

>>> VENISON SCHEDULE

Venison Schedule.

The venison schedule opened 2007 30% above 2006. The post game season decline sees the schedule sitting at \$4.71 for 60kg AP stags in the first weeks of 2007 (NI \$4.55, SI \$4.87). Other grades record even higher differences with heavy stags (80kg) up 40% and hinds up 30-37% over schedule prices recorded a year ago.

Much now depends on the currency. The weakness of the US Dollar is a concern, but the gradual appreciation against the Euro is of more importance to returns for the New Zealand venison industry with an estimated 85% of trade denominated in this currency. At current levels DINZ estimates that each 1 Euro cent appreciation knocks about 10 to 15 cents of the schedule.

IN THIS ISSUE

- Venison Schedule.
- Market Conditions.
- Graham Brown Tumbles
- Cervena Lists on www.NRN.com
- Star Chefs Sponsored Event – Rising Star Chefs Honorees Dinner, Washington DC
- Pools
- PGG Wrightson/Velconz Survey
- Successful Korean Promotion
- Korean-NZ Deer Industry Relationship Deepens
- Velvet Joint Promotions
- Super Heavy Weight Red Deer Velvet Competition class proposed
- DEERSelect: Velvet /hard antler data records wanted
- National 2 year old velvet and 1, 2, 3 year old hard antler competition

Market Conditions.

The slightly warmer weather than usual so far this northern winter did not deter people from eating game through the winter. Importers report steady sales, with middle cuts now in short supply. Some chilled is still being ordered to carry on some retail operations, but the vast majority of the exports have now swung back to frozen.

Orders for frozen continue briskly with strong demand continuing from Europe. North America has seen sales fall as the weak US dollar makes Europe a more attractive destination for manufacturing items. Sales of middle cuts to North America continue to increase slowly as exporters and their distributing partners work to build demand for venison.

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Deer Notes

Top US Chefs fly in to Prepare Cervena for Pinot Noir 2007

Delegates at Pinot Noir 2007 will not only be treated to great New Zealand wine and food – they'll also get to sample the culinary skills of some of New Zealand Trade and Enterprise's Ambassador Chefs. Three American-based chefs will join North Canterbury's Graham Brown in each designing a main course at the Gala Dinner on the last night of the four day event being held in Wellington from 29 January – 1 February 2007.

Culinary Director Ruth Pretty says the chefs' guest appearance will be a fitting culmination to what is tipped to be the biggest wine event of its kind ever held in New Zealand. "The chefs will prepare a Cervena dish they have designed as a perfect match for the Pinot Noirs that will be on offer. The chefs serve Cervena and New Zealand Pinot Noir in their restaurants and I am really looking forward to their interpretation.

"It is exciting to have the opportunity to work with them." Ruth says the 1000 guests at the Gala Dinner, being held in a special marquee on Wellington's waterfront, will be treated to four courses – a sumptuous seafood entrée, followed by the Ambassador Chef's Cervena main course, then a Whitestone Cheeses buffet and a dessert perfectly matched to New Zealand dessert wines.

The American NZTE Ambassador Chefs coming for the event are:

- Shawn McClain, chef/owner of Spring, Custom House and Green Zebra restaurants in Chicago
- Todd Gray, chef/owner at Equinox in Washington DC and
- Brad Farmerie, chef/owner at Public in New York

... "the chefs will prepare a Cervena dish they have designed as a perfect match for the Pinot Noirs that will be on offer". Ruth Pretty, Culinary Director

Graham Brown Tumbles

Our sympathy to Graham Brown who succumbed to the law of gravity in a classic motorcycle race prior to Christmas and suffered a painful break to a bone in his shoulder. It was of course the other guy's fault, and Graham has spent an uncomfortable few weeks over Christmas recuperating. However it has done nothing to dampen his enthusiasm for racing bikes, nor will it slow down any of his work for the New Zealand deer industry. DINZ and Graham have another packed year planned with local trade education and market based promotions in the pipeline and believe it or not, will be racing at Pukekoe in early February.

Cervena Lists on www.NRN.com

Deer Industry New Zealand has ensured that Cervena will be featured on America's most visited professional culinary website. A series of recipes have been loaded onto the www.nrn.com (Nations Restaurant News) website and will be used by the web publishers as featured recipes on a monthly basis over the next year.

Star Chefs Sponsored Event – Rising Star Chefs Honorees Dinner, Washington DC

Cervena was the star entrée featured at the Dec 12 Rising Star Honorees Dinner, when fifteen local chefs were honored (see http://www.starchefs.com/chefs/rising_stars/2006/dc/html/index.shtml). The private event was held at Farrah Olivia www.faraholiviarestaurant.com.

Broadleaf Cervena and their local Washington DC supplier AM Briggs sponsored the Star Chefs Gala Revue on Dec 13, see http://www.starchefs.com/chefs/rising_stars/2006/dc/html/index.shtml. Each of the Rising Star Honorees hosted a station and served a signature dish to 500 guests.

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Deer Notes

Bart Vandaele's dish, Cervena Venison Couscous Waffle with Fresh Herbs and Mushrooms, is posted on the Star Chefs website, at http://www.starchefs.com/chefs/rising_stars/2006/dc/html/cervena_venison_b_vandaele.shtml.

>>> VELVET

	Current Season		Last Season's	Approx. Change
	Week ending 12/1/07		Weighted Average	from
				Last Season
SA	113	- 114	\$60.00	89%
A	106	- 107	\$57.00	87%
B	101	- 101	\$53.00	91%
C	93	- 93	\$48.00	94%
D	76	- 78	\$43.00	79%
E	64	- 65	\$37.00	74%
Sp	85	- 86	\$50.00	71%
RG	78	- 83	\$49.00	64%

Pools

Velvet prices are still holding well despite the high dollar, increased quantities sold and higher import costs for Korean importers.

PGG Wrightson/Velconz Survey

Responses have come in at a reasonable rate for the PGG Wrightson survey of velvet producers. The survey is to understand producers' view on how New Zealand velvet should be sold and marketed. Around 260 responses are in. It is not too late to respond. If you need a new survey form or you would like to discuss the ideas in more detail, call Ponty von Dadelzsen (06 857 7922) or Tony Cochrane (03 344 3666).

Successful Korean Promotion

The recent Seoul Millennium Hilton Promotion in Korea where New Zealand deer velvet was showcased as part of high end Korean cuisine was a great event. The 9 day promotion at the prestigious hotel where venison also featured created quite a stir from hotel guests, food planners and food and beverage directors from Seoul's top hotels. The imagination of the legendary Chef Park who oversaw the whole project was fantastic and the presentation of all dishes was superb, some of which included: velvet soup, velvet sorbet, venison with velvet sauce and velvet dusted chocolates. Interest from other hotels on hosting another such promotion was high and the event hit both magazines and food papers within the week.

... velvet soup, velvet sorbet, venison with velvet sauce and velvet dusted chocolates served at the Seoul Millennium Hilton

Deer Notes

Korean-NZ Deer Industry Relationship Deepens

During December DINZ assisted in hosting two delegations of deer farmers from Korea. The groups enjoyed time in both the North and South Islands and visited processing facilities, a velvet cool store, Invermay, artificial breeding companies, and the industry's North Island and National velvet competitions. The groups were both treated to several farm visits where farmers went out of their way to show the group deer, facilities and talk them through our annual calendar of events. This has further developed our relationship with the Korean Deer Breeders Association and they expressed their sincere thanks to all who were involved. DINZ did not contribute to the cost of their travel.



Figure 1: members of the second Korean delegation being talked through our velvet judging process at the Invercargill Nationals.

Velvet Joint Promotions

Several Joint Promotions are underway at present. One partner is due to hit two of the biggest supply trade shows in the world for innovative and healthy ingredients with their velvet product for people. Another is also heading to the United States to exhibit at the North American Veterinary Conference which is an annual event attracting over 16,000 attendees. A partner in China is currently involved in large promotion and marketing campaigns which encompass several of the largest Chinese cities.

Deer Notes

Super Heavy Weight Red Deer Velvet Competition class proposed

Convenor Joe Crowley has proposed that the Waikato Branch NZDFA's hosting National 2 year velvet competition, in association with the hard spiker, hard 2yo and inaugural 3 year old hard antler competition being held on at The Oaks, Tower Farms, 17 February 2007 might feature a super weight red deer antler class. (SHW)

It is intended that the minimum weight be 10kg, and will allow both the classic heads and some of the more unusual heads being grown to be seen, judged and displayed.

It is not a competition for Reds that are overgrown or outgrown to the so called Red extended stage but genuine super heavy competition SA1 or SA2 grades that may also feature with additional trez tines, basal developments, multi-bulbing tops and web type beam bulb tops etc but also to attract the more classic styles in SAP and SA1 and SA2 grades.

Judging will be based on the same judging criteria as used now. Similarly overgrown heads will be treated as such.

It is hoped that this class may provide more interest and allow a greater number of big heads to be seen, in place of the Branch challenge (a combination of a 2yo and adult head) which is not going to be run this year as there was little interest from branches in 2006 and only 2 entries.

Contact Producer Manager direct (021719038) or talk to Joe Crowley (027 4727 436) for further information.

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>>> Research Update

Deer Industry New Zealand invests a substantial amount of funds into R&D typically around \$1,000,000 per year (exc GST) split between VARNZ and DEEResearch. As much as this is in terms of available industry funds, the amount of research this can buy is small relative to the number of issues facing the industry. Having access to other funds and in particular central government through Public Good Science and Technology funds is therefore crucial to undertake meaningful research. Having good governance structures to guide the research along industry needs and ensure good uptake of results is equally important.

Throughout 2006 there has been considerable discussions between researchers and industry groups as current central government funding contracts near their end and new proposals are contested. For both VARNZ and DEEResearch this has represented an ideal opportunity to offer more governance of the non-industry funded research and to integrate this with industry funded research. It has also provided an opportunity for other industry groups to send clear signals on research priorities.

The funding allocation process, administered by the Foundation for Research Science and Technology is conducted in two stages:

- Preliminary concept proposal (submitted on 18 September 2006)
- Full proposal (submission by 22 February 2007 for velvet related research and 7 March 2007 for non-velvet related research). Successfully funded proposals will commence on 1 October 2007.

Overall the deer industry has been successful in passing the *first stage* - two full proposals will be submitted by AgResearch (the lead research provider for both proposals):

Proposal Title	Annual Government Funding (incl GST)	Contract Duration
Creating wealth with premium products from NZ deer velvet	\$1,000,000	Two years
Venison supply systems	\$1,895,478	Six years

In addition the industry (via DEEResearch) also contributes funding to pastoral sector research consortia (Pastoral Genomics – improved pasture species, Pastoral Greenhouse Gas – mitigation technologies, and Johne’s Disease – anticipated start 1 July 2007).

Although there is no guarantee, if both proposals are fully funded, then industry will be leveraging government funding at a ratio of more than 1:3 for the two proposals and even higher for the research consortia (although the research in these is not specific to the deer industry).

Such an outcome will give the industry a workable research base (funding and time) to develop solutions to productivity issues, environmental concerns and higher value products.

Over the next few weeks researchers and industry will be working closely to develop the full proposals for submission.

... Overall the deer industry has been successful in passing the first stage of FRST re-bidding - two full proposals will shortly be submitted by AgResearch

>>> DEERSelect

DEERSelect: Velvet /hard antler data records wanted

Added value for velvet and hard antler genetics.

An Invitation to deer breeders and those interested in hard antler and trophy genetics.

EBV's for the leading antler trait **mature velvet weight** have been available on a within herd basis since the inception of DEER Select but there is not yet sufficient data available to publish robust cross herd evaluations for velvet or antler traits. A new tool developed that allows predicted velvet antler taken from hard velvet measurements taken from young stags (essentially the elite 2 & 3 year olds offered annually for sale) is available and DEERSelect would like to attract and interest as many breeders as possible to record and share this information from this season. There are two main emphases.

a) predicted velvet weight from hard velvet/antler measurements

A trial established last year across a small number of key breeders measured a number of parameters on hard velvet cut at the stripping stage and related that back to the other antlers specifications cut at the optimal velvet stage.

- The key finding was that a beam circumference measured in hard velvet taken at the point of stripping has proven to be a reliable consistent measurement that can be used as a solid predictor of assumed velvet weight after conversion from the developed formula based on this work.
- Hard velvet upper beam circumference can also be accurately be converted to velvet upper circumference
- Accuracy is around 60% which is sufficient in genetic terms to allow this information to be useful, where none existed before.

Use of this measurement could provide:

- More accurate velvet EBV's on animals not velvetted
- BV's for velvet available prior to sale
- genetic evaluation to account for the selected recording of velvet weight for animals not cut for sale
- BV's on upper beam circumference itself, as an economically relevant trait in its own right, as well as being a predictor of velvet weight.

If you are cutting and recording young animal antler in January/ February and are prepared to share that data with DEERSelect please measure the beam circumference above the trez tines for each antler at the standard velvet measuring point, (in fact record the main beam as well), the weight of each antler, stage of antler growth and a genetic description (English, European, Composite and record against tag no in respective age groups. If you are interested please contact Deer Select (Tony Pearse (tony.pearse@deernz.org 021 719 038, or Jason Archer (jason.archer@agresearch.co.nz 029 4899138). We will be happy to provide a data set sheet to full in and return.

b) Modified SCI scores as a new trait.

DEERSelect recognises that the modified SCI score is a key measurement in selection and breeding programmes, it is objectively used in hard antler competitions and in advertising and promotion and can be verified to a standard by experienced measurers. DEERSelect proposes this year to develop the background needed to provide heritability estimates for SCI and hard antler scores and produce an EBV for this trait.

Deer Notes

While the assumption from individual experience is that this trait is strongly heritable it is not yet quantified in an EBV sense.

A measurement trial covering 400 young heads of known age linked to at least known sires with scores is proposed to develop this EBV for the 2007/08 season. The data set needs at least 40 different sires with 10 measured progeny each in the same year.

If you have an interest in this area and will be collecting records please contact DEERSelect and add your records on velvet and antler growth to allow the same cross herd evaluations programme to be applied as the venison and growth EBV's .

>>> Dates to Remember

Saturday 3 February

Elk and Wapiti Society: National Elk/Wapiti Velvet and inaugural carcass competition
Contact Tom May 03 236 7035 (carcass competition) or
Tracey Maclean 03 318 3101 (for Velvet and dinner tickets)

National 2 year old velvet and 1, 2, 3 year old hard antler competition

Saturday, 17 February 2007. Tower Farm, Cambridge.

The Waikato branch, NZDFA are proud hosts of the 2007 competition and introduce 2 new exciting categories, 1 and 3 year old hard antler , along with the 2 yo Velvet and 2 yo hard antler classes. Prizes exist for each class with spot prizes on the day as well.

Details and Entry forms are available from Sharon Love, (07 332 5892 or 027 486 4341) sharon@reddeer.co.nz or Joe Crowley (027 472 7436) tower.farms@clear.net.nz

All entry forms need to be received by Friday, 9 February and all heads received by Wednesday, 14 February.

Antler viewing and results will be at Tower Farm, Cambridge from 5.00pm Saturday, 17th, followed by presentations and dinner.