be substituted for direct advice on any matter addressed.</p>
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