

DEER INDUSTRY NEWS

Issue 40 • February/March 2010 • Official magazine of Deer Industry New Zealand and the NZDFA



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Johne's disease
vaccine released -
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Also in this issue:

- *Dedicated to Deer* consultation feedback
- Latest from Northern and Central Regions Focus Farms
- *Focu\$ed 2010* Deer Industry Conference preview
- Venison industry roundup
- More on breeding values
- VARNZ and DEEResearch annual reports



**DEER INDUSTRY
NEW ZEALAND**

NZDFA
New Zealand Deer Farmers' Association





Ten good reasons to get involved

Welcome to the 40th issue of Deer Industry News and the first for 2010. To begin this "10" year, I thought it would be worth sharing my 10 reasons why I strongly encourage all deer farmers to take an active part in their industry.

1. Volatility

This is a reality of farming today, whether it's a global financial crisis, exchange rates, weather or a biosecurity problem. A good way to deal with volatility is to lower the break even point – the point where income equals cost. The best ways to do that are to reduce costs and raise productivity. These are key elements of the recently reviewed 2010–2014 venison strategy. A positive way to do that is to be an active part of the *Making the DIFFerence* Focus Farm programme because there are others in your community, working with the regional Focus Farm, trying to achieve the same thing.

2. Maximising income

A better spread of venison sales outside the European game season is being achieved, but the industry still wants to maintain a seasonal price premium in the traditional high game season for New Zealand venison. It is therefore desirable to supply a higher proportion of deer in the August to October period. Again, this is an important aspect of the *Making the DIFFerence* Focus Farm programme, with some outstanding results being achieved. It makes sense to attend and be involved in your regional Focus Farm programme.

3. A united voice

Agriculture is facing more and more imposed challenges – such as environmental restrictions, animal welfare compliance, preference for local food production or a growing urban population that does not understand where their food comes from. The best way to deal with these issues is collectively or with a united front. For deer farmers, this is by active membership of the New Zealand Deer Farmers' Association. "Active" means forming views on issues and making those known by attending the Deer Industry Conference (a great conference – not "politics"), attending local branch events which have a great mix of social activity and local focus, making the odd call to your NZDFA representative or, better still, being an NZDFA representative at branch or national level.

4. Giving something back

Every deer farmer is benefitting from the hard work of the producers who preceded them. Taking an active part in the deer industry is a good way of leaving the industry stronger than when you found it for future generations. This industry was founded on the back of that passion and drive.

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Cover: We bring you our annual sire sale report on page 32. Photos courtesy of Sharon Love, Tradedeer. Montage: Arvind Sardar.

Editorial from page 3

5. Communication

This is often raised as an issue for farmers. But communication is (at least) a two way street which requires some sort of a relationship. If you have ever said “the communication is terrible – no one tells me what’s going on”, consider that you receive *Deer Industry News* six times per year (it’s in the post and on the website) plus a Deer Industry New Zealand Annual Report. *Stagline-Online* is available via email monthly (to NZDFA members). The Board and Executive of Deer Industry New Zealand are at the Deer Industry Conference along with many of the leading CEOs of the venison marketing companies and the valuable people in the myriad of the supporting service and product suppliers. The direct telephone lines and email addresses of all DINZ Executives are available, and the DINZ Producer Manager is at most local events. If you choose to put something into the relationship by reading the material and discussing your views with those who work for you, there’s a much better chance of good communication.

6. Our industry is built on grass roots support

It’s often been said that the branch network of NZDFA is the backbone of the deer industry. But, at the end of the day the NZDFA branch network is nothing without great people, their ideas and a bit of work. The recognition of individuals working at branch level each year through the Matuschka Award is a tangible celebration of this grass roots contribution. The system is extremely valuable but breaks down if it’s left to too few people. A decent number of people making a positive contribution and sharing a small part of the load will make a big difference to those currently shouldering the work.

7. Get accountability

You pay a levy to DINZ for work to “promote and assist the development of the deer industry”. It is not a tax. It is paid to get work done that will benefit the New Zealand deer industry. It is important that you have accountability for the way your money has been used. Were you one of the 130 people who made their views known through the *Dedicated to Deer* consultation on DINZ’s work, roles and functions? If you were, your comments were provided to each DINZ Executive and Board Member. If you were not, you can make your views known at any time. You have a right to ask questions, share your views and get answers about your industry-good organisation.

8. Personal growth

There are many opportunities to take positions which will give you an opportunity to learn new skills and get new knowledge. A critical challenge for the deer industry is leadership. One person can make a big difference in an industry – and that person does not have to be able to talk like Martin Luther-King or Don Nicolson. A common misperception is that anything too far from the farm is about “politics”. It’s not – or at least, shouldn’t be. It is about representing the views and concerns of the industry and making good change happen.

9. Where are the deer industry’s women?

Despite deer farming being a family business, there are currently no female NZDFA branch chairs although there have been some standout contributors in the past. To my recollection there has only been one female board member on the GIB/DINZ Board. Surely we can do better than that?

10. It’s an industry with a future!

It’s a great industry with great people and I believe great prospects. It’s definitely worth being a part of.


Just a few of the ways farmers could get involved include: attending conference in Napier from 18–20 May, joining branch committees, national committees or Focus Farm community groups, becoming a focus farmer, going to Focus Farm field days, joining industry working groups (industry strategies, DINZ budget reviews, AHB reviews, etc), responding to surveys, allowing research to be done on your farm, embarking on a path toward DINZ/NZDFA national leadership positions, joining the productivity working group, contacting industry leaders with ideas, sharing your views through *Deer Industry News* or *Stagline-Online* ... there are lots more.

So how about making 2010 the year when you take a more active part in your deer industry? The opportunities and rewards are many. 📧

■ **Mark O’Connor, CEO, Deer Industry New Zealand**

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Dedicated to Deer: Industry consultation completed

Deer Industry New Zealand undertook a consultation round late last year to seek industry's views on Deer Industry New Zealand and how it is performing. This was part of a commitment made in 1999 to discuss DINZ's role and performance with producers every five years.

The consultation was centred around a document called *Dedicated To Deer* (available by request from Deer Industry New Zealand through info@deernz.org). The document presented Deer Industry New Zealand's work over the past five years and summaries of Deer Industry Strategic Intents for the next five years. As well as seeking feedback on performance, it also sought industry's ideas on the work which should and should not be undertaken.

The number of responses was low at 128, but the quality of responses was very high with most respondents providing detailed comments.

Those responding indicated strong support for Deer Industry New Zealand. In answer to a question "How supportive are you of Deer Industry New Zealand's work, roles and functions?" (1 = don't support at all, 10 = extremely supportive), the average and median responses were 8 (Figure 1).

Responses contained an array of views and perspectives, although a number of consistent topics were raised:

- 1. Support for Deer Industry New Zealand:** Most respondents expressed support for Deer Industry New Zealand. A typical response was: *"I believe DINZ's approach to be well balanced and I have confidence in the overall direction taken."*
There was a small number (about five) who are unsupportive. One respondent, in answer to "What is DINZ doing well?" commented *"not a lot except clipping the ticket..."*.
- 2. Support for marketing and promotion:** A common theme was strong support around the importance of DINZ investment in promotion, but with a cautionary comment that it must be spent wisely. Paraphrasing one typical response: *"there seems to be a huge proportion of expenditure on marketing - well done. But is it really spent wisely? In the right areas? Are the right people pushing venison along 150%?"*
Two respondents felt that promotional investment should be company only and two questioned whether promotion should continue in the face of lower production and supply of venison.
- 3. Industry representation:** There was a strong theme urging Deer Industry New Zealand to guard against regulatory bureaucracy and cost increases,

eg, *"Compliance and Government regulation is our biggest enemy. Good luck"*. Tied into this, a number of producers commented negatively about NAIT- and AHB-related costs as well the Emissions Trading Scheme.

- 4. Local market for venison:** A common view was the desire to see New Zealand venison available more widely at retail in New Zealand, eg, *"Promote wider accessibility of venison in the local New Zealand market at supermarkets, butchers and restaurants."*
- 5. Support for Focus Farms:** Producers were consistently supportive of the Deer Industry Focus Farm project. *"Focus Farm days are very important. They're how we learn to be better farmers."*
- 6. Encourage new farmers into the industry:** A number of producers were keen for Deer Industry New Zealand to encourage new people into deer farming to maintain critical mass.
A similar number of producers did not want new entrants encouraged because an increase in supply could encourage another boom/bust.
- 7. Battle against volatility:** There were calls to minimise volatility to encourage both producer and market investment. *"Volatility remains the issue. It discourages producer investment and discourages the purchase of venison. Stable pricing should mean that all participants in the supply chain can make some money."*
- 8. Role of research:** Some producers argued that research and science has an important role in producing new knowledge, while a similar number argued that science has not made a significant difference in their farming operations. There was a perception by some that velvet research had not delivered.

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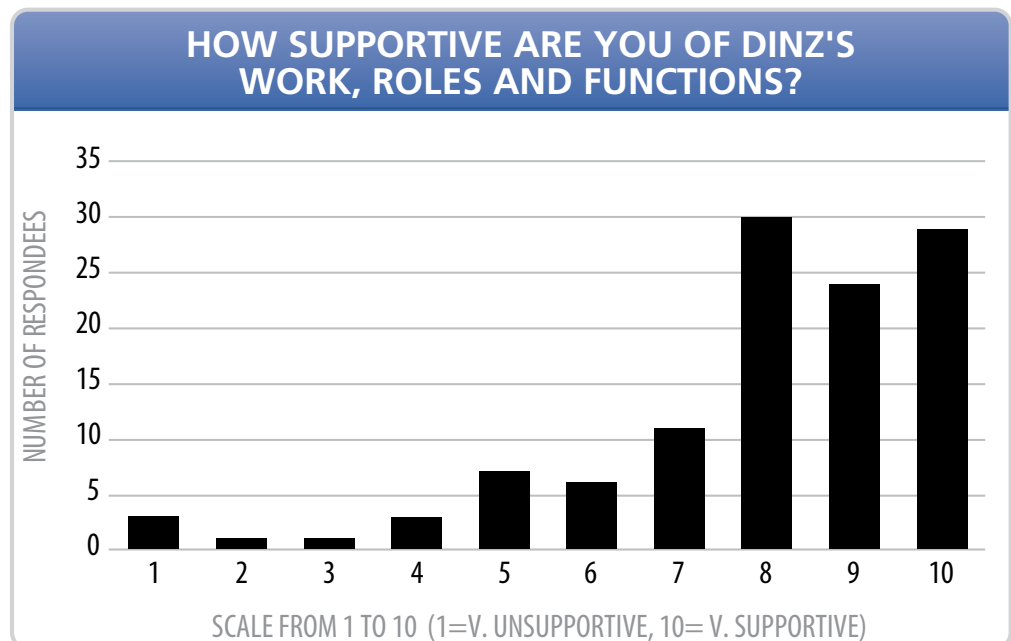


Figure 1: Support for DINZ work, role and functions.

Velvet levies – everyone should play their part

Levies paid on velvet fund industry-good work that is being done on behalf of all producers. In its broadest sense, the levy is used to promote and assist the development of the New Zealand velvet industry. In practical terms that means funding – among other things – work on promotion, market access, research, QA programmes and industry representation. These are all activities essential to the continued functioning and development of your industry.

If some levies are not paid, this means the rest of the industry is giving the non-payers a free ride, and it also restricts the already modest amounts available to do this work.

While the system for venison levy collection ensures good compliance, this is not the case with velvet, and close attention is needed to ensure all levies are paid. Deer farmers can play their part in ensuring everyone pays their share.

Responsibility for paying the velvet levy, including timing, is set out in the *Deer Industry New Zealand Regulations (2004)*. These can be viewed on www.legislation.govt.nz, but in essence, the person primarily responsible for paying the velvet levy is the owner of the velvet at the earliest of the following:

- when the velvet is sold by a pool
- when the velvet is bought by someone acting for a velvet packing house or
- when the velvet arrives at the packing house.


Both pool operators and independent road buyer/agent must pay the levy on behalf of the producers. Both will usually

recover the levy by deducting it from what is paid to the producer, and remitting the levy to DINZ.

The person responsible for paying the levy must provide a return to DINZ within 10 days of the end of each month, indicating how much they owe, and make the payment by the 20th of the month following the due date. The due date is the earliest of the day on which:

- velvet was sold by a pool
- velvet was bought on behalf of a packing house or
- velvet was received by a packing house

In order to ensure compliance, DINZ employs a levy auditor who audits pools, processors, road buyers and others to establish whether the correct amount is being paid.

Where it suspects levy is not being paid in full, DINZ will take action. If you suspect levy has not been paid on velvet you have sold, please contact DINZ immediately. 

■ **Mark O'Connor, Chief Executive, Deer Industry New Zealand**

Dedicated to Deer from page 5

9. Velvet promotion: Generally producers and trade supported a focus on Asian markets for deer velvet. *“Real key is velvet in Korea/China – promotion and marketing focus on Asia.”*

10. Importance of focus: *“Look at finding a type of promotion that gets results and concentrate on that particular type of promotion – in other words spend money on what works for the producer, processors and marketer.”...and always ask, “Will our input really help sell more velvet in a manner that will deliver benefits to the growers?”*


There were a range of good ideas including:

- provide farmers with more business advice (*we’re great farmers, but not necessarily great businessmen*)
- provide more tools for farmers to use
- improve the bankability of the deer industry
- a “trade guide” would be a useful tool
- when producing English language promotional material for venison, send a copy to each producer for their use and to pass on
- set a target for the proportion of value from a deer to be earned in New Zealand, and aim to increase it
- malignant catarrhal fever (MCF) is more of an issue than people realise
- cheaper, more effective tick control would be useful
- undertake promotion around the Rugby World Cup in 2011
- lift level of activity and awareness of DEERSelect
- do a Focus Farm road show to get out to more producers.

John Scurr, Chairman of Deer Industry New Zealand, commented that the quality of the responses was excellent and Deer Industry New Zealand is very appreciative of the time and thought people put into them. Each response has been provided to the Deer Industry New Zealand Board and Executive. “Of course we would have preferred to have received more responses, but we knew that getting producers to respond would not be easy given that it wasn’t a matter of just ticking a few boxes.”

He also commented that a large proportion of respondents were not “the usual faces” and it was great to hear from people who Deer Industry New Zealand does not hear from often.

“We are an open organisation which is easily accessible to producers every day. When our industry disagrees with a decision or direction, we hear about it.

“There are many issues confronting the New Zealand deer industry and many opinions on how best to meet the challenges which lie ahead. In many areas there is a good level of agreement on what producers feel should be done, and what DINZ is doing. Examples include working with the owners of our products in the marketplace to achieve greater stability of returns for producers and the well-attended and well-run Focus Farm programme. We’ve got to ensure that the information is delivered in a manner that can be applied on-farm to boost productivity.” 

■ **Deer Industry New Zealand is always open to ideas and comments from producers. The Executive can be contacted on 04 473 4500, or John Scurr on 021 919 931.**

Weaned deer and transport

The time of year is fast approaching when the weaners are yarded and tagging, sorting and actual weaning process begins before sending them off to saleyards or to other farms.

With the greater than ever emphasis now being placed on animal welfare right across the board, it's timely to revisit the issues involved with these practices.

We all know that stress is a big killer of deer, so consider this: The weaning of deer according to scientific data is the most stressful time in that animal's lifetime. Couple this with tagging and drenching and it adds to the stress during this process.

Transport is the second-most stressful time in an animal's lifetime according to the same data. With that in mind, it's important to recognise why both the Animal Welfare Code of Practice for Deer and the DeerQA Transport Programme have standards specific to weaned deer. The minimum standards in both of those documents have been put in place to protect the welfare of the animals.

There is an amendment to the Code of Welfare for Deer to bring it into line with the DeerQA Transport Programme. This change gives those farmers who don't have the appropriate facilities to wean and hold deer an alternate option at weaning time.

The change affects Minimum Standard No.15 (page 43, Code of Welfare for Deer): *"Unweaned deer (dams or fawns) and deer that have been weaned for less than 10 days (dams or fawns) must not be transported"*. This standard has been replaced with the DeerQA Transport standard 4.7, weaned deer (page 13, DeerQA Transport Programme): *"Where deer are transported at weaning they must proceed directly from farm to farm immediately following weaning and the total duration of yarding and transport must not exceed six hours."*


Unweaned deer and deer weaned for less than 10 days,

including dams, must *not* be sent to saleyards or to slaughter. Statistics from NZFSA at processing plants show an increase in death rates for hinds being sent to slaughter during the weaning period.

In the earlier days of the DeerQA Transport Programme, transport operators clearly identified that the area of most insurance claims against them were for losses with weaner deer. It was also identified that in some instances these deer were being subjected to stressors like transport, saleyards and going without food or water for anything up to 48 hours or more after being weaned on the farm to arriving at their final destination.

The implementation of the DeerQA transport standards back in 1993 dramatically changed the situation and insurance claims dropped to a very low percentage for losses. Although the system didn't suit everybody it certainly worked and animal welfare benefited.

Some deer transporters comment that last season in some instances they were being asked and expected to transport unweaned deer for greater distances and times than the standards allows. All things being equal and with the right environment, weaners will travel perfectly fine for longer distances and times but given the wrong environment such as cold, wet and muddy conditions and rain during the journey, then things may not go according to plan.

Nobody likes to see animals dead on arrival so if everybody involved in weaning and transport works to the standards and considers those down the chain from where they are and don't push the limits too far, then the process will run more smoothly. 

Septic arthritis in deer

Septic arthritis in weaners appears around the country and some years are worse than others. The only common factor appears to be climatic conditions such as very humid moist conditions during weaning. This article was originally produced in 2000 with veterinary input and is reproduced here as a timely reminder.

The cause

Following injury, bacteria can enter the damaged tissue. The bacteria frequently implicated are *Fusobacterium* spp. These are similar to those causing footrot in sheep (however, footrot as it occurs in sheep has not been seen in deer). Other bacteria involved in the complex issue of foot abscesses are *Actinomyces pyogenes* and *Streptococcus* species.

Once the bacteria enter the tissue they increase in number and can go into the bloodstream (bacteremia) from where the heart and lungs can be affected (pleurisy, epicarditis, and pneumonia). Unless treatment is rigorous and commenced early, deer may die. In some cases amputation of an infected toe may cure the problem. However, some deer will die despite the treatment.

The symptoms

Common symptoms include limping, swollen feet and legs,

abscesses breaking out up the leg. It is very painful and deer will become very tucked up in the flank, pinched in the nostrils and lose weight. The thing to keep in mind is that affected deer may be exposed to the problem at first yarding, become slightly lame 5 -7 days later (which may be difficult to observe when yarded) but more obvious when seen in the paddocks. What may have appeared to have been some bruising at that time could well turn out to be a major weaner herd lameness problem and the course of events has been possibly 10 to 20 days duration.

Treatment

- Draft off the affected deer and treat with antibiotics.
- Serious cases (where toes are sloughed off or pneumonia has developed) may need to be destroyed on humane grounds.
- Amputation of a toe may be considered by your veterinarian to be curative.

DINZ annual report released

Deer Industry New Zealand publishes its full annual report as an online document. This easy-to-read publication is available at www.deernz.org/annualreport

If you do not have reliable internet access, contact Deer Industry New Zealand (info@deernz.org or 04 473 4500) and they will mail you an electronic copy on CD.

The year ended 30 September 2009 was marked by solid returns for venison producers, while for velvet, returns were low and challenging. Venison and velvet market development continued and the *Making the DIFFerence* Focus Farm programme supported by research gained momentum. Industry services (eg, National Velvetting Standards Body (NVSB) programme, DeerQA Transport and policy) had a busy year with a number of issues arising.

Venison

Returns to producers continued to recover strongly with a weighted average schedule paid for an AP stag of \$8.65 per kilogram hot carcass weight. This was 19% higher than the same period in 2008 and 105% higher than the same period in 2006. The higher returns resulted from a benign exchange rate, successful marketing initiatives over previous years and positive market conditions. However, the impact of weak economic conditions in Europe and the United States was beginning to show at the end of the year, and conditions

have become more challenging since 30 September 2009.

However, New Zealand venison fared better than competing game items and more traditional red meats such as beef.

The industry continued to position New Zealand venison as a lean, healthy, great-tasting and versatile meat. Given weaker demand and lower pricing by competitors, Deer Industry New Zealand implemented a European trade-focused campaign using chefs' magazines, chef events and direct mail to communicate the availability and qualities of New Zealand venison during the game season. Deer Industry New Zealand continued its joint promotion programme with 46 individual projects completed.

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Predisposing factors

Foot injury more commonly occurs in unsettled deer and one example of this is where they run the fence lines. Obviously this may also occur in weaners when separated from the hinds, ie when stressed.

Also to be considered is the type of surface that these deer are weaned onto. It could be that the surface is bare and hard like concrete and the soft feet can be worn down very quickly with the excessive movement of the animals. It could also be other types of material that have sharp edges like some crushed stones etc that will damage the feet.

One case history was recorded where a farmer over-sowed a paddock of wheat stubble with grass and when ready the deer were weaned onto this paddock. The sharp stubble was enough to damage the feet to the extent that bacteria were able to enter and cause infection.


In their own right the deer's immune system can often cope with this singular issue. However there are other factors that are perceived to accentuate this condition to the point that the immune system will not cope: There are other factors that can cause stress, such as transport, standing for long periods on concrete, especially where there is time for

dung and urine to moisten and hence soften the foot tissue so that bacteria can enter. Even the process of ear tagging, weighing, copper bulleting etc may take quite some time and involve a longer time in the yards than is ideal or being weaned straight off the farm and onto another property.

Another factor is the weather, with the different seasons experienced in different regions each year, the damper than usual ground and or the more humid conditions seem to have an effect. These bacterial problems appear to be occurring in apparently healthy deer.

Summary

The weaning period is critical, and it is essential that it is done properly. Weaners are especially susceptible as they are under social stress at weaning. If management such as drenching, vaccinating (eg, for yersiniosis) and good feed supply is not properly done, then the problem escalates.

If weaning is shortened from the recommended 10-day time frame before being sold through saleyards, it is conceivable that the mild lameness which is easily overlooked could be exacerbated. Factors such as yarding, trucking, drafting at saleyards, and even standing at sale yards can trigger this process. In turn this could lead to a purchaser bringing a major animal health problem onto the property. 

DINZ annual report from page 9

Velvet

Selling conditions remained difficult for New Zealand velvet during the 2008/9 year, with a weighted average price to producers of about \$60 per frozen kilogram compared to \$73.50 in the previous season and a 10-year average of about \$76 per frozen kilogram.

China continued to grow in importance to the New Zealand velvet industry during the period with 6% more velvet exported by volume and 32% more by value. Growth is primarily from Chinese importers acting as a trading hub to South Korea. However, opportunity continues to develop for New Zealand velvet and co-products as China continues to grow and a middle class of new consumers emerges. Market access issues continue to hamper the development of the Chinese market for New Zealand velvet.

South Korea continued to consume the lion's share of New Zealand velvet. Use remains based on the oriental medicine trade, but increasing quantities of New Zealand velvet were used in finished product formats.

Deer Industry New Zealand


DINZ CEO, Mark O'Connor, reported that Deer Industry New Zealand collected levy and interest income of \$4.880 million, of which approximately \$1.95 million was used to promote venison, \$795,000 for velvet promotion and removal programmes, \$805,000 invested in research (both velvet and non-velvet), \$340,000 for communications, \$260,000 in producer management, \$200,000 in quality assurance programmes and \$700,000 in administration. This resulted in a deficit of \$150,000 which was funded from reserves in line with Deer Industry New Zealand's policy.

Deer Industry New Zealand coordinated the development of new industry strategic intents 2010–2014 for venison and velvet. The industry strategic intents received input from a

wide range of venison and velvet industry participants and set a course for venison and velvet industry development over the next five years. They are available online at www.deernz.org

The industry continued to support the Venison Supply Systems research programme which focuses on venison productivity improvement to achieve the industry's goal of *more deer, heavier, earlier*. The deer industry's investment of \$430,000 was matched by \$1.3 million from government. The deer industry's four focus farms in the *Making the DIFFerence* programme continued to gather momentum and towards the end of the period a fifth project was added covering Southland, Fiordland and South Otago. The success of the Focus Farm programme is due to the efforts of a large number of dedicated people to whom the deer industry is indebted.

In its management role of the NVSB programme, Deer Industry New Zealand participated in a joint surveillance project with the New Zealand Food Safety Authority and the Ministry of Agriculture's Enforcement Unit to identify people removing velvet who are non-compliant. A small number of people were identified and a range of actions taken, from education through to warnings.

Chairman, John Scurr, thanked fellow Board member John Spiers for his contribution to Deer Industry New Zealand, noting that John's term ended in June 2009. John also welcomed Jerry Bell to the Board, who has already made a very positive contribution to Deer Industry New Zealand. 

We're on the move

Deer Industry New Zealand is shifting offices in April, along with Meat and Wool New Zealand and the Meat Industry Association.

We leave our offices on the Terrace on 9 April and from Monday 12 April we'll be open for business on:

**Level 5 of Wellington Chambers,
154 Featherston Street**

We are sharing office resources with the Meat Industry Association and will be located on the floor between Federated Farmers, who are on the floor above us, and Meat and Wool New Zealand, who will be below us.

Our postal address (PO Box 10702, Wellington), phone (04 473 4500) and email addresses will be unchanged.



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Soil health management

Attention to soil health will pay off in more ways than one, according to Environment Waikato's sustainable agriculture coordinator, Bala TikkiSETTY. He spoke to deer farmers at the Northern Regions Focus Farm field day hosted by David Dewar and Kay Garland on 3 February.

"Healthy soil is essential to any profitable farming operation and its long-term sustainability. Soil acts as a rooting medium which provides plants with air, water and nutrients," he said. "The filtering function of healthy soil can remove suspended solids, dissolved nutrients and pathogens. Soil degradation can result in decreased pasture growth, regardless of the nutrient status."

Bala said the physical structure of soil controls the movement of air and water through it, and the ability of roots to penetrate into the soil. "It also provides habitat for beneficial organisms like earthworms. Soil with good structure has a significant number of pores that provide aerobic conditions, good drainage and high water-holding capacity. If your soil is physically healthy and fertile, your pasture production will be high."

Pugging and compaction, on the other hand, can damage soil structure. Pugging is caused by animals' hooves sinking in, sometimes as deep as 15 cm, when they tread in very wet soils. "Soil scientists have found that compacting soil can reduce the amount of dry matter in pasture by 200 kg per hectare per month. Aerating the compacted soil at the correct depth and time can increase dry matter production by about 30 percent within six months and about 50 percent after eight months."

Other problems caused by pugging and compaction include more frequent and persistent surface ponding and increased sediment, nutrient and effluent losses through surface runoff. "It also takes longer for pasture to recover after grazing and weed invasion often occurs in the bare sites created by pugging and compaction."

Visual soil assessment test

The visual soil assessment (VSA) is free of charge and won't take long to learn. Many properties of soil show up as visual characteristics. Once you know how to interpret these, the test is easy to use and the results simple to understand.

The VSA Field Guide requires little equipment, training or technical skill, and presents visual assessment of key soil "state" and plant "performance" indicators of soil quality on a scorecard. It ranks soil quality by assessing the soil indicators alone, and unlike plant indicators, requires no knowledge of the immediate crop and paddock history.

The VSA Field Guide is available through your regional council or can be downloaded from:

www.landcareresearch.co.nz/research/soil/vsa/fieldguide.asp



Bala TikkiSETTY says visual soil assessment should be carried out annually.

Bala said problems like these could be minimised by:

- reducing stock density, especially on sensitive (eg, wet) paddocks
- not feeding out on sensitive paddocks
- monitoring pugging and compaction during at-risk periods and moving stock off before damage occurs.

On cropping land, aggregate breakdown from excessive cultivation is the most common threat to soil health. The result is increased soil loss through water runoff and a reduction in the amount of soil organic matter which binds the soil particles together to form aggregates, minimises erosion and serves as a reservoir of nutrients and water, Bala said.

"With so many cultivation techniques now available, it's worth considering the options. For example, two-pass cultivation is often all that is needed to prepare a seedbed. This avoids the need

to make repeated passes to get a good tilth, and shortens the risk period for erosion between initial vegetation clearance and ground cover by the growing crop. You could even consider the no-tillage approach.

"An easy way to learn more about the condition of your soil is to carry out a visual soil assessment (VSA) once a year, or when you think you may have created some damage. It's also a good idea to keep records about how your soil and paddocks cope with wet and dry extremes over time." (See box for further information.)

Any decline in soil physical properties takes considerable expense and many years to correct, and can increase the risk of soil erosion by water or wind. "Fertiliser plays an important role in the basic role of soil quality, but if you apply too much or at the wrong place or time, it can become a contaminant, polluting groundwater and promoting algal growth in nearby waterways."

Your fertiliser rep or consultant can help you prepare a nutrient budget and ensure you only apply enough fertiliser to grow the pasture you need, Bala advised. Nutrient budgeting is a long-term measure of the sustainability of a farming system, a "balance sheet" that can quickly identify nutrient surplus and/or deficit.

One of the biggest issues is nitrate leaching. Pasture plants need nitrogen for healthy leaf growth. But nitrogen is extremely mobile and excess leaches through the soil into groundwater. Some is lost as runoff and some is released back into the air as nitrogen gas.

continued on page 12

No magic bullet for managing copper deficiency

Copper supplementation trials at David Dewar's Focus Farm at Ngakuru, near Rotorua, suggest to date that supplements aren't likely to be a magic bullet for deficiency problems.

At the 3 February field day, veterinarian Robin Hopkirk of Animal Health Services said results from two years' trials tended to replicate other studies showing no significant liveweight responses in young deer, or improvement in velvet growth. Different dosing regimes showed no pattern of improvement and there was little difference in results between years when supplements were used and years when they were not, he said.


"We still don't even know at precisely what body copper levels deer become deficient. The problem certainly seems to manifest itself at a lower level than in sheep and cattle, probably below 60 micrograms of copper per kg of liver tissue. However, some clients have herds that are constantly well below this level and they have given up using supplements as they feel there is no measurable advantage."

He said many studies had shown wild deer had about three times the copper levels of domestic deer in the same region. This could result from the wild animals preferentially grazing plants not available to their domestic counterparts.

The present trial followed on from a 2002 review of 11 copper supplementation trials, only two of which had shown any improvement.

"What this all means is still open to interpretation and we don't have any clear answers. The picture is complicated by the fact that copper levels in deer are antagonised by sulphur, molybdenum and iron. Even where there is sufficient copper in pasture, or a supplement is being fed, these antagonists can combine with some of the copper and make it unavailable. This explains why copper deficiency tends to be worst in late winter and spring – at these times grass is short and animals end up eating more soil and dust which contain the antagonist substances."

Copper supplements could be applied as an oral dose, injection, in supplements or by spraying dissolved copper on pasture.

"Copper deficiency can have serious effects, so it's important that we keep working on the problem. The worst symptoms are arthritis and swayback (enzootic ataxia), a complex syndrome resulting from lesions in the brain that can cause a wobbly walk or paralysis of the back legs. Other symptoms include poor immunity and possibly anaemia." 

continued from page 11

Nitrogen leaching from pastures can be reduced by:

- timing fertiliser applications to avoid periods of low plant uptake of nitrogen, for example, when it is cold or wet
- applying fertiliser in split dressings, rather than all at once
- using fenced wetlands and well-managed open drains as nutrient traps.

Phosphorus is another big issue, Bala said. "It behaves very differently to nitrogen: it binds with the soil and only dissolves slowly in water. This means it doesn't readily leach into groundwater, but it can still pollute waterways through soil erosion and surface run-off. Minimise phosphorus leaching by not applying phosphate fertiliser when heavy rain is coming."

You should also:

- follow the New Zealand Fertiliser Manufacturers' Research Association code of practice for nutrient management (available online at www.fertresearch.org.nz/default.aspx)
- apply fertiliser when the grass is actively growing
- don't apply fertiliser near waterways
- leave a grassed buffer strip between paddock and waterway to filter out phosphorus
- control runoff from tracks, races, feed and stand-off pads.

The Olsen P test is still regarded as the best test for phosphorus in the soil (though it is less reliable in acidic soils, where it can overestimate the levels of P available). Generally, if your soil Olsen P levels are high, it's likely you're applying more fertiliser than necessary and losing a lot to nearby waterways. Seek advice if you're not sure.


Timing cultivation: not too dry, not too wet

Cultivate when the moisture content isn't too high or too low. To assess soil moisture content, apply this simple test: Take a piece of soil about half the volume of your index finger, press it firmly and roll it into a "worm" on the palm of your hand until it's about 50 mm long and 4 mm thick. If the soil cracks before the worm shape can be made, it's the right time to cultivate. If you can make the worm, the soil is too wet. Clods that are too dry won't break down when cultivated and you won't get a good seedbed.

Soil tests combined with an OVERSEER[®] nutrient budget will help you ensure your soil fertility isn't excessively high, and reduce the amount of nutrients lost from your farm – with both economic and environmental benefits.

For further information see www.agresearch.co.nz/overseerweb.

OVERSEER is produced by AgResearch Ltd, and is being constantly updated and improved. The latest version (2010) provides for more data input, wider choice of farm types and more detailed technical explanations.

For further information about managing your soil and nutrients, call Bala Tikikisety on Environment Waikato's freephone 0800 800 401. 

Weaning and animal health tips

When it comes to weaning there are plenty of ways to skin a cat, but on the Focus Farm at The Steyning in Central Hawke's Bay, Tim Aitken and Lucy Robertshawe have been developing some useful techniques which attracted plenty of interest on their field day on 17 February.

Tim puts the hinds and fawns into mating mobs prior to weaning and then – at least 48 hours prior to weaning – puts them into the paddocks the weaners will be staying in once the hinds have gone. He weans pre-rut and has been gradually shifting weaning forward to give more time to get the hinds in good shape and get mating under way earlier. He uses single sire mating and aims to have all stags out by 1 March.

Weaning is one of the most stressful times in a deer's life, and Tim tries to reduce stress levels at weaning itself. Tagging, for example, is done in January, and the weaners are kept in the shed for as short a time as possible.

Tim said he ensures the weaners are used to each other and settled in their mobs well before weaning and the hinds are moved well away from them after they're separated. Visual barriers such as a shelter belt can help prevent weaners trying to make their way through fences back to the centre of the farm, in situations where the weaning paddock is on the edge of the farm.


Focus Farm facilitator and veterinarian Richard Hilson said the introduction of a few fawns that had been weaned earlier, or older cull "auntie" hinds could help settle the young stock at weaning. He also reminded farmers it is important

to drench to the heaviest weights in the mob to get good parasite control. "Don't be mean with the drench – it's not that expensive for deer!"

A straw poll at the field day revealed about 30 percent of farmers there vaccinate for yersiniosis and only about 5–10 percent vaccinate for leptospirosis or clostridial diseases. "If you're vaccinating for yersiniosis, make sure you use both shots as recommended," Richard said. "If you only use one shot the vaccine is unlikely to work." The interval between the two shots when vaccinating should not be shorter than recommended, or the animal's immune memory won't have had time to learn to respond to the antigens in the vaccine and mount a proper immune response, he added.

He said that while most chose not to vaccinate for leptospirosis, there is plenty of it about, and the risk was elevated during wetter conditions. "If these wet conditions persist, it could be bad this year," he noted.

Richard said farmers often confused leptospirosis and yersiniosis. "Don't second guess animal health problems. Get advice quickly – it can usually be sorted out fast."

He said lameness can be a problem at weaning, with infections getting in through injuries caused by old yards or new concrete. (See separate article on septic arthritis, page 8.) 


Worth the trip

The regular trip to catch up with developments at the Hawke's Bay/Central Regions Deer Industry Focus Farm at The Steyning is definitely worth the effort, according to three farmers who spoke to *Deer Industry News* following the field day on the property on 17 February.

One of the most useful and practical sessions was the discussion on weaning techniques. Derek Nowell-Usticke, who farms at Otamauri, said the idea of setting up the hinds and weaners in a weaning paddock for a while before weaning, so the young stock were already used to the environment before mum departed, was a good one. He also liked the idea of bringing weaning forward and getting the hinds in better shape in time for mating.

The impact of Johne's disease on production was also of interest, as was the use of Farmax™ for feed budgeting. The three still needed convincing that the information

gained through the program could be used as a basis for stocking decisions many months ahead, although experience at *The Steyning* had shown the good quality information had given Tim Aitken and Lucy Robertshawe the confidence to raise stock levels and catch the wave of good pasture growth throughout this last spring and summer.

The demonstration of tag reading equipment by Zeetag and Gallagher also piqued the interest of the field day regulars. 



Relaxing after the field day, from left: Derek Nowell-Usticke (Otamauri), Hugh McArdle (Kereru) and Ross Allen (Kereru) – Focus Farms yielding useful ideas.

Fodder beet at Whiterock Station Focus Farm

Ross and Sally Stevens of Whiterock Station are cautiously optimistic about prospects for their fodder beet crop sown last October and now at the bulbing-up and total ground coverage stage.

A cooler, moist summer has helped, and since the report in December's *Deer Industry News*, a third post-emergence application of sprays (1kg Goltix®, 1.25 litre Betanal® Forte, 400 ml Versatill™ and 400 ml Lorsban, plus 1 litre/ha Uptake™ oil), on 4 December has achieved satisfactory weed control. All spraying has been done in early morning or evening in cool/overcast conditions, and applied with 100 litres of water per hectare through "02" nozzles, giving a fine misting spray.

Timing and proper application of weed control has been crucial, Ross says. "We probably could have done a better job with two post-emergence sprays (as opposed to three) by spraying earlier. Still, we have achieved adequate weed suppression, with the herbicide slowing weed development enough to allow



Coming along nicely: fodder beet at Whiterock in early February.

the beet to achieve canopy and hence provide further suppression of the weeds. But it is tricky: one patch I missed with the first post-emergence spray has ended up with no crop at all."

The main weeds have been fathen and shepherd's purse. "Thistle control has not been a big issue as you can safely use Versatill with beet. The major issue is getting an even enough strike of beet over a short time period, so that you can safely spray the weeds when they are small. If some of the beet plants are still in the cotyledon stage they are very susceptible to being taken out by the herbicide, even at low rates of application. Once the beet reaches the four true leaf stage you can up the rates of the herbicide. The catch-22 is that



It's going to be that big! Agricom's Dereck Ferguson (centre) enthuses about the fodder beet crop. Looking on are Focus Farm facilitator Richard Hilson (left) and Tim Aitken, The Steyning (right).

Beet that!

It's a high-risk crop and it looks like a disaster in its early stages, but at The Steyning, a first foray into fodder beet has paid off in spades.

Dereck Ferguson of Agricom told farmers at a field day that there were plenty of challenges getting the crop established. The decision was made to try a crop of fodder beet last July and the crop sown at eight plants per square metre in October. The soil was lighter than desirable and the crop struck in several stages, but by mid February the beets were bulking up and well in charge of their territory, at a density of about four beets per square metre.

Weed control is crucial, and the crop had three sprays by February. Fertiliser was also key, and the mix included salt, potassium, magnesium, high amounts of lime, and phosphorus, nitrogen and calcium.

by this time the weeds can potentially devastate the crop.”

On 4 December, 125 kg/ha urea was applied by broadcast spreading. “There is some debate about the wisdom of nitrogen applications and the timing of it. Too much can encourage leaf growth at the expense of the all-important root. At the end of the day I have been told that it requires 100 kg of N to grow a 20-tonne crop, and side dressings of N required will depend upon the paddock’s history, ie, the amount of nitrogen present in the soil at sowing.

“We have now got a good plant population and now that the crop has achieved canopy all that remains is for it to keep growing.

“However, the scope for beet growing at Whiterock will always be limited as we only have a few paddocks suitable for cultivation, owing to the presence of large rocks, and the steep and broken nature of our paddock area. Cultivation on these soils is risky due to wind erosion – the loess arrived here on the wind and can easily leave the same way. I think there will be issues on other properties with heavy clay soils on slopes, owing to the heavy stocking density required to utilise the large amounts of dry matter grown. What I mean by this is pugging in wet conditions, with soil loss to gullies and waterways.”

Ross believes that the wide uptake of beet across Canterbury this season will produce a lot of information about “best practice” management especially for the newer growers. “Meanwhile, we have got a good plant population and now that the crop has achieved canopy all that remains is for it to keep growing.” 🌱

While not a cheap crop to establish at \$2,200 per hectare, the 30 tonne per hectare crop was going to yield high quality feed at just \$0.06 per kg dry matter. Most brassica crops work out at 7–10 cents per kg, and the feed value isn’t as high. (The 30 tonne figure stood at February, and Dereck said the yield would be well over this level by winter.)

Tim Aitken said they chose the Munro variety, which provides a softer bulb to satisfy any fussy eaters. He said the crop isn’t troubled by white butterfly, aphids or diamond-backed moth, although cutworm, army worm and springtail can be a challenge at establishment.

He will be putting his 120 lightest weaners on the crop, break feeding for 90 days, starting on 1 May. It’s expected there will be some loss of leaf to frost, and this will be balanced by use of lucerne baleage to keep up protein levels in the diet. One farmer at the field day noted that deer on fodder beet can be careful eaters, making and using the same trails in and out of the crop and not causing waste by trampling.

The fodder beet crop is the icing on the cake for *The Steyning*, which is going into the autumn with 500 tonnes of silage in the pit, three lucerne cuts under their belts, some hay, a crop of oats to go in, and excellent pasture covers.

It’s a far cry from the situation just 12 months earlier when Hawke’s Bay was still in the grip of a drought and stocking options were limited.

Tim said the excellent data on pasture covers generated through Farmax™ had given them the confidence to plan actively and take advantage of the improving conditions. 🌱

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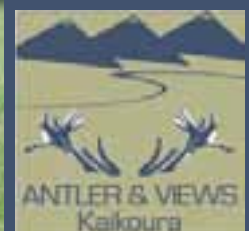
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Napier War Memorial Conference Centre, 18–20 May 2010

The NZDFA, host Branch Hawke's Bay and Deer Industry New Zealand warmly invite you to the 35th Annual New Zealand Deer Industry Conference, to be held at specialised facilities of the War Memorial Conference Centre, Napier. The conference organisers promise a full programme to inform and entertain attendees.

Focu\$ed 2010 theme

Focu\$ed 2010 promises to be an outstanding event, not to be missed by any deer farmer serious about their business.

The conference will concentrate on the industry's strengths, and potential. Venison has survived the global recession well, thanks in part to the reduction in production, but also thanks to the focus on differentiating New Zealand venison as a superior protein in our international markets. Velvet is returning to strength with some welcome industry co-ordination. The *Making the DIFFerence* Focus Farm programme is going from strength to strength and the Hawke's Bay Branch has linked this conference into the major public field day at the Hawke's Bay/Central Regions Focus Farm, *The Steyning* at Tikokino on 20 May. This year we mark the 40th anniversary of the formal birth of the deer industry when Deer Farming Licence No 1 was issued to Consolidated Traders (Rex Giles) at Rahana Station Taupo, in 1970.

Good conference participation is being actively encouraged, and contributes to the success of any event. Individual session or day registrations are available, and delegates are invited to bring partners, farm staff or just good friends interested in the deer industry and to enjoy the outstanding social events like the Welcome Dinner and the Awards Evening. New conference organiser, Havelock North-based, Maria Gourlie, has a passion for this event and aims to attract locals as well as new faces, and those who haven't been to a conference for years. The Branch is also arranging a partners' programme based on demand with details to follow.

Day One – Agribusiness Seminar

Building on the interest created by the excellent 2009 Palmerston North Conference, the formal Agribusiness Seminar opens proceedings from 2.00 pm on Tuesday 18 May.

Delegates can be assured that the speakers have strong credentials and great presentation skills. Some personal challenges will be issued. The local conference committee has a long track

record of producing outstanding events, with some surprises and innovations of their own. The *Focu\$ed 2010* theme has a sustainability sideline, seeking lessons from within the industry and from leading commentators.

The programme will feature an international market overview from long term Industry Partner Rabobank; a session discussing the recently unravelled deer genome; water use as a resource; and Prof. Frank Griffin on Johne's disease, supported by Johne's Management Limited's Jamie Hunnam. Two high profile key note speakers will create a memorable atmosphere. The organisers have invited Minister of Agriculture David Carter to address attendees, and we hope he will stay for the social function.

Welcome Dinner – a perennial highlight!

The welcome dinner and conference opening will include celebrating Napier's art deco heritage. This year our featured chef, Malcolm Redmond (Breckenridge Lodge) will present a menu of venison dishes to match the flavours of five featured Hawke's Bay wines and/or matching boutique Hastings-brewed beers (or non-alcoholic options).

MC will be Hawke's Bay's well-known wine columnist Yvonne Lorkin, with commentary chef Redmond and brewer Greg Forrest from HB independent brewery. Venison, kindly sponsored over the course of conference by Firstlight Foods, will be the mainstay of this very social function, which has been a firm highlight of past conferences. The evening incorporates announcement of the 2010 Matuschka Award.

Day Two

The second day kicks off with the expanded DINZ FGM including the valued contributions of the major venison processor/exporters on the state of the market, conditions influencing sales and individual company perspectives.

This will be followed by the 35th NZDFA AGM.

Participation is the key: This is your chance to ask marketers, DINZ Board and Executive, and the DFA Executive Committee questions about the industry. This is your chance to have a say. Q&A time slots follow each

Stop Press: We can confirm the highly entertaining and engaging speaker Dr Dave Baldwin will be closing our agribusiness session. Dave is a former RNZAF Medical Officer and now runs a mobile aviation medicine service from his base in Bulls. He has recently published *Healthy Bastards*, a hilarious, down-to-earth look at the serious business of blokes' health.

session on venison and velvet antler, including a full Q&A session with the DINZ Board.

The Dinner that evening features the Deer Industry Awards presented in collaboration with NZX, *Country-wide* magazine and *The Deer Farmer*, and the Biennial Deer Industry Environmental Awards. The entertainment slot will be filled in style by the 40s and 50s music of the talented trio "The Warbirds".

Programme

Tuesday 18 May

- Morning: Branch Chairmen's meeting and DINZ Board meeting
- Afternoon: Agribusiness Seminar, *Focu\$ed 2010* 2.00 pm – 6.00 pm
- Major welcome event: from 7.00 pm "Taste the Bay", an exploration of matching great Hawke's Bay wine and beers with the best venison dishes.

Wednesday 19 May

- DINZ Formal General Meeting: 8.30 am – 1.30 pm
- NZDFA AGM 2.00 pm – 5.30 pm



The Passion and Profit conference in Palmerston North last year was constructive and fun. Expect more of the same at Focu\$ed 2010 in Napier.

- Annual Awards dinner, featuring the 26th Deer Industry Award and the 2010 Deer Industry Environmental Awards
- Entertainment by "The Warbirds".

Thursday 20 May

- Hawke's Bay/Central Regions Branch field day at *The Steyning* (DINZ's *Making the DIFFerence* Focus Farm project open public field day, followed by a social hour or so at the Sawyers Arms, Tikokino).

Strong sponsorship and industry partner support

We have tremendous sponsorship support this year and are proud to announce the partners for *Focu\$ed 2010* who have committed to date (see partner logos below).

We also thank and acknowledge industry supporters: **PGG Wrightson Seeds, Tb Free New Zealand (Animal Health Board), John's Management Limited, Venison Packers Feilding and Progressive Meats**, along with our trade stand supporters, including **Pfizer Animal Health and Zeetags**.

Registration/contacts

Registration will be handled through the experienced conference management business MediaWise for Events, led by Maria Gourlie. Contacts are:

- Maria Gourlie: 06 877 6443, 0274 983 408, maria@eventmanagement.net.nz
- Producer Manager, Tony Pearse: 021 719 038, 04 471 6118, tony.pearse@deernz.org
- Marketing and Communications Assistant, Hannah Hsu: 04 471 6110, hannah.hsu@deernz.org

An advance registration form is available electronically from www.deernz.org or contact maria@eventmanagement.net.nz, your local Branch or the Deer Industry New Zealand office.

The full programme will be available at www.deernz.org as soon as it is finalised and will be circulated to NZDFA members through *Stagline-Online*.

Accommodation

Accommodation has been reserved adjacent to the venue and along Marine Parade. Requirements for accommodation must be coordinated through the conference organiser by completing the registration form.

Conference fees have been set at an Early Bird discounted rate of \$350, valid until 7 May.

- **For further information please contact Maria, or Hannah.**

Major conference partner:
Silver Fern Farms



Industry partners



2010 NZDFA AGM, constitutional and other matters

NZDFA Annual General Meeting: War Memorial Conference Centre, Napier, Wednesday 19 May, 2010

Discuss issues locally before national meeting

In 2009, a single remit around traceability and NAIT dominated the NZDFA's AGM but prior to conference there was much discussion at Branch level and at the Regional Branch Chairmen's meetings about other issues, many of which were resolved locally. This year, advance notice of remits and discussion topics is requested to give time for discussion around the Branches prior to the conference and to encourage a productive, informed and active AGM. The Executive Committee will again lead Branch Chairmen in three separate regional meetings prior to conference to advance that preparation.

Remits to the AGM are customarily submitted through Branches. Members are urged to submit all remits to the Association offices by **Wednesday 14 April 2010** to enable them to be published in the pre-AGM *Deer Industry News* and meet our constitutional demands, which have a 30-day window prior to the AGM. Time lines are under a little more pressure this year with the conference a week earlier than usual, but remits will still need to be written in March and early April.

This provides Branches the opportunity to develop remits before the Branch AGM round and have time during May to meet again locally and discuss remits and other industry issues to bring forward at this important conference. Discussion of late remits arising at conference that have not had Branch input, irrespective of the wisdom of your Chairman and committee, is not particularly productive.

It is to **everyone's advantage** for remits to be published and circulated to all members. Remits will be posted on the website and circulated to Chairmen and there will be a final session with the combined Branch Chairmen before the Conference opening on Tuesday 18 May.

Matuschka Award 2010

Nominations are called for a farmer or farming entity who or which has made a significant ongoing or lifetime of contribution to deer farming and the NZDFA, in particular at Branch level.

The award recognises the grass roots farmer and unsung contributor to local area activities, functions and core spirit of deer farming. It will be announced at the *Focused 2010* Deer Industry Conference Welcome Function on the evening of Tuesday 18 May 2010 at the War Memorial and Conference Centre, Napier.

As recognition of the unsung heroes at Branch level, it is appropriate that the award itself be presented to the 2010 winner at a special mid-winter function in the recipient's Branch.

Nominations should be made through the appropriate Branch. It is not a requirement of the award that the nominee be aware of the fact that a nomination has gone forward. Nominations must be submitted to the NZDFA no later than **5.00pm on Friday 7 May 2010**.

The Rumpole Cup

Entries are invited for the 2010 Rumpole Cup, which is awarded to the best Branch or Associated Society newsletter. Newsletters submitted routinely to the NZDFA office will be entered automatically. The inaugural competition for this trophy was held in 2000 following the initiative of long-serving and eloquent NZDFA Councillor Colin Perrior QC, who amongst other attributes, was known affectionately as Rumpole.

The award is to promote good communication at grass roots level. Newsletters are professionally judged on variety, topicality, quality of writing/editing, effective communication, originality and presentation. Smaller Branch newsletters which cannot afford more expensive printing (eg, more colour) are not disadvantaged.

Please submit your entry to the Rumpole Cup, NZDFA, PO Box 10-702, Wellington by **Friday 7 May 2010**. You can submit either one or a number of issues of the newsletter, provided it was published during the previous 12 months.

For any questions or discussion on any of these AGM and conference matters please contact:

- Hannah Hsu 04 471 6110, hannah.hsu@deernz.org or
- Producer Manager, Tony Pearse, 021 719 038, tony.pearse@deernz.org

NZDFA and DINZ nominations: 2010/11

A) Executive Committee Nominations

Members of the NZDFA Executive Committee (two members representing the North Island and two representing the South Island) are elected for a two-year term. Members retire by rotation.

Nominations are now called for the following positions:

- Executive Committee member, North Island, one vacancy. (Current Member **Earle Wells, Whakatane, Bay of Plenty** retires by rotation and is available for nomination and re-election.)
- Executive Committee member, South Island, one vacancy. (Current member, **Edmund Noonan, Christchurch, Canterbury**, retires by rotation and is available for nomination and re-election.)

Nominations are invited for both positions. A nominee need not be resident in the Island of nomination.

Each nomination must:

- be in writing and specify the Island which the nominee seeks to represent
- be moved and seconded by two other full members, or elected members of the Association **resident in the same Island as the vacancy**
- be signed by the nominee
- be delivered to the Association's office by **5.00pm on Friday, 2 April 2010**.

All nominees are entitled to submit a statement of about 150 words in support of their election. This statement must be sent to members at the same time as the ballot papers.

Should an election be necessary, details of postal voting and procedures, candidate profiles and confirmation of timelines will be sent with the April edition of *Deer Industry News* or by separate post to meet deadlines. Postal voting runs for 21 days and must close 7 clear days prior to the AGM on Wednesday, 18 May 2010 (**voting opens 20 April, closing 11 May 2010**).

B) Selection and Appointment Panel (SAP)

The role of the SAP is to make producer representative appointments to the Deer

Industry New Zealand Board and to meet with those appointees at least once a year to discuss industry matters and their roles as Deer Industry New Zealand representatives.

The 8-member SAP is made up from:

- Four Executive Committee members
- Four elected non-Executive Committee members: two farmer members from each of the North and South Islands.

The elected non-Executive Committee members whose term expires at the forthcoming AGM are **(NI) Mike Holdaway, Apiti, Central Regions** (retirement by rotation) and **(SI) Mark Hawkins, Pleasant Point, South Canterbury** (retirement by rotation). Mike Holdaway has advised he does not wish to seek a further term. Mark Hawkins is available for nomination and re-election.

Nominations are now called for the following positions:

- SAP member, North Island, one vacancy.
- SAP member, South Island, one vacancy.

Each nomination must be in writing and moved and seconded by two full, life or elected members, signed by the nominee and delivered to the Association offices by **5.00pm on Friday, 2 April 2010**.

The nominees must be full, life or elected members of the NZDFA. Further, nominees:

- may **not** be a member of the Deer Industry Association,
- **can not** hold more than a 20% interest in any organisation which is a member of the Deer Industry Association,
- **can not** be a candidate for membership of the Deer Industry New Zealand Board, or a current member of the Deer Industry New Zealand Board.

[The voting procedure and timing of the process is the same as that for the positions on the Executive Committee.]

C) NZDFA Appointments to Deer Industry New Zealand Board

The Ministerial approval of the Regulations to allow a 50:50 levy share from producers and the processor/exporter sector was formalised in October 2004.

The Deer Industry New Zealand Board comprises four producer-appointed representatives and four representatives from the processing/exporting sector. The producer representatives are selected by the New Zealand Deer Farmers' Association through an electoral college process, and have been appointed for a three-year term on recommendation by the NZDFA's Selection and Appointment Panel according to its detailed Operating Code of Practice and then advised to the Minister. Successful appointments who retire by rotation are eligible for further terms.

Nominations are now called for the following NZDFA-appointed position on the DINZ Board:

- 2 vacancies: Deer Industry New Zealand Board members retiring by rotation (**John Scurr, Richmond, Nelson and Keith Neylon, Winton, Southland**).

The nomination must be moved and seconded by full, life or elected members, signed by the nominee and delivered to the Association's offices before **5.00pm on Friday, 2 April 2010**.

The NZDFA Constitution (2008) refers:

- 37.9 **Nominations for DINZ:** The Returning Officer shall publicly announce, in writing, the names of the retiring Association representatives of DINZ and call for nominations for their replacement, prior to the end of March each year. Nominations shall be:
- (a) made by any two Full Members, Elected Members or Life members of the NZDFA
 - (b) in writing; and
 - (c) in the hands of the Returning Officer at a date to be specified which will be before the Annual General Meeting of the Association each year.
- 37.10 **Eligibility for Selection as DINZ Representative:** All persons interested or engaged in the deer farming industry shall be eligible for nomination, with the exception of employees of DINZ or of the Association. Each nominee for selection shall be required to make a written declaration of any office held or managerial position or financial interest that either the nominee or any of the nominee's immediate family or any partner or fellow shareholder in any deer farming project has in any organisation which deals directly in the products of or materials for the deer farming industry.
- 37.11 **Right to Address AGM:** Each nominee for selection as a DINZ representative may address the Annual General Meeting of the Association at a time and date to be specified by the Executive Committee.
- 37.12 **Selection Process:** As soon as possible after the closing date for nominations the Returning Officer shall publish to all Branches and in "Stagline" a full list of the persons nominated, together with any declarations of interests received from them. On the date determined for the selection (but not later than the end of **June** each year), the Selection and Appointment Panel shall convene, interview and select from the nominees as many Association representatives as are required to fill available vacancies on DINZ.

Nominations for the positions will be considered by the Selection and Appointment Panel following the 2010 AGM within 21 days of that meeting, with recommendations and appointment to the Board being advised to the Minister of Agriculture at that time subject to the Operating Code of Practice procedures.

Nomination forms

Nomination forms for the Executive Committee, SAP and Deer Industry New Zealand vacancies can be obtained from the Association's office: Phone: 04 473 4500; Fax: 04 472 5549; email: hannah.hsu@deernz.org or tony.pearse@deernz.org

Nomination forms are also available through your local Branch Chairman, Secretary or the Producer Manager and will be posted on the website: www.deernz.org at time of publication of *Deer Industry News*, Issue 40, February, 2009.

For further information please contact the Returning Officer, Tony Pearse at the Deer Industry New Zealand office or 021 719 038 or tony.pearse@deernz.org 

Venison

It's all about the currency

The impact of the weak dollar this time last year may be underestimated by some commentators addressing the current "disappointing" venison schedule.

Twelve months ago, the New Zealand dollar was worth 27% less than it is today. If we adjust the schedule to account for this fluctuation, today's schedule at last year's exchange rate would be \$8.45. As was observed this time last year, the depreciation of the New Zealand dollar added about 20% to New Zealand venison prices. This exchange rate bonus was eroded as the year progressed and the New Zealand dollar rapidly appreciated against the Euro and the US dollar. This effectively negated the traditional seasonal chilled peak.

The New Zealand dollar is currently at about its long-term average against the Euro; it is not overvalued. It is about 20% above its long-term average against the US dollar but, with the severe debt burden being carried by the US economy, pressure will remain on the value of its currency and the US dollar is likely to remain weak for some time to come.

Exporters to Europe and the United States are in something of a trap at the moment. If these economies improve, this will encourage investment in "risky" assets like the New Zealand dollar, increasing its value, and reducing the returns exporters get. If their economies falter, our currency might decline, but so will demand.

As an export-dependent industry, venison producers have to live with the impact of the exchange rate. The only thing we can do is ensure diversification of markets to reduce over exposure to any one market, differentiate our products from the competition, and continue to encourage greater demand for our products so we can extract a premium in the market place. Assuming that a reduction in production will ensure continued high prices for our venison is a false step. Only sustained demand for the product will ensure continued high prices.

Production: processing numbers well down

Venison production is declining in line with the reduction in the national herd. Some 485,900 deer were processed in the 12 months to October, compared with 586,000 the year prior. The number of hinds slaughtered in the past 12 months is down very sharply: 100,000 fewer hinds were killed in the past 12 months compared with the year earlier. If an estimated 30,000 mixed age velvetting stags were deducted from the 2009 national kill, hinds would account for 45% of the kill over the past 12 months, indicating a small amount of herd rebuilding is now underway.

A seasonal kill for 2009/10 of between 360,000 and 380,000 now seems likely.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE (WEEK BEGINNING 22 FEBRUARY)

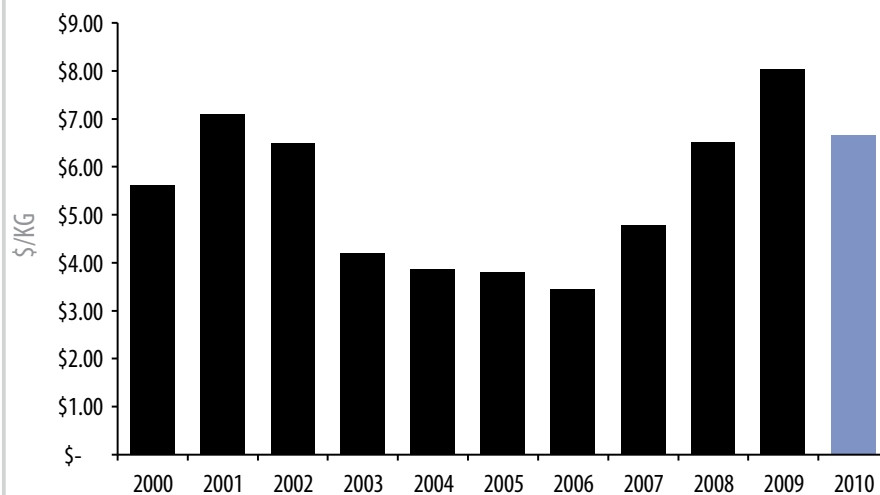


Figure 1: National published schedule for week beginning 22 February, AP 55-60kg stag, 2000–2010

Schedule

The decline in the schedule slowed in recent weeks after a rapid fall from the peak of \$8.68 in the final week of September 2009. After dipping to \$6.59, it has now risen to \$6.69. At this level, the schedule is the third highest for this week this decade. It is above the level of 24 months ago when the global economy was riding a commodity boom. It remains 13% above the 5-year average for this week, according to Agrifax figures (see Figure 1).

Promotion activities over the game season in Europe

- A public recipe competition run in November/December attracted many thousands of hits to the neuseelandhirsch.de website, and 61 entries.
- Tastings were conducted for importers on 23 days during December.
- Billboard advertising was placed outside participating supermarkets.
- Web advertising on chef and consumer culinary websites promoted free giveaways. The agency received more than 5,000 requests for Neuseeland Hirsch recipe brochures and spice sachets.
- Print material was translated and customised for five German importers.
- A newsletter for the wholesale and retail trade was customised and distributed to seven importers.
- Advertising was placed in food service and catering magazines.

Velvet

New Zealand exporters comment that velvet prices have held firm throughout this season, with reports in Korea that New Zealand velvet has retained its premium pricing over Russian velvet at wholesale level. One importer suggests that the New Zealand “story” is getting through, particularly with the younger generation of doctors where they identify with New Zealand’s brand attributes such as clean, green extensive farming systems, quality programmes and traceability.

Prices

Strong selling by New Zealand exporters this year has led to a good recovery in prices. Furthermore, velvet appears to be moving through the supply chain to sale which is a positive indicator of manageable stock levels. However, several factors could still disrupt price stability, particularly the fragile nature of the global economy.

Korean economy

Unemployment continues to be an important factor for an economic recovery in Korea. Unemployment is recognised by economists as the last, major element of a recession to correct: a country needs to get people back into work, with increased job security, for spending to ignite again. Velvet is a highly valued health product and should benefit as people start to open their wallets wider.

Since the last *Market Report*, the Korean won has strengthened against the New Zealand dollar. Ideally, to be comparable with previous seasons, the rate should reside comfortably under 800, which it has recently dipped below. Unfortunately with much of this season’s velvet sold or committed, the favourable trend may be too late to benefit this season further.

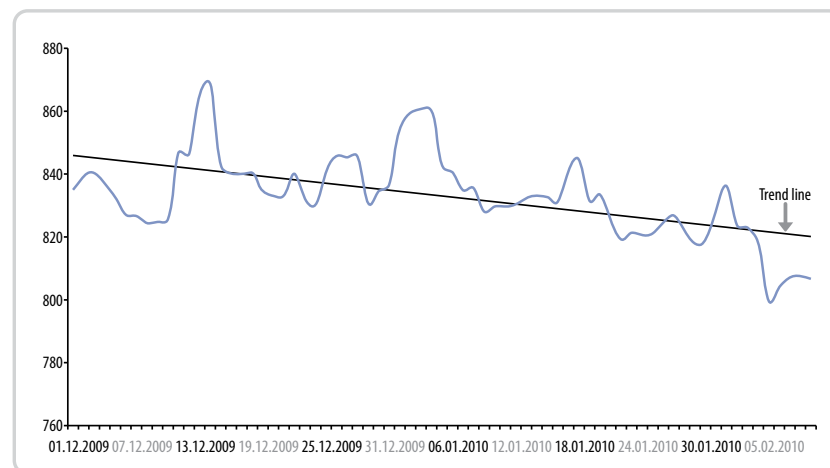


Figure 1: Strengthening Korean won versus NZ dollar, 1 December 2009 – 9 February 2010

Market activity

- New Zealand Velvet Marketing Company (NZVM) held its formal launch in Korea in early January. Their objective was to highlight the efforts being made to work with importers and distributors to reduce historical levels of volatility that have made business difficult for all in the supply chain. NZVM reported a good turnout of buyers with a generally positive response. The launch presented a great opportunity

to highlight key attributes of New Zealand velvet, right at the peak of the season. The event was attended by New Zealand Embassy staff in Seoul.

- Deer Industry New Zealand hosted a delegation of government officials from XiFeng County (known as “Deer City”). The delegation’s positive experience of New Zealand is covered in more detail on page 25. The group commented that the visit was important in understanding New Zealand’s production systems to help guide their industry and will increase the opportunity for further collaboration with the New Zealand industry.

Market access

Korea

The third round of free trade negotiations, which were held in Seoul from 14–19 December 2009, achieved little in terms of trade concessions. New Zealand’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade said the two sides remain far apart on market access for goods. A fourth round is likely to take place in New Zealand in April 2010.

Taiwan

At a Taiwan Business Leaders’ Forum, held in Auckland in December, Taiwan’s Vice Minister Liang used velvet as an example of a product that could benefit from the strengthening relationship between the two countries. The forum followed the annual New Zealand–Taiwan Economic Consultations held in Wellington the preceding day, where the five tonne frozen velvet quota was discussed.

Australia

Progress continues to be made in getting velvet access into Australia, with the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) recommending DINZ prepare a trade name application for the Permitted Ingredients List. The application has now been split into two categories under the TGA as (1) sliced and (2) powdered. The TGA has agreed to no extra charge for the separate applications and has recommended this as a more appropriate pathway toward registration of velvet. Although the preferred option is powdered, it is highly likely that sliced velvet may achieve approval on the Permitted Ingredients List first, with the intention that powdered velvet will follow shortly thereafter.

The formal application was submitted just over a year ago (January 2009) for a process that can take at least 18 months. While there are still a few questions to answer from the TGA, recent communication has been very positive.

Venison news roundup

European game season

Venison marketers report that chilled venison sold very well at solid prices up until Christmas. Retail orders were strong and late delivery airfreights were used to satisfy demand for the chilled product. Prices on the wholesale market eased back about 20–25% in comparison to the highs of 2008, but these were still very good prices considering the 50% falls in the price of European game and imported beef.

However, it seems that demand for chilled venison dried up very quickly post Christmas. The recessionary effect still lingers over European consumers and they remain cautious about spending on expensive items. Restaurant sales suffered in parts of Europe affected by the extremely cold winter, which dissuaded people from venturing out.

The market for frozen venison was subdued through the game season and the prices of competing European venison remained at very low levels through the season. On the frozen market, New Zealand and European venison are more easily substitutable and while the preference for New Zealand venison has built up over the past few years, it does not withstand the lure of the heavy discounts offered by sellers of European game.

While some volumes of frozen venison remain in Germany, orders for manufacturing and leg cuts are progressing, with the prospect of the reduction in production later this year encouraging importers to place their orders now.

Belgian importers publicise relaxation of seasonal sales ban

Three Belgian importers helped Deer Industry New Zealand promote New Zealand venison at a press luncheon in Brussels on 4 February.

Food writers and local chefs were invited to a special event to publicise the ending of the seasonal sales restriction in the Belgian region of Flanders. A renowned Belgian chef, Robrecht Wolters, prepared several dishes using New Zealand venison to demonstrate its excellent eating qualities and suitability for modern styles of cooking, not just goulash or winter roasts.

The chairman of the Belgian Deer Farmers Association, Dr Paul Audenaerde attended. Dr Audenaerde has supported



Part of the crowd enjoying New Zealand venison at the press luncheon in Brussels on 4 February.

New Zealand's efforts to remove the seasonal sales restriction, and we are grateful for his assistance in the matter.

Recipe competition boosts interest in New Zealand Venison in Germany

Over the course of the game season, Deer Industry New Zealand ran an online recipe competition for German consumers in conjunction with the culinary website www.bongusto.de. Home cooks were invited to submit their recipes electronically and share their ideas with others. The competition was also advertised in a leading culinary magazine. The winners were treated to a gourmet meal at their homes cooked by a well-known German chef. Many thousands of people visited the New Zealand venison website, and 5,000 people requested recipe brochures and a free spice pack. The winning recipes were chosen based on the quality of the written recipe and modern use of venison. The winning recipes from the competition are on the website www.neuseelandhirsch.de/gewinnspiel.html

Visiting US food writer

DINZ and Aquaculture New Zealand brought a writer to New Zealand to compile a feature on venison and greenshell mussels for the magazine *Food Arts*. This is the premier culinary trade magazine in the United States. The writer spent a week in New Zealand and visited a number of farms, food processing plants, and scenic locations during a week-long stay. The feature is expected to be published in March/April 2010.



Food writer Martin Gillam (left) and host Charlie Ewing on a visit to Cattle Flat Station in Wanaka.

Social media

Twitter: Do you tweet? A 'Cervenavenison' twitter account has been set-up and now 'tweets' Cervena news to a global audience. At time of writing Cervena venison is gaining followers and spreading the news one venison chop at a time.

Youtube.com: Eighteen short videos have now been loaded on youtube.com to ensure New Zealand venison cutting, preparation and cooking instructions are widely available. To date these have been viewed nearly 5,000 times. Search for New Zealand venison or "low-fat venison recipes" on youtube and enjoy the videos we provide for you.

continued on page 25

The year of the tiger ... or deer?

Most would agree that this velvet season has seen a good start in terms of returns for farmers. Some of this can be attributed to the work exporters have been doing, helping to lift and stabilise prices by augmenting the traditional Korean market to include China. A good portion of New Zealand velvet exports end up in shop windows in XiFeng County, or "Deer City".

XiFeng is in the mountainous north-eastern part of Liaoning Province in northern China. XiFeng has around 70,000 farmed sika deer and receives significant assistance from government to help establish it as the major distribution centre of deer products in China.

New velvet processing facilities have recently been built with the help of government incentives. As focus on the deer industry continues, XiFeng officials are keen to build on their good relationship with New Zealand, due its status as the world's largest exporter of deer products.

On 17 January, the first-ever delegation by XiFeng government officials came to New Zealand. The high-level delegation of four included the secretary and two directors of the local government. Accompanying the officials was a large importer and processor of New Zealand velvet.



Ms He (XiFeng Director) viewing the vast amount of deer farmed in wide open spaces at Rangitaiki Station.

continued from page 24

New Zealand promotion

Venison will be promoted via several activities in New Zealand over the next month.

Tom's Kitchen: DINZ provided sponsorship to ensure venison featured as a main ingredient for an episode of a new television series which will screen in March/April this year on Prime TV and Sky's Food Channel. Our thanks to Ian Scott for hosting the film crew on his property.

Pinot Noir 2010: Cervena sponsored the gala dinner to cap off *Pinot Noir 2010*, New Zealand's biggest wine conference. *Pinot Noir 2010* attracted about 2,000 wine professionals from around the world, including numerous chefs, wine makers and food and wine writers. Showcasing the best of New Zealand cuisine with the best of New Zealand wine is an effective means of reinforcing New Zealand's reputation as a producer of fine food to this highly influential audience. 📺

Deer Industry New Zealand hosted the delegation and showed the government officials the quality conditions in which New Zealand deer are farmed, and in which velvet and co-products are processed and presented. It provided the opportunity to give the visitors some cultural experiences as well as promoting New Zealand's natural, pristine environment. Deer Industry New Zealand took the delegation through the North Island visiting farms, processing factories and further processed velvet stores.

The XiFeng delegation expressed a desire for further interaction with the New Zealand velvet industry and more promotion of our velvet. Discussion will continue on how to best market New Zealand velvet in China. 📺

- **Many thanks to Andrew and Rachael Mitchell, New Zealand Supreme Natural Foods, Landcorp Farming and John Spiers for their help with hosting the delegation.**



Beach flags is physically demanding and often close to the wire. Morgan (left) competing for the last flag.

Powered by velvet.org – Surf Champs

Powered by velvet.org's surf lifesaver, Morgan Foster, recently competed in the surf league finals at Mount Maunganui. Morgan, captain for the Canterbury team, placed first and second in the beach flags during the finals with yet another fantastic season. Morgan will find out later in April whether he has made the New Zealand team for the World champs in Egypt in October 2010. Morgan specialises in the beach flags event, with many publications citing him as the one to watch at upcoming events.

Morgan has been using New Zealand deer velvet for a few years and enjoys the edge it gives him in terms of recovery after training. This allows him to train harder, more often – an advantage in any sport. Morgan also says he very rarely gets run down or a cold while supplementing with velvet and would recommend velvet to any endurance athlete.

Karate world champion gains the edge with New Zealand velvet supplement

New Zealand's Mountain Red® Deer Velvet product has received the endorsement of six-time karate world champion, Ruan Retief of South Africa.

Ten years ago, Nelson business woman Karen Morley established her company Mountain Red with the vision of producing the highest-quality health supplements available, manufactured in New Zealand using deer velvet from her

father's farm in Redwood Valley. Redwood Hills stock had been producing world-class velvet for some years, but this was the first time their velvet would be used in health supplements.

A decade on, their flagship product, Mountain Red Deer Velvet, has received the highest accolade – endorsement from a world champion athlete, who puts much of his success on the world stage down to his use of this supplement.


Ruan Retief was introduced to Mountain Red Deer Velvet as part of his training regimen, and quickly started to see positive improvements. "In the highly competitive world of sport, athletes need all the help they can get and throughout my years as multiple-time world champion I have tried many techniques, natural supplements and systems to enhance my performance," comments Retief. "I was introduced to Mountain Red Deer Velvet and I can honestly say that was the day that my search for truly effective performance



Karen Morley, CEO, Mountain Red.

enhancers stopped. Mountain Red Deer Velvet gave me an extra edge that took me from competing successfully in my home country to conquering competition worldwide".

Retief's bench press ability increased from 80kg to 120kg, and his leg strength, critical in karate, doubled to nearly 200kg, something that has also benefited his new sport of competitive mountain-biking.

"Deer Velvet has a long history of use in the Orient, and this traditional use is supported by a growing body of scientific evidence showing that velvet, when taken as a supplement, improves athletic performance, stamina and recovery from injury," says Mountain Red's CEO, Karen Morley. 

Fifth World Deer Congress

We now have further information on the congress and itinerary for the pre-congress tour. Papers have been called by the Chinese organisers for the following topics:

- Deer farming overview
- Deer genetics, breeding and reproduction techniques
- Deer nutrition and management
- Velvet antler growing and removal
- Velvet antler composition and pharmacology studies



The tour promises a fascinating look at China's deer industry and some amazing cultural attractions.

- Deer Welfare and disease
- Velvet antler, venison (and other deer products) processing, utilisation and marketing
- Deer hunting and wild deer conservation.

The pre-congress tour will be a great opportunity to meet people in the velvet industry in Taiwan and Korea. The programme includes deer farms and medicine markets in Taiwan and Korea as well as some of the sights.

The post-congress tour is designed for an exciting look at deer farming in China as well as some amazing cultural attractions. Included in the programme are farms at Shuangyang and Beijing plus deer processing at Batou in Inner Mongolia. There will also be visits to the Great Wall, Forbidden City, Buried Army, Shanghai Expo and many exciting sights plus a magnificent cultural experience.

Ron McPhail of CR McPhail Ltd has been liaising with Tony Pearse and Rhys Griffiths at Deer Industry New Zealand about the contacts for the congress and tours.

A prompt and firm commitment for these tours is now required from those interested. A copy of the itineraries, terms and conditions and booking form is available from CR McPhail Ltd: Email enquiries@crmcphail.co.nz or phone 06 357 1644 

There is now limited information available on:

- <http://deercongress.jlau.edu.cn>

JML can help you control Johne's disease on your farm



Johne's disease is a chronic gut disease that affects ruminants such as deer and is a financial burden to many New Zealand farmers. Control of Johne's disease in deer can be challenging. To ensure the maximum return from your investment in Johne's disease control, an efficient, effective management plan for your property is recommended.

More than 30 veterinarians from throughout New Zealand have recently been upskilled on Johne's disease control in deer. They can advise you on a programme tailored to your deer and your expectations. As a further incentive to tap into this expertise, Johne's Management Limited (JML) will rebate \$250 on the cost of an initial consultation by a JML-trained veterinarian. This offer is strictly limited to the first 100 farmers, so call your nearest adviser now and invest in the future of your deer herd!

NORTH ISLAND
Waiuku Veterinary Centre 17 Kitchener Rd, Waiuku Tanya Liefing 09 235 9217, 027 497 9719 wku@vetcentre.co.nz
Tokoroa Veterinary Services PO BOX 637, Taupo Tony Parsons 07 378 5433, 027 445 5202 tonylynnex@xtra.co.nz
Veterinary Services (HB) PO BOX 503, Waipukurau Richard Hilson 06 858 9060, 027 275 3943 richard.hilson@hawkesbayvets.co.nz
Totally Vets Limited 43-45 Manchester St, Feilding Barney Askin 06 323 6161, 027 464 9979 barnya@totallyvets.co.nz
Equine Farm Vets 78 Riverbank Rd, Otaki Erin Simpson 06 364 6942, 027 542 2818 admin@equinefarmvets.co.nz

SOUTH ISLAND
Golden Bay Veterinary Club 64 Meihana St, Takaka Luisa Ferrer: 03 525 8011 luferrer@gmail.com
Northern Canterbury Veterinary Service PO BOX 46, Cheviot Ian Page 03 319 8677, 027 436 0477 ian@ncvets.co.nz
Grey Veterinary Centre PO BOX 231, Greymouth Gary Dew 03 768 0370 gary@greyvetcentre.co.nz
4a Carruthers St, Ilam, Christchurch Edmund Noonan* 03 358 8718, 027 288 6925 edmund.noonan@gmail.com
Xcell Breeding Services PO BOX 165, Kaiapoi Jim McPhee 03 327 9555, 021 453 406 jim@xcell.co.nz

Darfield Veterinary Centre Ltd 125 Waireka Rd, Darfield Simon Hewitt 03 318 8611, 027 449 1031 darfieldvet@paradise.net.nz
Vetlife Dunsandel PO BOX 110, Dunsandel Rebecca Kingan 03 325 4155, 027 378 6700 rkingan@gmail.com
Riverside Veterinary Services PO BOX 211, Ashburton Rob Dunbar 03 308 2321, 027 241 6008 rob.dunbar@vetent.co.nz
Vetlife Temuka 35 King St, Temuka Andrew McLaughlin 03 615 7352, 027 444 0819 andrewm@vetlife.co.nz Phil Skinner 03 615 7352, 027 244 7016 phil@vetlife.co.nz
Vetlife Pleasant Point 83 Main Rd, Pleasant Point Katie Bowron 03 614 7777, 027 543 2018 KTD4000@hotmail.com Hayden Barker 03 614 7777, 027 223 1023 hayden@vetlife.co.nz Beatrix Loomes 03 614 7777, 027 444 1202 vetpoint@gmail.com
Aorangiri Veterinary Services 72 Main St, Fairlie Glenda Kellahan 03 685 8407, 027 477 9216 glenda.k@aorangirivet.co.nz

Vetlife Fairlie 31 Main St, Fairlie Georgina McKerchar 03 685 8884, 027 484 3001 georgina@vetlife.co.nz Dean Dickson* 03 685 8884, 027 479 8079 fairlie@vetlife.co.nz
Waimate Veterinary Services PO BOX 96, Waimate Eric van Schreven 03 689 7213, 027 203 9642 veits@waimatevets.co.nz
Aspiring Veterinary Services PO BOX 223, Wanaka Gary Walker 03 443 7262, 027 433 5673 aspiring-vet@xtra.co.nz
Beech Resources Limited PO BOX 361, Wanaka Amanda Bell 03 443 4251, 027 443 4250 mandyb@criffel.co.nz
Central Vets Limited Stuart Rd, Ranfurly Dave Dodd 03 444 9615, 027 431 7945 kate@centralvets.co.nz
Gardens Veterinary Clinic 14 Bank St, Dunedin Russell Brown: 03 473 0387 vetsoffice@xtra.co.nz
AgResearch Invermay Puddle Alley, Mosgiel Colin Mackintosh 03 489 9229, 029 489 9229 colin.mackintosh@agresearch.co.nz

Northern Southland Vets PO BOX 65, Riversdale Paul Langford 03 202 5636 julia@nsvs.co.nz
Northern Southland Vets (Te Anau) PO BOX 22, Te Anau Nigel Dougherty 03 249 7039 nsvsn@ispnz.co.nz Jill Sloane 03 249 7039, 027 549 8870 jill@nsvs.co.nz
Vet South Ltd Gore PO BOX 242, Gore Gavin Sinclair 03 203 9220, 021 222 6153 gavin@vetsouth.co.nz
Vet South Ltd Winton PO BOX 12, Winton Andrew Roe 03 236 6090 021 710 068 andrewr@vetsouth.co.nz
Veterinary Services Invercargill 299 North Rd, Invercargill Glenn Dean 03 215 9237, 027 231 6599 glenn@vetservices.co.nz
AsureQuality Limited PO BOX 644, Invercargill Lester Laughton 03 214 6757, 021 888 145 laughton@asurequality.co.nz
* not a veterinarian

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Breeding values for deer: a primer

by Jason Archer, AgResearch Ltd and Tony Pearse, DINZ

Breeding values (BVs) are used in most livestock industries to assist in making selection decisions through ranking animals on their genetic merit. Their impact on making genetic progress is well proven. BVs give an estimate of the genetic superiority of individual animals which is more accurate than assessment of the animal's own appearance or measured performance alone.

In essence, BVs make predictions based on:

1. Adjusting for systematic differences between animals due to factors such as:
 - management group (this includes feeding, but also other factors which might affect the performance of a whole group including water supply, etc)
 - sex of calf
 - age of dam (2-year-old hinds have lower productivity than other age groups).
2. Adjusting performance records for how heritable the trait is (some traits have a larger relative contribution of genetics in determining performance than others) and for the available performance information on relatives (eg, information on the performance of sire, dam, half-brothers and sisters and progeny if available adds information to predicting BVs over and above the performance of the individual alone).

DEERSelect is our industry's BV prediction system. Breeders contribute data via the internet to an industry database which is used to calculate BVs.

For growth trait BVs, this data is pooled across the country so valid comparisons can be made between herds. This allows us much more scope when selecting the sires which we use to breed stags, and results in much faster genetic progress. The outcomes can be seen in Figure 1, which plots average BVs of animals born across New Zealand over the last 15 years. It shows the marked improvement coinciding with the start of BV usage in the early 2000s, and also an increased emphasis by breeders on venison traits.

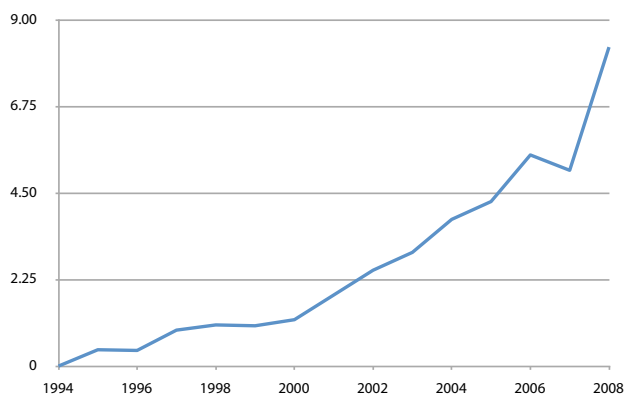


Figure 1: Genetic progress in 12-month weight BV across all DEERSelect herds over the last 15 years

Growth BVs usually reported are for weight at 12 months of age (ie, around the time that deer are usually killed), and hind mature weight (this reflects the cost of maintaining hinds).

Hind weight affects the cost of production management and feeding – for efficient overwintering systems and for the crucial feeding levels required during lactation in late summer where often climate and pasture quality can influence fawn growth rate.

Both BVs are reported in units of kg liveweight, and are relative to the average animal born in 1995 and recorded on the DEERSelect database. That animal as a 12-month old venison stag was about 105kg, (it changes as more data are added to the database so cannot be defined exactly) essentially from New Zealand red deer origins with a history of also having velvet as a secondary breeding goal. In other words, a stag with a 12-month BV of +15.0 carries genes which would make him 15 kg heavier as a yearling than the average recorded stag born in 1995. If you use this stag as a sire, his calves will then be 7.5 kg heavier (on average) than a stag with a BV of 0.0 used over a similar group of hinds.

The difference is half of the difference in the stag's BVs because the stag only contributes half the calf's genes. Of course if you use the stag over a group of hinds with similar genetic merit to the stag, you will get calves with better genetics from both hind and stag and will achieve more gains. The stag's genetics will also be passed to his daughters who, if kept as replacements, will pass their better genes to future calves. In this way, over time the average performance level of your herd will lift (providing the animals are fed to be able to achieve their genetic potential), and you will get a long-term permanent improvement in productivity from your investment in animal genetics.

In sale catalogues, selection for highly heritable velvet and hard antler superiority is being increasingly distinguished from lines bred solely for use in venison production. BV for weaning weight and 12 month figures calculated through DEERSelect are published in sale catalogues. As can be seen from Figure 1, the average of all recorded herds (now 41 herds) for 12 month weight in 2007 was plus 5kg and in 2008 plus 8kg. BVs in catalogues need to be either referenced back to the 1995 base level or to an average of the stags born in the year of this offering.

In the DEERSelect rankings for December 2009 (available in sortable form on www.deernz.org) some 400 Eastern and composite sires are now recorded with another 35 English stags separately analysed for both growth and velvet genetics with a plus 7.92kg average.

This average includes a proportion of DEERSelect-recorded stags born in herds with a strong antler focus and relatively little emphasis on growth rate. However, relativity to other stags born in the same year, and (within the same analysis) BVs are comparable across other herds.

Table 1 features the top 20 Eastern/composite stags in DEERSelect (December 2009) for their BVs for 12 month weight and BVs for maternal weight. It also introduces other factors that buyers need to consider, including the number of progeny recorded and an accuracy estimate. DEERSelect requires sufficient progeny to give an accuracy ranking of greater than 75 percent. That percentage will increase with numbers of recorded progeny, careful weighing and data recording and, as a pre-requisite, DNA matching and

parentage verification.

DEERSelect's developing package of tools includes:

- BVs for individual economic and productive traits
- genetic trends analysis that quantifies genetic progress in a herd
- economic indices to optimally balance selection for different production scenarios
- mating allocation tools to maximise genetic progress while minimising inbreeding
- tools to utilise information from DNA-based tests
- diagnostic tools which suggest opportunities to increase genetic gain.

While within-herd evaluation is available, DEERSelect strongly encourages evaluation on an across-herd national basis. Where technically feasible, all deer will be evaluated on a common base so breeding values and economic indices will be directly comparable.

DEERSelect publishes summaries of information available on recently used sires, to assist top tier breeders in identifying new genetics for their breeding programme and to encourage commercial breeders in identifying which herds are using the sires most suited to their particular breeding goals.

Traits with potential include: (*currently available or under development)

- growth (principally weight at 12 months and mature weight)*
- velvet production (weight-based)*
- reproductive success/failure
- reproductive seasonality (conception date) *
- carcass traits including eye muscle area as an estimate of overall muscularity and potential yield (includes data from CT scanning programmes)
- disease resistance/immune competence (potential for Johne's disease resilience or parasite resistance)
- temperament*


Current work also includes:

- Extending the software system to include elk and wapiti-type deer (DEERResearch funded programme).
- Developing economic indices – the Breeding Worth concept. These indices rank animals for profitability under different circumstances where a different balance of traits is required. For example, the genetics for a stag being used to breed velvetting stags and replacement females are quite different to what we are looking for in a terminal sire for venison production. DEERResearch has also funded development of economic indices, so that animals can be ranked for the different purposes and genetic merit is measured in dollars of profit (rather than units of weight).
- Deer genome sequencing project funded by AgResearch with a contribution from Landcorp Farming Ltd that will allow researchers to identify genetic markers related to traits of productive and economic importance and allow a calculation of an estimated breeding value from blood samples

Table 1: Top 20 Eastern/composite stags, DEERSelect December 2009.

Birth Herd	Current Tag	No Progeny	Weaning 12BV (kg)	W12 Accuracy	Mature WTBV (kg)	MWT Accuracy	Current Herd Owner
Peel Forest Estate	ATLAS	60	25.1	0.94	22.2	0.79	Peel Forest Estate
Stanfield Eastern	MEGAMILIAN	263	24.9	0.98	24.3	0.84	Wilkins Farming
Deer Improvement	CZAR	115	24.8	0.95	20.9	0.77	Deer Improvement
Deer Improvement	BREMEN	96	24	0.95	15.7	0.74	Deer Improvement
Doncaster Deer Partnership	CORONA	37	23.8	0.91	19.5	0.74	Deer Improvement
Doncaster Deer P/Ship	CORLEONE	25	23.4	0.89	17.8	0.73	Deer Improvement
Canterbury Imp Red Deer	SONNY BILL	25	22.7	0.88	24.5	0.75	Canterbury Imp Red Deer
Black Forest Park	KURGAN	50/98	22.1	0.95	22.7	0.85	Black Forest Park
Doncaster Deer P/Ship	PERFORMER	33	21.9	0.91	20	0.74	Deer Improvement
Landcorp Stuart	259/06	12	21.7	0.83	15.3	0.67	Landcorp Stuart
Peel Forest Estate	04052	7	21.7	0.83	21.4	0.72	Peel Forest Estate
Deer Improvement	COMMODORE	76	21.7	0.94	15.7	0.76	Deer Improvement
Fairlight	STALLONE	174	21.5	0.97	14	0.78	Deer Improvement
Deer Improvement	FRANCHISE	37	21.3	0.91	16	0.74	Deer Improvement
Canterbury Imp Red Deer	COSSAR	288/302	21.2	0.98	23.5	0.86	Deer Improvement
Stanfield Eastern	MAXIMILIAN	88/464	20.8	0.99	25.3	0.94	Stanfield Eastern
Black Forest Park	DENZEL	41	20.8	0.90	18.6	0.81	Totara Hills
Remarkables Park	LUCIANO	94	20.6	0.95	14.1	0.74	Deer Improvement
Doncaster Deer P/ship	05073	5	20.3	0.82	14.9	0.68	Doncaster Deer Partnership

taken at birth (just completed).

The potential for industry-wide genetic improvement is enormous, fitting well with industry productivity and the venison strategies and the drive for more calves on the ground, heavier and earlier. Right now, deer farmers can exercise that choice by selecting sires with proven BV traits that support their own breeding goals. 

COMING EVENTS: 2010

Date	Event	Time/Location	Contact for further details
22 April	Canterbury Branch NZDFA	Sudima Hotel AGM	Malcolm Gilbert 03 314 5831 gilbertm@farmside.co.nz
18–20 May 2010	Deer Industry Conference <i>FocuSed 2010</i>	War Memorial Hall, Napier (Field day 20 May at <i>The Steyning</i> , Central Hawke's Bay)	Tony Pearce, 021 719 038, tony.pearce@deernz.org or Hannah Hsu, 04 471 6110, hannah.hsu@deernz.org
1-3 June 2010	Annual Conference, Deer Branch, NZVA	Queenstown (venue to be confirmed)	Peter Wilson, P.R.Wilson@massey.ac.nz , 06 356 9099 ext 7619
27–28 July 2010	Fifth World Deer Congress	Changchun, China	Tour proposed via velvet processing centres in China. To register interest contact Ron McPhail, PO Box 2091, Palmerston North, Ph 06 357 1644, enquiries@rcmcpmail.co.nz

This table is compiled from publicly available information. We have done our best to ensure it is up to date and accurate, and encourage readers with events to publicise to contact us directly at din@wordpict.co.nz

Deer genetics presentation: Deer Improvement responds

In the December 2009 issue of Deer Industry News, we carried reports on presentations and discussion during the Deer Genetics and Progress seminar at the October 2009 NZDFA Branch Chairmen's meeting. Also carried in that issue was a letter to the editor from Graham Carr of Peel Forest Estate critical of comments made by Deer Improvement's Peter Gatley during his presentation. The following article by Peter Gatley is in response to Graham's letter.

Genetic gain offers biggest opportunity

by Peter Gatley, Deer Improvement

The December 2009 issue of *Deer Industry News* contained reports on the genetics seminar at the October Branch Chairman's meeting at which I gave a presentation entitled "Genetic Improvement For Venison Production". In his letter to *Deer Industry News*, Graham Carr, who did not comment at the meeting, expresses dismay at some of the content of my talk.

Graham says, "to say farmers are still using the same kind of stags they used 20 years ago is not only incorrect but is insulting to deer farmers". He goes on to say my comments "belittled the intelligence of the New Zealand deer farmer".

The presentations were recorded for future reference, therefore what I said is not a matter for selective interpretation. Here it is, word-for-word, from the video. I have also included the graphic used during this part of the talk to illustrate my point:

"In terms of achieving genetic improvement, yes, there has been some progress and it began before Deer Improvement came along. We don't claim any credit for this.

This is DEERSelect data. You can see that when people started to measure BVs they started to improve.

Although they're improving reasonably well among some of the breeders and a few commercial herds, in terms of the national herd it's almost a non-event, so what we have to do is capitalise on the opportunity".

Readers can decide for themselves whether Graham's comments accurately reflected my message.

Further on in my presentation I said, "Genetic gain for venison production is the biggest potential contributor to productivity improvement in the deer industry. The low level of uptake of improved genetics in the national herd is therefore a huge opportunity cost to the deer industry."

Genetic gain is permanent and cumulative. This is what makes it the biggest contributor to improved farm profitability in other livestock industries, and given the relatively untapped potential, it is reasonable to expect the same in venison production.

Whereas a useful indication of genetic potential in antler growth

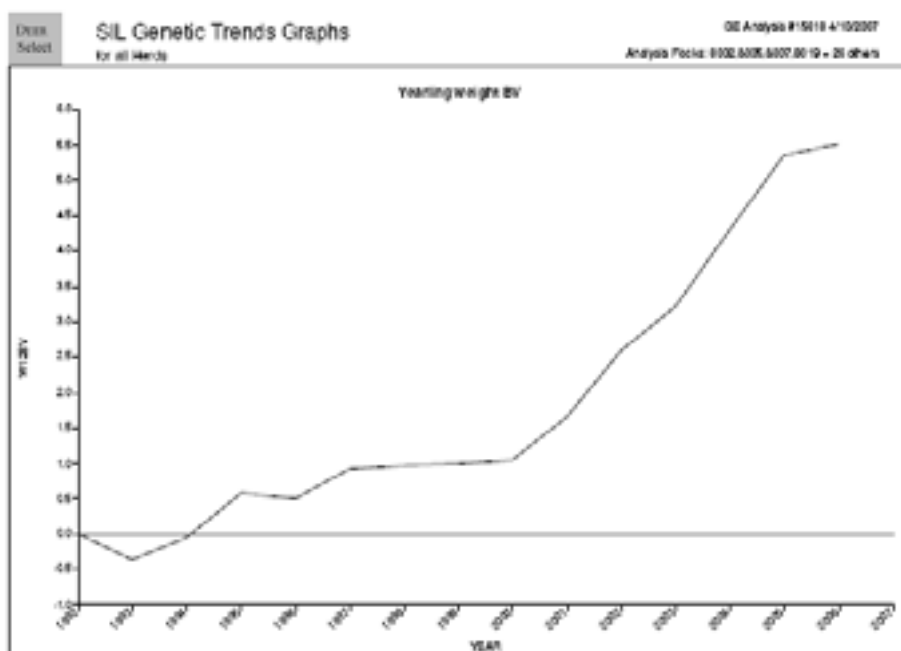
is self-evident on the head of any stag, venison productivity traits cannot be adequately assessed visually. Many farmers are familiar with the disappointment that follows when sale-day weight is taken as a proxy for genetic merit. This is why Breeding Values are essential to evaluate true genetic merit in venison.

As previously mentioned, progress was being made on Breeding Values before the advent of Deer Improvement six years ago, but we do lay claim to lifting the rate of gain, providing the industry with genetic diversity, and putting the very top genetics within reach of every farmer through AI.

This is not to suggest that every farmer needs to use AI. As explained at the Branch Chairmen's meeting, AI is simply a method of multiplying elite genes while minimising biosecurity risk. We predict that in 20 years' time, more than 90 percent of all hinds will still be mated to stags, but most of those stags will themselves be AI progeny.

This is what makes the Deer Improvement programme so potentially useful to the industry. No individual conventional breeder can justify the investment necessary to advance genetic gain across several key traits encompassing multiple bloodlines, and even if they could, simply selling a few dozen stags each year would provide minimal benefit from an industry perspective. Only through AI can the industry leverage the outputs to enable efficient and effective transfer of genetic merit with the necessary scale.

Key to this is the transfer of genetics between programmes. Most breeders seriously underestimate the value of genetic diversity and many cripple their own efforts by refusing



to source from other studs, and hinder progress for all by refusing to release their own genes. Fortunately not all studs take this approach. For example Deer Improvement genes have been put to good use by a number of breeders including Doncaster, Maranoa, Parkhurst, Remarkables Park, Ruapehu, and Wilkins and several have willingly supplied semen or animals to our programme.

On page 38 of the December 2009 *Deer Industry News*, the DEERSelect rankings show Deer Improvement stags occupying 15 of the top 30 places. I would encourage Graham Carr to revisit his current policy on the exchange of genetic material as the bloodlines of his 2 stags on the list are already well represented in the Deer Improvement programme whereas we can offer him several exciting outcross options. As Andy Mitchell said at the meeting, "none of us are stupid, down the track we're going to have to cross with Deer Improvement genetics [at the Northern Focus Farm] because of the outcross and those sorts of things".

Based on the number of hinds in the industry being bred for venison production, we can assume there are more than 10,000 stags in use. What proportion of these is directly derived from a programme achieving demonstrable genetic gain? We contend that the vast majority of stags going to work in the coming rut will do little to improve genetic merit, and no doubt many of them are inferior to some of the hinds they are mating. This is the situation that faced the dairy industry before the development of central progeny testing and AI. Thirty-seven percent of the bulls in use were actually inferior to the herd.

Fortunately farmers can now access red deer sire stags or an AI team that will deliver real benefits quantified by a BV. Until wapiti breeders have a central database delivering something similar, farmers cannot readily assess what, if any, progress is being made. In the meantime, for those who like the terminal sire approach, one option is to improve the growth rate genetics of the red hinds while continuing to source wapiti stags.

One thing is not disputable. Too few of the industry's yearling progeny are achieving killable weight in time for the chilled season. Therefore, regardless of anything else, we need faster growth rates. Deer Improvement has proven that high BV red deer have no problem achieving this goal on all-grass systems, and we have data showing a clear advantage over wapiti-cross animals for carcass yield. We continue to work with processors in accumulating more data as they

move quickly to develop technology that will enable them to adjust their payment systems accordingly.


As we move toward a more useful multi-trait breeding goal, it is essential that we have genetic diversity within the industry. Deer Improvement has gone to great expense to protect and develop bloodlines that would otherwise have been lost. Consequently we have eight different families represented among the top-ranked stags on DEERSelect, whereas the other studs are almost totally dependent on just the Maximilian and Kabul lines.

The formula for success is simple. Every breeder needs to put egos to one side and bring in whatever new blood they can get with reliable BVs.

The value of this is illustrated in the dairy industry right now where the top Holstein Friesian bull was bred by LIC but sired by an Ambreed bull, and the top Jersey is an Ambreed bull sired by an LIC bull.

At the Branch Chairmen's meeting, Deer Improvement applauded the efforts of those who provided the essential tools by establishing the central database, and instigated work on economic indexes relevant to different farming systems. We remain concerned however, that the excellent draft paper by Drs Archer and Amer is yet to be adequately examined and debated in readiness for further refinement and implementation. We have often said that we are happy to breed whatever the industry wants, but there needs to be agreement on the components of the breeding goal.

Potentially we stand on the threshold of a whole new era with the advent of genomics. The ability to use DNA markers to identify genetic merit offers the potential for the biggest leap in on-farm productivity gain since the invention of AI over 60 years ago. LIC is a world leader in this technology and is working alongside AgResearch to make it accessible to the deer industry. The ability to apply selection pressure on a whole range of traits will, however, be of little value if we cannot decide what we are breeding for.

This paper won't find agreement with every sector but represents the views of Deer Improvement, an initiative which we believe is of enormous potential value to the deer industry, and which has earned the right to a voice after six years of investing considerable effort, money and intellectual property, and having achieved demonstrable leadership in the field of genetics for venison production. 

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Sire sale report

True to the patchy conditions in the industry, there were uneven results at the recent sire sales. Top price reported to *Deer Industry News* was \$87,000 for Lot 1 at Stanfield's. Other notable prices achieved were \$51,000 for a Charlie Mac son at Foveran Deer Park and \$45,000 for a Tower Farms stag purchased by neighbour Raroa Deer Stud.

As always, the studs were generous hosts, from a helicopter shuttle service from Christchurch to Foveran, to a well cleaned-out spit roast at Pampas Heights (Bryce Heard reports enthusiasm for the live animals in the sale ring unfortunately didn't match guests' appetite for the cooked meat.)

ANTLER & VIEWS	22 January at Kaikoura
Stags sold	11 of 31 on offer
Top price	\$15,900
Average	\$7,177
Other animals sold	17 of 26 hinds on offer sold; average price \$864
Sales compared with last year	First on-farm sale
Comment	Pleasing result for our first on-farm sale at Kaikoura. Being at the end of a long sales circuit and with limited registered buyers, the \$7,177 stag and \$864 hind averages were very good. The many positive comments on the quality of the deer both for sale and retained for breeding have inspired us to try again next year. Thanks to all for your support.

ARAWATA DEER FARM	14 January at Pine Bush, Southland
Stags sold	16 of 22 on offer
Top price	\$13,500, cut 5.25 kg SA at 2 years, sold to Bruce Patterson, Scotts Gap, Southland.
Average	\$4,400
Other animals sold	21 13-month hinds sold, top price \$1,500; 21 2yo velvetting stags sold, average \$650.
Sales compared with last year	Back a wee bit on last year
Comment	Market softer this year. Sold more outside region last year, but more local support this year. Hinds harder to sell this year. Happy with condition of animals. Arawata breeds dual-purpose animals with some trophy genetics on the side.

CANTERBURY IMPORTED RED DEER STUD	9 January 2010
Top prices	\$6,800 (Argyle Station) and \$7,000 (Jock and Pip Foster)
Other animals sold	Full clearance of yearling hinds; top price \$3,700 (David Smith – Ashburton). Majority staying on to be mated to Wormwood.
Sales compared with last year	Overall much better sale than 2009, with balance still in favour of the purchaser.
Comment	Very good clearance of stags with only half a dozen remaining. All good enough to be put up as 3-year-olds in 2010. Good to see previous purchasers returning year after year, with stags going as far north as the Bombay Hills and as far south as Invercargill. Overall strong support from throughout the country by deer farmers who know their deer.

CLACHANBURN ELK	18 January on farm at Clachanburn, Ranfurly
Bulls sold	43 sold – total clearance
Top price	\$7,000
Average	\$3,900
Sales compared with last year	Same average and top price as last year but more animals sold.
Comment	A full gallery from throughout the South Island, with strong demand for the heavy, meatier bulls. Despite increasing the number of bulls offered to meet demand, the same average was maintained as last year.

DEER GENETICS NZ LTD	12 January at McKeown Rd, Geraldine
Stags sold	18 sold – total clearance
Top price	\$31,000
Average	\$10,350
Other animals sold	Five yearling hinds, \$2,960 average
Comment	Very good turnout and the weather was kind. Don's home-cured bacon was enjoyed by all at the breakfast put on by DGNZ. Lots of interest and good comment on the sire stags. Bidding was brisk and competitive with Clarkie providing his usual entertaining auctioneering. We are very happy with the sale and thank all the bidders for making it such a success.

In many cases top prices and averages were back on last year, with lower clearance rates and few top prices reported over \$20,000. This industry thrives on optimism however, and even those who had mediocre sales were heartened by the response to the quality of what was on offer – even if that didn't always inspire strong bidding.

Deer Industry News invited all known studs and significant breeders to submit a sale report again this year and we thank those who responded. If you didn't hear from us, please contact us with your up-to-date details so we can ensure you don't miss out next time. The following is a summary of the reports we received by press time.

FOVERAN DEER PARK	10 January at Foveran
Stags sold	59 of 63 on offer
Top price	\$51,000
Other animals sold	Small select line of yearling hinds; top \$5,500 for a Warlord daughter; balance \$3,000 – \$4,000.

Comment
Buyers from through New Zealand including a big North Island contingent. Many took advantage of a helicopter ferry service to take buyers to Foveran from Christchurch. Ninety registered buyers. Lot 1, a 40-point spiker by Robert the Bruce sold to G Hansen, Palmerston North, for \$35,000. Eric Thompson, Wanaka, bought a 22-point spiker by Wredson Major for \$9,500. Top price of \$51,000 was for an English 2yo stag by Charles Mac out of a Henry James daughter, bought by D Hudson. A 2yo son of Amadeus sold for \$15,000 and an Achilles son made \$12,800. The rest of the 2yo selection sold for \$4,000 – \$10,000. Small selection of 3yo sires was topped by a Henry James son for \$13,000 with a Bradford son selling for \$10,000. Balance of 3yo sires sold for \$3,000 – \$9,000.

GLORIAVALE DEER PARK	12 January at Insignis Park
Stags sold	31 of 37 on offer
Top price	\$15,000
Average	\$3,300
Other animals sold	12 elite yearling English hinds on offer as well; all sold, average \$850.
Sales compared with last year	The sale was a lot better than last year with great sire stags on offer. Buyers recognised this and took advantage of our genetics.

Comment
Overall we are pleased with the results of the sale and the quality of the stags on offer. Top price of \$15,000 was for a Lazor son out of our pure Woburn dam Blue 72. We also achieved \$14,000 for a Major Peel son out of Dam Yellow 846. Another Major Peel son from dam yellow 37 fetched \$11,500. There was a great atmosphere at the sale with strong bidding. Thankyou to all the successful purchasers and the under-bidders, without whom the sale would not have been a success.

NETHERDALE RED DEER	13 January at Netherdale, Balfour, Southland.
Stags sold	15 of 27 on offer sold at sale and 5 sold after
Top price	Top \$11,000
Average	\$5,020 for elite 3yo sires; \$1,800 for commercial 3yo sires.
Other animals sold	Top price for a pen of 10 2yo velvet stags, \$1,000 per head; Top price for a 13 mth hind, \$3,100. Full clearance for 70 2yo velvet stags, average \$830; top pen of 10 animals cut an average 3.75kg velvet; 60 13mth hinds offered – 30 sold at an average of \$890.

Comment
Sale average price back on last year, down from \$7,000 in 2009 to \$5,000 in 2010. Fewer sires sold at this year's sale, although good sales following auction. The offering of 70 velvet stags was 20 more than last year. Their average velvet weight was 3.04kg, higher than for last year. Average sale price of \$830 for 2yo velvet stags was down slightly on last year. Number of 13mth hinds on offer (60) was well up on the 40 offered in 2009 and the average price for them (\$890) was also well up on last year.



Any chance of a lift? Awaiting transport to the Foveran sale from left: John Carter, Raroa Red Deer, Cambridge, Paul Lampp, PGGWrightson, Hastings, John Hunter, Te Awamutu and Graeme Churstain, PGGWrightson, King Country.

PAMPAS HEIGHTS 6 January at Rotorua	
Stags sold	15 of 21 on offer
Top price	\$20,000 (private treaty, pure Warnham)
Average	\$5,808 over all sires
Other animals sold	30 velvetting stags and 20 yearling hinds.
Sales compared with last year	More than 40 registered buyers (similar to last year). Better quality stock than ever offered before, but generally lower prices paid than previous years, which surprised and disappointed. All stags velvetted immediately after sale averaged just a shade under 8kg of OG velvet (2009 average was just over 7kg).
Comment	Nervous and weak bidding on the first day of the selling circuit, with buyers looking for a lead from one another. (Nothing wrong with the appetitie though – guests managed to eat a whole pig and a whole lamb, so the appetite for meat remains alive and well!!!)
PEEL FOREST 11 January at Peel Forest Estate	
Stags sold	Almost total clearance
Average	English \$9,620; Eastern \$5,187
Comment	Excellent sale with a large number of registered buyers. English stags sold in hard antler were presented to the buyers on a very professionally filmed video clip showing off their antlers from different angles. This was very well received by the buyers, helping them fully analyse the stags. First offerings from Rob Roy, new pure Fuzeland master sire, were strongly sought after as well as the first offering of Atlas in the European line. These were excellent conformation animals whose quiet temperament was much commented on. European stags had BVs for 12month weight ranging up to 21.8.
RAROA DEER STUD 7 January on the property	
Stags sold	18 of 24 on offer (including after sale)
Top price	\$20,500
Average	\$3,653
Other animals sold	9 of 12 yearling hinds offered sold; average \$1,311
Sales compared with last year	Similar – a good number of registrations but low competition.
Comment	Lot 1 is a really outstanding stag – rated by pundits (not by us) as one of the top heads offered in New Zealand this year. He sold to the Hollands, who farm near Whanganui. We felt our stags had very good velvet and trophy attributes and compared well with other offerings in both Islands.
REMARKABLES PARK 14 January, Remarkables Park, Queenstown DEER STUD	
Stags sold	35 of 55 on offer, with 10 more sold after the sale
Top price	\$7,000
Average	\$2,771
Sales compared with last year	Twenty-five percent more registered buyers with an average sale price slightly down on the 2009 sale.
Comment	The top-priced deer, a two-year-old sired by Platinum over an Adonis Cross Hind, went to Bob Swann, Geraldine. It had a BV (breeding value) of 10.26 and weighed 239kg. WH and BA Clarke and Son, Otautau, bought the second-highest priced two-year-old stag, a Rossi over a Carl cross hind. With a BV of 14.08 and weighing in at 245kg, it was the top-equal heaviest weight in the sale. The third-highest sale was a Platinum over an Adonis cross hind which went to Jeff Matthews, from near Whanganui, for \$6000. It had a BV of 10.49 and weighed 232kg. The highest BV stag at 23.56 was a yearling which was sold to M Burdon, Lumsden – a good buy at \$5,000.
RODWAY PARK & SARNIA DEER 8 January at Rodway Park, Rotorua	
Stags sold	24 of 31 on offer
Top price	\$30,000
Average	\$6,037
Other animals sold	Some semen sold; maiden hind sale held on 21 February.
Sales compared with last year	Last year we had a total clearance through the ring, with one stag only retained for sire duties at Sarnia Deer. This year, average was higher, which reflected the quality of the line-up.
Comment	We were very pleased to see many new faces and have achieved a number of new clients for the studs this year. Our overall line-up of stags on offer was very well received and met a ready market. We had several enquiries about hinds but have decided to stay with the policy of running our hind sale in conjunction with the National Rising Stars Velvet Competition in February.

STANFIELD'S 9 January at Bangor, Darfield EUROPEAN RED DEER STUD	
Stags sold	33 of 47 English on offer 25 of 29 Easterns on offer
Top price	\$87,000 (Lot 1)
Average	English \$10,124 Easterns \$6,564
Comment	English stags to 215 kg liveweight with seven over 200 kg. Heads cut after sale to 9.54 kg with Lot 1 and other top heads left on to strip out. The Easterns were remarkable, with astonishing antler and body combinations. Top weights 253 and 254 kg with 17 over 200 kg. Best heads 10 kg cut after the sale; Lot 1 10.2 kg stripped so estimate 11.5 kg if cut after sale. Exceptionally quiet deer. Last sale of Stanfield Easterns. Clive Jermy believes this crop of stags, especially, would be unparalleled anywhere in the world.
STEINVALE DEER STUD 27 January on farm	
3 yo Fiordland Wapiti bulls	Top \$3,900, average \$3,240
3 yo New Zealand Wapiti bulls	Top \$3,100, average \$2,540
3yo Wapiti x Red stags	Top \$3,000, average \$1,770
3yo Elk x Red stags	Top \$2,600, average \$1,600
4yo Wapiti bulls	Top \$2,600, average \$2,666
Comment	Full clearance, plus a few sold afterwards that weren't in the sale. Very pleased with sale, which was ahead of last year's. Buyers from Hawke's Bay, Whanganui, Taupo, Feilding with most sales to Hawke's Bay buyers. All were interested in venison genetics with strongest demand for Fiordland Wapiti. Top Wapiti x Red was from a Fiordland bull over a Hungarian hind.
TIKANA 16 January at Browns, Southland	
Bulls sold	21 of 21 on offer
Top price	\$13,500
Average	\$6,270
Other animals sold	Four yearling Wapiti cows @ \$1,500
Sales compared with last year	Fully firm on last year with 100 percent clearance sire bulls. Top price and average both up.
Comment	Commercial farmers have voted with their purchases of sires. A 94 percent clearance of Wapiti sires on offer nationally compared to 73 percent of Red sires on offer. Tikana is delighted to have topped the average sale price of all 12 Southland and Otago stag sales.
TOWER FARMS DEER 8 January at Cambridge	
Stags sold	26 of 34 on offer
Top price	\$45,000
Average	\$7,057
Other animals sold	R 1yr and R 2yr maiden hinds, \$750 – \$7,100
Sales compared with last year	Similar to last year
Comment	Full gallery of attendees, whose shopping list strongly favoured trophy genetics. Little support for velvet. Sticky in places, the sale represented good value for buyers, with a reasonable result for vendors. Strong demand for trophy females top-priced hind \$7,100 purchased by TSG syndicate. Top-priced stag \$45,000 purchased by Rarora Deer.
UNFEHLBAR ENGLISH 9 January on farm, West Melton RED DEER	
Stags sold	12 of 14 on offer
Top price	\$10,000
Average	\$4,400
Sales compared with last year	Average is down approx \$600 from last year but this followed the general trend of the North Island. We were pleased that we had the same number of people attending and registering. Many of these were return buyers.
Comment	The fourth Unfehlbar sale welcomed around 130 guests, 50 of which registered to buy, and CRT banners flying for the first time. Auctioneer Andy Kelleher conducted the sale and even under the prevailing tough economic climate was successful selling 12 out of 14 stags on the day at an average price of \$4,400. The top lots were William John x Hermes sold for \$10,000 and Mount Batten x Clive sold for \$9,000. Lot 8 was sold in the following days.
WINDERMERE DEER 8 January on farm	
Stags sold	27 of 36 on offer
Top price	\$10,500
Average	\$4,800
Sales compared with last year	Sale total slightly up on last year.
Comment	We had a sound sale with 46 registered buyers and a gallery of 150–200. The sale average was very indicative of good bidding as it was not elevated by any high-priced animals. The sale of a phenomenal pure Woburn stag is still being negotiated at \$40,000.

Release of registered vaccine for Johne's disease in deer:

Read this first!

On 11 January, Pfizer New Zealand released a limited batch of Silirum[®], a newly registered vaccine as an aid in the prevention of clinical Johne's disease (JD) in deer. This development may be a welcome step forward for venison finishers who have been struggling with JD in their deer.

Vaccination can now also form part of discussions between producers and their veterinarian/adviser on the management and control of JD in their deer herd. However, **registration of the vaccine is associated with a number of clear and specific conditions related to its use and to the identification of vaccinated animals:**

- *Silirum* can only be administered by a veterinarian who is registered with Pfizer.
- *Silirum* should only be used in deer **destined to be reared for slaughter** (ie, not for trading as capital or breeding stock).
- *Silirum* is administered to weaner deer, from 3 months of age, at or prior to weaning. An animal needs to be vaccinated only once in its lifetime.
- Deer vaccinated with *Silirum* **must** be identified using a MAF-approved single earmark in either ear in a forebit or backbit position to comply with the Animal Products (Specifications for Products Intended for Human Consumption) Notice 2004 (Figure 1). Ear-marking pliers will be supplied by your veterinarian at vaccination.
- Vaccination with *Silirum* will have a significant adverse effect on diagnostic tests currently used for the detection of bovine Tb. For this reason, producers are strongly encouraged not to retain and/or sell vaccinated animals for capital or breeding stock.



Figure 1: Earmark shape of Johne's-vaccinated animals

Vaccine efficacy

More than 3,300 deer in six commercial South Island herds were involved in a 2008 field trial of the efficacy of *Silirum*, conducted by Massey researchers. The trial herds had some history of a significant prevalence of clinical Johne's disease. In the trial year, preliminary results indicate *Silirum* was found to reduce the number of deer suffering from clinical Johne's disease (ie, diarrhoea and/or weight loss) by 61% (95% confidence interval: 8% – 84%). It should be noted that, in the field trial, vaccinated and non-vaccinated/control deer were grazed together and, if all animals are vaccinated, reduction in clinical disease may have been greater.

Although researchers found that vaccination did not prevent all weaner deer from becoming infected or from shedding the causative bacteria (MAP) in their faeces, further work is required to determine whether vaccinated animals shed less MAP than control animals. Based on preliminary results, every year, each new batch of weaner deer destined for slaughter as yearlings will need to be vaccinated because *Silirum* does not wholly prevent pasture contamination and subsequent bacterial transmission to young deer.

Lesion development at vaccination site and slaughter of vaccinated stock

In a 2007 study, Massey researchers found *Silirum* caused temporary and mild swelling at the injection site. The swelling was greatest 2 days post-injection and decreased to become non-detectable by day 83. Inspection of 2008 field trial animals at slaughter confirmed that injection site lesions are almost always restricted in size, with most removed through skinning, or very easily trimmed with no adverse effect on carcass weights or value. This is a significant departure from previous vaccines for Johne's disease, such as Gudair and Neoparasec, which caused considerable injection site lesions that caused animal welfare and carcass trimming problems.

DINZ has contacted all venison processors advising of the future use of *Silirum* in deer and seeking comment on any potential effect on processing and/or the likelihood of a market reaction to vaccinated deer. Results of these discussions will be published in future issues of *Deer Industry News*.

Additional inspection of the injection site, regardless of the amount of reaction, is required under current New Zealand Food Safety Authority (NZFSA) regulations. This means that companies need to know if deer destined for slaughter have been vaccinated. The current Animal Status Declaration (ASD) form does not formally require a deer farmer to notify processors that deer sent for slaughter have been vaccinated for JD (unlike cattle, sheep, lambs and goats) (Section 4 on the ASD). A change to the ASD form is planned, but is likely to take up to 12 months to come into effect. Currently, discussions are underway with the NZFSA on the correct use of the existing ASD form to notify of vaccinated deer and producers will be informed of this in future issues of *Deer Industry News*.

Reactivity to primary intradermal tests for bovine Tb

Massey researchers also found that 44% of vaccinated animals in the field trial reacted to the mid-cervical test (MCT), a primary test for bovine tuberculosis (Tb), compared with 23% of control animals. However, most of the vaccinated animals were cleared after application of the comparative cervical test (CCT). For this reason, it is essential that *Silirum* is only used in finishing deer destined for slaughter and not required to be Tb tested. This is clearly stated in documents released by Pfizer with directions for use of the vaccine. In addition, a study conducted by AgResearch Invermay showed that vaccination with *Silirum* can mask Tb infection, and therefore vaccination of deer in Tb-infected farms or where there is a significant risk of

continued on page 35

NAIT gets government go-ahead

The Government has given the green light for the National Animal Identification and Tracing (NAIT) project, with deer to be compulsorily included in the scheme from late 2012, 12 months after cattle.

Agriculture Minister David Carter last month said the Government would provide funding to build and operate the new system and would draw up legislation to make it compulsory for cattle and deer farmers.

“NAIT is about future-proofing New Zealand agriculture,” Mr Carter said. “The Government is satisfied that there is a strong business case for the scheme and that its benefits far outweigh its costs.

“The livestock industries are a cornerstone of our economy. NAIT will help maintain the confidence of export markets in the safety and disease-free status of New Zealand’s livestock products. It will also boost our ability to prepare and respond to animal disease outbreaks.

“Despite concerns raised about compliance costs, the majority of farmers I have spoken to can see the necessity of having a robust and internationally credible traceability scheme.”

Mr Carter said it is important NAIT is compulsory for all cattle and deer farmers

Tracing systems gaining momentum overseas

Many of New Zealand’s markets for agricultural products, and competitors for those markets, either have or are developing mandatory tracing systems; many of these use RFID ear tags to support accurate recording of individual animals. Countries with systems in place or under development include Canada, South Korea, the 27 countries of the European Union, Japan, Argentina and Brazil.

Read this first! continued from page 34


Tb infection is contra-indicated. For these reasons, it is strongly recommended that producers examine all sale weaner deer in 2010 for the identifying earmark and **do not purchase vaccinated stock.**

Testing for Johne’s disease

Weaner deer vaccinated with *Silirum* should not be tested with a blood test for Johne’s disease, such as the Paralisa™, as false positive reactions will occur. Therefore, once a mob of weaner deer are vaccinated, it is not possible to differentiate between infected and non-infected animals.

Use of *Silirum* is only recommended for venison finishing herds, with an all in-all out system, to reduce the incidence of clinical JD and increase the likelihood of weaner deer reaching slaughter weight due to a reduced severity of subclinical disease. However, use of *Silirum* as part of an overall herd management plan in other herd types, such as commercial breeding herds, is not currently recommended and should be discussed with your veterinary adviser. JD control can be complex and vaccination is one of a number of potential management tools available. Contact your local veterinarian or call Johne’s Management Limited (JML) on (0800) 456 453 for further information.

Silirum® is a Prescription Animal Remedy (P.A.R.) Class I. For use only under the authority or prescription of a veterinarian.

Registered pursuant to the ACVM Act 1997, No: A9639. 

because complete records of individual animal movements are needed to ensure effective biosecurity responses.

“It is what our trading partners are increasingly demanding from us.”

He congratulated the NAIT Governance Group on its work with farmers and industry to address concerns about costs, transition issues and the need to safeguard privacy.

In a fact sheet sent out with the NAIT announcement, a conservative cost benefit analysis for NAIT estimated benefits of \$38 million per year from the scheme. The Government has agreed to fully fund the capital costs and cover most of the operating costs during the development period. The \$6 million annual operating cost once NAIT is up and running will be funded by MAF and levy contributions from cattle and deer farmers. The fact sheet says NAIT-compliant tags will each cost \$2–\$3 more than conventional non-electronic tags (available at www.nait.org.nz).

The aim is for the scheme to be compulsory for cattle farmers from October 2011 and for deer farmers a year later.

NZDFA Executive Committee Chairman Bill Taylor said the government confirmation came as no surprise, although the timing of implementation was earlier than he expected.

“NZDFA is still concerned about the costs of the system for individual farmers, especially those who will be forced to use the tags for compliance but won’t be making use of the radio frequency identification (RFID)

technology for anything else,” he said.

The NZDFA negotiated an extra 12 months before NAIT would become compulsory for deer farmers, and a three-year transition period for the tagging of capital stock kept on farm.


“We will be working with tag companies to source the cheapest possible options for a direct to slaughter tag,” he said.

Now that NAIT was going to be implemented, the challenge was now before marketers to take full advantage of the benefits that traceability was said to offer, Bill said. He noted that some of the countries said to be using electronic traceability systems were unlikely to be policing the system as well as it will be in New Zealand.

DINZ Chief Executive Mark O’Connor has welcomed the Government’s announcement but noted that industries are not getting a free ride on the taxpayer.

“There is a strong element of public benefit in the NAIT system which the government should be covering.

“It is also important that NAIT fits ‘hand in glove’ with other animal identification schemes, particularly the Animal Health Board’s. A short term goal must be ‘one tag to rule them all’ so that farmers and processors are not dealing with multiple tags and systems. This drives cost and time efficiencies.

“Finally, NAIT will improve the deer industry’s effectiveness in a biosecurity response, its market access credentials will be stronger and it will have the potential to create a closer relationship between farmer and consumer. However, NAIT just helps these issues, it does not solve them,” he said. 

Pulling back from the brink?

The Mesopotamian fallow deer translocated from the nucleus herd at Invermay seem to have enjoyed the warmer climes of Central Hawke's Bay.

Six of these extremely rare fallow deer were sent to the farm of Richard Hilson and Karen Middelberg late in 2008, as the herd at Invermay had increased in number. Herd overseer, Dr Geoff Asher, felt that further reducing any risk to the herd could be achieved by establishing another herd.

The three year old buck (named "Sputnik" by Geoff, due to his ability to orbit deer yards, no doubt) rutted aggressively in late March. Mesopotamian fallow deer generally do not breed before three years of age, so it was expected that the sole three-year-old doe present would be the only doe to fawn in 2009.

However, it looked like there was a bit more than fresh spring grass in at least two of the yearling does and one fawned in the first week of November. Long grass and tiny deer meant that the fawn was only seen once or twice until mid December when it became apparent that Sputnik had indeed been busy and now had three offspring - all does, a great boost for the species. Not that he seems that interested.

With only about 200-300 of these fallow deer elsewhere in the world, any natural increase must be a good thing. Time will tell whether these new arrivals are males or females but right now the North Island herd has increased by 50 percent and Mesopotamian fallow deer in New Zealand just got a little less endangered.

The herd at Invermay has now reached 25 animals. The last two seasons have been particularly good fawning seasons.... but with a strong bias towards male fawns. Despite this, there are sufficient females to establish another satellite herd in late 2010. 📷



Growing family: There are three new fawns in the Hawke's Bay satellite herd of Mesopotamian fallow, not just one as expected. Photo: Richard Hilson.

Turnips look OK for deer, but be vigilant

Brassica toxicity has been recorded as an increasingly common problem with cattle on summer forage crops, but inquiries among deer veterinarians by Deer Industry News suggests it's unlikely to be a problem with deer ... yet.

None of nine vets spoken to from throughout New Zealand had encountered problems with deer that could be attributed to turnips. However, Angus Black of New Zealand Veterinary Pathology in Hamilton says that may be because turnips aren't yet being fed widely to deer. Also, the toxic effects can be subtle and difficult to detect because photosensitivity, one of the main signs, does not manifest itself very obviously in deer.

"Toxicity with brassicas is always something to bear in mind. I'm not aware of recent cases involving deer, but there is always a risk with high levels of SMCO (sulphur amino acids) in brassicas causing haemolytic anaemia, and free nitrate causing toxicity, which can be a problem with brassicas (including turnips) and maize. There are also other toxins such as glucosinolates that can occur in various forage crops. These tend to be higher when the plants are stressed, for example in a drought."

Subclinical effects of these toxins could still result in damaging effects to the liver and cause ill thrift and growth retardation, he said. In particular, glucosinolates are toxic in the liver and suppress thyroid function.

Good husbandry and feed management would prevent these problems, but until more was known, toxicity should be regarded as another possibility to eliminate in any situation where deer on forage crops were having problems.

"Any suspicion of health problems with deer on supplementary feed warrants the immediate involvement of your vet," Angus concluded. 📷

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ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2009

Chairman's Report

Velvet Antler Research New Zealand Ltd: Objectives and Achievements

Velvet Antler Research New Zealand Ltd (VARNZ) was established in 1994 to undertake research on deer velvet and co-products in order to advance the production, processing and ultimately the promotion, sale and distribution of deer products.

In order to achieve this purpose VARNZ has a range of functions including:

- Commission and fund research and development in respect of deer velvet antler and deer co-products aimed ultimately at being of benefit to the deer industry.
- Consult with the deer industry and the scientific community to identify the content of research programmes relevant to the needs of the New Zealand deer industry.
- Identify, develop, protect, transfer, license or otherwise commercially exploit intellectual property and new technologies, products and services in the interests of the New Zealand deer industry.
- Control and manage the outputs of such work for the benefit of the New Zealand deer industry.

I am pleased to report the following achievements against these objectives:

- VARNZ has secured the services of an Australian burns specialist clinic to undertake a small-scale human study on the efficacy of the wound-healing extract RepairX and an Australian consultant will assist VARNZ in submitting an application to the Australian authorities to conduct this study. This study signals a significant step in determining the potential for RepairX to be commercialised. Results are expected to be available in 2009/10.
- A pilot trial to determine if the use of stable light isotopes could be used to distinguish New Zealand-grown velvet from overseas-sourced velvet showed clear separation and strongly suggested that this technique could be used as a country of origin identification/verification tool. This technique has been used for this purpose in other biological material.
- A repeat of a trial to study the effect of velvet on pre-existing tumours was completed in 2007/08 and reviewed by two independent experts in 2008/09. This latest trial was considered to be well designed and analysed, and the reviewers accepted the researchers' findings that velvet had no effect on growth and proliferation of pre-existing tumours.
- The velvet *Technical Manual* was updated with recent research findings, re-formatted and published as an information source for velvet marketers, exporters and



Dr William Rolleston, Chairman, Velvet Antler Research New Zealand Ltd.

importers. Uptake has been very encouraging and marketing feedback has been appreciative for this as a good source of technical information.

- VARNZ invited a group of key stakeholders to discuss research needs and priorities for the New Zealand deer velvet industry. The list of topics important to the stakeholders will be prioritised by the VARNZ Board against future available funds.

It is however important to realise that VARNZ continues to operate in a very reduced funding environment which limits the amount of research and development that can be undertaken. Since 2007, VARNZ has not had access to FRST funding for the velvet research team at AgResearch, which has since been split up, although a small amount of research on deer velvet remains (wound healing support and stem-cell biology).

However on a positive note, AgResearch has committed to joint funding for the RepairX small-scale human study. This will allow VARNZ to complete its role in developing the product for commercialisation.

With falling velvet levies, industry funding will also be reduced so the stakeholder workshop outcomes will be a valuable guide to determining the most appropriate use of limited funds in 2009/10 and beyond.

Acknowledgements

I thank all of my fellow directors and the management team for their time, dedication and support in ensuring VARNZ continues to deliver its objectives for the industry's benefit.

Research in 2008/09

In the 2008/09 year, a research investment of \$135,367 was funded by VARNZ from the Deer Industry New Zealand Research Trust.

Nine projects were undertaken in 2008/09 with six being completed (*in italics*):

Research areas and projects	Duration	Notes and key findings
Area: New products		
2009-01: Development of RepairX	2009/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clinician and regulatory consultant secured for human study. • Information available is considered to be very comprehensive. • Discussions with securing manufacturing facilities underway.
Intellectual Property	2008/09	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patents protecting RepairX.
2009-07: <i>Chloroprocaine residues methodology</i>	2008/09	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Method for assessing residues of chloroprocaine in deer tissue determined.
Area: New markets		
2008-03: Review of co-products (tails)	2007/08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delayed due to focus on RepairX. • Review of tail uses, function, composition and safety.
2009-04: <i>Technical manual review</i>	2008/09	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update of velvet technical manual and formatted for marketing purposes.

table continued on next page

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Research areas and projects	Duration	Notes and key findings
Area: Other		
2007-03: Tumour re-trial	2007/08	• Trial completed in 2007/08 and approved by independent review in 2008/09.
2008-02: Iso-trace pilot trial	2008/09	• Results show clear distinction between New Zealand and overseas velvet samples. • Technique shows good promise for use as country of origin determination tool.
2009-05: Isotopic signature validation	2008/09	• Project to build on the pilot trial and present a case for acceptance by regulatory authorities. • Delayed until 2009/10 to obtain sufficient velvet samples.
2009-02: Antler regeneration model	2008/09	• Antler stem-cell biology – capability retention.
2009-06: Strategy workshop	2008/09	• Stakeholder discussion on research needs for New Zealand deer velvet industry.

Current Year's Programme – 2009/10

Funding for 2009/10 totals \$150,000 as well as funds allocated to projects from delayed or ongoing work. This year sees the expected conclusion of the RepairX development work and the first stage of developing a proof of country of origin technique that will be accepted by overseas markets for velvet.

Funding allocations and duration of projects are shown below:

Research Projects	Status (Duration)	Budgeted funds	Comments
Ongoing work			
2009-01: Development of RepairX	Ongoing (ends 30/09/2010)	\$255,000	Funds cover 2008/09 – 2009/10
IP costs	Ongoing (ends 30/09/2010)	\$25,000	From 2009/10 budget
2008-03: Review of co-products (Tails)	Completed (31/12/2009)	\$10,000	Accrual from 2007/08
2009-05: Isotopic signature validation	Ongoing (ends 30/09/2010)	Up to \$40,000	Funds cover 2008/09 – 2009/10
Unallocated 2009/10 funds			
To be prioritised against industry needs	Pending	\$105,000	
Administration			
Directors' expenses		\$15,000	
DINZ support expenses		\$5,000	

Directors

As at 30 September 2009 the Board of VARNZ Ltd. comprised:

An independent Chairperson appointed by the shareholding directors

- **William Rolleston:** Director and owner of South Pacific Sera Ltd, SPS Biomedica Ltd, SPS Cell Culture Ltd; Director of Aoraki Development Trust; Partner of Blue Cliffs Station; Member of the Life Sciences Network; Member of the Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathy Liaison Committee; Member of the Board of Governors for the Foundation for Research, Science and Technology; President of Federated Farmers South Canterbury Province; wr@southpacificsera.co.nz

One director appointed by AgResearch

- **Jimmy Suttie:** Science & Technology General Manager – Agriculture and the Environment, AgResearch; Director of Grasslanz Technologies; Member of the Possum OBI Biocontrol Governance Board; Member of Grasslanz Technologies Governance Board; Director of Epigene; Director of Johne's Disease Research Consortium; james.suttie@agresearch.co.nz

One director appointed by Deer Industry New Zealand

- **Mark O'Connor:** CEO, Deer Industry New Zealand; Director of DEEResearch Ltd; Director of Group Research Holdings Ltd; Director of DEEResearch Emissions Mitigation Company Ltd; Director of DEEResearch Pastoral Genomics Company Ltd; Director of Johne's Management Ltd; Director of Johne's Disease Research Consortium; Member of the Animal Health Board Representatives Committee; Member of the Animal Identification and Tracing Governance Group; mark.oconnor@deernz.org

One independent director appointed by the shareholding directors

- **Doug Wilson:** Director of Neuren Pharmaceuticals; Director of Merinva Ltd; Director of Phylogica Ltd; Director of BioPharma Consultants; Former Head of Worldwide Medicine at Boehringer Ingelheim; jdoug.wilson@xtra.co.nz

Accounts

A summary of the VARNZ Limited audited financial statements for the year ended 30 September 2009 which were authorised for issue on 26 November 2009 is set out on page 39 opposite. The summary financial statements have been extracted from the full audited financial statements dated 26 November 2009 and have been prepared in accordance with FRS-43 – Summary Financial Statements. They have not been examined by the auditor for consistency with the audited financial statements, but there has been no change to any previously reported financial information. The full financial statements have been prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting practice in New Zealand. Copies are available on request from info@DEEResearch.org.nz

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE YEAR ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2009

		2009		2008
		\$		\$
Research Income				
Game Industry Research Trust		-		175,194
Deer Industry New Zealand Research Trust		135,367		116,971
AgResearch Limited				
FRST Funding		-		1,158,588
Other Income				
Group Research Holdings Ltd Administration Funding		15,852		19,385
AgResearch Administration Funding		15,852		16,475
Interest Received		237		204
Royalties		-		864
Total Income		167,308		1,487,681
Expenditure				
Research Expenditure				
	GIRT/DINZ RT	AgResearch	VARNZ	VARNZ
Chloroprocaine stability trial (2005-01)	(15,000)	-	(15,000)	-
Preclinical development of RepairX Obj 1	-	-	-	45,931
Preclinical development of RepairX - Innovotech	-	-	-	2,374
Spiker removal / Natur-O ring (2007-01-a)	-	-	-	61,000
Natur-O-ring (2007-01-b)	-	-	-	15,000
Pet Food Efficacy (2007-02)	-	-	-	32,239
Tumour Retrial (2007-03)	-	-	-	58,330
Deer Life Cycle (2008-01)	(435)	-	(435)	19,000
Iso-trace pilot trial	-	-	-	23,003
Co-products reviews	-	-	-	10,000
Development of RepairX (2009-01)	26,841	-	26,841	-
Antler Regeneration Model (2009-02)	50,000	-	50,000	-
Technical Manual Review (2009-04)	25,000	-	25,000	-
Isotopic Signature Validation (2009-05)	233	-	233	-
Bright Ideas Fund and Strategy Group (2009-06)	6,400	-	6,400	-
Chloroprocaine Residues Methodology (2009-07)	12,419	-	12,419	-
FRST Projects	-	-	-	1,133,302
Patent Costs (VARNZ-IP)	29,909	-	29,909	50,572
Total Research Expenditure	135,367	-	135,367	1,450,751
Administration Expenditure				
Audit Fees	2,509	2,509	5,017	4,849
Directors' Fees and Expenses	13,372	13,372	26,744	27,415
Foreign Currency Loss	-	-	-	2,674
Sundry Expenses	90	90	180	1,992
Total Administration Expenditure	15,971	15,971	31,941	36,930
Total Expenditure			167,308	1,487,681
Net Surplus/Deficit Before Taxation			-	-
Taxation			-	-
Net Surplus/Deficit After Taxation			-	-

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2009

	2009	2008
	\$	\$
Share Capital	119,390	119,390
Retained earnings	(119,390)	(119,390)
Total Equity	-	-
<i>Represented by:</i>		
Current Assets		
Short Term Bank Deposits	12,721	18,030
Accounts Receivable	39,214	117,067
Accounts Receivable - AgResearch	-	2,478
	51,935	137,575
Current Liabilities		
Accounts Payable & Accruals	50,633	137,575
Accounts Payable - AgResearch	1,302	-
	51,935	137,575
Net Assets	-	-

STATEMENT OF MOVEMENTS IN EQUITY
YEAR ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2009

	2009	2008
	\$	\$
Opening Equity	-	-
Net Surplus/Deficit After Taxation	-	-
Total Recognised Revenue and Expenses	-	-
Closing Equity	-	-





ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2009

Chairman's Report

DEERResearch Objectives and Achievements

DEERResearch was incorporated in 2001 to:

- coordinate and provide efficient management of industry-good research in the deer industry essentially in the production (on and near farm) area
- enable broad input into the establishment of research priorities and the direction of the industry's research programme to ensure alignment with the industry's short-term needs and long-term strategic goals
- illustrate the deer industry's commitment to research to leverage other funding sources, including government funding.



Collier Isaacs, Chairman, DEERResearch Ltd.

I am pleased to report the following summarised achievements against these objectives (more detail is available from DEERResearch or on the website www.deerresearch.org.nz):

- DEERResearch funds a mix of strategic and short-term (tactical) programmes of science in line with identified priorities and needs following consultation with industry participants. Strategic investments acknowledge that there are potential gains to the industry that can only be achieved by understanding the biological systems of importance to the industry; and this in turn will lead us to identifying critical points where improvements are needed or can add significant benefit. In 2008/09 the approximate split between strategic and tactical funding allocation was 80:20.
- For the 2008/09 year, as well as the \$1.4 million in FRST funding contributed from FRST via AgResearch for the DEERResearch programme *Venison Supply Systems*, DEERResearch is involved in projects supported with more than \$6 million in funding from other funding organisations and research providers.
- A project looking at spray chilling showed that weight loss was minimised and there was no apparent drop in venison quality. The study results suggest significant benefits in terms of minimising carcase weight loss. Based on projected annual kills this technology, if adopted by all processors, could add \$1.2 million per annum to the industry.
- A breeding value module for early conception has been added to DEERSelect.
- Identification of the deer genome has been started that will enable the industry to develop "SNP chips" that will provide a rapid and reliable screening technology to assess traits of interest for the industry.
- Use of liquid nitrogen for suppression of pedicle/antler development was trialled on a farm scale to identify large-herd issues and practicalities. The work will be completed in

early 2010. Determination of the genetic inheritance of late antler development is progressing and will be completed in 2010.

- GPS monitoring of hind movements around calving time in a high country farm suggests that hind behaviour is quite different to that in low land, intensive farms (the hind spends more time close to or by the calf). Differences in reported calving rates between high country and lowland farms may well be influenced by these behavioural differences.
- DEERResearch's communication activities are an important way that DEERResearch engages with industry participants. Communication channels included the website www.deerresearch.org.nz, articles in *Deer Industry News* and presentations by researchers at numerous Focus Farm field days, industry seminars and conferences.
- Administration costs represent about 2 percent of DEERResearch's total budget. These costs are kept to a minimum with administrative functions provided by DINZ.

Acknowledgements

I thank all of my fellow directors for their time, dedication and support in ensuring DEERResearch continues to deliver its objectives for the industry's benefit. I would like to thank Graeme Keeley for his contribution to DEERResearch and welcome Kelvin Ashby to the Board, who replaced Graeme in May 2008, as the venison processors and exporters-appointed director.

Research in 2008/09

In the 2008/09 year, a research investment of \$640,150 was funded by DEERResearch from the Deer Industry New Zealand Research Trust.

Eight projects were undertaken in 2008/09 with two being completed (*in italics*)

Research goals and projects	Duration	Notes and key findings
Goal: New technologies for wealth creation		
1.16 Pastoral genomics	2001/02 – 2013/14	Pan-pastoral industries consortium. www.pastoralgenomics.com
Goal: Deer health and welfare		
4.02 Epidemiology of Johne's disease	2004/05 – 2008/09	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major component (epidemiology) has been completed and a thesis is due in 2010. • Additional component examining lymph node lesion in DSPs will also be completed by 2010.
7.01 Johne's disease research consortium	2008/09 – 2012/13	Pan-pastoral industries consortium. www.jdrc.co.nz
Goal: Sustainable production and the environment		
1.03 Methane mitigation	2001/02 – 2011/12	Pan-pastoral industries consortium. www.pggrc.co.nz
8.02 Venison carbon footprinting	2008/09 – 2009/10	
Goal: Productivity gains, accelerated learning and technology transfer, deer health and welfare, sustainable production and the environment		

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7.02 Venison supply systems	2007/08 – 2012/13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Breeding (conception date) Values can now be calculated by breeders for use in DEERselect. • The deer genome has been partially sequenced with a full sequencing project nearing completion. This will lead to the development of “SNP chips” to rapidly screen animals for presence of desired traits. • Recent studies have indicated that fertility of R2 hinds (“first calvers”) may be extremely sensitive to environmental conditions in their first year of life (i.e. when they are calves themselves). • Presentations have been made by request at all Focus Farm field days • Long-term monitoring of hinds in-calf and post-calving has shown previously undocumented distributions and movements in high country systems
Goal: Market access and development		
8.01 Venison and water-holding	2008/09	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spray chilling reduced carcass weight loss and no negative effects on venison quality from spray chilling were found.
Goal: Support for Post-Grad Operating Costs		
8.03 Co-grazing preferences (Lincoln)	2008/09	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preference shown by deer to graze with cattle rather than sheep is suggested to be due to their respective faeces and not their presence. Possibly related to parasite avoidance.

Copies of all final reports for completed projects are available on the DEEResearch website. For more detailed information on DEEResearch and the programmes underway please see www.deeresearch.org.nz

Current Year’s Programme – 2009/10

Funding for 2009/10 totals \$660,000 and accounts for six allocated projects and two pools of funding. Funding allocations and duration of projects are shown below:

Project	Status (duration)	Funds (\$000)	Goal alignment
9.01 Southland Focus Farm	Ongoing (ends 30/06/2012)	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Productivity gains • Sustainable production and the environment • Accelerated learning and technology transfer
8.02 Venison carbon footprinting	Ongoing (ends 30/06/2010)	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable production and the environment
Venison Supply Systems (includes projects 6.01, 6.07)	Ongoing (ends 30/06/2013)	408	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Productivity gains • Sustainable production and the environment • Support for post-grad costs • Accelerated learning and technology transfer
1. Early breeding and optimising feed requirements			
2. Focus Farms and parasitology			
3. Extensive system benefits			
7.01 Johne’s Disease Research Consortium (includes project 4.02)	Ongoing (ends 30/06/2013)	100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deer health and welfare
1.16 Pastoral genomics	Ongoing (ends 30/06/2014)	34	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New technologies for wealth creation
1.03 Methane mitigation	Ongoing (ends 30/06/2012)	35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable production and the environment
Venison processing	Pending (annual)	52	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market access and development
Discretionary	Unallocated (annual)	11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tactical/strategic support
TOTAL		660	

Directors

As at 30 June 2009 the Board of DEEResearch Ltd comprised:

An independent chairperson appointed by the other directors

Collier Isaacs: National Manager – Services and Strategy, Landcorp Ltd; Chair of Deer Industry Genetic Evaluation Steering Committee; isaacs@landcorp.co.nz

Two directors appointed by AgResearch

Margot Buick: Commercial Team Leader – Food and Textiles Group, AgResearch; Director of Ultrafine Merino Company; Director of Meat Biologics Consortium; Director of Nutrigenomics NZ; Director of AgBio Innovators Academy; margot.buick@agresearch.co.nz

Peter Benfell: Science and Technology General Manager – Agriculture and the Environment, AgResearch; Director of Biopolymer Network Ltd.; Director of Pastoral Greenhouse Gas Research Consortium; Director of the Bio Commerce Centre; Director of Manawatu Investment Group; Member of Sustainable Land Use Research Initiative Governance Council; Member of Better Border Biosecurity Governance Council; peter.benfell@agresearch.co.nz

One director appointed by the New Zealand Deer Farmers’ Association

Noel Beatson: Director of Deer Records NZ Ltd, Director of Deer Reproduction Services Ltd, Veterinary Surgeon with Rural Veterinary Services; deer farmer; nbeatson@mail.es.co.nz

One director appointed by Deer Industry New Zealand

Mark O’Connor: CEO, Deer Industry New Zealand; Director of Cervena Company Ltd; Director of VARNZ Ltd; Director of Group Research Holdings Ltd; Director of DEEResearch Emissions Mitigation Company Ltd; Director of DEEResearch Pastoral Genomics Company Ltd; Director of Johne’s Management Ltd; Director of Johne’s Disease Research Consortium; Member of the Animal Health Board Representatives Committee; Member of the Identification and Tracing Governance Group; mark.oconnor@deernz.org

One director appointed to represent venison processors and exporters

Kelvin Ashby: Plant Manager Alliance Group Ltd; kelvina@alliance.co.nz

One director appointed to represent universities

Frank Griffin: Head of Department and Professor of Microbiology and Immunology, University of Otago; Director of the Disease Research Laboratory; Member of Scientific Advisory Group for the Johne’s Disease Research Consortium; Member of the Johne’s Disease Investigation Programme (USA); Member of PARATBTools Consortium (EU); Associate member of Deer Branch New Zealand Veterinary Association; hod.microbiology@stonebow.otago.ac.nz

Accounts

A summary of the DEEResearch Limited audited financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2009 which were authorised for issue on 20 November 2009 is set out below. The summary financial statements have been extracted from the full audited financial statements dated 20 November 2009 and have been prepared in accordance with FRS-43 – Summary Financial Statements. They have not been examined by the auditor for consistency with the audited financial statements, but there has been no change to any previously reported financial information. The full financial statements have been prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting practice in New Zealand. Copies are available on request from info@DEEResearch.org.nz

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2009

	Consolidated 2009 \$	Parent 2009 \$	Parent 2008 \$
Research Income			
Group Research Holdings	-	-	94,800
Deer Industry Research Trust	640,150	640,150	489,902
AgResearch Limited	1,356,000	1,356,000	1,334,000
Other Income - Administration Funding			
Group Research Holdings Limited	7,819	7,819	8,683
AgResearch Limited	7,819	7,819	8,683
Total Income	2,011,788	2,011,788	1,936,068
Less Expenditure			
Research Expenditure			
Funded by FRST through AgResearch	1,356,000	1,356,000	1,334,000
Funded by GRH/DINZRT	640,150	640,150	584,702
Total Research Expenditure	1,996,150	1,996,150	1,918,702
Interests in joint ventures			
Share of Net Assets of Unincorporated Joint Ventures	(59,123)	-	-
Administration Expenditure			
Chairman's Fees	6,000	6,000	6,000
Audit Fees	8,987	8,987	8,709
Sundry Expenses	651	651	957
Total Administration Expenditure	15,638	15,638	15,666
Communication Expenditure			
Annual Report	-	-	1,700
Total Communication Expenditure	-	-	1,700
Total Expenditure	1,952,665	2,011,788	1,936,068
Net Profit Before Taxation	59,123	-	-
Taxation	-	-	-
Net Profit After Taxation	59,123	-	-

STATEMENT OF MOVEMENTS IN ACCUMULATED FUNDS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2009

	Consolidated 2009 \$	Parent 2009 \$	Parent 2008 \$
Opening Accumulated Funds	24,796	6,108	6,108
Net Profit After Taxation	59,123	-	-
Total Recognised Gains and Losses	59,123	-	-
Closing Accumulated Funds	83,919	6,108	6,108

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 30 JUNE 2009

	Consolidated 2009 \$	Parent 2009 \$	Parent 2008 \$
Accumulated Funds	83,919	6,108	6,108
<i>Represented by:</i>			
Current Assets			
Short Term Bank Deposits	1,885	1,885	541
Accounts Receivable	159,800	159,800	234,032
Accounts Receivable - Subsidiary Companies	-	2,272	2,272
Share Capital Due	120	120	120
Total Current Assets	161,805	164,077	236,965
Current Liabilities			
Accounts Payable	157,969	158,209	231,097
Total Current Liabilities	157,969	158,209	231,097
Non Current Assets			
Investment in Subsidiary Companies	-	240	240
Share of Assets of Pastoral Genomics Research Consortium	34,800	-	-
Share of Assets of Pastoral Greenhouse Gas Research Consortium	38,711	-	-
Share of Assets of John's Disease Research Consortium	142,560	-	-
	216,071	240	240
Non Current Liabilities			
Share of Liabilities of Pastoral Genomics Research Consortium	23,960	-	-
Share of Liabilities of Pastoral Greenhouse Gas Research Consortium	31,268	-	-
Share of Liabilities of John's Disease Research Consortium	80,760	-	-
	135,988	-	-
Net Assets	83,919	6,108	6,108

RESEARCH EXPENDITURE BY PROJECT FOR THE TWELVE MONTHS ENDED 30 JUNE 2009

Project	Code	Year ended 30 June 2009 \$
1. SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION AND THE ENVIRONMENT		
Methane Mitigation	1.03	\$35,000
2. DEER HEALTH AND WELFARE		
John's disease research consortium	7.01	\$100,000
3. MARKET ACCESS AND DEVELOPMENT		
Venison processing/quality		
Venison and water-holding (drip loss and spray chilling)	8.01	\$50,000
4. NEW TECHNOLOGIES FOR WEALTH CREATION		
Pastoral Genomics	1.16	\$34,000
5. OTHER		
Venison Supply Systems (relates to Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)	7.02	\$408,000
1. Early breeding and optimising feed requirements (\$152,000).		\$152,000
2. Focus Farms and parasitology (\$196,000)		\$196,000
3. Extensive system benefits (\$60,000)		\$60,000
Discretionary		
MAF Climate Change Venison GHG Footprinting (relates to Goal 3)	8.02	\$10,000
Co-grazing Preferences	8.03	\$3,150
	TOTAL BUDGET	\$640,150

