

Hokonuis targetted for Tb control

A major feral animal Tb control programme in the Hokonui hills has received funding approval from the Animal Health Board.

MAF senior livestock officer Brian Butcher said yesterday the board had provided the \$750,000 needed for a two year initial control programme, scheduled to start in May 1992.

MAF currently has nine beef cattle herds and eight deer herds in the Hokonui on movement control as a result of bovine Tb outbreaks.

"Tb has been identified in feral possums, feral deer and pigs throughout the Hokonui," he said.

Because of the growing incidence of Tb being spread to domestic farm animals, control measures had to be taken.

"Southland has been selected by the Animal Health Board for a reasonable amount of finance as, together with coastal mid Canterbury it has been identified as an area in which Tb eradication is feasible."

The funds have been allocated for the 1991-92 July financial year.

The control programme will be undertaken in two parts. The western and eastern ends of the Hokonui of some 13,500ha, will be targetted in the first year to prevent "the geographical spread" of the disease outwards into adjoining farmland.

The Department of Conservation has agreed to provide the finance needed to treat the Croydon Bush area on the eastern edge of the Hokonui.

A further estimated 35,000ha of the central Hokonui hills is destined for control in the 1992-93 financial year.

Mr Butcher said any additional control work would depend on the outcome of surveys of the feral animal population in the region and on the results of post-mortems of killed animals.

The control programme will attack feral possums, deer and pigs with 1080 carrots, pellets and/or jam paste, spread by both ground parties and fixed wing aircraft.

"MAF and the Southland Regional Council, which will carry out the work through its contractor the Southland District Council, will be combining in a large public relations campaign to notify landowners in the Hokonui region and the general public of the need for the control programme," Mr Butcher said.

"The co-operation so far from landowners has been excellent."

Te Anau farmer fined for shooting deer

CHRISTCHURCH

A Te Anau deer farmer has been fined \$750 in the Christchurch District Court for shooting deer from a helicopter in the Lees Valley in November.

Michael Lewis Wilks was found guilty of breaching the Wild Animals Control Act. He was fined \$750 and ordered to pay \$1250 towards the Department of Conservation's costs of investigating the case.

The court was told that Wilks hired a helicopter, saying he wanted it for a fishing trip in Nelson and West Coast areas.

Later log book entries showed it had been used in the Oxford and Lake Sumner areas.

A Lees Valley farmer giving evidence said Wilks and the pilot landed near his farmhouse seeking fuel for the helicopter. Wilks, who had blood on his hands,

said they had been shooting further up Ashley River and left three deer on a saddle on the farmer's property.

Wilks said the farmer jumped to the wrong conclusions. He said he drove alone into Lees Valley to shoot deer to help towards the cost of hiring the helicopter.

The helicopter was used to fly to Oxford to assist the pilot repair a house for sale.

Judge David Holderness said he was prepared to accept that Wilks was not operating commercially.

He did not think the defendant's explanation was credible and Wilks's subsequent action was a result of his appreciation that an illegal hunting trip had been discovered.

The judge said he took into account while sentencing Wilks's stretched financial circumstances. — NZPA

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A2 Medium		155.80
A2 Short		175.99
B1 Long		145.05
B1 Medium		179.10
B1 Short		179.10
B2 Long		135.05
B2 Medium		136.10
B2 Short		150.20
C1 Long		130.90
C1 Medium		130.55
C1 Short		122.00
C2 Long		124.55
C2 Medium		123.65
C2 Short		105.65
D Long		120.25
D Short		101.15
E Long		100.85
E Short		100.15
OG1 Overgrown		121.10
OG2 Overgrown		113.39
TW1 Taiwanese		145.00
TW2 Taiwanese		180.99
TW3 Taiwanese		110.05
TW4 Taiwanese		109.50
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Spiker 2		91.15
RG1 Regrowth		21.00
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Velvet down

24/1/90

CHRISTCHURCH

Velvet prices dropped another \$30 a kilogram at the first South Island commercial velvet pool sale for the season.

This is the second price drop in a week.

The first Wrightson velvet pool last week sold at prices one-third lower than a last year's opening and \$5 to \$15 below the close.

The top price paid in the first sale of this season was \$210.50 a kilogram for A1 medium grade.

Wrightson South Island velvet pool manager Russell Henderson said the market had looked fragile, with Korean buyers saying prices were too high.

However, he was hopeful prices would steady at the present level.

Prices had started at very high levels at the start of last season, but had then gone down.

Thirteen tenders had been received for the South Island pool, and there had been very little price difference between the tenders, he said.

Demand for super A grade velvet had been poor in both sales.

The South Island pool contained six tonnes of velvet.

Demand for B grade velvet, a major component of the sale, was disappointing.

The B grade lines made between \$135 and \$179 for about two tonnes offered this week, compared with \$180 and \$181 last week.

A1 short and medium sold the best, dropping from \$210 last week to \$200 this week. — NZPA

Health problems in deer

The recent death of 20 hinds in Southland has highlighted the importance of giving animals fresh water daily.

The MAF Invermay Animal Health Laboratory had a case recently where 20 hinds from a mob of 70 were found dead, although their calves seemed normal.

A water trough in their paddock was dry, possibly for as long as three days, and because there was no other obvious cause of death, lab staff concluded water deprivation seemed likely.

Dehydration can happen easily over summer, particularly if the pasture is dry, so it is essential farmers check water troughs every day.

"All animals must have access to water, particularly mothers suckling their young."

Velvet Scabs

Every year, the Animal

Health lab examines outbreaks of scabs on velvet, and this year was no exception.

All of a mob of two-year-old stags in one case had scabs on their velvet, and some even had them extended over the muzzle, and the head, and had swollen eyes.

The problem was parapoxvirus infection, which is similar to scabby mouth in sheep, and while it isn't fatal, it does downgrade the quality of velvet.

Thistles in paddocks are known to spread the infection.

It is reasonably common to see stags thrashing their growing antlers in long grass and on prickly thistle stems.

Thistles seem to spread the parapoxvirus infection, and it can easily be passed on from one stag to another.

Farmers should be

aware they run the risk of downgrading their velvet quality by grazing stags in thistle-choked paddocks.

It is suggested velvet stags be put in paddocks with few thistles to minimize this risk, or thistles should be topped.

Copper

Lab staff are urging Otago and Southland deer farmers to check for cop-

per deficiencies in their animals.

Twelve out of 14 liver samples taken from deer recently, under the Optigrow system, showed copper deficiencies.

A lack of copper can cause bone and joint problems in young deer, and nervous disorders in the brain and spinal cord of yearlings. It may also affect deer growth.

EC rules threaten venison

By Hildred Cartisle

New Zealand deer farmers could suffer under European Community laws which outlaw the velvetting of stags — their venison could be banned.

New EC animal welfare legislation is binding not only on its 12 member states but also on countries exporting to Europe. Of those 12 member states, last year five imported New Zealand venison including Germany which is by far our largest single importer. In total those five countries took 53 per cent of New Zealand venison exports, worth \$20.9 million with Germany taking 45 per cent or \$17.3 million.

That level of import could, in fact, save deer farmers for the time being because while Europe cannot satisfy demand for venison from within authorities are unlikely to invoke the legislation. However, it is possible that animal rights campaigners could create so much public outrage at our velvetting that the authorities would be forced to impose a ban.

Some velvet is actually produced by European deer farmers because if stags happen to be in velvet when they are slaughtered there is no objection to that velvet being harvested.

Donald Broom, professor of animal welfare at Cambridge University, suggests that is what we should do here if we want to put ourselves beyond the threat of a European ban. But that suggestion is at complete variance with the recommendations made by a special subcommittee of the New Zealand Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (AWAC) which included representatives of the deer industry.

The subcommittee decided unanimously that a code of conduct for the removal of antlers was required largely because it was appreciated that on grounds of welfare alone it is necessary to remove the antlers of farmed deer to prevent injury both to deer and to their handlers. Quite apart from commercial considerations related to the sale of velvet, the subcommittee decided that the most appropriate time to remove antlers is when they are in the velvet because when the antlers are hard the stag is very much more aggressive and dangerous.

Interestingly when the New Zealand Veterinary Association questioned its members about velvetting, 97 per cent said they considered it necessary for safety reasons.

The AWAC subcommittee also recommended that deer with antlers should not be transported because it could result in severe damage or even the deaths of the animals.

In Europe deer farming is only in its infancy and there are, apparently, moves afoot for deer to be killed on farms rather than in abattoirs. This would certainly overcome the difficulty of transporting deer with antlers but there still remains the question of welfare when farming deer with antlers on would mean that for most of the year they would be unable to be yarded for drenching, veterinary intervention or, indeed, any reason at all.

Professor Broom said the Europeans are anxious that their animal welfare laws should be based on soundly researched scientific data; so obviously what is needed is more research into animal welfare so irrefutable evidence can be offered.

Without such evidence the \$20 million and growing export industry is at risk.

Inexperienced chefs threaten venison

OAMARU

Be wary of inexperienced New Zealand chefs, Malcolm Linn of venison meat processors Fortex Group has warned deer farmers.

An inexperienced chef invariably ruined venison, Mr Linn, Fortex's general manager (marketing) recently told the South Canterbury-North Otago branch of the Deer Farmers' Association in Timaru.

Mr Linn was asked why more venison was not on the local market. He said venison was a special meat, low in fat.

"Invariably the inexperienced chef ruins the meat. We would be concerned to be selling it and pushing it through retailers here and falling flat on our face," Mr Linn said.

Fortex had targeted sales through restaurants so people were introduced to venison properly and chefs were then able to prepare and serve the meat perfectly, Mr Linn said.

There had been

"tremendous success" on the domestic scene, with 400 restaurants taking fresh farm produced venison weekly, he added.

Fortex was starting to look at specialty food stores to sell farm-raised venison and begin networking it through other stores, he said.

Mr Linn said the priority for the industry was to formulate a strategic marketing plan for farm venison from New Zealand.

His company was prepared to give total support to a "champagne" marketing process.

The product overseas had to retain a truly New Zealand image and the objective had to be to produce a high quality range of venison products.

New Zealand needed to have more venison in places like the Harrods foodhall in London "and a more concerted effort to see we're a stronger presence at the higher end of the market," Mr Linn said.

Mr Linn said there had

been a 50 percent increase in the Fortex kill since last November and the group planned to increase its plant at Seafield, Ashburton, by the end of the year. — NZPA

25/5/91



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Tenders are invited from helicopter operators to provide an aircraft for up to eight hours of search and destroy operations on chamois control over mountain lands of Fiordland and Northern Southland.

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Tenderers to state aircraft type, hourly rate and detail pilot's experience on wild animal operations. Lowest hourly rate may not necessarily be successful. Charter price to be from Te Anau, Milford or Hollyford.

Tenders close with Regional Conservator, Department of Conservation, PO Box 743, Invercargill at 1pm on Tuesday, June 4, 1991.

K A Mawhinney
REGIONAL
CONSERVATOR

Don't brush with EC, says Broom

Some common farming practices in New Zealand may have to be changed or the European Community could have grounds for banning our primary produce.

That was the clear message of Donald Broom, professor of animal welfare at Cambridge University, in his Ron Kilgour Memorial Lecture at MAF Ruakura Agricultural Centre during February.

"The (European) Community already has a number of laws governing animal welfare and there are more already passed by the European Parliament and just waiting for the assent of the Council of Ministers before they also become effective.

"The important point for New Zealand is that these laws are not only binding on all the 12 EC member countries but also on those countries which export to the Community in competition with European producers," he said.

"So if a certain practice is outlawed in Europe, goods from a country using that practice could be banned straightaway. The obvious example which most people have heard of is the banning of American meat in the Community because the United States uses growth promotants which are outlawed in the Community."

European regulations which could affect New Zealand farming practices are:

By Hildred Carlisle

- It is illegal to dock cows' tails.

- No calf under seven-days-old may be transported unless with its mother.

- Disbudding of calves must be done before the calf is seven-days-old, or an anaesthetic must be administered under vet supervision.

- Lambs must be docked and castrated within seven days too, or again, anaesthetic must be administered under the supervision of a veterinary surgeon.

- The velvetting of stags is illegal, although the velvet from a stag that happens to be in the velvet when it is slaughtered can be harvested.

Professor Broom makes the point that even if the authorities or the farmers don't try to ban the import of New Zealand goods produced in contravention of European law, consumers may be induced to do so by animal welfare groups.

"The image of New Zealand is one of a clean, green country with contented, well-fed animals grazing on lush pasture all the year round. It's an image that New Zealand has worked hard to produce, and it's widely accepted and believed but it was very severely damaged when more than 9000 New Zealand sheep died aboard the Cormo Express on the way to the Middle East. That incident made people wonder if the



Professor Donald Broom

image was just a facade and New Zealanders were actually prepared to inflict appalling suffering on their animals for the sake of a few bob.

"As a result of that episode a number of people — and I have no idea how many — decided they would no longer eat New Zealand produce. And I can tell you that if pictures of four-day-old bobby calves in their roadside pens or being loaded on to trucks were shown in Europe there would be widespread outrage."

(Footnote: The Ron Kilgour Memorial Lecture is an annual event which commemorates the contribution to New Zealand farming of animal behaviour scientist Dr Ron Kilgour who was killed in a road accident almost three years ago.)

American deer scientist joins Invermay team

By CLAIRE GRANT, Journalist Invermay

Invermay has a new deer scientist, who hopes to find what causes one of the most mysterious ailments in New Zealand deer — fading elk syndrome.

Dr Ken Waldrup has come to MAF Invermay from Texas A and M University on a one to two-year-long fellowship and is looking forward to the challenge of finding out more about this mysterious syndrome, where seemingly healthy elk suddenly stop eating and literally fade away.

Dr Waldrup has been working on blood parasites and immunology in white-tailed deer and elk in Texas but has also worked with moose in Alaska and operated his own private veterinary practice in Missouri.

Although fading elk

syndrome does not affect American deer, Dr Waldrup has already learned it is a major problem in New Zealand, and farmers are keen to find out how to avoid it.

However, he said coming up with a cure, or a vaccine, would not be easy.

To start with he said, several Invermay deer scientists had already touched on the problem during their research.

"New Zealand is by far world leader in deer research, so if these highly intelligent scientists couldn't find the cause of the problem straight off, it's not going to be easy."

He is convinced there are multiple causes of fading elk syndrome and he will start his research by looking at the various treatments that are al-

ready being prescribed for deer with the problem.

The syndrome has been associated with copper deficiencies, so supplements are often given as a treatment, with varying degrees of success.

There has also been suggestions the problem is linked to parasites, so Dr Waldrup will be investigating that possibility.

"It's not a simple problem, like just getting a bug that runs its course. It's a complex problem that may relate to a number of causes, rather than one."

Dr Waldrup plans to set up trials with wapiti on the Invermay deer farm to study parasite control and copper deficiencies, and he is also hoping to talk with wapiti deer farmers and vets in the re-

gion, to get feedback for them on possible treatment options.

He is interested in what triggers the metabolic decline in deer, and wants to study the metabolic pathways related to that.

There is no doubt Dr Waldrup has a challenge in front of him, but he is keen to investigate every possibility at this stage in his search for the cause of fading elk syndrome.

"Even if we end up following the wrong path, at least we can discount another possibility, and we're still making progress."

In the meantime, he is reading up on all that has been written about the syndrome, and is also planning to make the most of the south's outdoor activities in his spare time.

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Sired by Walter Sommerville's "Dick" son of "King Richard")

M/s H D & R D Gardyne, Knapdale

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(Hinds from "Mararoa" and "Willowvale" blood lines.

Run with "Willowvale Shultz" 1/2 German Stag)

Mr J C McChery, Ferndale

ACCREDITED

35 — Rising 2nd FAWNERS

Mr T A J Jeffrey, Wendonside

ACCREDITED

13 — Red Weaner STAGS

6 — Red Weaner HINDS

Mr R J Christie, Glenary

ACCREDITED

20 — Weaner STAGS

(Warnham bloodlines)

M/s P R & S G Brunson, Waimumu

ACCREDITED

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2 Test plus sale test

45 — Weaner HINDS

45 — Weaner STAGS

I W & E M Miller, Waimumu

ACCREDITED

12 — M/A Red HINDS

A E Waters, Pyramid

ACCREDITED

10 — M/A Red HINDS

04393

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Flood of deer at killing plants 27/4/91

By GAIL GOODGER

Southland deer farmers face long waiting lists to get animals killed for the first time in the industry's history, according to the Deer Farmers Association.

A drop in prices for live deer and velvet meant many farmers were scrambling to kill deer, Southland Deer Farmers Association president David Stevens said.

"I don't know if it's panic or what it is," he said.

Some farmers were obviously concerned about balancing their books and the chilled venison market was providing an incentive to kill.

One Southland plant was offering \$5 minimum and \$6 maximum a kilogram for venison.

The flood of animals is placing pressure on the only two venison processing plants in Southland — Game Foods New Zealand Ltd, at Kennington, and the Venison New Zealand Co-operative Ltd, at Mossburn.

Co-operative manager Ian Stewart said the company had been holding a shareholders' drive for the past three weeks and money raised would probably go towards expanding the plant.

So far about 50 people from Southland and southern Otago had shown an interest in becoming shareholders, which included preferential stock killing.

Killing space was fully booked until about the end of July or mid-August.

"It's the first time in our history we've had a waiting list," Mr Stewart said.

The plant was processing about 550 animals a week, mostly stags, including 100 wild deer. Business usually slowed down from August.

The killing boom was all right to start with, but now had its down side, Mr Stewart said.

Farmers were having to wait so long it was probably affecting their cash flow and with winter near, they would be getting short of feed for the deer.

"There's probably a lot of unhappy people out there."

But the plant could only put people on the waiting list and work from the top.

The killing season would probably last for 12 months this year, Mr Stewart said.

The flood of venison on to the market did not seem to be creating problems so far.

"Our marketing company is getting rid of what we're doing at the moment. It's working very hard to make sure we do get rid of it because that's the last thing you want is a stockpile," he said.

A Game Foods' spokesman said killing space at its Kennington plant was booked up about two months ahead for the first time ever, when the killing season usually tailed-off towards June.

The plant had been operating at close to its maximum throughput of more than 90 animals a day since the season started in November. It was now killing mostly hinds.

The plant was originally designed in 1985 to kill 32 deer every second day but had been developed to where it was putting about 60 to 70 animals through each day last year.

Mr Stevens said lack of killing space meant poorer animals were being sold live.

When velvet was fetching about \$280 a kilogram last year, farmers kept the young stags but now that prices had dropped to about \$130 a kilogram, they were trying to get rid of them along with low-producing hinds.

The industry was expanding and buyers were more selective so live-deer prices had dropped, making owners with top-line animals avoid sale days.

They feared the lower prices would be used as a guideline, he said.

Sale prices were not reflecting true values but it was a good sign for the industry that so many farmers were culling poorer stock.

"It's going to be a good tidy-up actually," he said. "The expansion of the deer industry has slowed down."

Rural sector finances were tight, so not as many people were diversifying into deer farming and existing deer farmers had built up their herds, he said.



Picture: JOHN HAWKINS

So many deer ... Game Foods New Zealand Ltd plant manager Tangiariki Puki checks carcasses hanging in the chiller at the Kennington plant. The only two deer processing plants in Southland are fully booked out months in advance for the first time in the industry's history.

Americans learn to like venison

14/6/91

WASHINGTON

By SUZANNE POLLARD

Americans have needed a lot of convincing that venison is even edible, let alone worth forking out a lot of money for.

But a concerted education and marketing campaign by New Zealand exporters is now reaping rich rewards as Americans come to appreciate the many different ways in which farm-raised venison can tickle their tastebuds.

It has even become quite trendy in many upmarket establishments, aided by its low cholesterol health appeal and the clean, green image of its country of origin.

Misconceptions and prejudices about venison have been identified and, as sales figures indicate, successfully addressed in several key areas in the US.

New Zealand farm raised venison now dominates the US market, accounting for 85 percent of the venison eaten in America.

Market research showed New Zealand exporters that 65 percent of Americans who had tried venison once said they would never eat it again.

The reasons were clear.

Most had eaten wild deer that was not handled or cooked properly.

The result? A belief that venison was too strongly flavoured for the American palate, that it was tough, and time-consuming and difficult to prepare.

The research found the misconceptions common among chefs as well as the public.

A carefully planned and executed marketing strategy to create an entirely different image for venison has paid dividends for venison exporters, represented in the US by the New Zealand Farm Raised Venison Council.

Venison exports to the US have grown significantly in recent years, increasing by 44 percent from 1989 to 1990 and now accounting for around \$NZ9 million annually.

Council spokesman Peter Coulombe describes the American market as "more or less limitless."

"If we had more product we'd sell more product." New Zealand venison appears on restaurant menus

as chilli, satay, Japanese sushi, Chinese style or in more traditional European presentations.

New Zealand chefs demonstrate and discuss its merits at industry fairs, cooking schools and anywhere else they can get the message across that farmed venison is quick and easy to prepare in a huge variety of ways, that its mild taste is well suited to the American palate, and its low fat content ensures it is a healthy alternative to other red meats.

Mr Coulombe, an American, says the council learned from the early mistakes of New Zealand lamb and kiwifruit exporters and determined to get their strategy right from the outset.

"There are no second chances in the US market, it's too competitive.

"You can't afford to disappoint people because of over-extending yourself.

"You've got to do things in a nice, controlled way, a 'do it right and take your time' way."

Mr Coulombe says there is no doubt that the words New Zealand have contributed greatly to the venison success story.

"New Zealand does have a mystique here, its seen as a green and beautiful place."

Americans expect natural products from New Zealand.

"Advertising the fact it's from New Zealand also helps to reinforce that it has not been shot behind the restaurant.

"We always emphasize that it's New Zealand farm-raised venison.

"Just calling it venison would mean it would be a non-seller.

"Calling it farm-raised venison would help, always calling it New Zealand farm-raised venison is the best way to sell it."

The council's marketing strategy was enhanced last year when venison was described on a popular television show as "the red meat of the 90s."

Meanwhile, in New Zealand, the Game Industry Board plans to launch a new venison image in October, at a food fair in Germany.

It will hinge on a new marketing campaign 360 deer farmers at the Ruakura Farmers Conference this week were told is

At the Ruakura Farmers Conference yesterday 360 deer farmers expected to give New Zealand venison a more marketable and unique identity.

GIB marketing consultant Brian Richards said all of New Zealand's five-year lead over deer farming competitors overseas would be required to develop a psychological premium for New Zealand venison.

"If all we do is produce farm-raised venison, then all we will do is slipstream the Canadians and Americans," he told the deer farmers. "We need a definitive, leading edge. We have prime mover status in venison, and now we want to tell the story about our product, a story which cannot be copied."

The new marketing strategy and product band is likely to take another month or more to finalise.

In the US, Graham Brown, owner and head chef of Christchurch's Scarborough Fare restaurant, has worked with the New Zealand Farm Raised Venison Council to promote venison in the US.

He says chefs usually have a very poor perception of venison until they taste it.

But once they know how to cook it they are usually sold on it and keen to incorporate it in their menu planning.

The fact that it is available all year round is a big bonus for the restaurant trade, he says.

Mark Mitchell, president of Broadleaf Venison USA Inc which has been selling New Zealand venison for three years, says continuity of supply has been one of the most important factors in ensuring success for New Zealand exporters.

"You can't afford to rest on your laurels in this market.

"There can't be any slowing of the momentum... with the production end now geared up in New Zealand, there's a real need to keep promoting it here and develop the market." Mr Mitchell believes New Zealand venison should continue to be promoted largely to the restaurant trade, rather than retail.

That way it could be well presented and its crucial top-shelf image kept intact. — NZPA

VENISON NZ CO-OP

LTD

MOSSBURN PLANT

25/5/91

re: INTAKE OF FERAL DEER

Due to changing MAF and overseas requirements we can only accept feral deer at the following times:

Weekdays: Between noon and 1pm

Saturdays: Mornings up to 11am

For Saturday mornings please phone (03) 248-6441.

No on the spot payments will be made but payments will be sent within 7 days of delivery. This will take effect from May 20, 1991 until further notice.

Thank you for your help in this matter.

I D Stewart

Manager

MOSSBURN PLANT

17341

8/6/91

NO "VELVETING 1991"

Many thanks to the 141 (to date) Deer Farmers who replied to the May 25 advertisement in the Southland Times. Unfortunately a letter has been received from the President of the New Zealand Deer Farmers' Association writing on behalf of other vested interests forbidding contractual velveting or using the newly developed acupuncture method for supplying organic drug free velvet. Therefore until the process is evaluated it will not be possible to proceed as planned. They once said not so long ago it was not possible to farm deer - "Remember - let alone handle them". The main reason we will not discuss this innovative method as it is commercially sensitive and already enough information on handling and other technology has left New Zealand, and is, and will, be used against us. The demand is there, the price is right, the method is proven. All comments should be directed to Mr David Stevens, Chairman, Southland Branch NZDFA, Co signator.

02377

DeerMark awarded to Venison New Zealand

14/6/91

Venison New Zealand Co-operative Ltd is now operating within the Game Industry Board's DeerMark programme.

In recognition of the product quality achieved by the company at its Hastings and Mossburn plants, a special commemorative plaque was presented to company representatives by the Game Industry Board at Mossburn last night.

The achievement is a major milestone in the period of reorganization undertaken by Venison New Zealand since it bought the Mossburn plant in April 1989.

Since then further investment has been made in plant and substantial reorganization of processing standards undertaken.

Following on from achieving substantial growth in exports, processing at Mossburn has increased by more than 100 percent in the past 12 months.

"In determining to ensure that all its plants achieve this full ISO standard accreditation, Venison New Zealand Co-operative has been one of the innovative pioneers in the industry," GIB general manager Mike Patterson said.

He further noted it was pleasing to see that the drive to reach higher standards, which had played such a vital part in developing the venison trade, were still there and that the company was seeking and striving to meet new standards.

"Venison is a premium product and to maintain and build our reputation in international market places we must make sure that the product meets the demanding expectations of the customer," Mr Patterson said.

"Guaranteeing quality is the key to our future growth and it is highly encouraging that industry members are making this happen."

15/6/91



Game Industry Board member Bruce McKendry (left) presents the board's quality assurance plaque to Venison New Zealand Co-operative's chairman Nigel Gould (right) and the company's Mossburn deer slaughter plant manager, Ian Stewart.

Mossburn plant earns DeerMark

Achieving the deer industry's quality assurance DeerMark was a significant achievement, Venison New Zealand Co-operative Ltd chairman Nigel Gould told the company's Mossburn staff on

Thursday night.

The company was this week granted the DeerMark by the Game Industry Board after a two-year quality development programme at its Mossburn plant.

The company's directors and Mossburn plant staff celebrated achieving the industry's highest award with a social evening and special venison-based meal prepared by Invercargill master chef Graham Hawkes.

Congratulating the Mossburn staff for their efforts, Mr Gould noted that Venison New Zealand had achieved several milestones during the past few months. These included the decision to buy out the shares held by Wrightson, a move which had given the company full control over all of its operations, and the recent share issue which was "well oversubscribed."

"Venison New Zealand is going places," he said. "The throughput (at Mossburn) is getting close to capacity and we would

now like to see it remain consistent throughout the year.

"The plant's product is well respected and well received in our overseas markets."

Game Industry Board member Bruce McKendry, in presenting the award to plant manager Ian Stewart, stressed the increasing pressure being placed on suppliers by overseas consumers, especially supermarket chains, on consistent product quality.

He said for Venison New Zealand's Mossburn plant to achieve the DeerMark was credit to all members of the staff who had taken the quality assurance programme seriously.

In addition to the plant receiving the GIB DeerMark award, all employees were presented

with personalized certificates in recognition of their contribution to the programme.

Company chairman Nigel Gould said yesterday a directors meeting in Invercargill earlier in the day had agreed that, because of the increased throughput at Mossburn, a full review of options for expansion would be investigated.

Such options included increased processing facilities and expanding the chiller and freezer space.

"We expect it will involve a significant capital expenditure," Mr Gould said.

"The expansion will further improve the plant's quality standards as well as extending capacity and will ensure that we maintain our position as an industry leader."



VENISON NEW ZEALAND'S SPRING SCHEDULE ANNOUNCEMENT

Venison New Zealand's "New Spring" Venison Schedule for week beginning July 29, 1991 for Hinds and Stags Grading Prime

55kg — 64.9kg \$4.50
50kg — 54.9kg \$4.30
45kg — 49.9kg \$3.65
40kg — 44.9kg \$2.70

AUGUST SLAUGHTER SPACE FOR ALL SUPPLIERS

We have limited space available in August for both shareholders and non shareholders at our Hastings, Fielding and Mossburn Plants, so take advantage of our chilled market premiums and **BOOK NOW**.

Inquire about our special transport rates.

For bookings or further details contact your local VNZ Nominated Booking Agent or your local VNZ Plant Booking Officer. For the contact number of the agent in your area contact:

Venison New Zealand Deer Services
General Manager, Phil Caskey
Office (06) 323-6018
Mobile (025) 422-451

Deer's head tabled at farmer meeting

31/3/91

HAMILTON

MacBride said.

which a deer has strayed.

pastoral farms.

A Te Kowhai farmer 'tabled' a deer's head at a Waikato Federated Farmers meeting earlier this week saying that "the only good deer on my farm is a dead deer."

Dairy farmer Graham MacBride, the federation's Hamilton sub-province chairman, said he shot the stag on his farm to eliminate the risk of it spreading tuberculosis to his herd.

"Straying deer are emerging as a significant problem. It's a sensitive issue in our area," Mr

He also tabled a letter from a Department of Conservation solicitor who gives farmers the legal go-ahead to shoot deer found on their properties.

Mr MacBride said DOC's legal opinion was that tagged or branded deer that strayed from inadequate enclosures "may be regarded as wild animals ... and hunted or killed".

The hunter, however requires the approval of the owner of the land on

The monthly Waikato meeting of sub-provincial chairmen endorsed the call from Mr MacBride for the federation to push for firmer laws controlling deer farm management to guard against animal health risks to other

The consequences of Tb spreading through cattle herds could be the banning of meat exports to world markets, he said.

Tb is ranked sixth on a list of the worst animal diseases in the world. — NZPA

Mechanical failure led to helicopter crash

14/5/91

A fractured fuel line probably caused engine failure in a helicopter which crashed in Fiordland in December 1989, killing the pilot, the Transport Investigation Commission says.

James Anthony Kane, aged 42, died after the crash in Fiordland National Park on December 9.

The commission said it seemed poor repairs to the fuel line led to a fatigue crack which would have been difficult to detect.

Evidence indicated Mr Kane might have repaired a fuel pipe leak himself or arranged for it to be done by unapproved repairers.

The report found the helicopter's airworthiness certificate was rendered invalid by the unsatisfactory repairs.

Mr Kane was on a deer recovery operation in the Cameron Mountain range, near the head of Long Sound, when his Hughes 300 suffered mechanical failure and plunged 800 metres into the bush.

VENISON SCHEDULE



From 22 4 91 until further notice

EXPORT SCHEDULE

FAT	WEIGHT	GROSS \$/KG
AP1 GR <=14mm	70.1 and over	4.30
AP2 GR <=12mm	50.1 to 70.0	4.30
AP3 GR <=10mm	45.1 to 50.0	3.85
AP4 GR <=10mm	35.1 to 45.00	3.15
AP5 GR <=10mm	up to 35.0	2.30
AF1 GR+10, 12, 14	Overfat	2.90
AF2 GR+20mm	Overfat	2.30
AD 1 Primal	Damaged	2.20
AM 2 Primals	Damaged	1.70

DOMESTIC SCHEDULE

PLG Prime Local Grade 1.80

FALLOW SCHEDULE on request

BOOKINGS: Booking Officer (03) 230-4481 B/H
A/H (03) 230-4771, FAX (03) 230-4410

- * Te Anau — Owen Buckingham (03) 249-7180
- * Central Southland — Tom May (03) 236-7035
- * Balclutha — Geoff Grant (03) 418-3699
- * Mosgiel — Tim Armstrong (03) 489-3333
- * Your PPCS Drafter or your usual Livestock Drafting firm.
- Payout options * GFNZL 100%
- * PPCS 100% * POOL 90%

02617

Venison

Net values (\$/head) week beginning April 22, 1991

Grade	Weight	Fortex	Mair	Venist	NZ	PPCS Game Foods
AP	32.0	\$ 55	\$ 61	\$ 68	\$ 71	\$ 65
AP	37.0	101	88	89	89	106
AP	42.0	114	120	120	116	120
AP	47.0	165	163	163	163	168
AP	52.0	222	217	217	219	209
AP	57.0	243	240	240	240	229
AP	60.0	256	253	253	253	241
AP	65.0	277	274	274	274	261
AP	70.0	295	292	295	295	281
AP	75.0	316	305	301	294	301
AP	80.0	337	321	321	313	321
AP	90.0	371	353	353	353	362
AF1/AT	60.0	169	169	175		157
AF1/AT	80.0	225	193	193		209
AF2	70.0	162	166	120		141

CHANGES:

Fortex: AP grade for Stag and Hind (up to 35kg) -15c/kg; AP grades for Hind only (over 40kg) -10c/kg. Stag values are shown, Hinds over 40kg are 10c/kg less.

NOTES:

1. The net venison prices shown above in dollars per head are calculated after deducting the GIB levy. Transport to works needs to be deducted. All advised per head premiums have been included.

2. MAFQual inspection charges need also be deducted. They are (\$ per head) Seafield \$7, Venison NZ Mossburn \$7, Kennington \$7, Mair Hokitika \$7.85.

Venison

For week beginning July 1, 1991

Grade	Weights	Fortex	Mair	Venison NZ	PPCS/GameFoods
	kg	\$/kg	\$/kg	\$/kg	\$/kg
AP Hind	To 35	1.40	1.45	1.90	1.70
AP Hind	35-40	2.20	1.95	2.20	2.35
AP Hind	40-45	2.20	2.35	2.55	2.35
AP Hind	45-50	2.65	2.95	3.30	3.15
AP Hind	50-55	3.45	3.75	4.00	3.68
AP Hind	55-60	3.45	3.80	4.10	3.68
AP Stag	45-50	2.85	2.95	3.30	3.15
AP Stag	50-55	3.55	3.75	4.05	3.68
AP Stag	55-60	3.55	3.80	4.10	3.68
AP Stag	60-65	3.55	3.80	4.10	3.68
AP Stag	65-70	3.50	3.75	4.10	3.68
AP Stag	70-75	3.50	3.70	4.00	3.75
AP Stag	75-80	3.50	3.65	4.00	3.75
AP Stag	80-85	3.50	3.60	4.00	3.75
AP Stag	85-100	3.50	3.50	3.90	3.75
AF1, AT	50-70	2.75	2.55	2.80	2.60
AF1, AT	over 70	2.75	2.45	2.50	2.60
AF2	50-70	2.25	1.75	2.50	2.00

CHANGES:

Values now quoted in \$/kg gross. GIB and MAF levies to be deducted.
FORTEX: All AP grades over 35kg -10c/kg.
VENISON NZ: Stag/Hind AP grades 40-45kg -10c; 45-65kg -15c; over 65kg -30c/kg. Adult Stags -10c; Adult Hinds reduced by up to 30c/kg.

NOTES:

1. The net venison prices shown above in dollars per kg carcass weight. The GIB levy (28c/kg) needs to be deducted along with transport to works.

2. MAFQual inspection charges need also be deducted. They are (\$ per head) Seafield \$7, Venison NZ Mossburn \$7, Kennington \$7, Mair Hokitika \$7.85.

Venison NZ well supported

Deer farmers have responded with confidence to the recent share issue by Venison New Zealand Co-operative by subscribing more than the amount forecast.

Venison New Zealand chairman Nigel Gould said yesterday shareholders' funds had increased by 65 percent in the past six months with more than \$600,000 received from farmers.

"Not only are directors very satisfied by the strong level of support received under the prospectus," he said, "but they have

By JOHN CUTT

been very encouraged by the large numbers of farmers participating in the issue."

As a result of the share issue the total number of farmer shareholders had increased from 180 to more than 500.

Apart from enabling Venison New Zealand Co-operative Ltd to buy the minority shareholding in its subsidiary marketing company previously held by

Wrightsons, the success of the issue will enable the company to confirm its plans to accelerate the development of its Feilding DSP into a full processing amenity.

This is expected to become operative during the second half of 1992 and will significantly expand the company's North Island processing capacity.

A special general meeting of Southland shareholders in Mossburn yesterday approved a one-for-10 bonus issue, which will be distributed with full imputation

credits.

Shareholders will be asked at the company's annual meeting in September to approve a significant increase in the company's authorized capital.

"The success of the issue is a further reaffirmation that many within the industry view the future with confidence," Mr Gould said.

"Within Venison New Zealand we share that view and look forward to realizing upon the opportunities which are apparent."

Call for order in deer industry

The New Zealand deer industry was yesterday described as a "rogue elephant let loose."

International marketing consultant Dr John Morris, in a rousing address to delegates on the first day of The Southland Times Agricultural Conference, described the industry as having developed unrestrained, with little regard for anything else.

Dr Morris is a former New Zealander, a former vice-president of the Safeways food chain in the US and is currently the managing director of International Retail Marketing Associates, based in San Francisco.

Marketers and processors had been unable to bring the New Zealand deer industry under control, he said.

In spite of early warnings the industry had persisted in traditional New Zealand style to pay lip service to marketing.

"Basically, they are hawking off a commodity," he said.

Price undercutting by companies exporting sheepmeat had driven New Zealand products down to the bottom end of world markets.

The same short-term perspective existed for venison, Dr Morris said.

For the industry to have strength in the long term, a strong professional marketing strategy was needed.

Referring to farmers, Dr Morris noted that they never considered market realities and continued to "blindly produce and then complain bitterly when prices are not right."

Dr Morris emphasized that there was not a "bottomless pit" of markets that would take venison.

"It's time that we did an objective evaluation of the markets that are available for venison."

No developed market in the world now wanted frozen product, and he suggested that exporters-marketers looked more closely at alternative consumer ready products.



Dr MORRIS

These included fresh-chilled product, pre-cooked or in a meal-ready form especially suitable for microwave cooking.

In view of the growing overseas demand for chemical free foods, greater consideration should also be given to producing organically raised venison.

"If the quality is good enough, people will want to come back."

Dr Morris also questioned why New Zealand exporters persisted with having a deer head as a product emblem or trade mark.

In many overseas markets where there was a growing resistance to animal products, the use of a deer head created the Bambi syndrome in many consumers' minds.

"We have to stop throwing product at the wall to see how it sticks," he warned.

"Everyone has to make a full commitment to marketing, and make it now."

Chamois control

Sir — Through your column, I would like to ask the regional conservator of the Department of Conservation, Invercargill, the following questions:

1. How can they justify an operation such as the helicopter chamois control as tendered in The Southland Times, June 11, 1991?

2. What is the cost to the taxpayer of such an operation and how can it be carried out when the rest of the country has been asked to take cuts, that is salary and wage earners and beneficiaries?

3. What number of rifle permits were issued for Fiordland National Park for the 1990-91 season?

Could these hunters not be encouraged to control chamois at no cost to the taxpayer?

G L Lindsay

Wedderburn

[Asked to comment, Mr K A Mawhinney, the regional conservator, Department of Conser-

vation, Invercargill, replied: "1) Chamois have continued to push their range south from their original release area at Mt Cook and have reached the northern boundaries of Fiordland National Park. Ongoing operations in Fiordland against chamois have been undertaken each year since 1974 to prevent any further southward spread of this species into Fiordland National Park. These operations have been very successful with the southward spread held static and the residual population significantly lowered since the first days of these operations. It is important to maintain this pressure to ensure that progress made is not lost. Chamois in Fiordland National Park generally are inhabiting rough, steep country at high altitudes that in many cases is almost inaccessible to recreational hunters. Helicopters are the only viable means of controlling this establishing species and preventing its spread further into Fiordland. Venison aerial recovery helicopters seldom operate at altitudes where we would expect to find chamois.

"2) Eight hours helicopter time was tendered for to undertake this operation and one day's wages for two staff at a total cost of \$10,000. This is an ongoing programme that protects the investment of the previous 16 years.

"3) 2362 permits were issued to recreational hunters in Fiordland National Park in 1990-91. No chamois were reported on the permit returns as having been taken during this period. Fiordland is not a favoured area for recreational hunting of chamois due mainly to the low present population and inaccessibility of the terrain. Hunters prefer to hunt chamois in those areas of Canterbury and West Coast where population levels are significantly higher."

Venison marketing relies on quality

The New Zealand deer industry has to cast off the "meat and three veg" image and carve a niche in the consumer market if it is to reach its full potential.

That was the message from international marketing and business consultant and Game Industry Board member Brian Richards at the Southland Times Agricultural Conference in Invercargill yesterday.

Mr Richards told deer farmers that a route map for change which involved the production and distribution of a unique top quality product was not a quick fix-it arrangement.

New Zealand deer farmers were in a prime position to find their venison up there with the finest wines, Epernay champagne, salmon and truffles. As the first group of deer farmers in the world, New Zealand had "prime mover status."

Venison's competition was not simply other meat.

"It is an aristocratic product. We have our competition in other exotic specialties around the world such as pheasant," Mr Richards said.

As such, it should be produced to the highest possible standard and marketed as a speciality product.

In order to develop and market the product in such a way, the industry needed an appellation strategy.

The system was similar to patenting a product. Although other venison producers

around the world would be battling for similar markets — New Zealand venison would be recognized world wide as the best.

To develop such quality required a membership charter of producers and processors who have been vetted to a top standard.

Without the name which signified the best product in the field, New Zealand venison would simply become a commodity along with venison from other countries.

"This is a long-term strategy — we are signing people up right now. It is going to take a long time," Mr Richards said.

To explain the nuts and bolts of how the appellation strategy and a membership charter would work, Game Industry Board general manager Mike Pattison went into further detail.

Mr Pattison said the idea of a membership charter was mooted about five years ago.

To succeed, a quality assurance programme would be necessary. This could include three separate audits of a venison plant at six-weekly intervals before it would be allowed to become a member.

The industry was now poised to take the step forward.

"We are beyond analysis," Mr Richards concluded.

27/7/91
Venison

For week beginning July 22, 1991					
Grade	Weights	Fortex	Mair	Venison NZ	PPCS/GameFoods
	kg	\$/kg	\$/kg	\$/kg	\$/kg
AP Hind	To 35	1.40	1.45	1.90	1.70
AP Hind	35-40	2.10	1.95	2.20	2.25
AP Hind	40-45	2.10	2.30	2.70	2.25
AP Hind	45-50	2.55	2.85	3.65	2.95
AP Hind	50-55	3.35	3.60	4.30	3.60
AP Hind	55-60	3.35	3.80	4.50	3.50
AP Stag	45-50	2.75	2.85	3.65	2.95
AP Stag	50-55	3.55	3.60	4.30	3.50
AP Stag	55-60	3.55	3.80	4.50	3.50
AP Stag	60-65	3.55	3.70	3.80	3.50
AP Stag	65-70	3.50	3.60	3.70	3.60
AP Stag	70-75	3.50	3.50	3.70	3.60
AP Stag	75-80	3.50	3.50	3.70	3.60
AP Stag	80-85	3.50	3.30	3.60	3.60
AP Stag	85-100	3.50	2.35	2.80	2.60
AF1, AT	50-70	2.75	2.25	2.50	2.60
AF1, AT	over 70	2.75	2.25	2.50	2.60
AF2	50-70	2.25	2.15	2.50	2.00

CHANGES:

VENISON NZ: All AP grades (40-65kg) under 36 months increased 25 to 50c/kg. AP Hinds (40-65kg) over 36 months increased by 30 to 60c/kg. MAIR: AP grades 40-100kg increased by 10 to 30c/kg. For 55-65kg it is +30c/kg.

NOTES:

1. The net venison prices shown above in dollars per kg carcass weight. The GIB levy (28c/kg) needs to be deducted along with transport to works.
2. MAFQual inspection charges need also be deducted. They are (\$ per head) Seaford \$7, Venison NZ Mossburn \$7, Kennington \$7, Mair Hokitika \$7.85.

INFORMATION SUPPLIED BY THE GAME INDUSTRY BOARD

Koreans seek to import 100,000 live deer

Could wipe out NZ velvet industry

New Zealand deer farmers are confronted with a dilemma with the opening of the South Korean market to the large-scale importation of live deer.

Concerns expressed last week by the Fiordland branch of the New Zealand Deer Farmers' Association, that rules regarding live deer imports into Korea are to be relaxed after January, have been echoed by the association's president, James Guild.

The association's council met in Wellington for three days last week and a large part of the discussion, including meetings with politicians, centred on the live deer export issue.

The dilemma deer farmers face is while NZDFA members voted, albeit by a small margin, at their June conference that they were not opposed to the export of live deer, a groundswell of opposition appears to be developing as the implications of the Korean decision becomes more widely apparent.

In the past, NZDFA policy has been any exports should be limited to small numbers for breeding and zoological parks.

In spite of that, significant

By JOHN CUTT
Farm Editor

numbers of animals have been exported to Australia and North America in recent years.

However, the Korean situation is different in the Koreans are reported to be looking to import more than 100,000 animals, mainly red deer, wapiti and elk from New Zealand.

Writing in a recent newsletter to deer farmers, Mr Guild said: "Virtually no one has ever suggested the deer industry should allow unrestricted exports of large numbers of deer to our single largest trading partner and with no levy. And yet, such a scenario is now a very real possibility."

Korea takes 90 percent of New Zealand's annual velvet production.

MAF reports in the 1989-90 season New Zealand export receipts for velvet totalled \$43 million.

In the past six years Korean domestic deer numbers have grown by an estimated 58 to 60 percent, compared with New Zealand's national herd growth of between 20 and 25 percent.

After January, the Korean Government will allow the unrestricted importation of numerous goods, including deer.

"Clearly, the implications for the New Zealand deer industry are enormous," Mr Guild said.

"The long-term effect on the velvet trade and the developing venison market would be horrendous."

Mr Guild said yesterday he knew of Koreans who were already in the country sourcing "tens of thousands of animals."

He expected once the Koreans built up their deer numbers to give them self-sufficiency in velvet production a total ban on velvet imports was likely.

If that happened the New Zealand velvet industry could collapse overnight, creating problems that would make the industry's present marketing difficulties pale into insignificance, he said.

Mr Guild described the situation as "pretty tense."

"The council of the NZDFA has resolved to strongly argue against live deer exports to Korea."

The council was receiving a strong message from its mem-

bers to take whatever action it could to prevent the unrestricted sale of deer to Korea, he said.

Such measures might include seeking a levy on the export of deer under the Commodity Levies Act and having an input into redefining the animal health and welfare codes applying to export animals.

The velvet type preferred by the Korean market is for the heavier grades normally associated with wapiti, elk and their crossbreds.

New Zealand Wapiti Society president Dr Ken Drew said while the issue had yet to be debated by the society's management committee, he was sure the society would be opposed to live exports of animals on the scale envisaged.

"The cream of New Zealand's velvet crop comes from wapiti-elk type animals and this is the preferred type sought by the Koreans," he said.

"Exports of this nature would therefore impact badly on the quality end of New Zealand velvet."

Dr Drew said the issue would be debated at the next society committee meeting on September 6.

Specialized deer technology attracts US businessman to Southland

Deer farming may be expanding rapidly in the US but farmers there still have a lot to learn about humane and efficient deer handling techniques.

And that is the principle reason for a three week visit to New Zealand by Californian businessman, Walter McIntosh.

Mr McIntosh set up his retail business, which includes an expanding animal handling and capture equipment section, in 1989.

Not only the growing deer industry in the US, but the population explosion of feral deer in many states had created an urgent need for humane handling and capture systems, he said.

Soon after he set up his business Mr McIntosh said he had read an advertisement placed by Invercargill gunsmith Nelson Collie in the New Zealand Deer Farmer magazine relating to his gun-operated capture net method and since then had looked to New Zealand for the type of deer handling technology now in demand all over the US.

Proper deer handling methods were still very much in the educational stage in the US he said.

Also capturing or culling the growing feral deer population by either shooting or using tranquilizers had varying degrees of success.

New Zealand deer farming and deer farming methods had a high profile in the US and New Zealand was recognized as a leader in fencing materials, animal breeding and specialized consultancy, where he said "there is a great need."

By JOHN CUTT
Agricultural Editor

22/11/91

"New Zealand is the pioneer of deer farming and deer related products and it seemed logical that it was the only place to come to learn and see for myself where the state of the technology is," Mr McIntosh said.

In describing US deer handling methods, Mr McIntosh recounted one instance where he had been involved in helping to blood-type 100 elk using backyard-type equipment — an exercise that had taken six people including a veterinarian (at \$US75 an hour) a total of 16 hours.

Not one of the people involved had escaped without being kicked by the deer and one animal had to be put down as a result of the handling methods used.

Mr McIntosh said in many states, feral deer such as the white tail had become a major environmental problem.

Mr McIntosh produced a copy of an extensive article on the white tail which appeared in the New York Times Magazine earlier this year and which describes just how serious a problem wild deer have become.

In just the past decade the article states that white tail deer have doubled and even tripled in many states with numbers now estimated at 25 million.

The article reports that "hordes of deer are damaging millions of dollars worth of shrubs and plantings in homeowners' gardens and yards, while their children come in from play with deer ticks embedded in their skin."

"Of major concern is the possible link between growing deer population and Lyme disease, the fastest growing infectious disease in the country after Aids."

The Times article makes mention of deer invading urban areas to such an extent that they have earned the dubious titles of "rats with hoofs," and "unrestrained urban cows."

"There is a great demand for deer fencing, not so much to keep deer in but to keep deer out," Mr McIntosh said.

Apart from becoming major problems in cities such as Philadelphia and Baltimore, Chicago, Boulder and Portland, the white tail deer have caused incidents at airports.

Even the presidential retreat at Camp David has come under attack from the white tail.

Crop damage and serious ecological damage to national forests has put the deer at the top of the unwanted pest list.

The New York Times article further highlights the escalating bitter conflict between those who want the deer reduced to manageable numbers or removed completely and those, such as the anti-hunting and animal welfare lobbyists who want the animals protected.

One alternative suggested is to trap the deer and shift them to sites where they will be a lesser nuisance.

Another suggestion is to capture the animals and transport them to special abattoirs to distribute the meat to the urban poor.

Mr McIntosh said that was the part of the story where New Zealand technology, especially in deer capture and relocation systems could play a useful role.

His association with Nelson Collie has meant that much of his three-week stay in the country has naturally been spent in the province.

He leaves Southland today after visiting eight deer farms where he has seen first hand how Southland deer farmers not only farm the animals but the type of handling systems they use, experiencing live deer capture in the Lilburn Valley and gaining hands-on experience of not only Mr Collie's products but also John Dennis deer crush.

Velvetting, when farmers in Southland were handling large numbers of deer, had been an ideal time to come to New Zealand to see how the animals were handled, he said.

Mr McIntosh considered both John Dennis and Nelson Collie were "unsung heroes in the deer industry," and after seeing for himself the humane and efficient operation of their products, intends to see that they receive recognition in the US.



Californian businessman and agent for New Zealand animal handling equipment, Walter McIntosh, right, inspects a Dennis deer crush with John Dennis employee, Peter Stewart. Mr McIntosh has spent the past three weeks in Southland looking at deer farms and deer capture and handling equipment manufactured by John Dennis and Invercargill gunsmith Nelson Collie.

Wrightson Deer

WRIGHTSON will offer on account of:

M Kepple (Accredited)
8 — Weaner HINDS
6 — Weaner STAGS

M Faul
13 — Weaner HINDS
9 — Weaner STAGS

Gordon Farm Partnership (accredited)
11 — Weaner HINDS
11 — Weaner STAGS

SOUTHLAND FARMERS DEER

SOUTHLAND FARMERS will offer on account of:

Ralph Paterson, Ryal Bush (accredited),
90 — Red Hind FAWNS

R A Dynes, Ryal Park Stud (accredited)
10 — Elk x Weaner BULLS

(by Jack Pullar's bull - sire cut 5.3kg as a 4 year old). 21755

VENISON NEW ZEALAND DEER SERVICES LTD

16/11/91 VELVET

Phil Caskey will be buying velvet in the Southland region both for contracts and at a full schedule price. In attendance at Mossburn Deer Plant, Monday, November 18, from 1.30-3.30pm for larger lots and farm visits.

For further details of appointments contact:

Jim Guyton (Mossburn Plant) (03) 248-6063
John Duncan (Southland Farmers) (03) 224-6301,
Mobile (025) 322-881
Phil Caskey, Office (06) 323-6018,
Mobile (025) 422-451

especially those farming deer and cattle, became serious about tuberculosis, and made possum control programmes an important part of their normal farming operation.

I believe delaying the arrival of Tb or reducing reactor numbers will be money well spent — particularly with the likelihood of compensation for Tb-reactor cattle being reduced some time in the future.

There are several methods of possum control, but the following technique is giving excellent results.

Cinnamon-flavoured possum bait (manufactured especially by Animal Control Products, Waimate) is fed through a bait station made from 50 millimetres of alkathene pipe.

The bait should be fed for several nights. Bait stations will attract possums from at least 100 metres away, but it seems to take a few nights to get them feeding from the stations.

Fix the bait station to a fence post or tree in the area you think possums may be living.

A coloured flower pot is used to put feed paste and poisoned paste into. The pot is raised off the ground with a forked piece of number eight wire, keeping the paste dry and weatherproof, and also protecting non-target animals from being poisoned.

Cinnamon-flavoured feed paste is placed on the front edge of the flower pots, placed around the station, and ground-up bait should be laced behind the feed paste. Then, after two nights of feed paste, use cinnamon-flavoured cyanide poison paste on the front edge of

23/11/91 DEER FARMERS

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23127

14669

Venison successfully launched on domestic market

Farm-raised venison is finally available on supermarket shelves in Otago and Southland thanks to the active promotional efforts of Venison New Zealand.

Venison New Zealand is a farmer-owned national venison processing and

exporting company whose Mossburn processing facility began packaging domestic cuts of venison in early July.

At the forefront of the company's domestic promotion efforts are Invercargill deer farmer Bruce Hegan and VNZ's

Mossburn-based director, Phil Rossell.

Mr Hegan said the past three or four weeks had been hectic with in-store demonstrations and cooking negotiations with supermarkets to display and sell the new range of products.

While promotion has been focused mainly on Dunedin and Invercargill, a move into Canterbury is planned for about mid-August.

By JOHN CUTT

Agricultural Editor

Mr Hegan said the range of products, which includes stir fry strips, schnitzel, leg steaks, casserole, a trim suitable for mincing and meat patties, were packaged by a team of Mossburn women, many of whom are wives of VNZ's Mossburn staff, each Tuesday evening.

Each long-life vacuum pack comes complete with recipes specially prepared for VNZ by national cooking personality Annabel Langbein.

An added plus for VNZ farm-raised venison is its health endorsement from the National Heart Foundation.

"We've had a good response so far," Mr Hegan said.

"But it's been a lot of hard work and there is still a lot more educating of people to do — especially in making them aware that venison is low in cholesterol, low in fat, tender and quick cooking."

VNZ's project development manager, David Ellis said the company was very happy with the promotion of venison on the domestic market.

"We expect it will take some time to educate con-

sumers into the unique nature of our products and to convince people that farm-raised venison is not the same as feral venison.

"It has a consistency of tenderness as well as some remarkable nutritional benefits and does not have the 'gamey' flavour some people associate with feral venison."

Mr Ellis said VNZ believed the product range was well packaged and well presented.

Invercargill consumers will have further opportunities to sample VNZ's venison range next week during a Game Industry Board supported Venison Week.

Each day for six days one restaurant and one supermarket will feature respectively as the restaurant and outlet of the day.

The chef from each restaurant of the day will assist VNZ's in-store demonstrators at the outlet of the day advising consumers on simple, quick to prepare venison recipes designed to take the perceived complicated preparation image out of venison cooking.

Also during Venison Week the Game Industry Board is to hold a seminar for Invercargill chefs.

Time farmers took Tb seriously

By Gore MAF Quality Management Livestock Officer Peter Brunsden

It is time farmers, especially those farming deer and cattle, became serious about tuberculosis, and made possum control programmes an important part of their normal farming operation.

I believe delaying the arrival of Tb or reducing reactor numbers will be money well spent — particularly with the likelihood of compensation for Tb-reactor cattle being reduced some time in the future.

There are several methods of possum control, but the following technique is giving excellent results.

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the flowerpot.

The following year, it is suggested you concentrate possum control in the areas high possum numbers were found.

An excellent booklet called "Self Help Possum Control" is available from the Southland Regional Council and pest destruction staff, or for further information, contact your local MAF Quality Management livestock officer.



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For Saturday mornings please phone (03) 248-6441

No on the spot payments will be made but payments will be received within 7 days of delivery.

15178

Deer recovery chopper crash kills one man

WELLINGTON

A routine deer recovery operation went wrong for two Haast farmers yesterday when their small Robinson helicopter crashed on the Waipara River bed, south of Haast, killing one of them.

The pilot, Michael Jones, aged 23, survived the crash without any injuries, but his crew member died instantly.

The body of 25-year-old Barry Phillip Anderson, originally of Carter's Beach, was recovered from the crash site late in the afternoon. It will be flown to Christchurch for a post-mortem examination today.

Mr Jones, shocked and saddened by the death of his friend, found it difficult to describe what had happened.

"It is really quite horrible," he said. "I feel very upset."

The helicopter was lifting a deer carcass off the ground when one of the rotor blades struck a tree and the chopper plunged about 10 metres to the river bed.

Mr Jones stumbled out of the wreckage to find his friend dead. He walked about 9km down the river before a rescue helicopter spotted him.

Constable Roger Millard, of Haast, said Mr Jones was distressed and in shock when rescuers picked him up.

"But he had no external injuries and was taken home to recover."

Mr Millard said deer recovery operations, common in the Haast area in the past, were now infrequent.

"This particular crew had just started but was gaining experience quickly," he said.

The helicopter had left Hannah's Clearing at 6am and was expected to rendezvous with a ground crew at the Arawhata River bridge at 8am, but failed to turn up.

The Search and Rescue Co-ordination Centre in Lower Hutt mounted an air search about 10am and an emergency locator beacon was picked up soon after.

The wreckage of the helicopter was sighted by a rescue helicopter about 12.45pm and the pilot rescued. — NZPA

Farm-raised venison seen as a personal challenge

13/12/91

The winner of this year's prestigious Southern Venison plate, Alexandra chef Michael Clydesdale, sees promoting farm-raised game as a personal challenge.

This year he took top honours in the restaurant dish competition with "medallions of farm-raised venison south of the border."

The part-owner of Alexandra's Stepping Out restaurant, Mr Clydesdale said people still had to be convinced that farm-raised venison was a mild-flavoured tender fat-free meat.

"Of all the meats I deal with, I think venison is revolutionary. Lamb speaks for itself, but venison is more of a challenge to get people to try.

"Farm-raised venison is not like wild venison. You don't have to throw it in a bucket of red wine overnight or hang it for months or overcook it or make strong sauces to hide its flavour.

"Its flavour is lighter than some tough hogget or old ewes, and you can't put too strong a sauce with farm-raised venison or it will hide the flavour."

Mr Clydesdale said people were surprised by the mild flavour and the tenderness of the venison dishes.

"About 10 percent who are used to the wild game flavour don't enjoy it because it doesn't have that strong flavour. They get hooked on the flavour of game. I can understand that.

"I'll never eat a farm-raised duck, but I'll eat a wild one."

Mr Clydesdale said since the quality of the meat was guaranteed three years ago, he had included it in his menus.

"It's so versatile. I've done everything from mini-roasts, medallions satays and stir-frys.

"There's nothing you can't do with venison that you can do with lamb or beef.

"The quality of the meat is better in some cases than some of the lamb and beef cuts about. Now, sometimes I pay more for a kilogram of lamb than venison."

Mr Clydesdale, who was described by judges as having an amazing awareness of venison, is genuine in his promotion of the game meat.

"I'm not trying to force people to come to my restaurant to try venison. I want them to eat farm-raised venison at its best."

Possible answer to deer problem

30/8/91

American deer scientist Ken Waldrup may have stumbled onto the cause of fading elk syndrome.

Dr Waldrup came to New Zealand a few months ago to study fading elk syndrome at the Invermay Agricultural Research Centre.

Fading elk syndrome is a disease where seem-

ingly healthy wapiti deer stop eating and literally fade away.

He has been examining groups of wapiti and elk, investigating suggestions that the syndrome may be linked to internal parasites or copper deficiencies.

In each deer examined, Dr Waldrup found immature worms in the gut and no acid production in the fourth stomach.

He now believes a species of worm common to red deer is infecting the wapiti, altering the acidity of the stomach which in turn affects the animal's metabolism and ability to digest food.

For some reason, the elk lack resistance to these worms which remain in the internal glands creating an almost neutral pH.

Without acid the digestive enzymes do not work and food passes straight through the animal without being digested, causing weight loss.

Their bodies cannot use the food, and they waste away, using up body stores to provide energy.

Acid is also required if white worm drenches are to work.

Many deer with fading elk syndrome show marked copper deficiencies, but copper supplements will not work for the same reason as copper requires acid in the stomach to be absorbed.

Dr Waldrup said the next step in his research was to find a way of bringing the pH back to normal, and he also wants to know why this problem affects only the wapiti and elk species.

But Dr Waldrup emphasised that his hypothesis of the cause of the syndrome still needed many months of research before it was scientifically acceptable.

He said credit had to go to the whole Invermay Research deer group and the Invermay animal health laboratory. "I'm just the one that's seen the story unfolding.



Rotorua deer farmer Peter Fraser achieved considerable success at this year's national velvet competition held by the Southland branch of the New Zealand Deer Farmers Association in conjunction with the Southland A and P summer show. Mr Fraser won the imported red deer velvet section with this 8.20kg which also won for him the Wrightson All Comers open trophy. Hard antler taken from the same animal last season, also won the Landcorp Trophy for hard antler.

Venison price improves

2/8/91

Venison New Zealand this week announced a 50c/kg increase in its schedules for prime animals.

Company chairman, Nigel Gould said there was confidence that improved seasonal demand for product would offer the opportunity for improved returns to deer farmers.

"We are concerned to ensure that the processing capacity within the company's three plants is appropriately utilized during the next few weeks and accordingly the company has offered a significant improvement to farmers as an encouragement to slaughter early," he said.

"It has consistently

been VNZ's viewpoint that the schedule prices maintained by some exporters have not appropriately reflected the prices being achieved for product overseas.

"With the expectations for some recovery in overseas prices, this should be reflected in higher schedule prices to local producers."

Dog ban concern

15/11/92

NELSON

More than 100 Nelson region hunters turned out at a meeting at the weekend to express concern about a proposed law to restrict the use of dogs in pig hunting.

The proposed Animal Welfare Act would outlaw the use of dogs to catch, hold and maul pigs.

Pig hunters' spokesman John Wells said if dogs could not be used to catch pigs, more hunters would have to carry firearms, making the sport less safe.

Most pig hunters now hunted with knives.

Pig hunters were encouraged to write to the Government protesting against the proposed law.—NZPA

Illegal pig liberations pose threat to domestic livestock

Tb-infected pigs are a distinct threat to domestic livestock.

The role of feral pigs in spreading Tb to domestic stock is under investigation but to date the evidence strongly indicates that domestic stock are threatened.

MAF Quality Management spends considerable resources in trying to limit the spread of bovine Tb mainly by testing cattle and domestic deer, as well as possum poisoning operations.

While high populations of possums have long been recognised as the main feral vector of bovine Tb, it is also an established fact that wild pigs can contract the disease.

In Central Otago for instance some pig populations have an infection rate close to 30 percent and with the gregarious nature of pigs proving ideal for spread within

By GARRY KNOWLES
MAF Veterinary Officer

families, that infection could go as high as 100 percent.

There are numerous instances of pig populations being boosted or being established in new areas by illegal liberations.

This is presumably to increase pig hunting opportunities.

However, with many parts of the country now harbouring Tb-infected wild animals this action is counter-productive.

Liberation of pigs may mean the introduction of disease to an area previously disease-free and as a result the resource that was established for the benefit of hunters in fact becomes a risk to those same people.

Bovine Tb can and does infect humans. It is a

chronic disease that can be very debilitating and pig hunters are especially at risk of contracting the disease from infected hunted animals.

Pigs with Tb cope very well and usually show no obvious signs of being infected.

Even on post mortem a trained eye is needed to detect infection, with the lesions often being limited to a few glands.

The bacteria responsible for causing Tb is killed by cooking but not by freezing so an infected pig is a risk to the handler from the time it is caught until cooked.

For these reasons it is obvious that illegal liberations can be highly detrimental to pig populations, pig hunters and farmed stock.

Once Tb is established in wild animals it is difficult to eradicate. Prevention is the key.

Feral deer

THE VENISON New Zealand Co-operative Ltd Mossburn plant has put an ad in your paper saying they will accept feral deer between noon and 1pm weekdays, Saturday mornings until 11am, but please phone first for Saturday mornings. I shot a good stag on Saturday November 16. I put six phone calls through from 9am to 10am. No reply. I did not phone any more as I could not have got there by 11am. I took it through to Te Anau instead. They have already inconvenienced shooters in Tuatapere by not opening the

venison department, without this carry-on, as one must get the deer to a chiller in a reasonable time.

Now that farm deer are plentiful, they are giving the ground shooter the run around. It was the shooter who got them started.

The same goes for the buyers of the velvet. They are no longer interested in us either. They have very short memories. But I am sure five minutes of their time is not too much to ask for.

Deerstalker Tuatapere

[Asked to comment, the manager of Venison New Zealand Ltd, Mr Ian Stewart, said: "We do apologize for the inconvenience that was caused to 'Deerstalker' on November 16. We do have our work phone programmed to go to my house when no one is at the plant but obviously it did not work. For future reference, if the same thing happens, my after-hours phone number is in the phone book and secondly there are three after-hours phone numbers on the sign in front of the plant.

"As a company, we have no input into what chillers are open or closed as they are all owned by Taimex Trading, of Dunedin. We accept and process feral deer on behalf of Taimex Trading and have no link with feral deer at all as a company. 'Deerstalker' says that we are giving the ground shooter the runaround because of the set hours we have stipulated. This is far from the truth as I and my staff have

always gone out of our way to protect the feral deer industry and the set times that have been set out is another way to protect the industry. Up to a short time ago we have been pulled out of all types of functions and all times of the day and night to service the industry so I do wonder who has the short memory at present."

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B1 Medium	175.99
B1 Short	177.00
B2 Long	162.89
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B2 Short	172.00
C1 Long	161.00
C1 Medium	165.00
C1 Short	166.99
C2 Long	155.00
C2 Medium	156.00
C2 Short	157.00
D1 Long	146.00
D1 Short	168.00
D2 Long	139.00
D2 Short	151.00
E Long	120.00
E Short	140.00
OG1 Overgrown	115.01
OG2 Overgrown	53.11
TW1 Taiwanese	165.00
TW2 Taiwanese	160.00
TW3 Taiwanese	160.00
TW4 Taiwanese	143.99
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Spiker 2	117.07
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Increased deer returns Strong case for terminal sires

The economics of using wapiti-elk cross bulls as terminal sires over red hinds is again being shown in this season's venison and velvet returns.

Venison NZ Mossburn manager, Ian Stewart says that the average red spiker killed during December produced a 48kg carcass weight.

This was four to five kilograms below the normal carcass weight expected for that time of the year, in part the result of the poor growth in the spring and early summer.

That spiker would return, on current schedule, around \$182 to the farmer.

Winton veterinarian Dave Lawrence said the use of a terminal sire over the same red hind would

have produced a hybrid spiker with a minimum liveweight at 12 months of age of 110kg and a 60.5kg carcass with a gross value of \$278.

"A common misconception is that a larger animal eats more and therefore stocking rates have to be reduced to compensate," Mr Lawrence said.

However, that had been refuted by repeated research at Invermay and in practice by commercial farmers and while a wapiti animal may be twice as big as a red, it would only require one-third more feed, he added.

"And that truly endorses the superior feed conversion efficiency of the wapiti."

The additional returns possible from wapiti-elk cross velvet were also being seen in pool results this season, Mr Lawrence said.

As well as the potential to achieve heavier heads, the wapiti-elk grades including the poorer grades were again achieving premiums over Super A.

Mr Lawrence acknowledged that while red deer would always be the basis for the New Zealand deer industry the use of a terminal sire over a proportion of a red herd, in the same way as the use of terminal sire breeds in either the sheep or beef industries, would produce significant cost-benefits to deer farmers.

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Venison selling for high prices in US ^{13/1/92}

Te Anau deer agent Allan Bradley is concerned at the low prices New Zealand deer farmers are currently receiving for their venison.

He recently returned from a two month visit to the US, most of it holidaying with friends who own a Montana "dude," guest ranch.

While there, Mr Bradley had time to talk to

farmers and university people about New Zealand deer farming.

The US had a "huge" natural resource of deer, mostly elk (wapiti) and farmers were beginning to show a lot of interest in deer farming, he said.

But one thing that intrigued him was being given a venison price list — still valid two weeks ago — by a Denver-based wild game wholesaler.

This revealed that some cuts of venison were being supplied to the restaurant trade at prices ranging from around \$NZ22/kg to a staggering \$NZ77/kg.

Mr Bradley said those prices showed that "someone must be making a packet and it isn't farmers."

Currently the best New Zealand venison schedule price is less than \$4/kg.

Mr Bradley also questioned why, if it was possible to obtain such high prices, more effort wasn't

being put into developing the US venison market.

When asked for comment, John Sadler, Venison New Zealand Marketing Ltd, general manager, marketing said the prices quoted by the US venison wholesaler did indeed seem to be high.

"But I do not doubt some distributors to restaurants can achieve these prices."

Mr Sadler said there had been past situations where the New Zealand schedule at over \$6/kg had reflected such price levels.

"However, that situation has changed due to a rapid growth in production. Production in the 12 months ended May was up 80 percent on the previous period.

"Unfortunately the industry is not able to sell all of this increased volume to the American restaurant market," Mr Sadler said.

"We do not want to over-supply this market and see a price collapse. As an industry we are careful to maintain our premium price position in North America for the long-term good of the industry."

That had meant, Mr Sadler said, that a large proportion of this year's increase in venison production had had to be sold in Europe, where unfortunately prices had been very poor.

Mr Sadler expressed the hope that promotional work in North America would see sales to that market expand — "but this will take time."

Farmers should also realize that for a healthy industry the profitability of other sectors in the distribution chain from farm gate to restaurant plate was equally as important as the return to producers, he said.



VENISON NEW ZEALAND

Venison New Zealand's Winter Slaughter incentive scheme has again attracted strong support.

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Any applications we receive which miss out on this initial contract offer will be given priority in any future contracts we are able to offer.

Many thanks for your support.

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(025) 422-451 Mobile

03279

Hunting pilot loses chopper ^{18/2/92}

A Milford Sound helicopter pilot sparked a police search on Thursday when he lost his helicopter after taking a detour to do some hunting.

Police were advised about 1.30pm that a Hughes 300 helicopter was overdue for a rendezvous with a DSIR party at Lake Ronald, in the Milford area, Constable Lester Stevens, of Te Anau, said yesterday.

Pilot Jeff Shanks, who works for Southern Lakes Helicopters, was supposed to pick up the party at 10am.

He had left Milford before 9am but had not turned up.

A search was mounted but Mr Shanks came back on air at 3.15pm.

He had landed in the John O'Groats River area to do some ground hunting and had lost his helicopter, Mr Stevens said.

The DSIR party was picked up soon after.



A wapiti bull and cow typical of the vast numbers of animals held on US national parks.

VNZ announces new winter supply contract ^{21/2/92}

Venison New Zealand has released details of its 1992 winter contracts.

The company's confidence in the future is its procurement price peaking at a minimum of \$5.50, which, when after allowing for the contract fee also paid of \$5 a head, offers good news for farmers.

In a prepared statement, the company's chairman, Nigel Gould said: "Deer farmers participating in this contract will be receiving almost \$1 per kilogram more than the peak schedule achieved during 1991.

"At setting this base level during the peak of

the contract we are also offering a base price consistently higher than the \$5 offered in 1991 which was well supported by shareholders."

Mr Gould said the 1992 winter contract was similar to the company's successful schemes offered in the past two seasons and would be offered to shareholders with a minimum investment of \$2000 in the company.

"This year's details have been released much earlier so as to give farmers the maximum amount of time possible to plan their winter programmes," Mr Gould said.

The contract period will run from July to November.

Improvements to the contract include some to the weight ranges and a level of tolerance that recognizes that it is not always possible for farmers to plan with certainty the number of animals they will have available.

Farmers will also participate in any price rises above the schedule price, up to a maximum at the

peak of the contract of \$6.

Mr Gould said more than 700 farmers were now registered as shareholders in Venison New Zealand.

The company plans to hold a series of meetings around the country in the next six weeks to bring deer farmers up-to-date with the current state of the deer industry and the company's plans for the future, which include a major expansion programme for its Mossburn processing plant.

PPCS moving to take over Game Foods

PPCS will this week make a formal offer for shares in Game Foods New Zealand Ltd, but the initial response from shareholders has been lukewarm.

PPCS, which has an interest in 193,000 shares in the deer processing company, will offer 28c for each of the remaining 537,000 \$1 shares. The offer has perplexed several shareholders.

Game Foods New Zealand, a public unlisted company, has a capital of \$1 million, which includes 270,000 unissued shares.

At 28c a share, PPCS has valued the company at \$204,000.

PPCS, a Dunedin-based farmer co-operative and one of the South Island's biggest meat processing companies, markets Game Foods products.

Game Foods' independent directors will meet this week to make a recommendation to farmer-shareholders. The recommendation could go out to the shareholders with PPCS's offer.

New Zealander Deer Farmers' Association Southland branch chairman Harry Robinson said last night the offer was "a bit low."

By ANGUS MORRISON

"It was a bit disappointing, but it's early days yet," he said.

"We'll just have to wait and see."

Shareholder David Stevens, of Balfour, said 28c was too low.

"I wouldn't be terribly interested in an offer like that," he said.

"I was a little shocked."

Mr Stevens expects a negative response from shareholders, and said he would rather put his shares in his bottom drawer than sell them for 28c each.

Game Foods kills deer at its Kennington plant, which began operating in 1985.

Chairman John Matheson said last night it had been a busy season, and there was "a bit of a backlog."

"This week will be interesting," he said.

PPCS chairman Robbie Burnside confirmed the company was looking at taking over Game Foods.

"We consider it could be run quite efficiently as a subsidiary company of PPCS."

The 28c which PPCS was offering applied the other way, he said.

"If a buyer can be found, our shares are for sale."

Mr Burnside would not comment on the future of the Kennington plant if PPCS was successful in its takeover bid.

The company is finishing modifications on its Islington works, near Christchurch, and is expecting to begin killing deer there in May.

With only two deer killing plants in Southland — at Mossburn and Kennington — southern deer farmers are waiting for more than two months to get stock killed.

Game Foods shareholders take preference over other farmers in getting their stock killed at Kennington.

If the takeover is successful, Mr Burnside said PPCS shareholders would have that preference.

Most Game Foods shareholders also held shares in PPCS, he said.

Mair bids for Game Foods

A second bidder, Mair Venison, has entered the running for Kennington deer processor Game Foods (NZ).

Mair Venison is offering 40c a share — 12c better than a bid by Primary Producers Co-operative Society last week, which was greeted without enthusiasm by shareholders.

Mair Venison is one of three operating divisions of listed Mair Astley Holdings, which is also a major exporter of wool and leather.

By BRIAN FALLOW
Business Editor

Mair Astley executive chairman John Roy said the offer valued Game Foods at \$292,000.

In addition, Mair would spend \$700,000 to \$800,000 paying off debt (some of it to PPCS) and a similar amount upgrading the Kennington plant, with a vacuum packing machine for example, Mr Roy said.

Working capital on top of that would bring Mair's total investment to about \$3 million, he said.

"It's an efficient plant there," Mr Roy said, "with a very good catchment area for venison."

Mair Venison has plants in Rotorua and Hokitika and accounts for 30 percent of New Zealand's venison exports.

It was experiencing strong international demand for its products, Mr Roy said.

Game Foods's main shareholders are PPCS with 26 percent, Mr K J Naylor's Southern Goat Corp with 22 percent, and Northmark Investments, wholly owned by J Matheson and Co, with 18 percent.

The other shares are held by about 180 farmer shareholders, Game Foods chairman John Matheson said yesterday.

The directors would meet early next week to discuss Mair's bid, which he had only just formally received, Mr Matheson said.

The bid is to be sent to shareholders on April 10 and is conditional on 90 percent acceptance.

The offer includes a five-year slaughter access right for existing shareholders.

DEER INDUSTRY: Venison New Zealand will hold a meeting in the Mossburn Community Centre on February 26 at 7.30pm to update deer farmers on the industry, VNZ's plans for the future and local plant expansion.

The meeting is open to all interested deer farmers. A light supper will follow.

Warning not to release domestic pigs into wild

By John Stirling

Wild pigs are known carriers of bovine Tb, with infection rates in some surveys of up to 40%. Hunters releasing domestic pigs into the wild may be aggravating the situation.

The chairman of the Otago Regional Animal Health Advisory Committee, Mr Bruce McNab, of Owaka, said reports had been received of irresponsible people, including hunters, releasing domestic pigs into the wild on private land and Department of Conservation land.

In fact, there was a real risk that the liberated pigs could introduce bovine Tb into the area. To protect the country's meat industry it had to be stopped. Also, responsible hunters could lose their sport if landowners had to resort to using expensive saturation poisoning operations.

Poisoning operations do not discriminate between in-

fectured and clean wild pigs or deer.

To prevent the irresponsible few ruining recreational hunting for the responsible majority, the release of domestic pigs had to be stopped. The practice was an offence under the Wild Animals Control Act, 1977, and DOC had powers to prosecute offenders.

The MAFQual veterinary officer in Alexandra, Dr Garry Knowles, said in Central Otago there were many instances of pig populations being established or of existing populations being boosted by illegal liberations.

While such actions presumably were intended to increase hunting opportunities, in fact, this action was counter-productive.

Liberation of pigs may result in the introduction of disease to an area where previously it did not exist. As a result, a resource intended to benefit hunters becomes a risk to these very people.

Bovine Tb can and does infect humans. It is a chronic disease that can be very debilitating. Pig hunters are especially at risk if the population they hunt is infected.

Pigs with the disease cope very well and usually show no overt signs of being infected. Even on post-mortem, a trained eye is required to detect infection with lesions often being limited to a few glands in the head or at other points throughout the body.

The bacteria responsible for causing Tb is killed by cooking but not by freezing. Thus an infected pig is a risk to the handler from the time of being caught until cooked.

For these reasons it is obvious that illegal liberations can be highly detrimental to pig populations, pig hunters and farmed stock. Once Tb is established in wild animals in an area it is very difficult to eradicate. Prevention is the key.

Game Foods happy with offer

Mair Astley's bid for Game Foods (NZ), owner of the Kennington deer processing plant, has received the blessing of the Game Foods board.

The Game Foods directors said yesterday they recommended shareholders accept Mair's 40cps offer and they would be accepting it for their own shares.

Mair's offer values Game Foods at \$292,000 and betters, by 12c a share, an earlier bid by Game Foods' largest shareholder, Dunedin-based Primary Producers' Co-operative Society.

Mair has said it is committed to spending about \$3 million on upgrading and expanding the Kennington plant.

Its offer also included a five-year slaughter access right for existing shareholders.

"It will be good for the deer industry in Southland," Game Foods chairman John Matheson said yesterday.

Mair, a subsidiary of Mainzeal Group, owns export-licensed deer processing plants in Hokitika and Rotorua.

Its bid is conditional on 90 percent acceptance.

Mair confident

Mair Astley is confident of reaching the required 90 percent acceptance level of offer for Game Foods by the time the offer closes on May 15, Mair's company secretary, Warwick Lobb, said yesterday.

Mair's 40c a share offer for the Kennington deer processing plant was sent to shareholders on April 10, and has been recommended by the Game Foods directors.

"We expect to assume control on May 15 and make an early payment to shareholders," Mr Lobb said yesterday.

Mair buys Kennington deer slaughter plant

Mair Venison takes over the Kennington deer slaughter plant on Monday, following a successful bid for Game Foods NZ Ltd.

Mair Venison managing director Michael Rice said yesterday the company planned to spend between \$800,000 and \$1 million on upgrading the plant.

The expansion would allow the plant to handle 200 deer a day, compared with 40 now, and carry out much more boning and other further processing.

Storage capacity, at present minimal, would need to be expanded.

The upgrading, designed also to meet more stringent European Community requirements which come into effect next January 1, would mean more jobs, Mr Rice said. He would not say how many.

All existing staff had been retained.

The expansion of the plant was warranted

by the rapid growth in the export deer trade, Mr Rice said.

In the year ended June 1990, 99,000 deer had been slaughtered in New Zealand. The estimate for the June 1992 year is 265,000.

In addition to its offer of 40c a share, Mair guaranteed shareholders who supplied stock in the past two years killing space at the plant for the next five years.

"However," Mr Rice said, "we are dedicated to quality and this must extend to the quality of stock drafted for supply to our plants."

With winter approaching and feed short, pressure on killing space was considerable.

"We are well aware of the urgency attaching to increased slaughter capacity and until this is achieved we will use our best endeavours to maximize throughput, recognizing the constraints of the existing facilities," Mr Rice said.

Mair Venison, which already has deer

slaughter plants at Rotorua and Hokitika, is a division of Mair Astley, a major exporter of wool and leather.

Mair Astley, in turn, is 70 percent-owned by Mainzeal Group.

Mr Rice said the offer had passed the 90 percent minimum acceptance level and was now unconditional.

Payment would be dispatched immediately for acceptances received and the offer, which was to have closed yesterday, had been extended to June 30. The company would then move to compulsorily acquire the remaining shares.

Mair's offer valued Game Foods at \$292,000.

Game Foods' largest shareholder, with 26 percent, was Dunedin-based Primary Producers Co-operative Society, which took all the plant's throughput.

PPCS made an earlier 28c a share bid for Game Foods.

Wapiti v red deer

If you farm red deer and are of the opinion wapiti genes are bad business, then you should read this.

Similarly, if you are using wapiti or the large range of hybrids in your deer breeding programme, you also should read this.

For as long as I can remember, there has been controversy about the merits of using wapiti genes to upgrade the performance of pure red stock.

In one corner the red men claim wapiti genes will not improve per hectare performance because the bigger animals eat more so you have to carry fewer of them.

Anyway, the waps will get you against the yard wall one day when you least expect it.

In the other corner, wapiti men claim ease of attaining the magical 50kg carcass weight at an early age, better velvet weights and that if you let yourself be caught in the same pen with a 400kg wapiti bull during the rut, you probably deserve a reminder that all large animals need to be carefully handled. Besides, station hacks have caused more injury than deer — red or wapiti.

Like all controversial arguments, the points made by both sides have merit — often scientifically based but often reinforced with anecdotal evi-



On the farm
with Graham Butcher

dence, depending in which corner you stand.

As I see it, the truth lies not in either corner but square in the middle of the ring.

Consider the breeding herd. The sole purpose of the breeding herd is to produce kilograms of weaned calf — the more the better.

But the cost of doing so has to be considered.

The cost should be measured in kilograms of dry matter, the fuel of the herd.

If you relate the fuel cost with the outputs (kilos of calf) you will find pure red hinds (100kg live weight weaning 48kg at 85 percent calving) will do so at a cost of 30kg of dry

matter per kilogram of calf weaned.

If you progressively increase the weight of the hind and stag used to say 140kg hybrid, then to 170kg New Zealand wapiti, the cost of producing the kilos of calf weaned will increase a small amount because of the higher maintenance cost of the larger animals.

This will happen despite the heavier weight of calf weaned.

However, if you maintain the 100kg red hind and progressively increase the size of the stag, say to New Zealand wapiti or F1 size, then the cost of producing kgs of calf drops.

Red hinds would seem to be the most efficient dam and the use of wapiti-type sires adds to the efficiency of producing calves.

A system of using an elite red hind herd, say 30 percent of hinds, to produce replacements with all other hinds bred to a sire with the desired amount of wapiti genes (terminal mob) would appear to be an efficient system.

The performance of the hybrid calves in terms of growth rate GR and later velvet weights will be improved.

The light hind problem will be eased in the hybrid calves.

PS: When handling the wapiti-type bulls you should take care.

KILLING AND LIVE SALES VENISON



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TOM MAY

Deer Representative

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Deer kill up

More hinds than stags are now being killed in New Zealand.

The Game Industry Board reports that figures supplied by deer slaughter premises show that of the 257,759 animals slaughtered to April 30 this year, 131,852 (51 percent) were hinds.

At the same time last year hinds accounted for just 39 percent of the total kill. Actual kill numbers have increased by 63 percent from 158,089 at April 30, 1991.

MAIR VENISON LIMITED

MESSAGE TO ALL... DEER FARMERS

We invite you to meet with the management of Mair Venison Ltd, the new owners of the Game Foods NZ Ltd Kennington plant, to introduce you to our company, and share with you our plans for our Southland plant.

We welcome your attendance and look forward to meeting you at any one of the 4 venues listed below.

DATE/TIME: VENUE:

Mon, June 8 2.00pm **ROSEBANK LODGE HOTEL**
265 Clyde St
Rosebank
Balclutha

Mon, Jun 8 8.00pm **CROYDON LODGE HOTEL**
Main Queenstown Highway
Gore

Tues, June 9 2.00pm **TE ANAU TRAVELODGE**
Te Anau Terrace
Te Anau

Tues, June 9 8.00pm **CENTRAL SOUTHLAND LODGE HOTEL**
232 Great North Road
Winton

Venison

For week beginning May 18, 1992

Grade	Weights	Fortex	Mair	Venison = nNZ	PPCS/
	kg	\$/kg	\$/kg	\$/kg	\$/kg
AP Hind	To 35	1.40	1.55	1.90	3.05
AP Hind	35-40	2.30	2.05	2.20	3.05
AP Hind	40-45	2.30	2.30	2.50	3.80
AP Hind	45-50	3.45	3.90	3.65	3.80
AP Hind	50-55	4.30	4.60	4.40	4.45
AP Hind	55-60	4.30	4.70	4.40	4.45
AP Stag	45-50	3.65	4.10	3.80	4.00
AP Stag	50-55	4.50	4.70	4.55	4.65
AP Stag	55-60	4.50	4.80	4.60	4.65
AP Stag	60-65	4.50	4.80	4.70	4.55
AP Stag	65-70	4.10	4.50	4.50	4.55
AP Stag	70-75	4.10	3.90	4.00	4.15
AP Stag	75-80	4.10	3.75	4.00	4.15
AP Stag	80-85	4.10	3.55	4.00	4.15
AP Stag	85-100	3.20	3.20	3.50	3.80
AF1, AT	50-70	2.70	2.85	2.80	2.90
AF1, AT	over 70	2.70	2.10	2.50	2.90
AF2	50-70	2.20	2.15	2.00	2.20

CHANGES:

VENISON NZ: AP Stag 70-75kg + 20c; 75-100kg + 25c/kg.
PPCS: Schedule for Islington plant now in Table. AP grades for Stag/Hind 30-85kg + 5c/kg.
MAIR: AP Stag/Hind 45-70kg + 10c; 70-85kg + 15c/kg. MAIR Red Deer Schedule applies to stock supplied to Game Foods (Kennington) from this week.

NOTE: Only the main grades are shown, animals may be downgraded for age, conformation, fat cover or quality.

NOTES:

1. The net venison prices are shown above in dollars per kg carcass weight. The GIB levy (28c/kg) needs to be deducted along with transport to works.

2. MAFQual inspection charges need also be deducted. They are (\$ per head) Seafield \$7, Venison NZ Mossburn \$7, Kennington \$7, Mair Hokitika \$7.85. PPCS Islington \$5.00.

INFORMATION SUPPLIED BY AGRI-FAX

Radio transmitters in wild pig control

ALEXANDRA

Wild pigs with radio transmitters are leading shooters to other pigs on the Pisa Range in Central Otago, where MAF Live-stock Services is researching bovine tuberculosis.

This type of pig control, which MAF calls the Judas pig method, began 18 months ago after traditional methods were ineffective where pig numbers were low.

Pigs are attracted to each other and like to live in groups.

Once every six weeks a helicopter flies over the Pisa Range to find the 12 pigs with transmitters collared to their necks. The pigs without transmitters are killed.

Alexandra MAF officer Gary Knowles said the work could be difficult as pigs grew helicopter-shy after one encounter with the aircraft and hid in the alpine tussock.

By IONA CONDIE

The Pisa Range is the only area where the control method is used on pigs, but transmitters have been used in national parks to reduce goat numbers and in other countries to control bison.

The Pisa Range research was to study pig movement and to develop a cost-effective method of controlling infected pigs, Mr Knowles said. It was part of a \$30,000-a-year research programme funded by the national Animal Health Board.

Tuberculosis is a disease which can be transmitted to humans, and importers of New Zealand meat could use it as a non-tariff trade barrier.

The disease is killed by cooking, but not freezing, and humans are most susceptible to infection when they have open wounds and process dead or live animals with the disease.

Pigs carry Tb, but it has not been proven they spread it.

A survey of wild pigs in Central Otago showed 30 percent of them carried Tb. In contrast, only four infected possums have ever been found in the district.

Some ferrets and wild cats have been found with Tb.

MAF has not monitored Tb-infected possums and prefers a control policy rather than a monitoring one, as it is already known possums spread the disease.

The incidence of Tb had increased steadily in Central Otago in the past 10 years, mirroring the increase in other endemic areas which together cover one-third of New Zealand.

In the past eight months, 42,000 cattle have been tested in Central Otago and 90 reactors found. The area has 53 herds governed by the movement control regulations.

Deer, which are highly infectious Tb carriers, have also been

tested, and seven herds are under movement control.

This compares with 60 movement control herds and 57 reactors from 42,000 cattle tested in the same period last year.

In 1990, more than 120 cattle reacted to Tb tests and there were 65 movement control herds.

MAF has operated a possum poisoning programme for the past 18 months, using 1080 pellets distributed from bait stations on the boundaries of some endemic areas in Central Otago.

Co-operation was the key to the eradication of tuberculosis, Mr Knowles said. Everyone had to make a concerted effort to control wild animals carrying the disease.

"People on very big properties with a lot of possums are facing an uphill struggle at the moment."

"They are fortunate that the possum densities are often quite low by national standards, but unfortunately the vast tracts of land that they inhabit make control very difficult," he said.

Deer protocol tough for NZ

WELLINGTON

A protocol allowing live deer exports to South Korea has been settled but is so strict few New Zealand farmers will be able to meet its conditions.

Until this year South Korea banned imports of live deer as its farmers vigorously opposed competition from outside in their lucrative market.

New Zealand's negotiator on the protocol, Dr Derek Timbs, the Agriculture Ministry's animal exports national service manager, said trying to meet the protocol's terms would be risky for New Zealand farmers.

Deer could be sent to Korea only from farms with a 20-kilometre radius that had been free of tuberculosis and John's disease for five years.

"It's tough," Dr Timbs said.

There were some areas that qualified but they contained few deer.

Dr Timbs said farmers could develop herds in those areas but they would be taking commercial risks because they had no control over what happened on other farms in the 20km radius.

"It would be risky but if the price is right it might be a risk worth taking."

Massey University veterinarian Peter Wilson visited South Korea last year and found that elk fetched between \$10,000 and \$25,000 a head, sika \$3000 each and red deer about \$11,000 a tine.

Velvet sold fresh at \$800 a kilogram - up to six times the New Zealand price - and blood collected during the velvet harvest and drunk immediately fetched \$200 for a 400-millilitre cup.

Few New Zealand deer farmers would be able to enter the market though, he said.

The market was not as glossy for New Zealanders as it seemed.

Aside from the disease problems, Korean buyers coming to New Zealand would see deer being sold at \$200 a head and would want to pay the same price. New Zealand prices rather than those achieved in Korea would prevail. Most money would go to middlemen.

There were also several export companies competing so prices would not improve unless a cartel, such as the Dairy Board, was formed.

The number of deer wanted by Koreans would be limited, as was the available quarantine space in South Korea.

Dr Timbs said there appeared little prospect of the Koreans' attitude relaxing. Negotiators had tried several times to convince them to alter the protocol.

Countries such as Australia, Canada and the United States had large disease-free areas and would be able to meet the strict conditions but did not have deer industries able to take full advantage of the opening. — NZPA

20/6/92

Venison

For week beginning June 22, 1992

Grade	Weights	Forrex	Mair	Venison = nNZ	PPCS/
	kg	\$/kg	\$/kg	\$/kg	\$/kg
AP Hind	To 35	1.50	1.55	2.90	3.10
AP Hind	35-40	3.15	2.25	3.20	3.10
AP Hind	40-45	3.15	3.20	3.45	4.10
AP Hind	45-50	4.20	4.10	4.25	4.10
AP Hind	50-55	4.90	4.80	4.90	4.80
AP Hind	55-60	4.90	4.90	5.00	4.80
AP Stag	45-50	4.40	4.30	4.30	4.30
AP Stag	50-55	5.10	4.90	5.00	5.00
AP Stag	55-60	5.10	5.00	5.05	5.00
AP Stag	60-65	5.10	5.00	5.05	4.90
P Stag	65-70	4.55	4.70	4.80	4.90
AP Stag	70-75	4.55	4.40	4.45	4.35
AP Stag	75-80	4.55	4.00	4.45	4.35
AP Stag	80-85	4.55	3.80	4.45	4.35
AP Stag	85-100	3.30	3.40	3.50	3.85
AF1, AT	50-70	2.70	3.25	3.25	2.95
AF1, AT	over 70	2.70	2.10	2.75	2.95
AF2	50-70	2.20	2.00	2.50	2.25

CHANGES:

FORREX: AP Stag/Hind under 35kg and 45-65kg +5c; 35-45kg +10c.

VENISON NZ: AP Stag/Hind AP under 40kg +100c; 40-45kg +75c; 45-65kg +20c; 65-85kg +25c; AT under 45kg +10c;

45-70 +20c; 70-100kg +25c/kg.

PPCS: Stag/Hind AP 40-70kg +10c; 70-85kg +15c/kg.

NOTE: Only the main grades are shown, animals may be downgraded for age, conformation, fat cover or quality.

NOTES:

1. The net venison prices are shown above in dollars per kg carcass weight. The GIB levy (28c/kg) needs to be deducted along with transport to works.

2. MAFQual inspection charges need also be deducted. They are (\$ per head) Seaford \$7, Venison NZ Mossburn \$7, Kennington \$7, Mair Hokitika \$7.85, PPCS Islington \$5.00.

INFORMATION SUPPLIED BY AGRI-FAX

Ferrets spread Tb

ALEXANDRA

Ferrets, which hunt rabbits in Central Otago, are spreading tuberculosis, Tarras farmer Peter Davis told the Central Otago pest management committee meeting yesterday.

He said 30 percent of ferrets carried tuberculosis. That was more than possums.

Mr Davis described the spread of tuberculosis by ferrets as three times worse than by possums and said it was a known fact that the disease was passed through the urinary tract.

Otago Regional Council pest management officer Bill Johnson said ferrets travelled much faster than possums and can cover 80km in a day.

Big bucks in deer 4/8/92

CHRISTCHURCH

New Zealand deer industry exports could reach \$200 million next year, says Game Industry Board chief executive Richard Janes.

Exports of deer products earned a record \$146.5 million for the year ended June 1992, an increase of 39 percent over the same period last year.

Venison remains the major export earner, fetching \$81.3 million, compared with \$53.4 million to June 1991. Volume increased to 10,000 tonnes.

Deer velvet increased by 22 percent to reach \$60 million and hides, skins, and leathers recorded a 65 percent increase in export value to \$5.2 million.

Mr Janes said it was only a year ago that deer exports reached \$100 million. "Now we're looking down the barrel towards \$200 million next year. This is an industry growing fast and working to manage its growth."

The foundation for the industry's recent growth was the traditional venison markets in Europe, where countries took large volumes. This had been made possible by a big increase in New Zealand production over the last two years.

Exports to Germany, the single largest market, increased by \$13.5 million to \$31.2 million. Exports to Sweden, Finland, Denmark, and Norway had nearly doubled in the last year.

He said the board had recently launched its industry strategic plan for the next five years, which aimed to create demand for the rapidly growing production of venison, velvet, and other deer products.

The board was not the same as other producer boards. It could be more accurately described as an industry marketing board. Members included producer and exporter representatives who worked closely together to maximize returns across the whole industry.

"We believe we can harness the competitive drive of the private sector exporters with an industry umbrella marketing strategy and achieve the best possible combination. These latest results look as though we are succeeding so far," he said.

The number of hides and skins exported rose from 87,600 to 216,100. Leather receipts grew to \$1.7 million in 1992, with Italy the major customer, followed by Australia and Hong Kong. — NZPA



This rising four-year-old pure New Zealand born elk bull bred by South Hillend deer farmers Neville and Sandra Cunningham has been sold to Dargaville interests for \$30,000. The bull, to be known in future as Kaipara King, has been recorded back for four generations in the Cunningham's Taringatura Park stud. He cut 2.9kg spiker velvet in 1990 and 4.05kg of super A velvet as a two-year-old and 5.7kg super A at three years. When weighed in January this year the bull recorded 337kg. Mr Cunningham said the sale vindicated their efforts of 17 years of breeding elk and he is confident the bull has the potential to become one of the country's best elk sires. Mr Cunningham supervised the transport of the bull and five elk cows, in calf to it, to their new home in Northland this week. The cows were sold for \$4000 each.

New PPCS venison plant 20/8/92

A positive development on the former Burnside freezing works site in Dunedin came closer yesterday when PPCS revealed a decision to open a venison slaughtering and processing plant there.

Since the Canterbury-based Waitaki group closed Burnside in 1988 at a toll of several hundred jobs, Dunedin-based PPCS, which bought the discarded site, has created an increasing number of employment opportunities on the site.

The new Burnside operation will be fully operational before Christmas 1992, a company spokesman said.

"PPCS expects the facility to make a significant contribution to the PPCS venison kill."

PPCS confirmed it was satisfied with the performance of its venison plant opened at Islington, Christchurch, after earlier selling PPCS's minority shareholding in Game Foods Ltd in Southland.

"PPCS has been particularly pleased with the significant reduction we have achieved in killing costs, which has had the desired benefit of increasing returns to its farmer shareholders," the spokesman said.

PPCS clients would again be given priority for killing space at the new facility.

The spokesman said the country's exports of New Zealand deer products reached a record \$146.5 million for the year ended June 1992 and already there were forecasts that \$200 million in industry sales may be achieved next year.

PPCS believed the venison market would be an on-going international opportunity and New Zealand venison farms could provide excellent products.

Accordingly, it had made strategic long-term investments in the industry.

Two hunters spend night in bush 11/8/92

TE ANAU

Two Invercargill men spent a wet and cold Sunday night in the bush near Manapouri after getting lost on a hunting trip.

Sergeant Lloyd Matheson, of Te Anau, said the two men had walked out to the searchers' helicopter about noon yesterday.

Darryl McStay and Mark Shanks had left Manapouri early on Sunday morning for a day's hunting in the Back Valley area, telling friends they would return at 4.30pm.

Their friends raised the alarm when they had not returned at nightfall, and police assembled search teams.

Searchers decided to wait until the morning, and to allow the men enough daylight hours to walk out before beginning a search, Mr Matheson said.

Ten searchers were flown into the area after the men had not appeared by 11am.

But not long after the helicopter landed at Back Valley hut, after setting down the search teams, the men emerged from the bush.

They were cold, wet and embarrassed, but otherwise well, he said.

They had got lost and had spent the cold, wet night sheltering in bracken on the ridge between Lake Rakatu and Stinking Creek.

The men had gone into the bush without adequate gear or food for a night out, Mr Matheson said.

Neither had taken a compass, either, something that would probably have enabled them to avoid getting lost.

4/8/92

DEER HUNTERS

There has been a change in regulations for Feral Deer delivered to Venison New Zealand's Mossburn Depot, and Taimexs Game Depot in Te Anau. As from August 1, 1992 all Feral Deer must be delivered to the above two depots with heads on.

We realize this will be inconvenient to most hunters but new German Regulations demand this new inspection method so that product can be exported into their country.

Hunters must make sure that the deer are well opened up around the neck area so the carcass cools down quickly. For further information, consult your local depot agent.

ID Stewart

MANAGER VNZ MOSSBURN



CONSERVATION
TE PAPA ATAWHAI

25/8/92

Revised Hunting Permit System

As of 3 August 1992 Canterbury will operate a 2 monthly hunting permit system. This system will be implemented on an interim basis only. Numbers of permits issued for 2 monthly open zones will not be restricted, exclusive of the ROAR period, and will be valid for 2 months as of the date of issue.

A number of Restricted Hunting Zones will be excluded from this system. These zones will be available for a maximum of 7 days and must be booked in advance as hunter numbers will be restricted.

Permits for any Open Hunting Zone will be available from any DOC issuing office in Canterbury whilst those for Restricted Hunting Zones will only be available from the local issuing office.

To obtain a permit you must present your Firearms Licence and where hunting dogs are permitted these must be tattooed, treated for hydatids and registered. Contact your local DOC office for further details.

M. J. CUDDIHY
Regional Conservator

VENISON VALUES

29/8/92

Grade	For week beginning August 31, 1992				
	Weight kg	Fortex \$	Mair \$	VNZ \$	Affco \$
A P Hind	To 35	1.50	1.80	2.90	2.50
A P Hind	35-40	3.55	3.70	3.70	4.00
A P Hind	40-45	4.40	4.05	4.20	4.50
A P Hind	45-50	4.80	4.90	4.95	5.50
A P Hind	50-55	5.65	5.70	5.80	6.00
A P Hind	55-60	5.65	5.80	5.90	6.00
A P Stag	45-50	5.00	5.10	5.05	5.50
A P Stag	50-55	5.85	5.90	5.90	6.00
A P Stag	55-60	5.85	6.00	6.00	6.00
A P Stag	60-65	5.85	6.00	6.00	6.00
A P Stag	65-70	5.10	5.25	5.90	5.00
A P Stag	70-75	5.10	4.85	5.05	5.00
A P Stag	75-80	5.10	4.40	4.45	5.00
A P Stag	80-85	5.10	4.20	4.45	5.00
A P Stag	85-100	3.80	3.40	3.50	5.00
AF1/AT	55-65	2.70	3.75	3.45	2.60
AF1/AT	75-80	2.70	2.90	2.95	2.40
AF2	50-70	2.20	2.00	2.50	2.15

FALLOW VALUES

Age Weight (kg)	Under 24 months				Over 24 months	
	22	24	25	27	23	30
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Mair	4.40	4.60	4.60	4.60	3.65	3.90

NOTES:

- The gross venison prices show above in dollars a kg do not have the MAF quality fee, GIB levy or transport to works deducted.
- MAF quality inspection charges need to be deducted: Mamaku \$5.50 a head, Mair \$5.50, Summit \$5.50, Game Meats \$5.50, fallow, \$5.00 Venison NZ (Hastings) \$5.00, Venison NZ (Feilding) \$5.00, fallow \$4.00.

CHANGES: AFFCO: All AP grades have been increased by between 25c and 115c/kg. MAIR: AP stag/hind under 45kg +10c; 45-65kg +20c/kg. FORTOX: AP stag/hind 40-45kg +55c; 45-50kg +15c; 60-85kg +10c; more than 85kg +20c/kg. VENISON NZ: AP stag 40-75kg up 20c to 30c; AP hind 35-40kg +50c, 40-70kg up 20c to 25c/kg. AT stag/hind more than 45kg up 10c to 50c/kg. MAIR: Fallow AP under 24 months 17-20kg +10c, 20-30kg +20c; more than 24 months 17-20kg +10c; more than 20kg +15c/kg.

— Information supplied by AGRI-FAX

New deer plant for Mossburn

Venison New Zealand will open a new deer processing plant at Mossburn in November.

The new plant will have a processing capacity of 50,000 deer a year. Venison New Zealand chairman Nigel Gould said from Wellington yesterday.

The 28 permanent staff at the company's existing Mossburn plant will work at the new plant. Part-time staff will also transfer.

The company plans to convert the existing plant, which has a processing capacity of 35,000 head, to process feral deer.

More jobs would eventually be created, Mr Gould said. The new plant could easily be expanded, if needed. Another option was to run two shifts.

Mr Gould said there was sufficient growth in the deer industry in Southland to support the new plant and Mair Venison's Game Foods plant at Kennington.

New Zealand Deer Farmers' Association Fiordland chairman Chris Hughes agrees there is enough growth to support the plants.

"With their plant expansion, Southland will possibly be the best catered for area in New Zealand," Mr Hughes said.

It appeared for a time that Venison New Zealand had forgotten about Southlanders, he said, but competition from Mair Venison had "encouraged them to sharpen their pencils and get tied up a bit."

With about one-third of the company's shareholders coming from Southland, it had to be seen to be catering for them, he said.

New Zealand Deer Farmers' Association Southland branch chairman Harold Robinson agreed the province could sustain the two plants, with their higher capacities.

"We've been running behind with our slaughtering in Southland," he said.

"This is certainly going to help that situation."

The Mossburn plant killed 7000 farm-raised deer in 1989. This increased to 35,000 in 1991-92.

The new plant is being built by Naylor Love and was designed by Derrill Hopgood, of Design and Draughting Service.

Velvet racket busted

7/8/92

Hamilton police believe they have smashed a \$million velvet theft ring which is thought to have been operating in the upper North Island for the past three years.

Detectives investigating the velvet industry, since thefts began in 1989, have travelled throughout much of the country as well as to Australia and Hong Kong - one

of New Zealand's major velvet markets.

Police say the total value of velvet reported stolen is in the vicinity of \$1.2 million, but it is thought this figure could climb closer to the \$2 million mark.

Head of the inquiry, Detective Senior Sergeant Mike Whitehead, said much of the stolen velvet had been disposed of.

A 20 year old Hamilton man has been arrested and

charged with two burglaries relating to the thefts.

Both of these took place in the Waikato area early in 1990 and more than \$200,000 worth of velvet was stolen.

A Rotorua man, until recently employed by a firm dealing in deer and deer products, has also been arrested and charged with receiving stolen velvet.

Police said more arrests are expected to follow.

Controls put on live deer exports

Controls have now been placed on the export of live deer by MAF and the

7/8/92

Ministry of Customs.

Customs Minister Murray McCully said the live deer exports would now only be approved by MAF's Chief Veterinary Officer when the animals met the health requirements of the importing country.

"These standards are bilaterally negotiated and ensure if animals are properly certified in the country of export," Ag-

riculture Minister John Falloon explained, "they will have little difficulty meeting quarantine requirements on arrival."

Mr Falloon said Korean Agriculture officials recently became aware of a proposed shipment of New Zealand deer which didn't meet their standards. They asked MAF to ensure uncertified animals do not enter Korea.

The Minister said if uncertified animals did reach Korea they would have to be returned or slaughtered - causing a potentially embarrassing situation for both countries.

Mr McCully said the new control measures would protect the interests of genuine live animal exporters who wanted to export certified animals.

Deer export to Korea goes sour

5/9/92

A deer export deal involving Korean interests and Southland farmers went sour this week when the animals failed to meet animal health protocol requirements.

The shipment of more than 900 farm-raised red deer and wapiti cross animals from Southland had been scheduled to leave Christchurch International Airport on Wednesday.

The deer were destined for Korean deer farmers, for breeding.

The Ministers of Agriculture and Customs announced on Wednesday that controls had been put on the export of live deer under the Export Prohibition Regulations. Customs Minister Murray McCully said the export of deer would only be approved by MAF's chief veterinary officer if they met animal health requirements of the importing country.

Agriculture Minister John Falloon said the animal health standards were set after negotiations with the importing country.

Korean agriculture officials had apparently become aware of the intended import of deer from New Zealand which did not meet Korean animal health standards.

Mr Falloon stressed that if uncertified animals were to arrive in Korea from New Zealand, they would be either returned or slaughtered, which might prove embarrassing to both countries.

MAF chief veterinary officer Peter O'Hara confirmed yesterday that the export of deer had been scheduled but added that in no way would the animals have met the Korean agriculture requirements.

MAF could not issue a certificate of health clearance, as required by the protocol agreed to by Korea and New Zealand.

For example, the animals had not been officially tested for Tb and they had not been quarantined for 45 days, as required, he said.

Dr O'Hara said MAF had advised the Korean importer, Korean Air-

By JOHN CUTT
Farming Editor

lines and the New Zealand agents of its decision.

He said the controls announced by the Ministers of Agriculture and Customs — effective from Monday, August 31, just days before the intended export — had been in response to MAF's concerns at the implications for New Zealand had the animals arrived in Korea without necessary certification.

Customs Department senior supervisor (commercial) at Christchurch airport Brian Ford also confirmed an airlift of deer had been planned this week.

However, Customs officials had met the New Zealand export agents and representatives of Korean Airlines and had clearly spelt out terms of the prohibition order.

"Our requirement is that before allowing any export we insist on having a Ministry of Agriculture clearance certificate signed by the chief veterinary officer," he said.

"If we haven't got that then the bottom line is the deer can't be exported."

Mr Ford said Customs did not expect any problems administering the Export Prohibition Regulations.

The Southland deal had been organized by two Koreans, Duncan and Sam Kim, acting for a Korean importer.

Mr Duncan Kim said in Invercargill on Thursday they were concerned that the export had been stopped at the last moment.

They and the importer stood to lose more than \$1 million as a result, Mr Kim said.

It is understood about 10 Southland deer farmers were involved in the export deal.

However, they would not entirely lose out, Mr Kim said. The farmers had been paid non-refundable deposits and would also be reimbursed for other costs.

A Korean delegation, including Duncan and Sam Kim, began negotiating with the farmers in June, after their New Zealand agent received letters from both MAF and Customs giving the impression there would be no problems with the export shipment.

The Korean importer had booked quarantine space with the Korean Ministry of Agriculture. That had now lapsed, Mr Kim said.

However, Mr Kim and his partner will continue planning for an export shipment from Southland in November.

Mr Kim said this week's deal was to have been the foundation for a long-term trading arrangement between New Zealand and Korea in which Southland would have played a major part.

Dr O'Hara confirmed that another export of deer to Korea by a South Canterbury consortium was being planned.

As far as he was aware the animals in that shipment would meet the health requirements set out in the Korean-New Zealand protocol.

MAF national adviser exports Jim Edwards said yesterday the Korean protocol governing the importation of deer from New Zealand was extremely difficult to meet.

"We have to work hard to ensure we maintain New Zealand's good international animal health and welfare image and we must always see that we meet the importing countries' requirements," Dr Edwards said.

New code for deer velvet removal

18/9/92

A code of conduct for the removal of deer antlers has been circulated to all deer farmers and veterinarians.

The code of recommendations and minimum standards for velvet removal is the result of two years work by a working party chaired by Professor David Blackmore, chairman of the ministerial Animal Welfare Advisory Committee.

The working group included representatives

from the Game Industry Board, the New Zealand Deer Farmers' Association, the New Zealand Veterinary Association, the deer branch of the New Zealand Veterinary Association and the Royal New Zealand Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

The code requires that the removal of velvet antlers may only be carried out under veterinary supervision.

Non-veterinarians will

be allowed to velvet harvest their own stags after appropriate training and assessment of competence, using only approved methods of anaesthesia.

Removal of velvet without veterinary supervision and anaesthesia is likely to be considered a contravention of the Animals Protection Act.

Inspectors will be warranted under the act to actively monitor and follow up any allegations of

develvetting malpractice.

The Animals Remedies Board is expected to have an anaesthesia training programme for farmers in place for the spring 1993 develvetting season.

Electrical and mechanical techniques including electro-immobilization, acupuncture and tourniquet methods are not at present approved and will only be considered for approval after submission of detailed supporting scientific data.



Mr McKay with two pure-bred bulls.

4/4/92

Wapiti trial may open new doors

Venison New Zealand is slaughtering Wapiti at its Hastings plant in the hope of creating a new niche export market.

A trial of 15 wapiti have been slaughtered and are being exported to an up-market restaurant in Quebec, Canada.

Venison New Zealand chairman Nigel Gould said the company would pay a \$6 schedule for carcasses 80kg and heavier which contain 60 per cent or more wapiti blood.

Havelock North wapiti breeder Dave McKay said the trade would create the first New Zealand schedule for wapiti as a breed in its own right.

It gave wapiti an identity, which until now had only been slaughtered in the red deer schedule.

Breeders would no longer be penalised for

sending the heavier animals for slaughter, Mr McKay said.

To take advantage of the red deer schedule which pays a premium for 55kg to 65kg carcasses, wapiti breeders had to slaughter animals at less than 10 months of age, Mr McKay said.

Killing at an early age meant breeders could not realise breeding potential, he said.

The average weight of a 10-month-old wapiti red deer cross bull is 95kg and 90kg for a cow.

Wapiti, or Canadian elk, were first brought into New Zealand in the early 1900s and were released in Fiordland for game hunting.

They are now mainly used for breeding to increase carcass weights of red deer, Mr McKay said.

Venison New Zealand's Hastings plant oper-

ations manager Rob Wilson said the company had built a bigger slaughter box to kill wapiti. The old slaughter box was not big enough to cope with the large animals.

Extension costs were between \$2000 and \$3000.

It would be an exciting new venture for the company if the wapiti trial was successful, Mr Wilson said.

Wrightsons deer agent Gordon Herrington welcomed the new export as it gave wapiti farmers more options for their animals.

"Anything new is good for the deer industry."

There were several Hawke's Bay farmers with wapiti who would be able to take advantage of the export market, Mr Herrington said.

New regulations will put pressure on deer industry

5/8/92

Changes to German regulations covering the killing and processing of feral deer destined for that market will cause inconvenience to hunters and helicopter recovery operators.

The changes came into effect on August 1.

Previously, feral deer had to be presented at the Mossburn and Te Anau Taimex game depots complete with heart, liver and kidneys.

The manager of Venison New Zealand's deer slaughter and processing plant at Mossburn, Ian Stewart, said the regulations now required that, in addition, feral deer carcasses must be presented for inspection complete with the tongue, gullet and lungs, including windpipe and larynx.

"This means that all feral deer should arrive at Mossburn with the head on so a proper inspection can take place," Mr Stewart said.

"This is a blow, especially to the operators of helicopters, who see this as another downward move in the industry.

"With prices being at probably a \$2.70/kg average, helicopter recovery operations are now very marginal."

Mr Stewart said the demand for feral deer in Europe had, however, strengthened and operators were hoping for a significant rise in price in the near future.

If that did not come there was the possibility helicopter recovery operations might cease.

Mr Stewart recommended hunters supplying feral deer should make sure the carcasses were well opened up around the neck area so the carcass could cool down quickly.

Te Anau helicopter recovery operator Mark Hollows described the changed regulations as "just another problem to overcome in an industry that has not been doing too well in the last few years."

Operators had been aware of the impending changes for some months, he said.

While the new inspection regulations were going to be a headache there was little that operators could do and there was "not much use making too much of a fuss."

Plan to get tough on possums, Tb

TOUGHER stock movement controls and a more efficiently co-ordinated response were essential to beat the tuberculosis and possum problems, Conservation Minister Denis Marshall said yesterday.

The Government would expect all sectors, including its own agencies, to "get serious" about tuberculosis and possums, he said.

There would be one nationally co-ordinated but regionally agreed strategy, not fragmented or conflicting approaches, said Mr Marshall, who is also associate minister of agriculture.

Six of the last 10 outbreaks in endemic areas had been caused by transporting infected cattle, deer or feral pigs to tuberculosis-free areas where they infected local possums.

Stronger movement control provisions would require all cattle and deer more than 12 months old to have a pre-movement test a maximum of 90 days before being moved within or from high-risk endemic areas, and all stock moved from a property would have to be accompanied by a note from the farmer showing the required test had been passed.

Mr Marshall said sustained control over eight or more years was crucial if tuberculosis was to be eradicated from possums, with an initial reduction of 75

By MURRAY WILLIAMS
Environment Reporter

per cent and "a severe maintenance regime" keeping numbers at 40 per cent of the original level.

Though the Conservation Department was not liable for the control of pests that caused or spread tuberculosis on its land, the Government was aware of farmers' views and was prepared to consider giving the department a larger mandate to manage pests.

The Animal Health Board was developing a five-year strategic plan and a draft discussion document would be distributed widely in October.

One goal would be to reduce the number of movement-controlled herds in tuberculosis-free areas from the present figure of 0.45 per cent to 0.2 per cent within three years. A second would be a 50 per cent reduction in controlled herds in infected areas over five years.

Compensation provisions were also being rewritten, changing the system of paying 45 per cent of market value on the first two cattle reactors and 95 per cent on subsequent reactors, to an average of 85 per cent on all reactors.

However, compensation in clear areas would be only 40 per cent of fair market value.

Venison

For week beginning September 7, 1992

Grade	Weights	Fortex	Mair	Venison NZ	PPCS/
	kg	\$/kg	\$/kg	\$/kg	\$/kg
AP Hind	To 35	1.80	2.00	2.90	3.90
AP Hind	35-40	3.65	3.90	3.70	3.90
AP Hind	40-45	4.50	4.25	4.20	4.90
AP Hind	45-50	5.05	5.10	4.95	4.90
AP Hind	50-55	5.80	5.80	5.80	5.70
AP Hind	55-60	5.80	5.90	5.90	5.70
AP Stag	45-50	5.25	5.30	5.05	5.70
AP Stag	50-55	6.00	6.00	5.90	5.90
AP Stag	55-60	6.00	6.10	6.00	5.90
AP Stag	60-65	6.00	6.10	6.00	5.80
P Stag	65-70	5.35	5.35	5.90	5.80
AP Stag	70-75	5.35	5.00	5.05	5.25
AP Stag	75-80	5.35	4.55	4.45	5.25
AP Stag	80-85	5.35	4.35	4.45	5.25
AP Stag	85-100	3.80	3.55	3.50	4.65
AF1, AT	55-65	2.70	4.15	3.45	3.40
AF1, AT	75-85	2.70	3.20	2.95	3.40
AF2	50-70	2.20	2.00	2.50	2.70

CHANGES:

MAIR: AP Stag/Hind 35-50kg +20c; 50-70kg +10c; 70-100kg +15c/kg. AT under 40kg +30c; 40-65kg +40c; 65-85kg +30c/kg.
FORTEX: AP Stag/Hind to 35kg +30c; 35-45kg +10c; 45-50kg and 65-85kg +25c; 50-65kg +15c/kg.
PPCS A: grades +25c/kg.

NOTE: Only the main grades are shown, animals may be downgraded for age, conformation, fat cover or quality.

NOTES:

1. The net venison prices are shown above in dollars per kg carcass weight. The GIB levy (28c/kg) needs to be deducted along with transport to works.

2. MAFQual inspection charges need also be deducted. They are (\$ per head) Seaford \$7, Venison NZ Mossburn \$7, Kennington \$7, Mair Hokitika \$7.85, PPCS Inlington \$5.00.

Deer deal sours after requirements not met

Invercargill (PA). — A deer export deal involving Korean interests and Southland farmers went sour last week when the animals failed to meet animal health protocol requirements, MAF has confirmed.

A shipment of more than 900 Southland farm-raised red deer and wapiti cross animals, destined for Korean deer breeders, had been scheduled to leave Christchurch International Airport on Wednesday.

But the ministers of agriculture and Customs had announced two days before controls put on live deer exports under the Export Prohibition Regulations.

The Minister of Customs, Mr McCully, said the export of deer would only be approved if they met animal health requirements of the importing country.

The Minister of Agriculture, Mr Falloon, said animal health standards were set after negotiations

with the importing country.

Korean agriculture officials had apparently become aware of the intended import of deer from New Zealand which did not meet Korean animal health standards.

Mr Falloon stressed if uncertified animals were to arrive in Korea from New Zealand they would be either returned or slaughtered, which might prove embarrassing to both countries.

The MAF chief veterinary officer, Dr Peter O'Hara, confirmed last week the export of deer had been scheduled but in no way did the animals meet Korean agriculture requirements.

The animals had not been officially tested for tuberculosis and had not been quarantined for 45 days, Mr O'Hara said.

One of the two Koreans organising the deal, Mr Duncan Kim, said in Invercargill they were concerned the export had been stopped at the last moment.

Deer industry must fight for fair share of funding

Tb control and animal welfare are priorities in deer research and the industry must be politically active to ensure its fair share of research funds, Southland farmer and New Zealand Deer Farmers Association councillor Walter Somerville told a recent deer conference at Massey University.

The deer industry, he said, could be "headed for trouble" if research in those areas was cut back.

This would give customers, competitors and critics reasons to become wary, to place tariffs or ban our products.

"Animal health and growth will always rate high with farmers because they can be measured on the farm in the form of increased profits," he said.

But research priorities must consider the perceptions and real returns to the producer.

They must be visible not only to the producer but also to overseas customers, he said.

"It is important that we give clear signals to researchers and scientists where we see our priorities. The best method is for the industry to show direction and then give grants to that research that meets the criteria."

Mr Somerville said to ensure that it did receive a fair share of available science funding the industry had to be politically active and show research as a good investment.

"We must show direction and reverse what appears to be the thinking behind the Ministry of Research, Science and Technology STEP Panel, where they suggest spending on deer research should be cut back over the next five years."

Tb eradication must be a first priority and was possible, he said.

As a national disease with trade implications, research for fighting Tb should obtain additional funds from the Government, Mr Somerville said.

26/9/92
ATTENTION
ALL HUNTERS
Taimex Trading Limited
will open their Venison
Depot at Tuatapere on Fri-
day, October 2.
Purchases will only be made
from Friday-Monday each
week.
Prices up on last season.
PHONE 226-6603 Tuatapere
23522

New deer handler

4/8/92

From car repairs to handling deer — are major changes Alistair Mouat has made in the past month, and he's never been busier.

Alistair was the proprietor of West Road

Motors at Wallacetown, Invercargill. He sold the business last month and took over the manufacturing of the Hecton Sheep Handling system and his own invention, the Mouat Deer Handling System. The deer handler is a

simple, easy to operate system developed by Alistair and based on an idea from his brother who farms deer in the North Island.

"The crush is aimed at the smaller deer farmer but it is in use on some larger farms and seems to be adequate for them also," Alistair said.

As the deer handling system is new to the marketplace, Alistair realised he would have to have something else to manufacture and market as well. He decided to purchase the rights to manufacture the Hecton Sheep handling system from John Hecton.

Mr Hecton will remain with the company and will be in charge of marketing the units throughout New Zealand and Australia.

"We have full patent rights for both countries and the Hecton sheep handler is now one of the most popular units sold in these countries."

The sheep handler is manufactured in Invercargill and is in demand in this part of the country also. Alistair already has orders right through to November.

There have also been several orders for the deer crush from Southland and considerable interest from throughout the South Island.

Alistair said he is happy to demonstrate the units in on-farm situations.

"They have several advantages over some other units as there is no need for electricity. The units are competitively priced and are very quiet to operate so they don't scare the animals," he said.

The Mouat Deer Handling system is of steel construction and has padded sides which close around the animal to hold it firmly without hurting it. The whole crush can be easily operated by one man, another of the big attractions for the small operator.

Alistair has already got seven of the crushes in operation from Rotorua to Riverton.



The Mouat Deer Handling system is simple, efficient and easy to operate. Its padded sides hold deer of all sizes without hurting them and the silent operation reduces stress.

Briefly

Tb-suspect tags likely 1/10/92

HAMILTON — The reintroduction of white ear tags for cattle in herds suspected of having tuberculosis is being considered by the Animal Health Board. A tagging scheme, like the one discarded nine years ago after reducing the incidence of the disease, will be presented to farmers' regional animal health representatives next month. A survey of the 14 regional animal health committees revealed 12 in favour of wanting all animals tested within 90 days of movement off the farm, in any area. The scheme would likely require all cattle being tagged in a herd if any showed a positive reaction to the test. — NZPA

Venison hygiene

WELLINGTON — High hygiene standards were needed in the deer industry to limit the spread of bacteria that could cause human illness, Massey University researcher Edwin Bosi says. Mr Bosi, a post graduate in veterinary study, said two species of yersinia, a common deer bacteria, could cause severe abdominal pain and diarrhoea in humans. People handling deer or deer products could ingest the bacteria themselves or allow the venison to become contaminated if they had poor hygiene practices. Mr Bosi said a year's research found low levels of harmful bacteria contamination in deer carcasses (one in 321) after slaughter. Both the harmful species were able to multiply without oxygen and at low temperatures. They could survive long after being frozen and multiply rapidly when returned to usual refrigeration temperatures. Cooking them at 60 degrees C for a minute would kill them. — NZPA

Deer branch chairman re-elected

2/10/92

Spurhead deer farmer, Harry Robinson was re-elected chairman of the Southland Branch of the New Zealand Deer Farmers Association at a recent executive meeting.

Neville Cunningham, South Hillend was re-elected vice-chairman.

Executive members are: George Orr and Peter McIntyre (Eastern Southland); Murray McWhirter, Johann Groters, David Peak, Geoff Gill (Western Southland); Ken Buckingham, Bruce Story (Southern Southland); Peter Swann, David Stevens (Northern Southland); Dave Lawrence (Central Southland — Veterinary Association); Ewan Burnett, Colin Macnicol (Mid-Southland); Joe Wilson (Invercargill); Walter Somerville (NZDFA Council); Peter Ryan (honorary member); Geoff Erskine (representing stock firms).

Sub-committees have

been set up to organize velvet pools, show and field days, animal health, publicity, droving, national velvet and hard antler awards and awards dinner.

The executive has recommended that the branch hold two velvet pools this season, in the last week of November and again before Christmas.

Suggestions for the deer farmers' display at the Southland A and P show in December include a theme of oriental medicine.

The World Deer Congress will be held in Christchurch next February. Two pre-congress tours including visits to several Southland deer farms are planned.

The executive has discussed a range of subjects including animal health issues, livestock taxation, export of live animals to Korea and velveting drugs.

DOC getting tough over straying goats

The Department of Conservation is getting tough with farmers who let domestic goats loose on conservation land.

DOC is warning farmers it will destroy the goats and charge them for the destruction.

Southland Regional conservator Kerry Mawhinney said yesterday goat numbers had increased significantly in recent years and were seriously modifying areas of native vegetation.

Mr Mawhinney said the problem was inadequate fencing standards, poor maintenance of boundary fences and loss of interest in farm-

ing feral-type goats.

The department, he said, had tried education and consultation but the message was obviously not getting through.

"It is time to take a tough approach."

Mr Mawhinney said animals would be destroyed when encountered on conservation land, owners would be identified and fined, and costs of destruction recovered.

Sightings of goats in reserves and national parks should be reported to DOC so measures could be taken quickly to restrict damage to the

native flora, Mr Mawhinney said.

"DOC had destroyed goats in the past in consultation with farmers and individuals, but at our cost and expense of time and effort. Now we have really got to bring it home to farmers that it is their responsibility."

Some of the worst-affected areas were the Dean Forest, Takitimu Mountains and Leithen Bush, near the Waikaia forest.

There were several acts which DOC could prosecute under, he said, including National Parks, Scenic Reserve and Wild Animal Control acts.

Velvet prices dropping

The Game Industry Board reports that after two weeks of the velvet season predictions on prices had largely come true.

Top grade prices are about 30 percent lower than at the same time last year and lower grades have dropped 46 percent on 1991. GIB velvet marketing manager Collier Isaacs said the season had started much as expected. However, given the present market conditions the top A B and C grades were holding values reasonably well.

Top deer prize comes south

Waimatua deer farmers Alan and Joe Wilson yesterday took out the major award at the 1992 national deer velvet and hard antler competition ahead of 55 entries.

The national velvet competition, which is organized by the Southland branch of the New Zealand Deer Farmers Association, is the premier event for the country's deer farmers.

The awards function was held at Ascot Park Hotel in Invercargill last night.

Sponsorship by Air New Zealand, which flew velvet free of charge from all over the country, contributed to a significant lift in entries this year.

Southland NZDFA branch chairman Harry Robinson said he had been amazed at the improvement in the quality of velvet entered in the competition.

Results:

Open (Wrightson Trophy): A and J Wilson, Ingor Deer Farms (Waimatua, imported red) 1; W

Calder, M J Bringans, D Lawrence and W W Day Partnership (wapiti-elk) 2; N and S Cunningham (South Hillend, wapiti) 3.

Pure NZ red: P Fraser (Rotorua) 1, J and W Gregory (Richmond) 2, W Kane (Oamaru) 3.

Wapiti-elk (Alpine Trophy): W Calder, M J Bringans, D Lawrence and W W Day Partnership 1, N and S Cunningham 2, R H Robertson (Kurov) 3.

Imported red (Deer Game Services Cup): A and J Wilson 1, European Deer Services (Putaruru) 2, D H and L M Stevens (Balfour) 3.

Hard antler (Landcorp Trophy): R H Robertson and Stanfield Oaks (Hamilton) equal 1, R H Robertson 3.

Three-year red (Foveran Deer Park Trophy): A and J Wilson 1, Rau, Hogg, Hennessy Partnership (Gisborne) 2, D H and L M Stevens 3.

Three-year wapiti-elk: N and S Cunningham 1, R H Robertson 2, I H Pullar (Winton) 3.

Maiden NZ red (KPTA Trophy): P Fraser (Rotorua) 1, J and W Gregory 2, A and J Wilson 3.

Maiden NZ wapiti-elk: R Buckley (Featherston) 1, R N Jennings (Awarua) 2, M J and J L Bringans (Winton) 3.

Southland section — Red only: M J Gill, B J and R S Marshall (Otautau) 1, D H and L M Stevens 2, Swann family (Lumsden) 3.

Southland section — Wapiti-elk only: W Calder, M J Bringans, D Lawrence, W W Day Partnership 1, N and S Cunningham 2, R N Jennings 3.

Peter Ryan honoured

Otautau deer farmer Peter Ryan was last night awarded life membership of the Southland branch of the New Zealand Deer Farmers Association.

The award was made at the national velvet competition awards function held at Ascot Park Hotel in Invercargill.

In announcing the award, association councillor Walter Somerville said it was given in recognition of Mr Ryan's work and dedication to the New Zealand deer industry.

Mr Ryan had been deeply involved in many far-reaching activities on behalf of deer farmers since entering the industry in the early 1970s.

He was instrumental in introducing blood testing of deer for Tb control and fought strenuously for a fair and equitable system of livestock tax for deer.

"Never once in all he did, did Peter Ryan think of what was in it for him," Mr Somerville said.

Mr Ryan is also a former NZDFA Southland branch chairman and a New Zealand Deer Farmers Association national councillor.

Deer farmers riding out velvet price slump

Southern deer farmers are riding out a slump in velvet prices as they begin the new selling season.

Russian reindeer velvet has been flooding the Korean market where New Zealand sells most of its product, and early season prices here have been down about 30 percent on last year.

The season started early last month and most stags will have their velvet cut by Christmas.

New Zealand Deer Farmers Association Southland branch chairman Harry Robinson said yesterday farmers realized they were vulnerable by supplying only one major market.

He estimated that of about 500 tonnes of velvet expected on the market this season, 300 tonnes would have already been cut. Only

about 30 tonnes of that has been sold.

Korean buyers in New Zealand were also hamstrung because they have been unable to buy much. The Korean government is yet to announce its check price on which buyers will obtain letters of credit from their banks.

Prices to date have been up to about \$140 a kilogram for top grade product this season, and down to about \$45 for the lowest grade. Three years ago prices were as high as \$300 a kilogram.

Mr Robinson said prices had fluctuated in recent years, but this had been partially offset by higher yields.

About 15 years ago when he first started farming deer, animals were producing only 1 to 2kg.

Top New Zealand stage now produced about 6kg, with some heads up to 8kg last year.

Mr Robinson believes one way to get on top of the fickle Korean market would be to educate Westerners of the benefits of deer velvet. Velvet is used in a variety of Korean medicines and is reputedly an aphrodisiac.

Awarua farmer Ray Jennings said he had learned to take the good with the bad in the deer industry.

Mr Jennings farms a herd of up to 3000 deer and this year expects to cut about 3 tonnes of velvet.

The lower price had not had caused any serious problems and had been offset by a stable venison market, he said.

Stock he could not sell last year were killed for the venison market.

16/2/92
No permit
Christopher John Lawrence, a Lumsden farmer, was fined \$350 for hunting without a permit in the Waikaia Forest and selling a red deer he shot there.



Harry Robinson, of Spurhead, near Dacre, holds about 5kg of velvet cut from one of his stags. The price of velvet has opened this season about 30 per cent down on last year. Picture: BARRY HARCOURT

Ministry reviews deer practices

HASTINGS

Docking and deer de-velvetting practices could be reviewed under new animal welfare legislation, according to Hastings Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries Quality district manager Ru Davis.

An age limit could be imposed for the docking of lamb tails and some new rules governing the de-velvetting of stags could also be introduced under the law, Mr Davis said.

Agriculture Minister John Falloon said drafting instructions for the new legislation, to be called the Animal Welfare Act, would be issued early this year.

The Government had given this review of the Animals Protection Act priority and Cabinet had approved policy proposals from his ministry, Mr Falloon said.

Mr Davis said the docking of dairy cows and dogs as well as lambs could be covered by the legislation.

Deer de-velvetting was also being carefully scrutinized because of the nature of the operation which was banned in some countries, including Britain.

A local anaesthetic is applied around the base of a stag's antler to prevent pain and the velvet is then removed.

Most deer de-velvetting was done by vets but some farmers were now being taught how to do it.

The new legislation was likely to review the question of training people to remove the velvet from stags, Mr Davis said.

Farmers who cared for their stock had little to fear from the impending legislation.

"They are aware that an animal that is well cared for is a productive animal," he said.

However, farmers should be aware that many of the measures likely to be included under the new act already existed as codes of animal welfare.

Codes governing the welfare of sheep, dairy cattle, deer, goats and bobby calves were already available.

New codes covering the transport of animals within New Zealand, a code of welfare for pigs and the transport of deer were in preparation.

"There is much information in existence that would be of interest to a farming operation which farmers need to seek out and apply," he said.

The codes included the basic provision of fodder, water and shelter for animals. They also covered the behavioural needs of the species and the requirements that have to be met if the animal is to be used by humans.

A bill had been introduced late last year which increased the maximum court fines for cruelty to animals by 400 percent.

The bill also gives the courts the power to disqualify people from having custody of an animal after receiving a conviction for an animal cruelty offence.

"The fines reflect an awareness of animal welfare, the seriousness which society views acts of animal cruelty and it has raised the penalties as a result," Mr Davis said.

Animal welfare legislation could be a double-edged sword in overseas markets because groups within those countries could interpret it as they saw fit.

"It can be used to assist in mounting trade barriers against us on the grounds that we're not a clean, green and humane society."

On the other hand if New Zealand was seen as a humane society, this could be used to its advantage when selling products overseas.

The new legislation was designed to assist this cause, Mr Davis said. — NZPA

New anti-Tb campaign will constrict stock flow

NEW PLYMOUTH

The latest moves by the Animal Health Board to eradicate bovine tuberculosis will have wide-ranging repercussions for farmers and farm-servicing industries alike.

Regions with the highest status in freedom from Tb may have trouble sourcing replacement stock or breeding animals from endemic areas such as the central North Island, south-eastern North Island, the West Coast of the South Island, the Clarence-Waiapu region, and Central and coastal Otago.

Stock and station agencies, transport operators, meat processors and others will have extra responsibilities under new regulations, in which the documented health status of cattle and deer will determine where stock may travel and what can happen to them when they get there.

While a number of new laws on Tb came into effect on October 1, one part of the overall strategy still to be decided upon by the Animal Health Board is expected to have a dramatic impact on stock trading within non-endemic regions such as Taranaki.

Regions which achieve the most-favoured "protected area" status given to the Bay of Plenty and Northland will find the ability of

stock companies to source cattle from outside the region severely limited.

Incoming stock, according to the proposal, could be sourced from only non-endemic areas; Tb-accredited herds and would require testing within 30 days of entering a new area.

In Taranaki, for instance, industry observers fear the drop in cattle numbers coming into the region would mean half of the region's freezing works would close.

An advantage would be that some freezing works could declare they did not kill Tb-infected stock, and this would be an incentive for farmers to assist in eradicating the disease.

Nationally, there are five main endemic areas, and some 30 percent of New Zealand has persistent Tb infection in farmed cattle and deer as a result of the disease being present in feral species.

At present, 13 percent of all cattle herds and 11 percent of the country's deer herds are in the five endemic areas.

The movement of stock poses a significant risk in spreading Tb. Six of the past 10 outbreaks have occurred as the result of moving infected stock.

The Animal Health Board has set three targets in its five-year strategic plan:

- To reduce the number of movement-controlled herds (cattle and deer) in non-endemic areas from the current 0.45 percent to the internationally accepted 0.2 percent within five years.

- To reduce the number of movement-controlled herds by more than 30-50 percent in the five major endemic areas.

- To reduce the number of animals which test positive to Tb (the reactors) within endemic areas by 50-70 percent.

The board will spend about \$21 million in its first year of operation, with the bulk of the funding coming from farmer levies on cattle (\$15.22m) and a Government grant for feral animal control (\$4.4m).

At the heart of the new regulations is a card system, which will document the health status of stock. Use of the cards will be compulsory whenever stock are moved from one site to another in endemic regions and, additionally, before deer or cattle can be moved they must be Tb-tested 90 days beforehand.

An exception to the rule applies if stock are destined for immediate slaughter.

For non-endemic areas the use of Tb status cards is voluntary.

The card system, it's claimed, means buyers, agents or graziers will be well-informed about the stock they're dealing with.

Not only will they know whether stock have been tested and what the Tb status is, but they can also find out where the stock came from and if the animals were born on the property. Age details will also be cited.

At public auctions all information on the cards must be made available to potential buyers, and after the sale of stock, cards must accompany the stock to the buyer's property.

Where lines are split for sale, stock agents are required to either duplicate the information received from the vendor on to special stock-agent cards or photocopy the original.

Transport operators will be required to obtain the documentation before collecting stock and hand it over on delivery. If there is no documentation, stock can not be moved.

The new laws come with teeth, and penalties to be imposed from January 1, 1993 range from returning stock to the owner at their own expense to imposing fines of up to \$5000 or prosecuting under the Fair Trading Act if false information is supplied. — NZPA

NZ venison now named Cervená

Deer farmers have delved into their Latin books to come up with an export brand name for New Zealand farm raised venison.

"Cervená" is a combination of the latin word for deer — cervidae — and the word for deer meat — venison — which evolved from Latin.

The Game Industry Board has been developing the brand name for two years.

Board chief executive Richard Janes unveiled the brand name last night in Wellington, saying it had been tested extensively in key northern hemisphere markets.

Seven companies, representing 95 percent of venison exports, are franchised to use the name.

Mr Janes said the brand was targetted at emerging markets, such as the US, rather than established markets like Germany.

It translated well into several languages, he said.

In the year to September 1992 venison exports were \$104 million, a 92 percent increase on the previous 12 months.

Speaking at the National Velvet awards function at Ascot Park Hotel in Invercargill last night, GIB representative Collier Issacs said since the development of deer farming in the early 1970s farm-raised venison had become known for its tender, mild yet distinctive taste compared with the "gamey" flavour of feral deer.

Ways had to be found to market farm raised venison effectively in the world's markets, he said.

Thousands of possible names had been considered, he said.

The solution had been to settle for a distinctive brand name that markets would associate with quality and at the same time would protect the place of New Zealand venison.

The name finally selected would suggest a product unique to New Zealand and avoid confusion or association with venison produced in other countries, he said.

Venison NZ profit increases to \$1.1m

Venison New Zealand more than doubled its pre-tax profit to \$1.7 million in the year to June 30, chairman Nigel Gould says in the annual report.

After-tax profit of \$1.1 million represented a return of 26 percent on average shareholders' funds, enabling the company to pay a 6 percent dividend and 4.5 percent rebate, and to make a one-for-10 bonus issue to its 900 deer farmer shareholders.

Sales increased 53 percent to \$29 million.

Venison NZ expected its new plant at Mossburn to be completed next month, Mr Gould said.

The company, responsible for about a third of the country's venison exports, had completed a major upgrade of its Hastings plant and built a new plant at Feilding.

Mr Gould expressed some uncertainty for the future, however, centred on extreme movements in the availability of livestock.

"The general consensus is that while again there may be a shortage of prime livestock in the 1993 spring, it is quite likely that a combination of factors will contribute to an over-supply situation early in the new year."

Nevertheless the company was budgeting to lift sales to more than \$50 million, and with the plant development programme completed or under way, would be well placed to maintain its position as the industry's dominant exporter, Mr Gould said.

Two truck drivers convicted

3/2/93

ALEXANDRA

Two Cromwell truck drivers have been convicted of failing to ensure deer being transported from farm properties to slaughter plants were provided with comfortable and secure accommodation.

In the Alexandra District Court yesterday Deon Andrew Stafford, aged 28, a driver for Cromwell Transport Ltd, pleaded guilty to the charge.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries brought the prosecutions and Judge Ron Young, of Dunedin, ordered Stafford to pay \$750 towards its costs.

Judge Young said 15 of 100 deer being transported from Central Otago to the Fortex Seaford plant by Stafford on March 19 died and others were affected by the journey.

It was clear problems arose because of inappropriate penning of the stock, which included mixing stags and hinds.

Proper loading to ensure animal safety was the responsibility of the driver. But farmers also needed to be educated how to prepare stock for transport.

If stock were in poor condition it was, however, difficult for a driver to refuse to transport animals for a farmer, he said.

Vernon John Wells Reid, aged 42, who also worked for Cromwell Transport, was convicted and ordered to pay \$800 towards MAF's prosecution costs.

Reid pleaded not guilty to a charge of failing to ensure deer transported on a truck and trailer unit between Cromwell and Mossburn on March 19 were not provided with comfortable and secure accommodation.

The court was told one deer had died and five others staggered off the truck and trailer driven by Reid when it arrived at Venison New Zealand's Mossburn processing plant. The truck

pens would usually hold 10 and 12 deer, but each pen had 14 in it.

Another deer died during the night and three others died as they walked to the slaughter box the next morning.

A contract vet working at the plant, Laurens Moolenaar, said of the 93 that survived the trip, a significant number had suffered premature rigor mortis within five minutes of killing, which downgraded the meat. More than two or three cases of premature rigor mortis a month was unusual.

Deer had also suffered hair loss, abrasions and internal bleeding, probably due to overcrowding and trampling, he said.

Pat on the back for NZ deer industry

10/2/93

CHRISTCHURCH

The country's deer industry yesterday gave itself a "pat on the back" for turning a national environmental problem into an asset earning \$200 million a year.

The industry's growth from nothing 20 years ago was the topic of yesterday's sessions at the World Deer Congress, which opened at Lincoln University.

Congress chairman Sir Peter Elworthy told the 500 delegates that the industry's pioneers recognized the value of capturing deer in the wild for sale to farmers.

"In 1975 you could land a deer from the wild on a farm for \$150. The value doubled each year until 1980 when more than \$2000 was being paid for good quality red deer hinds," Sir Peter said.

He recalled a forecast made 20 years ago that the deer industry would be equal to or stronger than the beef industry by the year 2000 was then condemned as being hopelessly optimistic.

Yet export earnings from deer had continued to rise and the country's farms now had 2 million deer, he said.

Sir Peter said the deer industry, by adopting new techniques and attitudes, had been a catalyst for other farming and agricultural processing and marketing industries.

Its determination to separate its product from the entrenched industries had a widespread influence.

Sir Peter said deer farmers had confidence in the country's economy and were looking forward to reaping the rewards of export productivity.

Minister of Finance Ruth Richardson said plotting the deer industry's development was like plotting the economy's fortunes.

"Deer farming is an exciting and important part of New Zealand's effort to strengthen and diversify its trading performance," she said.

Enterprises such as the deer industry had prospered in the new economic climate pitched to create an environment in which entrepreneurial skills could flourish.

Deer farmers were the ultimate entrepreneurs and risk takers, Miss Richardson said.

Deer Farmers' Association President James Guild said prices for deer had crashed in the last seven years.

Prices for hinds which peaked at \$4000 a head in 1985 had dropped to \$150 last year. — NZPA

ATTENTION HUNTERS
THE ROAR IS COMING

The Wild Game Depot GD261 will be open to receive deer from Friday, April 2, 1993.

Please note that game will only be accepted from 3pm Fridays-5pm Mondays.

Your support is needed. Contact Agent G Muldrew at Tuatapere 226-6603. 07760

Scheme quickly controls Tb

10/3/93

Tb control schemes administered by MAF Quality Management quickly reduce the incidence of the disease found in domestic livestock and feral animals.

Evidence of that was presented to the Federated Farmers (Southland) meat and wool section meeting on Monday by MAFQual Invercargill district manager livestock services Brian Butcher.

While all feral animals could be carriers of Tb, possums were the main target.

Southland had six feral animal schemes in operation with the largest in the Hokonui Hills, an area that had a large control scheme in the mid-1970s to reduce the numbers of feral pigs, cats, possums, ferrets and deer, he said.

The initial results of that scheme were "quite outstanding," Mr Butcher said.

But Tb had returned to the area — "Because we didn't do it right the first time. We've learned a great deal since the 1970s.

"Then it was felt that one major programme would resolve the Tb problem and there was no major follow up, which is the key to the success of any Tb control scheme."

The numbers of cattle and deer herds that had Tb outbreaks and become movement control herds, had initially fallen from 70 to

By JOHN CUTT

two as a result of the first control scheme, but numbers have been rising steadily since the mid-1980s.

Mr Butcher said the Hokonui scheme was estimated to cost \$500,000 with a further \$150,000 a year required for follow-up work.

The small Tb control scheme at Fortification was considered an example of what could be achieved to control Tb, he said.

Tb was first identified on one property there in 1985 and a possum control programme put in place in 1988. No further Tb had been found since 1990 and MAFQual hoped to be able to declare the area no longer Tb endemic by the end of the year.

Other schemes also reduced the incidence of Tb outbreaks.

Mr Butcher said the fact the Southland Regional Council had agreed to fund 53 percent of possum Tb maintenance work in the province showed the commitment the council had to solving the problem and guaranteed existing schemes would continue.

Southland had 40 cattle and 12 deer herds under Tb movement control.

Council rural services committee chairman Bruce Paterson said the council had a possum control management plan which aimed to control possums and



An example of a Tb lesion found in a possum. Possums carrying the disease can quickly spread it to other animals, especially cattle and deer.

achieve a Tb-free status for the province by the year 2003.

Ten percent of the council's pest rates went towards possum control, he said.

Mr Paterson described Tb as the greatest risk to New Zealand's agricultural exports.

In addition to feral animals, such as possums, spreading Tb to domestic livestock, Mr Paterson said farmers were often to blame for the disease spreading into other areas by not buying Tb-free stock or isolating bought-in stock until a clear Tb test was achieved.

He suggested it was also up to farmers to control possums on their own properties to protect themselves.

Mr Butcher outlined the recently introduced compulsory Tb declaration card system for the movement of cattle and deer from Tb declared movement control areas.

At present it was voluntary for farmers in clear areas to use the cards when moving cattle and deer off their properties for sale. But the cards might eventually become compulsory for all farmers.

Mr Butcher advised legislation provided for MAFQual livestock officers to audit farmers' declaration records and check the records of stock offered for sale at public saleyards. There was also provision for fines and penalties under both the Animals Act and the Fair Trading Act.

Concern deer herd not tested for Tb

31/3/93

Reports a Southland deer herd slipped through the MAF-administered Tb control scheme concern the Southland Regional Animal Health Advisory Committee.

The Animal Health Board operates the national Tb eradication scheme and contracts its functions to MAF Quality Management.

Regional advisory committees help in the administration of national policy, most notably in the formulation of Tb eradication programmes.

MAF is responsible for keeping a register of all cattle and deer herds, their Tb status and the testing of animals.

Tb testing of both cattle and deer is compulsory and MAF has statutory powers to ensure farmers comply.

Regional advisory committee chairman Lindsay Wards said the

By JOHN CUTT

committee was disappointed to learn a mob of stags had not been Tb-tested.

But by the time the case was reported the stags were in the middle of the roar — mating season — and it would have been dangerous to both the animals and handlers to try and test them.

"As much as we hate to accept that, we have to," Mr Wards said.

Because of that, the deer could not be safely tested for Tb until June.

Mr Wards said it was totally unacceptable that farmers should, for whatever reason, not register their animals under the Tb eradication scheme.

"The committee is extremely angry that we still have got herds that are not being tested."

MAF Qual veterinarian Gavin Struthers said while there had been suggestions of other cases of non-compliance, none had been substantiated.

"As far as we can find out we've got everyone under test.

"It is up to all farmers, vets and stock agents to let us know if anyone is not testing so we can put them on the Tb surveillance scheme.

"If we've missed anyone, we would like to find out."

But it was in deer farmers' and cattle farmers' own interests that they complied with the eradication scheme regulations.

Mr Struthers said MAF had not had to use its statutory powers to ensure compliance.

"But it is quite likely we may have to and if we have to then we will."

Tb status declaration card inaction causing concern

17/4/93

Southland cattle and deer farmers appear reluctant to fill in their Tb status declaration cards.

The status card system has been introduced by the Animal Health Board as a means of controlling the spread of bovine Tb.

For cattle and deer farmers in Tb-declared movement control areas, filling in the status cards is now compulsory before stock can be moved out of the area for either sale or slaughter.

For farmers in Tb "free" areas the card system is voluntary.

Books of status cards and explanatory letters were sent to farmers in declared Tb areas before Christmas and farmers in other areas, known to have cattle or deer received their information packs in March.

MAF Quality Management district manager, livestock, Brian Butcher said around 120 Southland farmers came under the compulsory scheme.

These farmers have a legal responsibility to complete new cards whenever they move stock off their farms, even to other properties they might own — such as a run-off or fattening block.

"As far as we are aware, these farmers appear to be using the cards and using them correctly," he said.

"For these farmers the system seems to be working reasonably well."

But the problem is that farmers outside the Tb-declared areas appear to think that because they are not directly affected by bovine Tb, that there is no need for them to complete the status cards when they either sell or send stock to slaughter.

A MAF survey of recent calf sales in the province has revealed that less than 20 percent of farmers in "free" areas are using the cards.

This has concerned both MAF and the Southland Regional Animal Health Committee.

Committee chairman Lindsay Wards considered the problem was one of apathy.

"I'm disappointed that in spite of publicity and personal letters to farmers that they still appear to be ignoring the seriousness of Tb and what the card system is designed for," he said.

"Unless farmers respond quickly and start using the cards

voluntarily the regional committee will have no option but to fight to have the use of all cards made compulsory.

"We must all make a determined effort to keep further Tb infection out of the province, ensure that our already clear areas remain clear and eradicate Tb from the province altogether."

Mr Wards said buyers of cattle and deer should start demanding vendors complete a Tb status declaration card.

It was encouraging to hear that this had started to happen and some farmers were refusing to accept stock unless their Tb status was known, he said.

"Buyer demand rather than legislation is the best way to make this system work."

Tb campaign working

The Animal Health Board believes its farmer education campaign on bovine Tb is beginning to pay off.

A survey conducted by the board shows farmers have become more aware of the threat of contracting Tb from infected stock.

Before the campaign began in October, only 58 percent of farmers knew stock could contract Tb from contact with other infected cattle or deer. This awareness has increased to 72 percent.

Only one farmer in six, (17 percent) knew they could prevent their stock becoming infected by buying stock certified as free of Tb. The survey shows this has now been raised to nearly one in three (31 percent).

"These results confirm all the hard work put in by the board and our people in the field to educate farmers about Tb is worthwhile," board chairman Richard Alspach said.

"Our objective is to build an attitude among farmers that Tb is unacceptable and to have every farmer take responsibility for stopping Tb.

"While these results are positive we certainly haven't reached that objective yet.

"Some farmers are still buying stock and not asking about their Tb status. This is unacceptable," Mr Alspach said.

"Not only are they putting themselves at risk but under the new area movement control classification they are putting their whole region at risk."

Mr Alspach said sponsorship from Wrightson, the Supergrow fertilizer group of companies, animal control products and MAF Quality Management was confirmed and would ensure the education programme continued.

"The fact that these companies are sponsoring an education campaign for Tb shows just how serious the threat of Tb is to New Zealand agriculture," he said.

"If Tb was used as a non-tariff trade barrier the impact would be widespread. These companies have recognized that are are taking responsibility.

"What we need now is for every farmer, stock agent and transport operator to do likewise," Mr Alspach said.

17/4/93 Venison

Grade	Weights	Fortex	Mair	Venison NZ	PPCS/
	kg	\$/kg	\$/kg	\$/kg	\$/kg
AP Hind	30-35	2.80	2.75	2.85	4.40
AP Hind	35-40	4.25	4.25	4.05	4.40
AP Hind	40-45	5.15	4.80	4.50	5.18
AP Hind	45-50	5.30	5.30	4.80	5.18
AP Hind	50-55	5.55	5.50	5.15	5.58
AP Hind	55-60	5.55	5.60	5.25	5.58
AP Stag	45-50	5.50	5.40	4.90	5.28
AP Stag	50-55	5.75	5.60	5.25	5.68
AP Stag	55-60	5.75	5.70	5.35	5.68
AP Stag	60-65	5.75	5.70	5.35	5.68
P Stag	65-70	5.45	5.40	5.05	5.58
AP Stag	70-75	5.45	5.30	4.95	5.30
AP Stag	75-80	5.45	5.20	4.95	5.30
AP Stag	80-85	5.45	5.00	4.95	5.30
AP Stag	85-100	4.05	4.00	4.65	4.95
AF1, AT	55-65	4.60	4.25	4.00	3.70
AF1, AT	75-85	4.90	3.80	3.50	3.70
AF2	50-70	4.05	2.70	3.00	3.00

CHANGES:
MAIR: AP/AT Stag/Hind 40-50kg +15c/kg; 50-70kg +10c/kg.
PPCS: All hind grades +10c/kg.

NOTES:
1. The net venison prices are shown above in dollars per kg carcass weight. The GIB levy (28c/kg) needs to be deducted along with transport to works.
2. MAFQual inspection charges need also be deducted. They are (\$ per head) Seafield \$7, Venison NZ Mossburn \$7, Kennington \$7, Mair Hokitika \$7.85, PPCS Islington \$5.00.

INFORMATION SUPPLIED BY AGRI-FAX



Southland rugby player Paul Henderson, who is finding that the natural vitamins and minerals in deer velvet are helping speed his recovery from sports injuries.

Picture: KARA MATHESON

Deer velvet just the tonic according to Henderson

Southland rugby flanker Paul Henderson, who was plagued with injuries last year, is singing the praises of deer velvet tonic as a way of speeding recovery.

Henderson is so taken with the product he is putting his name to its promotional material.

Henderson was introduced to the tonic last year by Invercargill-based Silberhorn International founder and director Peter Beadle.

An early season groin injury and a broken thumb received while playing for the All Blacks against New South Wales last year were taking their toll on Henderson's fitness. But after using the deer velvet tonic he found his recovery rate improved remarkably.

The pain was lessened and he was playing again after three and a-half weeks, having earlier expected to be off for up to eight weeks.

By KIRSTY MACNICOL

Last Wednesday he strained a calf muscle while playing for the New Zealand Divisional XV against Hawkes Bay and did not expect to be fit again to play against Wellington on Sunday. He did, and credits his quick recovery to the deer velvet tonic.

Southland artist Peter Beadle discovered the tonic, an old Chinese recipe, about seven years ago and made it for his father to relieve arthritis and rheumatism.

Since he launched the company, Silberhorn International Ltd, its use in relieving sports injuries and as a general tonic has become more widespread.

Silberhorn marketing manager Marie Callander said many people who used it regularly found they were sleeping better and generally felt better.

Mrs Callander put this down to the many vitamins and minerals the tonic boasted that people often missed in their diets.

The tonic also contained the natural hormones and steroids found in deer velvet which helped rejuvenate damaged body tissue.

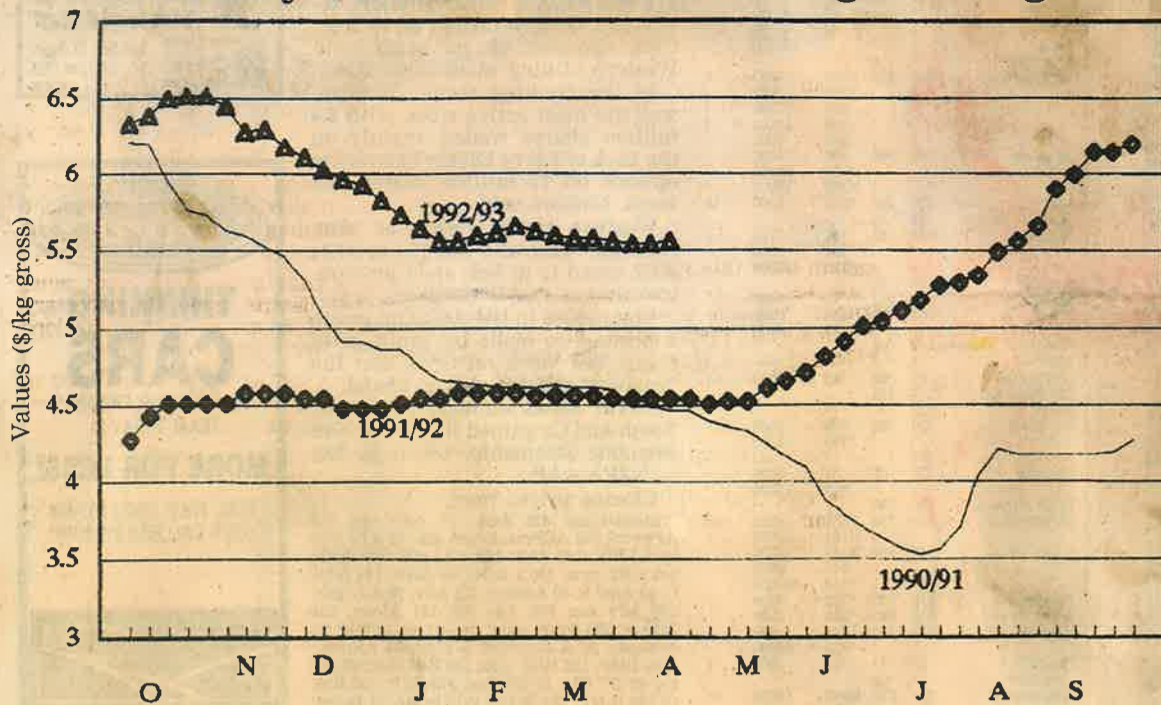
The medicinal qualities of deer velvet were widely recognized in Asia but in New Zealand could only be sold as a food supplement.

The product was available throughout New Zealand but bureaucratic red tape was holding up exports. Tourists who bought the tonic in New Zealand and wanted to continue using it could buy through mail order.

However, as more people turn to natural remedies, Mrs Callander said she felt certain the benefits of deer velvet would be more widely recognized and more international markets would open up.

Venison values (\$/kg gross)

Weekly venison values for 60kg AP stag



GIB levy of 28c/kg is included — 1990/91 — 1991/92 — 1992/93

Produced by Agri-Fax.

The graph, above, shows the schedule prices received for venison during the past three years. The cents per kg price is based on a 60kg carcass weight stag and is before levies have been deducted.

Prices reached an all-time high of nearly \$8/kg in the spring of 1989. By the winter of 1991 prices had slumped to \$3.50/kg with the breakup of Eastern Europe and the flooding of feral venison into Germany.

Up to November 1992, prices had risen steadily, in spite of large slaughter numbers in New Zealand, especially hinds. This season prices have declined 15 percent as the chilled markets have closed off and the European currencies have weakened.

As expected prices have held above \$5.50/kg and are likely to firm as the European game season starts and the chilled markets open up again. These markets may be stronger than last year.

Rut almost over, thank goodness

Like most farmers with a reasonable number of velvetting stags, May is the month to do a bit of maintenance after having spent the past six weeks rearranging the fencing on the farm.

At this time of the year I could do quite nicely without velvetting stags, but when spring arrives I could do with twice as many.

After a year of lower prices, processors being accused of working a cartel to drive prices down and the oversupply of low grade reindeer velvet arriving on the Korean market, the situation for velvet doesn't look particularly encouraging for the coming season.

A positive move this season has been the voluntary restriction placed on the reindeer velvet for the coming year by the Koreans which might help next season's prices. All this reinforces the fact that New Zealand must produce top quality velvet so we don't have to compete with the poorer quality product.

The outlook for venison returns in the coming season looks excellent, with many companies offering attractive contracts.

This seems to be because of good overseas demand and anticipation of a lack of animals available for slaughter in the spring for the chilled market.

It is pleasing to see the confidence back in the deer industry after a fairly tough year last season because of poor weather and a shortage of killing space.

DEER TALK

DAVID STEVENS



These problems created an over-reaction to the situation which led to weaner animals selling at ridiculously low values — especially weaner hinds.

Some of the companies must take some blame for farmers' reaction. In many cases the cost of taking light-weight animals through the winter is far too high compared with the return in the spring.

All this contributed to an overkill of the breeding herd last season and a possible lack of animals for slaughter this season.

With the expected good return for venison, deer farmers should still look seriously at whether they should retain the poorer producers in their herds — stags and hinds.

I would think it could be the ideal time to cull those animals.

Moving on to deer farming politics, nominations for the New Zealand Deer Farmers' Association council and president have closed. If you are a member of the NZDFA you will receive voting papers, so please vote!

Also, nominations for the GIB close next month.

Cervena launched

WELLINGTON

What is being hailed as a new era in New Zealand's \$120 million a year venison export industry begins today when cervena, the new brand name for farmed venison, is launched on to the world market.

The launch is part of a marketing strategy to help New Zealand firms develop new overseas markets for cervena, described variously as "natural tender" venison and "guilt-free red meat."

Countries targeted in initial marketing include the United States, Canada and Australia but the strategy also includes boosting venison sales in New Zealand.

Game Industry Board executives hope the campaign will boost export sales to about \$320 million a year by 1998, more than doubling export volumes from 12,000 tonnes this year to 28,000 tonnes.

Cervena is an amalgam of the words cervidae (Latin for deer), venison and A-grade.

The launch in Auckland last night by Agriculture Minister John Falloon coincides with the first load of cervena leaving for the US.

It will be followed tomorrow by a launch for New York food writers in Central Park and similar events in other parts of the US. — NZPA

Deer industry going from strength to strength

The deer industry has had a good year.

Export earnings reached \$184.5 million for the year to March 1993 — a record \$123 million for venison, \$51 million for velvet, \$9 million for hides and skins and \$1.5 million in live deer sales.

The launch of the Cervena brand for venison in the American and New Zealand markets in April was the culmination of two years' planning and development.

The strategy is to identify the best of the New Zealand's farmed venison through the Cervena brand.

Stringent quality and other criteria apply, and seven exporting companies have been franchised to use the brand.

The emerging market of the US was selected for the test brand marketing strategy because it offers excellent growth potential.

The American market presently takes about 5 percent of total venison exports by volume, but returns close to 10 percent by value.

The traditional European markets account for 90 percent of exports by volume but only 80 percent by value.

In those markets the ZEAL quality mark will identify quality assured New Zealand venison.

Only venison produced from a processing plant accredited to the international ISO 9002 standards qualifies to use the ZEAL quality mark.

The deer velvet season was difficult, competing in an over-supplied and highly competitive Korean market.

cervena

N A T U R A L T E N D E R V E N I S O N

28/5/93



Large quantities of lower grade Russian reindeer velvet have brought prices down in Korea, which is the largest single market for velvet.

Prices held up better in the higher grades. This reinforces the market signals the NZGIB has emphasized — New Zealand producers should aim for top graded top quality velvet which is less vulnerable to commodity price fluctuations.

Production per animal, not per hectare is the key to success.

The New Zealand Velvet Mark is used to identify New Zealand product to doctors and pharmacists, who recognize its quality.

This quality differentiation is the basis of the industry's marketing strategy for the Korean market, and for diversifying to other emerging markets.

Interest in natural remedies, thought to be more in harmony with nature and with few if any side effects, is increasing worldwide. Deer velvet products are well positioned to benefit from that trend.

The industry's "pasture to plate" Quality Assurance Programme is the platform for the future.

Every aspect of the industry, including the on-farm management and facilities, is part of the overall picture and will have appropriate codes of practice to guarantee quality throughout.

Deer transport operators, for instance, are presently being invited to join an accreditation scheme which ensures that deer are transported safely and effectively in specialized crates.

The better condition they arrive in, the better the return to the farmer.

A Velvet Training Programme starts in June, so that skilled farmers are certificated to velvet their own stags under the indirect supervision of a veterinarian.

The deer industry has always attracted pioneers and forward thinkers, and the emphasis on quality and marketing in every aspect of the industry demonstrates that vision.

The deer industry represents a unique partnership in the agricultural sector — combining the competitive drive and efficiency of the private sector with the strength of a co-ordinated marketing strategy for best results for all.

The industry is well placed for future export success.



The World Deer Congress at Lincoln University earlier this year once again proved that the New Zealand farmed deer industry leads the world. In spite of poor returns for velvet this season the deer industry is in good heart.

Tb implications far-reaching

13/5/93

GORE

Tuberculosis might have wide implications for New Zealand's meat trade, especially beef and venison, according to Walter Somerville, of the Animal Health Board.

Mr Somerville was a speaker at a New Zealand Beef Council southern region seminar in Gore yesterday, the first of a two-year programme planned by the council emphasizing "quality beef."

The mission of the Animal Health Board was a "simple one ... to eradicate bovine Tb from New Zealand," Mr Somerville told the audience of about 100.

Via a five-year plan, the board had four main goals:

- In endemic areas, to reduce the percentage of movement controlled herds of deer and cattle by 30 to 50 percent and reduce reactor numbers by 50 to 70 percent;
- To reduce the percentage of movement controlled herds in non-endemic areas to 0.2;
- To prevent the establishment of

new endemic areas and expansion of existing endemic areas into farmland free of feral Tb vectors;

- To encourage individual farmers to take greater responsibility for the control of Tb within their herds.

Achieving those goals required a "huge commitment" from those with a vested interest in removing the Tb threat, and a "huge level of co-operation" from farmers, regional councils and stock agents in particular.

"Tuberculosis vectors (possums) are the most important source of infection for deer and cattle. Nevertheless, movement of tuberculosis cattle and deer from endemic areas is the most important source of infection for the herds in non-endemic areas, as well as contributing to the spread of infection within endemic areas," Mr Somerville said.

Within endemic areas, new feral animal control operations were needed. Maintenance programmes for existing possum control oper-

ations needed to be intensified and sustained comprehensive vector control of possums, deer, pigs and ferrets was necessary.

In non-endemic areas, key activities included expanding and consolidating feral animal control buffers around endemic areas, control of high-risk herds and herds grazing in endemic areas, depopulation of high-risk herds, especially deer and possibly the establishment of "protected areas" in regions already meeting the 0.2 percent figure.

In both cases, area movement control, and the introduction of compulsory Tb declaration forms for movement of all deer and cattle over three months old were two key activities.

Mr Somerville said discussions were under way between the board and interested industry groups regarding the introduction of permanent identification for all deer and cattle, "from conception to consumption."

Animal Health Board determined to eliminate Tb

28/5/93

The Animal Health Board is currently involved in developing a strategic plan to cover the control and hopefully the ultimate elimination of Tb from New Zealand.

The draft plan, plus a supplementary paper, has been circulated to interested parties throughout New Zealand.

These included Regional Animal Health Committees, Federated Farmers, Regional Councils, NZVA and many other organizations with a vested interest.

The key objectives identified, to be achieved over the next five years, are:

- To reduce the percentage of movement controlled herds in the non-endemic areas to 0.2 percent (that is, the internationally recognized level for official freedom from Tb).
- To reduce the percentage of movement controlled herds (deer and cattle combined) by 30-50 percent and the numbers of reactors by 50-70 percent, in each endemic areas.
- To prevent the establishment of new endemic areas and expansion of existing endemic areas into farmland free of feral-wild Tb vectors.
- To encourage individual farmers to take responsibility for the control of Tb within their herds.

The proposed activities are based upon the simple model that herd infection results from either contact with infected feral-wild animals or movement in infected cattle and farmed deer. Activities are characterized by endemic and non-endemic areas and common to both.

Twelve percent of New Zealand's herds are contained within the endemic areas but account for 74 percent of the infected herds. Tuberculosis vectors (possums) are the most important source of infection for deer and cattle.

By ROBERT ISBISTER

Nevertheless, movement of tuberculosis cattle and deer from endemic areas is the most important source of infection for herds in non-endemic areas as well as contributing to the spread of infection within endemic areas.

Key activities are aimed to effect potential sources of infection and also make herd owners more responsible for their actions.

The first objective is therefore dependent upon both reducing the amount of tuberculosis in cattle and deer in endemic areas as well as preventing infected animals from moving into non-endemic areas.

The key activities to achieve the goals within endemic areas are:

- The need to initiate new feral-wild animal control operations to reduce the number of movement controlled herds and reactors.
- An intensification of the maintenance programmes for existing possum control operations (to include three yearly aerial work, averaging two kilometres into bush from all bush-pasture margins).
- A need for sustained comprehensive vector (possums, deer, pig and ferret?) control.

In non-endemic areas the movement of tuberculosis cattle and deer (mostly from special Tb investigation areas (STIAs) and from endemic areas) is the most important source of infection for herds in non-endemic areas.

It is also important that regions already approaching the "official freedom" level of 0.2 percent herds on movement control be given extra protection and status.

Key activities are targeted at meeting, and then protecting, the 0.2 percent figure as well as addressing the issue of human behaviour towards Tb.

In these non-endemic areas key activities to help in achieving these goals may include:

- Immediate control of Tb foci in STIAs. For example South Kaipara.
- Expand and consolidate feral-wild animal control buffers around endemic areas.
- Additional control of high risk herds (for example dealer herds and large beef dry stock herds) and effective control of grazing in endemic areas.
- Depopulation of high risk herds (particularly deer).
- Establishment of "protected areas" for regions that have already met the 0.2 percent figure.

Key activities common to both areas include:

- Enhanced movement control (pre and post testing, use of movement control ear tags and suspension of status for herds receiving stock on movement control).
- Full implementation of area movement control to include other STIAs and require all cattle and deer over three months of age to be tested prior to movement.
- The introduction of compulsory Tb declarations for the movement of all deer and cattle over the age of three months.
- Establishment of farmer Tb focus groups to minimize further breakdowns and assist in the eradication of Tb from infected herds in their locality.
- Introduction of a suitable permanent animal identification system hopefully within two years.

The board acknowledges the need also to engage in communication and education exercises, and have already begun by publicizing the recent changes to the movement control regulations. Further resources will be directed into these activities. — Robert Isbister is the General Manager, Animal Health Board.

Velvet industry challenge

DEER TALK

DAVID STEVENS



After the first contested presidential election in the history of the New Zealand Deer Farmers' Association — and I might add it was good healthy stuff — we have a new president, Clive Jermy.

Clive is well known in the south having been one of the principal sponsors of the national velvet and hard antler awards for the past four years.

The positions on council in the South Island remain the same — Walter Somerville, Peter Stewart and Andrew Orbell. The North

Island has one change in Alistair Porter who was successful in gaining a seat on council but was unsuccessful in the presidential race.

We wish Clive and the council all the best as they have quite a challenge ahead of them.

With the Game Industry Board (GIB) election for two producer representatives coming up, the question must be asked: How good has the GIB's performance been in the area of velvet?

I don't think many would question the performance of the board as regards venison, other than possibly the area of cost.

With close to \$2 million collected in velvet levies, velvet prices dropping 50 percent in the past season and things not looking too good for the coming season, what is the velvet industry's future?

Can the GIB have any influence on a marketing structure that is hundreds of years old? A market in which there are more middle men than we have hot dinners in a week and in all cases with huge mark-ups.

We have been encouraged to produce a better quality velvet and that is a market reality but what has happened to our Game Industry Board velvet grading chart?

It has become a farce, with at last count, 53-plus grades, all seeming to be open to many interpretations depending on your financial vantage point.

Some buyers' grading has been more than questionable with the end result being thousands of dollars difference in lines of velvet.

A number of deer farmers have opted to dry and market their velvet through a processor to try and gain some advantage. In some cases this is costing them around \$30/kg for the drying before other costs come into account.

Most velvet processors should be able to dry 1kg of velvet for half that cost and still make something out of it.

I suggest producers should shop around before next season and ask questions before com-

mitting themselves to a processor.

As a velvet producer I believe we have bent over backwards to do our bit at quite some cost and what have we achieved?

It is time the GIB came out with a planned approach as to what they intend to do and at what cost.

Surely with the drive towards a closer trading relationship with Asia, the GIB has exerted some pressure on our government as to a reduction, if not a total removal of the excessive duty placed on New Zealand velvet entering Korea — our biggest velvet market.

A lowering of the duty would have a significant impact on producers' returns. So it is time the GIB came clean — can they do anything to help the present situation?

If not, is the velvet levy justifiable?

If they can then let's hear their plan. Or is velvet going to continue to be just a by-product in the eyes of the GIB?

Te Anau man dead after hunting mishap

A 38-year-old Te Anau man died in Southland Hospital on Saturday night after being shot in the back during a hunting trip.

Constable Jim Jamieson, of Te Anau, said Peter Ian O'Sullivan and his brother, Kevin John O'Sullivan, aged 35, also of Te Anau, were hunting in bush beside Lake Te Anau near Camp Bay early on Saturday afternoon when the accident happened.

Peter O'Sullivan was shot in the lower back with a .308 bullet.

Kevin O'Sullivan carried his brother to the shore and went to get their boat

some distance away, Mr Jamieson said.

It took about two hours for the men to reach Te Anau Downs by boat, where the alarm was raised.

The Fiordland Ambulance Service and Te Anau doctor Trevor Walker attended the wounded man at the scene.

Peter O'Sullivan was transferred to Te Anau by ambulance before being flown to Southland Hospital by helicopter about 5.15pm. He died during surgery that night.

Police have made no decision on whether charges will be laid.

Meatworks problems easy to fix — MAF

HAMILTON

The problems that have forced Horotiu meatworks to shut down its mutton and lamb operations are easily fixed, says an Agriculture and Fisheries Ministry spokesman.

But its owner, Affco, has said the operations, which shut down on Friday, will be closed indefinitely.

MAF Regulatory Authority national compliance manager Tony Zohrab yesterday said the European Community list of standards which the Horotiu works failed to meet covered mainly maintenance matters, not hygiene.

About 150 workers at Horotiu were told their jobs on the mutton chain and the lamb room would wind up at the end of the week because the plant failed to meet EC hygiene, maintenance and procedural regulations.

Dr Zohrab said the defects at Horotiu were minor and could be fixed readily.

"With all routine EC reviews there are these sort of problems found usually at two or three premises. They are technical non-tariff barriers to trade."

EC officials visited all meatworks, meat packing and processing plants which exported to their countries, about every two years.

MAF had temporarily withdrawn certification for Horotiu following the EC report, Dr Zohrab said.

Horotiu plant manager Brian Cuff yesterday said Affco's decision to close the operations was made on the basis of discussions with MAF.

But low stock levels were also a factor in the decision, he said.

Mr Cuff said it was not appropriate to disclose exactly why the plant failed but the list included:

- Upgrading the amenities areas, of which there were 22 at Horotiu. They included dining and changing rooms which needed repainting.

- Contact points — areas where meat could touch a wall.

- Condensation in the cooling rooms.

The company was unable to give workers any idea of when the operations would be running again. — NZPA

Tb gene breakthrough

WELLINGTON

Scientists at the Agresearch crown research institute's Wallaceville animal health laboratories, near Wellington, detailed a scientific breakthrough in genetic work on bovine tuberculosis.

Scientists said that, in collaboration with New York researchers, they had identified a gene involved in both the ability to cause disease and also in drug resistance.

The advance is regarded by

scientists of considerable significance to the control of both human and bovine tuberculosis.

Using genetic engineering they have identified a genetic element which confers virulence, the ability to produce disease.

"It may well be that your joint endeavours to promote the animal health of New Zealand will result in a worldwide defeat of a terrible killer, which is re-emerging after decades of obscurity," Prime Minister Jim

Bolger told scientists at the institute.

Medical authorities in the United States, Australia and parts of Asia have recently expressed concern about a resurgence of human tuberculosis, and particularly strains resistant to traditional drugs.

Mr Bolger said the New Zealand strategy would seek to ensure the incidence of bovine Tb was halved; no new endemic areas are allowed to establish; and areas currently free of Tb will be effectively sealed-off. — NZPA

Health officials not told of disease case

12/6/93

Meat inspectors are under fire for not reporting a serious disease a Lorneville plant inspector is believed to have caught on the job.

Wayne Chittock was admitted to hospital more than a month ago, suffering from leptospirosis disease, which pigs and cattle sometimes carry. He has been released from hospital and now works in Christchurch.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries should have known to report the matter to Occupational Safety and Health, OSH branch manager Alex Iremonger said yesterday.

OSH was still considering what action to take, he said. Under the new Health and Safety in Employ-

By DAVID MILLS

ment Act, an employer was required to report within seven days a serious accident or serious harm to an employee.

Under the act, MAF could be fined up to \$25,000 for the offence.

Lorneville plant meat inspectors manager Ben Ward referred comment on the matter to MAF South Island meat services manager Brendan Connolly, of Christchurch.

Mr Connolly said yesterday he was unaware of it.

Many meat inspectors had been brought to Christchurch recently to learn of their responsibilities under the Health and Safety Act, he said.

MAF would hold a meeting of Southland farmers, meat worker union officials, health officials and leptospirosis experts during the next month, to discuss the disease and how it could be prevented.

A similar educational meeting had been held recently in Blenheim, when about 60 people attended, Mr Connolly said.

Up to four Southland people, including two meat workers, are believed to have caught leptospirosis this year.

Three have been taken to hospital, suffering symptoms as severe as kidney failure.

The disease is passed on through skin contact with animals' urine. It shows itself in white spots on animals' kidneys.

Deer farmers about to break away

19/6/97

A group of South Island deer farmers, disgruntled with the of the Game Industry Board and the Deer Farmers' Association, is about to set up a break-away group.

They plan to call themselves the Deer Farmer Levy Payers' Society.

Winston Day, of Winton, said yesterday the dissatisfied farmers were unhappy with what the board was doing with farmers' levies and with the performance of the Deer Farmers' Association.

Those setting up the society include Brian Kenton, of Timaru, David Tipple, of Christchurch, Murray Crosland, of

By JOHN CUTT

Rangiora, Murray Cook, of Ashburton, and Vince Pender, of Lincoln.

The impetus to break away comes from the impending code of velvetting practice and the associated velvet training and certification programme.

The velvet training programme would result in farmers incurring additional costs, which the Levy Payers' Group considers unjustifiable.

Moves to introduce a velvet quality or training programme began more than two years by the board and the association.

A joint committee of veterinarians and association representatives was set up to study velvet harvesting methods and to formalize a programme to ensure quality.

Sources contacted by The Southland Times yesterday suggest that vets were consulted, but deer farmers were not.

The programme requires farmers to register if they want to be approved as being capable of velvetting their own stags without veterinary supervision.

They will then be required to complete a training programme under a vet and pass a

written test conducted by a second independent assessing vet.

To complete the programme farmers will incur a flat fee of \$550, which includes a training manual.

Many farmers are becoming suspicious of the reasons behind the velvet training programme and now see vets as becoming both player and referee.

They believe the velvet training programme is a further move by vets to make velvetting a vet-only procedure.

Until now farmers have been able to velvet their stags under certain guidelines without the need of

direct help from a veterinarian.

Sources say if farmers do not register for the training programme, or fail the written test, they will be barred from velvetting.

Yet the programme has no legal standing to prevent that.

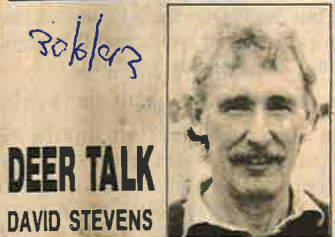
Mr Day said the velvet training programme was "just adding more costs onto farmers."

The chairman of the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee, which implemented the original velvet training programme, is Timaru veterinarian Adrian Campbell.

He would not comment on the situation other than to say discussions were continuing with deer industry leaders over costs.

Mr Campbell said the result of those discussions and changes, if any, would be announced within a week.

Deer quality assurance



In the past week I attended two interesting meetings involving the deer industry.

The first was a meeting of the Deer Development Council which is putting together a deer focus farm (monitoring) project.

The aim is to establish several monitor farms nationwide and a programme to pass on new technology and industry-related information to New Zealand's 4500 deer farmers.

The ability of this programme to get off the ground depends greatly on the availability of funding and sponsorship.

Hopefully it will get the support it deserves as it is a project which would be of great value to deer farmers.

The second meeting was the on-farm quality assurance working party with the responsibility for animal welfare and production.

This group is one of three working parties, the others being responsible for animal health and facilities.

The final outcome of these groups will be the establishment of an on-farm quality assurance programme to provide consumers with assurances that meet their expectations of product quality, to pre-empt opportunities to impose non-tariff restric-

tions on our exported produce and to improve on-farm profitability through better management, lowered inputs and improved performance.

The quality assurance programme is the joint initiative of the New Zealand Deer Farmers' Association and the Game Industry Board and has been put together for deer farmers by deer farmers.

Deer farmers will be invited to attend meetings in the next three months to discuss the programme and will be encouraged to make their views known.

Deer farmers will be invited to join the quality assurance programme at a later stage, which is totally voluntary.

I think the on-farm quality assurance programme, although still in its formative stages is brilliant and will be of tremen-

dous value to those who become involved.

One of the advantages of the programme is that it has been developed with deer farmers and I must take my hat off to Game Industry Board product development manager Bruce McKendry for the way the programme has been designed.

I must admit, however, to being mentally fatigued after each two-day working group meeting and quietly delighted to get back home to family and farm.

The deer farmers from Southland and Fiordland involved in the working groups are Chris Hughes, Russell McDonald, David Peek, Mike Harbord and myself.

Farmers with questions or concerns regarding the quality assurance programme are urged to contact any of the above.



Queenstown Parkroyal sous chef Chris Mein with a smoked cervena salad. Six southern restaurants are promoting the top-grade venison.

Restaurants push cervena

QUEENSTOWN

Southern restaurants are taking part in a national promotion for cervena — tipped to be the meat of the 1990s.

The promotion is designed to raise New Zealanders' awareness and appreciation of cervena — the brand name for top-quality farmed venison launched last year by the New Zealand Game Industry Board.

Seven franchise companies which process and use the cervena brand are supplying the meat to 49 restaurants throughout New Zealand for the two-month promotion, including six in the south.

They include Donovans in Invercargill, Olivers in Clyde, and the Stonewall Cafe, Treetops, Gibbston Valley Wines and Parkroyal Hotel in Queenstown.

The premium meat was pioneered by New Zealanders and could become the meat of the 1990s, Cervena Company spokeswoman Heather Ware said.

Versatile and quick to cook, it is low in fat and cholesterol and has a milder and lighter taste than feral venison.

Chefs at hotels throughout New Zealand are presenting cervena in various ways, many co-ordinating the promotion with local events during the same period.

Keen interest in deer sale at Pine Bush

A large gallery including buyers from Canterbury to Southland attended the first annual offering of female deer and weaner stags held on the Arawata Partnership's property at Pine Bush on Friday.

The sale on account of Walter, Nancy and John Somerville and Geoff and Dianne Gill attracted brisk bidding on most lines.

Buyers were prepared to pay good prices for animals showing good growth rates and also paid attention to progeny from well-known velvet-producing stags.

The depth of breeding and body weights — the heaviest on offer in Southland at this time — was reflected in the prices paid.

Weaner stags especially were in de-

mand with Ken Smith, of Winton, paying \$1150 for a 91kg animal.

A 92kg weaner stag, sired by "Dick" was bought by the Scobie family, of Wyndham, for \$1070.

European cross weaner hinds weighing up to 77kg brought prices up to \$480.

The top priced 18-month-old hind, weighing in at 113kg, sired by a Danish stag "Dan" and herself mated to "Roland," sold for \$1050 to Bill Chalaner, of Te Anau, who also bought two two and a-half-year-old Hungarian cross hinds, mated to "Roland" for \$1200 each.

Mixed-age European cross hinds weighing up to 148kg sold at prices up to \$660.

Call for stag cull

AUCKLAND

Half the number of stags being kept for velvet should be culled to increase velvet quality and ensure better prices, Deer Farmers' Association Clive Jermy says.

"Of the 450 tonnes of velvet we will export to Korea this year, two-thirds is of very poor quality."

Last season returns dropped by half as large quantities of velvet came on to the Korea market and Taiwanese buyers stopped trading.

"I would personally like to see half the herd go."

With a strong venison schedule returning farmers at least 30 percent better prices than they received last year, the cull could be a blessing.

Old stags would not be suitable for the new Cervena brand marketed by the Game Industry Board, but animals under three years old will be. —NZPA

Field-day targets winter feed

20/6/93

More than 100 deer farmers attended a winter feed field-day at Glenarary Station yesterday.

The programme included presentations on winter feeding options for deer and a tour of Glenarary's deer unit.

Speaking on silage production, Agriculture New Zealand consultant Peter Hook said basically any green material could be used provided it was wilted, chopped and then compressed — either in a pit or baled — to exclude all air.

When air was removed bacteria was able to convert the plant sugars to acids which preserved the silage, he said.

The material being converted to silage had to be sufficiently moist enough with sufficient sugar and most importantly air-tight, to ensure enough acid was produced for safe storage.

While saying almost any material could be used for silage, Mr Hook recommended farm-

ers used high-quality leafy plant material with good legume content, such as clover.

That was especially important where the expensive baling and wrapping technique was used, he said.

He estimated pit silage cost between \$10 and \$12 a tonne to make compared with about \$27 a tonne for baled silage.

Mr Hook listed the following points that contributed to good silage.

- A pH of around 4.3 to 4.6. Anything below 4.3 could result in acidosis problems with a risk of levels above 5 leading to rot and the development of listeria.

- Fibre content should be below 30. A high fibre content suggests over-mature pasture with low metabolizable energy and low digestibility.

- A dry matter range between 25 to 30 percent. There can be a loss of nutrients when the dry matter content is below 25 percent. More than 35 percent there is a risk of not enough

acid being produced to preserve the material.

- An organic matter below 93 percent indicates soil contamination which can also lead to rotting.

- Less than 7 percent ash indicates low soil contamination.

- The crude protein level should be above 12.

- Metabolizable energy should be above 11.

- Digestibility should be at least 65 percent. This is important to ensure a high intake.

Gore AgResearch officer-in-charge David Stevens outlined the various winter forage options for deer which include brassicas — either swedes or kale, or a combination — autumn-sown cereals or Italian ryegrass, autumn-saved pasture, silage or hay.

Each crop had its benefits, he said, including their part in a pasture renewal programme, but each had to be considered on its respective merits, such as feed value and cost.

Swedes were possibly better value as a winter feed crop for deer than sheep, he said.

Mr Stevens suggested:

- An average brassica crop could be expected to produce 12 tonnes/ha of which 7.2 tonnes would be available to grazing animals.

- Cereals and Italian ryegrass crops could average 6 tonnes/ha of which 4.8 tonnes was available for grazing.

- Autumn-saved pastures, with additional nitrogen, 2 tonnes/ha with 1.8 tonnes available.

- Silage saved in October-November, 4 tonnes/ha after field and storage losses with about 90 percent available.

- Hay 5.5 tonnes/ha with 4.4 tonnes available or 220 bales/ha.

Using average yields for the respective crop options, Mr Stevens suggested brassicas would cost \$760/ha, cereals \$498/ha, saved pasture with ad-

ditional nitrogen applied \$53/ha, pit silage \$442/ha, baled silage \$744/ha and hay \$630/ha.

Broken down into the feed unit requirements to graze one 90kg hind for one day on maintenance, the per day grazing costs were, brassicas, 25c, cereals 31c, pasture 5c, pit silage 20c, baled silage 33c, hay 34c and if barley was considered, 42c.

Mr Stevens said when deciding on winter feed options for deer it should be noted that brassicas, while high in energy were low in protein and could result in an iodine deficiency. Red water disease and other metabolic problems could result from feeding kale.

Cereals and Italian ryegrass, if actively growing could cause nitrate poisoning.

Mixing some forage crops together such as swedes and Italian ryegrass or kale could improve the balance of the diet, boost growth rates and provide better feed utilization, he said.



Inspecting a sample of baled silage at the Northern Southland Deer Farmers' Group field-day at Glenarary Station yesterday were group chairman Peter Swann (left), Game Industry Board chairman Tom Williams and Agriculture New Zealand consultant Peter Hook.

Deer talk

All deer farmers are invited to attend a meeting organized by the Tuatapere Deer Discussion Group tomorrow night.

The meeting will be held in the Waiiau Hotel lounge bar at 8pm.

Speakers will be Chris Hughes on the new velvet-ing code, David Peak on the proposed on-farm quality programme and Neville Cunningham on behalf of the Southland branch of the New Zealand Deer Farmers' Association.

28/7/93

DEER TALK

DAVID STEVENS



In the past month the Deer Farmer Levy Payers' Group has attracted plenty of press which has left me to ponder the effectiveness of the producer representation we have in place.

As a member of the Deer Farmers' Association I think the events of the past two months haven't done any harm at all.

The reasons for concern were justified but I do believe the end result could have been achieved through the association.

Most, if not all, the organizers of the levy group are members of the association.

Is the association doing the job as the producers' representative and watchdog in the deer industry?

The association must listen to its membership and that membership can only give an informed opinion if it has all of the facts.

If those facts had been available I believe the problems with the velvet-ing code could have been sorted out without all of the fuss.

The strength of an organization is a well-informed membership.

Ask a deer farmer why he hasn't joined the association and the reasons usually given are cost, lack of representation by those elected and is the association necessary? I would also add apathy.

Ask a deer farmer who is an association member and he is quite happy with the structure. Any concerns are only a phone call away from either a Southland committee member, an association councillor or the national Deer Farmers' Association president.

The association president and councillors, like most producer representatives, do the job for love and not money, which is a cost to themselves and their business.

They do the job because of a concern for the direction of deer farming, not for themselves or some hidden ambition for higher office as some might suggest — not that I see anything wrong with ambition, as long as it is well directed.

The deer farmers who are not members must realize they have the opportunity to have a voice in the deer industry if they join the association.

The cost is not great considering the fact it allows you a say in the direction of your industry.

A quote from Benjamin Franklin crossed my mind while writing this article: "Any fool can criticize, condemn and complain and most fools usually do."

Levy payers' group winning velvet stand

^{17/7/92}
The Deer Farmer Levy Payers' Group appears to be winning increasing support for its opposition to the New Zealand Deer Farmers' Association velvetting code of practice and velvet training programme.

The programme is designed to enable farmers to gain accreditation to velvet their own stags without veterinary assistance.

While all deer farmers accepted the need for such a programme there was a growing resistance to the cost of the scheme and its complicated structure, levy payers' group spokesman David Tipple said.

Although there were 5500 deer levy payers in New Zealand only 2200 were members of the deer farmers' association, he said.

"We believe that all levy payers should have a say in the affairs of the deer industry."

Last month, the association successfully negotiated with the National Velvet Standards Body (which is to administer the scheme) to reduce the base cost from more than \$500 a farmer to \$295 (plus GST).

But the levy payers' group says this is still too high.

The group has been holding meetings throughout the South Island to gauge farmer feelings on the issue.

By JOHN CUTT

Mr Tipple, a Christchurch deer farmer and businessman, said yesterday a recent meeting in Winton had attracted 56 Southland deer farmers, more than half of whom were not members of the association.

Mr Tipple said those at the meeting had been asked to vote on changes to the velvet training scheme being suggested by his group.

Thirty-one of those who attended had voted in favour of the suggestions, he said.

Other meetings have been held at Rangiora and Blenheim.

The majority of farmers at the Blenheim meeting had accepted his group's arguments and suggested alternatives to the velvet training scheme, he said.

"We got massive support in Rangiora."

Further meetings are planned for Ashburton and Timaru and the group has a proposal to hold a meeting in the central North Island in the near future.

Mr Tipple considered the association was holding a gun to farmers' heads in that if they did not agree to join the scheme the Animal Remedies Board would reclassify the drugs used in velvetting as vet-only drugs

which would prevent them from velvetting their own stags.

The levy payers' group intended to keep pressure on the Game Industry Board, which is funding a large part of the programme. That was because farmers were unhappy with the programme in its present form and to carry on with it would be to waste the board's levy income.

Rather than weaken the deer industry, Mr Tipple was confident the group would strengthen it. The group would draw more farmers into industry affairs and so direct the way they wanted the industry to go, he said.

Deer Farmers' Association president Clive Jermy said yesterday the activities of the levy payers' group should be kept in perspective.

Just 33 people had attended the group's Rangiora meeting and 23 at Blenheim, he said.

That attendance was insignificant compared with the more than 400 deer farmers who last month attended the association's Canterbury branch annual meeting, an open meeting to discuss the velvet training scheme and a Canterbury deer farmers' field-day.

Mr Jermy said 1600 deer farmers had so far joined the velvet training scheme.

"By and large there is a growing acceptance among farmers that the

association is arbitrating successfully on behalf of levy payers in cost reduction and other matters relating to the scheme.

"We are happy with the training scheme in its present form for this year with the exception of a few minor loose ends.

"Farmers will have the opportunity to make submissions for change to the National Velvet Standards Body (which is administering the scheme) after this velvetting season," Mr Jermy said.

"We now need the benefit of practical application of the scheme so that experience can be gained on which to make submissions for change."

Mr Jermy said the association was not holding a gun to farmers' heads as suggested by Mr Tipple.

Unless the scheme was implemented there was a real risk that the industry and deer farmers would incur real financial losses and possible loss of market access through animal welfare grounds.

The scheme would give farmers who had not been able to velvet their own stags the opportunity to do so and thus save money that would otherwise be spent on veterinary fees.

The scheme would also protect the right of farmers to continue velvetting in the future, he said.

Tb declaration cards to be compulsory

^{24/7/93}
From next month it will be compulsory for the movement of all deer and cattle to be accompanied by a bovine Tb declaration card which gives information on the Tb status of the stock and their herd.

Up until now, declaration cards have been mandatory only for stock moved in declared movement control areas.

The new, more stringent measures follow on from the control policies introduced by the Animal Health Board in October last year.

They are a further move to develop a five-year strategic plan to significantly reduce the level of bovine Tb in New Zealand.

Board chairman Richard Alspach said the August 1 changes to the Tb control regulations were only part of the board's total programme.

"The stock movement control procedures are complementary to the feral animal control, research and farmer education programmes already in place.

"The board acknowledges that for some farmers and associated industry

participants these new measures will mean considerable changes in the way they do business.

"However, there is a strong desire by the industry to keep up the momentum and get on top of the problem, especially given the international repercussions for the individual farmer and country if the disease control situation worsens," he said.

By December the Tb declaration card booklets will have been redesigned and distributed to incorporate the changes and make them more useful to farmers.

Mr Alspach said farmers should not lose sight of the main purpose of the declaration card — to encourage farmers to take responsibility for the Tb status of the stock they buy.

Not only will the movement of all stock after August 1 have to be accompanied by a declaration card, but other changes will come into effect relating to pre and post-movement Tb testing and the use of official white movement control eartags for stock from movement control cattle and deer herds.

Invermay targets control of Tb in farmed deer 11/8/93

Tb might not be regarded as prevalent in New Zealand farmed deer but it could become serious if present measures to control the spread of the disease are relaxed.

Heading Tb research at the Invermay Research Centre is Colin Mackintosh.

"Not all deer develop Tb and we are looking at ways to identify resistant animals and hopefully breed for increased resistance," he said.

Invermay's deer Tb programme was one of the central displays in the deer unit at Invermay's Open Day last Friday.

The possibility of a vaccine for use in high risk areas to augment the animals' natural resistance was also a major thrust of present research, Dr Mackintosh said.

In order to effectively study farmed deer in their natural surroundings, Invermay is leasing a 20ha deer farm near Milton. A 3km protection strip or buffer zone around the block has been set up to study the effect of feral animals in the Tb cycle and to ensure Tb won't be carried out onto surrounding farmland.

Dr Mackintosh said the deer

on the block were experimentally inoculated with Tb to determine how the disease was transmitted between animals and to find out why some were more resistant to the disease than others.

"None of the deer are left to suffer or die from Tb. They are humanely slaughtered before there are any clinical signs of the disease, usually eight to nine months after inoculation," Dr Mackintosh said.

Monitoring feral animal movement around and through the deer block is attempting to determine the incidence of Tb carried by other species and how that might be controlled.

So far Tb has been identified in adult pigs, cats, stoats and possums caught in the buffer zone.

Dr Mackintosh said the benefits of the research were:

- Identifying management factors to assist farmers avoid Tb in their farmed deer.
- Possibility of selecting for Tb-resistant animals.
- Developing a vaccine for use in high risk areas.
- Develop better tests to identify the presence of Tb in farmed deer.
- Gain a better understanding

of how Tb is transmitted between different animal species, especially feral predators such as ferrets, stoats and cats.

Other areas of Invermay's deer research programme include studies into deer reproduction, behaviour and welfare, antler growth and composition and venison assessment.

The aim of the reproductive research is to better understand the effect of season and age on the ability of hinds to mate and produce offspring.

In the wild, hinds can live to about 18 to 20 years and are capable of producing fawns until they reach 16 years of age.

But performance might be more closely related to their bodyweight or condition than age.

The aim behind the welfare research programme is to develop improved management techniques that will lead to improved welfare of farmed deer.

The benefits of the research will be improved productivity and a competitive advantage on other countries that will result from husbandry systems which achieve high welfare standards.

Present research is considering the need for shade, shelter and wallows in pasture; the ef-

fect of group sizes and composition; the effect of lighting in deer movement within deer yards and the measurement of individual animal temperament.

Velvet antler earned more than \$60 million for New Zealand last year.

The velvet research programme aims to discover more about what influences velvet growth and quality of the various products extracted from velvet.

Ultra lean venison through crossbreeding, carcass yield and quality and the better use for the lower-priced parts of deer carcasses are the main focus of Invermay's venison research work.

Crossbreeding red deer with the pere david species also has some possible benefits for the farmed deer industry.

Invermay has been involved in breeding pere david deer since 1983.

The initial objectives of the research were to conserve the rare breed — which originated in China — and to begin a hybridization programme with red deer.

The aim is to determine if the early breeding characteristic of the pere david could be transferred to farmed deer, thus achieving an earlier birth date to better coincide with New Zealand's pasture growth curve.



Invermay Tb deer research team leader Colin Mackintosh.

Deer industry to lift profile

The Southland branch of the New Zealand Deer Farmers' Association intends to lift its profile and develop more effective communication with farmers.

That is the aim of incoming branch chairman Neville Cunningham. He was elected branch chairman earlier this week.

The branch also has a new secretary, Winton accountant Janet Horrell.

Southland is one of the country's major deerfarming regions with some 900 deerfarmers.

Mr Cunningham said a regular newsletter outlining branch activities and giving hints on deer management and welfare would become an important part in

improving communication between the branch and the province's deerfarmers.

Regular field-days would also be held.

Lifting the branch's profile and improving communications would hopefully encourage more farmers to become members, Mr Cunningham said.

By having a committee whose

members were spread geographically around the province farmers had district representatives they could contact with problems or ideas, he said.

In mid-October the branch will be organizing a series of meetings around the province with members of the Game Industry Board and the deer farmers' association.

Mr Cunningham said the meetings would give grassroots farmers the opportunity to closely question industry leaders on new policies and quality assurance schemes and other industry-related matters.

Mr Cunningham agreed the deer industry was not without its problems, such as the recent controversy surrounding the velvet training programme.

And while it was necessary that there be various special interest groups it was essential for there to be unity between such groups if the deer industry was to survive and prosper.

It was also essential, he said, that deerfarmers had a strong voice to represent them and that voice had to be the deer farmers' association.

Mossburn farmer and chairman of the Northern Southland Deer Discussion Group, Peter Swann is the new vice-chairman of the Southland branch of the association.

Committee members are: Harry Robinson, of Spurhead; David Stevens, of Balfour; George Orr, of Gore; Peter McIntyre, of Maitland; Dave Peak, of Tuatapere; Johan Groeters, of Otautau; Murray McWhirter, of Merrivale; Bruce Story and Ken Buckingham, of Wyndham; Joe Wilson, of Invercargill; Geoff Gill, of Otahuti; Colin Macnicol, of Dacre; Ewan Burnett, of Glencoe; Susan Toomey, of Makarewa.



Mossburn deerfarmer Peter Swann (right) discusses aspects of his winter management with Kevin Edge, of Ashburton (left) and New Zealand Deer Farmers' Association North Otago-South Canterbury branch chairman Keith Orange. They were members of an 11-strong party of northern deerfarmers which inspected wintering systems on four Northern Southland properties yesterday.



Southland Farmers Co-op livestock manager Terry Cairns with the new Tb awareness billboard at the Lorneville saleyard.

Bovine Tb campaign gears

Billboards are going up at saleyards around Southland warning farmers of their responsibilities under recently introduced measures to control the spread of bovine Tb.

From August 1 it became compulsory for the movement of all cattle and deer aged three months and over to be accompanied by Tb declaration cards.

The cards, which had been mandatory for stock being moved from declared movement control areas, provide information to buyers on the Tb status of the stock and their herd of origin.

The change to a compulsory requirement for all cattle and deer, regardless of their origin, is a further step by the Animal Health Board in its five-year programme to eradicate bovine Tb from New Zealand.

Not only is there now a mandatory requirement for all vendors of cattle and deer to complete the declaration cards, but stock from movement control herds — in which Tb has been identified — must carry an official white eartag and be post-movement tested for the disease.

Farmers who now offer stock for sale without the necessary docu-

mentation face the prospect of having their stock rejected for public sale and returned.

The new billboards erected at Southland saleyards drawing farmers' attention to their responsibilities were a first for the South Island, Southland Regional Animal Health Advisory Committee chairman Lindsay Wards said yesterday.

Mr Wards said there had unfortunately been some problems in getting the books of declaration cards out to farmers and it appeared some farmers were still confused about what they should do.



Mossburn Lions Club vice-president John Douglas admires the town's new stag monument yesterday. Picture: CHRISTINE MCKENZIE

Mossburn unveils giant stag

Until recently visitors to Southland could take home snapshots of giant sausages, fish and sheep to put in their family albums.

Now, when they pass through Mossburn, they can capture themselves on film standing beside a giant concrete stag.

The Mossburn Lions Club yesterday officially unveiled the stag, which sits in the town's main street.

Club vice-president John Douglas said the monument was a club-community project. It was designed and built by Murray

By MARIE MACKAY

Matuska, of Rotorua.

The town wanted to promote itself as the deer capital of the country, he said.

Other town monuments in the region include a trout and ram in Gore, sausages in Tuatapere, fruit in Cromwell, clydesdale horses in Clinton, a tap in Wallacetown and a blade of grass in Invercargill.

Mr Douglas said Mossburn had one of the

first deer farms and deer slaughtering plants in New Zealand.

"It gives the town a bit of focus. We don't want to be remembered as the last town you come to before Te Anau."

The stag weighs 600kg and sits on a 12-tonne rock found in a quarry near the town. Genuine 16-point antlers are a feature of the monument.

The unveiling was attended by representatives from the Southland District Council, the Mossburn Development Council and the Mossburn Lions Club.

Training manuals out soon on velvet training scheme

Deerfarmers registered as taking part in the industry's velvet training programme should soon receive their training manuals.

New Zealand Deer Farmers' Association national president Clive Jermy said manuals had been posted to 180 veterinarians taking part in the scheme.

They in turn will distribute the manuals to the 1500 farmers so far registered.

In recent weeks the scheme

has drawn considerable opposition from a mainly South Island breakaway group of deerfarmers.

It is concerned at the cost and the fact farmers had not been consulted on the scheme and the new velvet code of practice.

The aim of the velvet training scheme is to enable farmers who have received the necessary training under the guidance of participating veterinarians, to administer the drugs used in

velveting and velvet their own stags.

The scheme, described by Mr Jermy as a world first, will not only reduce farmers' costs but will also allay the fears of animal welfare groups.

The SPCA is a signatory to the new code of practice, as are the Agriculture Ministry, the Animal Welfare Advisory Council, the New Zealand Veterinary Association, the New Zealand Deer Farmers' Association and the Game Industry Board.

14/8/93
VENISON
NEW ZEALAND
CO-OP LTD

We wish to advise our clients that as of Monday, August 16 we will not be accepting any Feral Deer for procession. This is a temporary measure and we will start again in two or three weeks. Watch the paper for the details.

Ian Stewart
MANAGER

24804

No apologies for venison price stand

27/8/92

By JOHN CUTT

Venison New Zealand is taking stock of where it wants to be in the New Zealand venison industry with a view to strengthening its market share.

Company chairman David Maling, who has spent the past two days in the province with newly appointed company chief executive Tim McMahon, agreed the company was undercapitalized.

"We are looking closely at the need to rethink where Venison New Zealand stands in the venison industry. We must either decide to live within our means or seek further capital," he said.

What had surprised him, in talking to shareholders and farmers, was that they no longer considered a co-operative structure to be essential.

"What they want is a company that performs and that's exactly what we are going to do," he said.

The appointment of Mr McMahon as chief executive was the start of that direction.

Mr Maling said a major part of Mr McMahon's role would be to develop a strategic plan for the company that would give a clear focus on the future direction the company should take.

The company's directors were keen to see southern shareholders nominate a local director, he said.

Such an appointment would re-establish a closer contact with farmer suppliers in the southern part of the country.

"Southern shareholders need to nominate someone with a strong commercial background who also has the ability to communicate well with farmers."

Mr Maling questioned the procurement activities of some of the other players in the venison industry that had led to a virtual procurement war in the past six months.

While farmers had in turn been critical of the company for not matching the schedules of other exporters, Mr Maling said the prices his company had offered had been totally market-led.

"But we know we didn't sell our stand to farmers well."

But in view of falling venison prices he was confident the stand the company had taken had been vindicated.

Mr Maling said because of the unrealistic and confusing signals the schedules had given farmers their relevance had to be seriously looked at.

"Companies that have paid higher venison prices simply to get market share and performed poorly, have really done farmers a disservice."

With a kill of about 100,000 animals in the past year and an estimated 28 percent of New Zealand's venison exports, the company is one of the industry's major players.

Mr Maling agreed the procurement war had enticed a good number of the company's suppliers to other companies.

"But I'm amazed at the amount of support farmers have given the company when other companies were paying higher prices."

"Many have expressed pleasure someone like VNZ was taking a longer-term approach. And (now venison prices were softening) farmers are returning to VNZ."

Mr Maling said the company placed a lot of importance in offering farmers supply contracts as an alternative to schedule and intended to build on the contract system in the future.

During the past two years large numbers of hinds had been killed either by people leaving the industry or farmers seeking increased cash



Venison New Zealand chairman of directors David Maling (left) and chief executive Tim McMahon who spent the past two days at Mossburn meeting staff at the company's deer slaughter premises and shareholders.

flows, Mr Maling said.

"We have got to stop that trend (killing females) and rebuild the breeding base of our herds."

As for velvetting animals, low producing stags and those with C and D grade velvet should be culled heavily, he said. Many of these animals produced an ideal carcass and fit well into the Cervena programme.

Older stags were really suit only the commodity European trade which was developing into a soft market with a reluctance from buyers to pay higher prices.

Mr Maling said the industry estimated there could be a 20 percent drop in the number of animals coming forward for kill in the next year.

In view of the surplus killing capacity that would result, it was a trend that gave cause for concern.

Because of the foreseen surplus killing and processing capacity, Mr Maling said the company had dropped any idea of building deer slaughter premises in Marlborough. Land bought for the purpose was being sold.

The company already operates three killing and processing plants at Feilding, Hastings and Mossburn.

The company was putting considerable effort into securing a long-term profitable market for deer byproducts and 15 months ago had taken a majority shareholding in a new specialty, New Zealand-based marketing company, Dai Yat Luk Yung.

"The byproducts market is a difficult one to crack," Mr Maling said.

In contrast to other exporters which export deer byproducts, such as tails and pizzles, in bulk frozen form, Mr Maling said the company will further process and export dried product.

Greater efforts would also be put into research to find new uses for byproducts.

Referring to the company's Mossburn plant, Mr Maling said changes to EC regulations will require a further upgrade and this would have to be completed by January 1.

Discussions with MAF officials are expected to be held soon to determine exactly what those requirements might be.

Tb researchers look to natural immunity

By Mark Wright

University of Otago scientists researching tuberculosis in deer hope a new deal with a leading research-based United States university will lead them further down the path to wiping out the disease.

The Deer Research Laboratory at Otago has signed an agreement with Texas A and M, which boasts a big programme focussing on brucellosis and non-specific disease resistance in cattle and bison.

Laboratory director Associate Professor Frank Griffin, says research is now taking them in the direction of being able to naturally select animals which show a natural resistance to Tb, and the work being

done by Texas A and M can be switched to focus on deer.

Collaborating with an American University will open the door to a whole new range of funding. The links are already there as the US institution is using a Tb test developed by the Otago research group.

Skin tests had proved too unreliable on their own, and the blood test they developed, while 95 percent reliable, cost \$100 per animal.

Frank Griffin and his team instead came up with an ELISA antibody test, which combined with a skin test, was as reliable as the blood test, but at a tenth of the cost.

The Deer Research Lab, in collaboration with Invermay, has set up an infected farm which has accelerated research

in protective immunity and disease resistance. It allows scientists to study animals reactions to exposure to the disease as well as test the efficiency of vaccines.

Their new American research partners have identified a gene for non-specific disease resistance, while another set of genes has been discovered which govern immunity.

Collaboration between the Otago University Deer Lab, the Agresearch Molecular Biology Unit, and Texas A and M will focus on natural infection and animals which show immunity, and how genes interplay in this.

Associate Professor Griffin is excited about the future possibilities, especially as New Zealand's deer industry has

become the prototype for managing wildlife. "New Zealand is in the privileged position of being able to develop models the rest of the world can follow."

It's the potential to apply the research to humans that is one of the most exciting aspects of the research. New Zealand lacks the sheer human population for meaningful paraclinical research, but as Dr Griffin points out, bigger animal populations provide more scope.

"With deer we have got to

the point where we can manipulate disease to set up models of disease in developing countries or the western world. This may be useful as a model for human vaccines."

It may provide answers with a disease that is on the move in human populations, in the wake of the spread of Aids. Tb is already the leading killer and by the end of the century the total number of deaths is expected to rise by more than 300 percent from three to 10 million per year.

It's predicted that in the com-

ing ten years, 7000 people in New Zealand and Australia will contract Tb as a result of Aids.

Of even more concern is the way RB bacterium is becoming drug resistant. New York, doctors are finding the proportion of such cases has gone from two to seven percent with a 95 percent fatality rate.

It serves to underscore the importance of the work Dr Griffin and his team are doing on immunology and vaccines. It may well provide important answers for humankind.



Scientists hope research work on Tb deer will lead to important answers for humankind.

Deer industry not of age yet

26/8/93

15-month hind going to the stag at between 65 to 70kg liveweight and a mixed-aged sire stag producing 3kg of velvet.

Now we expect 15-month hinds to be at least 85 to 90kg and many mixed-aged stags are producing 6 to 7kg of velvet.

All achieved through genetic selection, better environmental and feeding management.

These results are quite impressive, but can they continue to improve at the same rate?

Last week I attended a meeting with several other deer farmers to look at the possibilities of setting up a programme to evaluate sires' performance. Something I consider important if the deer industry is serious about improving its genetic base.

Dr Dorian Garrick and Dr Hugh Blair of the Animal Science Department, Massey University with the help of Dr Geoff Nicol, a geneticist with Landcorp, presented a paper — Genetic Improvement for the New Zealand Deer Industry.

It covered areas of genetic principals, breeding values and how much the environment can have an effect on performance.

Breeding sires for velvet will continue to be required to supply progeny for velveting herds and increase the nation's velvet quality.

It is a young industry in terms of recorded genetic information but I believe we have to make a start.

The next time you buy a sire stag or breeding hind inquire about their performance, how they rank and the overall herd performance.

Environment (climate, social numbers, feed) also play a large part in an animal's performance — but this has no effect on their genetics.

There has been far too much influence in the past placed on the origin of an animal with little regard to its true performance.

The direction and the progress of the entire deer industry depends on decisions made by sire breeders — those decisions should be made on performance not on fashion.

My answer to the question I asked at the beginning of this article, yes, I think we have a little further to go until we come of age in the deer industry particularly in the area of performance recording.

Some interesting facts and assumptions of the industry needs in the future were discussed at the meeting.

With a national breeding herd of between 550,000 to 600,000 hinds, the deer industry will require about 2500 breeding stags annually.

The majority of breeding hinds will be mated to a terminal sire with the objective of producing progeny for slaughter at 50kg or more, preferably by one year of age.

The preference is for a smaller breeding hind (110 to 120kg) to be used to achieve the 50kg-plus carcass. The smaller hinds consume less feed and are easier to manage under commercial conditions than larger hinds.

Selection criteria of terminal sires should include calving difficulty, progeny survival, carcass weights/traits and temperament.

The industry will also need to produce replacement hinds selected for maternal characteristics such as fertility, early breeding, calving ease, milking and mothering ability, temperament and in the case of a velveting herd, velvet genetics.



DEER TALK
DAVID STEVENS

Is deer farming paying its way? Are you getting the best performance out of your herd? What are your weaning weights, slaughter weights, velvet weights, calving percentages?

It costs as much to run a poor performing animal as it does to run a good one.

You have probably heard it all before, but are we doing anything about increasing performance?

The deer industry has achieved a lot in the way of animal performance in the past. I recall in the late 1970s it was considered acceptable to have a

Ferrets also carry TB

2/9/93

DUNEDIN

Ferrets have been confirmed to carry bovine tuberculosis and may spread infection to livestock, according to preliminary results of a nationwide study into possible Tb carriers.

The manager of the Animal Health Board in Wellington, Robert Isbister, said ferrets, feral cats and stoats were studied at sites throughout the country, including Otago.

"What we are finding is that yes, ferrets are suffering from Tb and big percentages of the (ferret) population in the locality where there are Tb infections are being infected," Mr Isbister said.

Stoats and cats had also been found to be Tb carriers, but to a lesser extent.

Scientists conducting the studies could not say for certain, however, whether the ferrets spread infection to livestock, although this was suspected.

The findings raised important issues, such as whether ferrets should be regarded as pests.

But little was known on actual numbers of ferrets in different areas or what impacts controlling them would have on ecology and on rabbit populations.

Ferrets were originally introduced to New Zealand to control rabbits, he said.

The board was planning a "quick" study to assess ecological impacts of control by targeting ferrets in areas yet to be decided.

Some pressure was already coming from the farming community which wanted to start controlling ferrets.

Mr Isbister was unsure how they could be controlled although there was some suggestion they could respond to poisoned jam bait. — NZPA

Venison						
Grade	Weights	Fortex	Mair	Venison	PPCS	Duncan
			11/4/93			
Grade	kg	\$/kg	\$/kg	\$/kg	\$/kg	Otago
AP Hind	30-35	2.80	2.85	2.50	4.49	2.85
AP Hind	35-40	4.00	4.05	3.80	4.49	4.00
AP Hind	40-45	4.85	4.80	4.75	5.34	4.85
AP Hind	45-50	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.34	4.90
AP Hind	50-55	5.20	5.20	5.30	5.74	5.20
AP Hind	55-60	5.20	5.20	5.40	5.74	5.20
AP Stag	45-50	5.10	5.10	5.10	5.44	5.00
AP Stag	50-55	5.30	5.30	5.40	5.84	5.30
AP Stag	55-60	5.30	5.30	5.50	5.84	5.30
AP Stag	60-65	5.30	5.30	5.50	5.74	5.30
AP Stag	65-70	5.05	5.05	5.25	5.74	5.10
AP Stag	70-75	5.05	5.05	5.10	5.39	5.05
AP Stag	75-80	5.05	5.05	4.95	5.39	5.00
AP Stag	80-85	5.05	5.05	4.95	5.39	4.95
AP Stag	85-100	4.55	4.20	4.65	5.04	4.75
AF1, AT	55-65	4.25	4.20	4.05	3.92	4.15
AF1, AT	75-85	4.55	3.80	3.85	3.92	4.10
AF2	50-70	3.70	3.20	3.00	3.22	3.30

CHANGES:
No Schedule changes in the South Island this week.

NOTES:
1. The net venison prices are shown above in dollars per kg carcass weight. The GIB levy (28c/kg) needs to be deducted along with transport to works.
2. MAFQual inspection charges need also be deducted. They are (\$ per head) Seafield \$7, Venison NZ Mossburn \$7, Kennington \$7, Mair Hokitika \$7.85, PPCS Isthington \$5.00, Duncan Otago \$7.00.

INFORMATION SUPPLIED BY AGRI-FAX

Venison New Zealand wishes to secure the supply of prime deer yielding carcass weights of 45kg to 75kg.



A
SUPPLY
PREMIUM
WILL BE
PAID TO
OBTAIN
A
LIMITED
NUMBER
OF
STOCK

Venison
New Zealand
Co-operative
Limited

For more details
please contact:

VENISON NEW ZEALAND
John Fogarty, (03) 214-2499
Mobile (025) 452-723
Jim Guyton, Office (03) 248-6063
SOUTHLAND FARMERS
CO-OP
John Duncan, Mobile (025) 322-881
WRIGHTSON
Brian Duggan, Mobile (025) 324-212



Ian Stewart, manager of the Venison NZ plant at Mossburn, Tad Porteous, president of the Mossburn Lions Club, and John Douglas, chairman of Mossburn's Community Facilities Committee, with the statue of a stag unveiled in the township last week.

Statue of stag unveiled

By LIANNE MACKAY

The image of Mossburn as "the deer capital of New Zealand" will be fostered by a life-size statue of a stag unveiled in the township last week.

The Mossburn Area Development Committee initiated the project in the hope of giving the town an identity.

The project was supported by Mossburn Lions and the Mossburn Community Facilities Committee, according to the project convener, John Douglas.

"We don't want to just be known as the town you go through on the way to Te Anau," he said.

Deer had provided a focus for the area, which boasted one of the first deer farms in the country at West Dome, and had a history of deer recovery and farming. The establishment of a venison processing plant in the district had also been a milestone.

The company which runs the plant, Venison New Zealand, put \$5000 towards the cost of the statue and the Game

Industry Board donated another \$500, leaving the Mossburn Lions Club with just \$500 to find to finish the project.

Built by Murray Matuschka, of Taupo, the stag features a 12-point set of antlers and stands on 12 tonnes of rock hauled from a Northern Southland quarry in an environment created by members of the area's two Lions clubs.

Schoolchildren have been invited to come up with a name for the stag and asked to keep an eye on it to prevent vandalism.

Venison company chief on tour

Venison New Zealand's chief executive Tim McMahon has only been in the job for two weeks but he is already well versed on the venison industry.

Mr McMahon and company chairman David Maling have spent the past two days in the province meeting staff at the company's Mossburn deer slaughter premises and shareholders.

Last week the two men inspected the company's plant at Feilding and earlier this week travelled to Hastings.

Those visits had given him a good look at the company's operation, he said.

Mr Maling said in appointing Mr McMahon as chief executive, his directors had looked for someone with "people skills" and experience in international marketing.

Mr McMahon is a former chief executive of the Cable Price Corporation. In that role he had often visited Southland and knew the province well, he said.

The venison industry being export-based was a vital part of the total New Zealand export industry on which the future of the country was dependent, he said.

Mr McMahon said he was pleased to see that the Cervena programme for venison was moving away from the traditional commodity trading concept.

"Venison is still a young industry and there is tremendous scope for it to develop with obvious benefits back to New Zealand and especially to farmers."

As new markets developed, increased volumes of venison would be needed and farmers and the industry would have to move away from seasonal supply to year-round supply to service those markets.

Mr McMahon was confident the Cervena programme, at present based on the United States and Australian markets, would expand into other regions.

"The future for Venison New Zealand is customer focussed and the company intends to supply what its customers want."

Mr McMahon was pleased that all company plants had received ISO 9000 quality assurance accreditation.

"To me that's a feather in VNZ's cap. But it's only a start and we have to continue to improve the quality of our product."

Students study new deer velvet product

30/6/93

DUNEDIN

An innovative deer velvet product that Otago University students have been investigating for a business contest could become a lucrative export-earner for Dunedin, according to the game industry.

Four Otago postgraduate marketing students will be basing their presentation on the product in the finals of a trans-Tasman competition in Queensland early next month.

This is the third consecutive year Otago marketing students have reached the final of the ICM Pacific Agribusiness Mar-

keting Competition. For the first time Otago has also entered an undergraduate team and it has also reached its respective final.

Mike Reid, aged 28, a member of the postgraduate team and a spokesman for both teams, said the senior students had put thousands of hours into developing the idea.

Although the concept was being put forward in a contest simulation, he was convinced it was a commercially viable proposition.

The product had been developed by the students in consultation with Dr Peter Fennessy, general manager of science and technology at Agresearch,

Invermay, and the New Zealand Game Industry Board.

New Zealand deer velvet exports in their traditional form were prized in Korea and other Asian countries for their invigorating properties, Mr Reid said.

The velvet was usually mixed with herbs and boiled for several hours before being consumed.

The new product offered velvet in soluble form, ready for immediate use, but in keeping with Asian cultural requirements.

The product was high in added value and was aimed at lucrative niche markets in Hong Kong and the nearby province of Guangdong, in southern China, he said.

Game Industry Board general manager Chris Bryan, of Wellington, acknowledged the work of the Otago students.

The product was in keeping with the board's emphasis on added-valued, consumer-friendly products and could also win valuable niche markets in Taiwan, Singapore and Japan, he said.

Dunedin was already involved in the drying and slicing of deer velvet and was a logical place to base a commercial operation based on further processing along the lines suggested.

Ready access to Invermay and university scientific expertise and to supplies of good quality velvet were also favourable signs, Mr Bryan said. — NZPA

Keen interest in deer industry

15/9/93

Chris Hughes is typical of many Te Anau basin deer farmers.

His love of the outdoors and hunting were natural lead-ins to establishing a highly successful deerfarming operation.

He has been a member of the New Zealand Deer Farmers' Association Fiordland branch since its formation and stood down as chairman two weeks ago after a four-year term.

Mr Hughes came to the Te Anau basin in the late 1960s as a teenager when his father took up a position as a Lands and Survey Department farm manager.

His wife, Marg, came to the basin in 1975 and stayed.

Not long after leaving school Mr Hughes set up a contracting business finding plentiful work on the Lands and Survey farm development blocks.

Recreational deer hunting took up his spare time.

A downturn in contracting fortunes during the mid-1970s encouraged him and brother Dave to venture into deer capture and part-time helicopter culling.

"I've always been intrigued with deer. They're an intelligent and adaptable animal," he said.

Mr Hughes said he saw the potential for deerfarming early on and initially set up a deer herd with captured animals on a leased property.

The opportunity for Mr and Mrs Hughes to get their own farm came in 1985 when they successfully bid at auction for an 105ha Lands and Survey block at The Key.

That block is now fully deer-fenced and "stocked to the hilt" with 1000 hybrid deer.

"It was a numbers game at

first but once we got the numbers we were able to cull quite heavily."

Today the farm carries about 400 breeding hinds, 280 velveting stags and replacements.

The replacement stock are taken through to two years when the decision is made to either retain or sell them.

Two-year-old velveting stags have to cut 1.5kg of C grade velvet and be of good temperament to remain in the herd.

With fawning coming at a busy time of the year for the contracting side of their business, the hinds are "left to do their own thing," Mr Hughes said.

Even with 20 percent of the herd being first calvers they still achieve 90 percent fawning.

All the young hinds were pregnancy scanned this year for the first time and any dry hinds —

apart from the larger wapiti-type animals, which have been given a second chance — have gone to the works.

Mr Hughes said they preferred the hybrid animal because it was hardier and better able to cope with the tougher feed conditions often experienced in the basin.

He believes low velvet prices could be a fact of life for the next year or two.

Because of that, farmers had to ensure what velvet they did produce was only of top grade.

Mr Hughes is right behind the Cervena promotion for New Zealand farm-raised venison.

"The Cervena concept is the right way to go. Moving away from Europe into new markets will eventually see increased dollar returns which farmers will rightly expect in view of the investment they have made in the scheme."

Accidental deerfarming politician

15/9/93

Te Anau contractor and deerfarmer Chris Hughes, did not set out to become embroiled in deerfarming politics, but as a member of the National Velvet Standards Body, he is.

It has not been an easy involvement. There have been many disturbed nights and the family's social life has suffered.

Having to leave golf to be home in time for a telephone conference call, for example, was an experience neither he nor his wife, Marg, had ever expected.

In some ways his involvement in the controversial velvet code of practice and farmer velvet accreditation scheme was by accident.

In late March, in response to an advertisement, he along with 31 other interested deerfarmers assembled in Wellington to discuss the deer industry's on-farm quality assurance proposal.

"This was aimed at identifying acceptable farming practices and describing them in a written form," he said.

"Basically what was being attempted was to develop a code of deerfarming practice that would further assist New Zealand in maintaining market access for our deer products."

He was appointed to a working party to develop a code for animal health. Other working parties were set up to look at deer yards and handling facilities, and breeding and farm management.

The quality assurance programmes were a positive response by the deer industry to the rapid changes taking place in consumer awareness and concerns at how food from animals was derived, he said.

While attending that first meeting, deerfarmers got wind that a

By JOHN CUTT

velvet code of practice and farmer accreditation scheme was being developed by the veterinary profession and was about to be sprung on farmers.

He along with other farmers voiced their concern.

He agreed to be appointed as one of two deerfarmer representatives on a committee — the National Velvet Standards Body — to iron out the wrinkles in the scheme.

Mr Hughes said he first became involved in the velvet wrangle last year when the Animal Remedies Board had imposed restrictions on the use by farmers of the velvetting drug, Rompum.

"I was so concerned we faced losing the right to use the drug I wrote in submissions.

"Being able to use 2 percent Rompum might be alright for smaller red deer but for farmers velvetting heavier hybrid animals, especially here in Southland, we needed to be able to use it full strength."

Mr Hughes said he had accepted the argument New Zealand farming practices had to be seen by the rest of the world as humane if market access was to be maintained in the long term.

But the vet scheme to allow farmers to continue velvetting their own stags was "difficult and complex and wouldn't be accepted at all by farmers."

"What we needed was a scheme that was easily understood, workable and at the same time one that would stand up to intense animal welfare scrutiny."

For that reason, and his earlier submissions on the use of Rompum, he agreed to be nominated to the National Velvet Standard Body.

Mr Hughes said the debate — at some times acrimonious — that followed the settlement of the scheme had not been a pleasant experience.

"The scheme is still more complex than I think it needs to be but it must now be given a chance to work, and if vets and farmers take a practical view, it will work.

"Farmers have to accept that reality says we can't keep operating deerfarming the way we did in the past."

If farmers could regulate themselves then hopefully they would counter any future attempts for regulations and restrictions to be forced on them.

"The fact is that we either accept the present situation (the introduction of the farmer accreditation scheme) or face the prospects of vet-only velvetting or no velvetting at all — and we couldn't farm deer as intensively as we do if we couldn't velvet."

Mr Hughes acknowledged he had copped a lot of flak by being on the National Velvet Standards Body.

Most of the criticism had centred on farmers wanting to hold on to something they had always been able to do, and because it had worked well in the past why change, he said.

After all, many farmers had developed greater expertise in deer handling — and velvetting in particular — than many veterinarians.

"But people just couldn't see the change was needed to protect the future of not only velvetting but venison as well."

Debating the issue and arriving at a compromise scheme had been "extremely hard going," Mr Hughes said.

"But all I want is a sensible system for an industry I believe has an excellent future."

Mr Hughes enjoys a good debate provided it's constructive and informed.



Te Anau basin deerfarmers Marg and Chris Hughes.

Unlike the Deer Levy Payers' Group, set up by disgruntled farmers to oppose the velvet code of practice and accreditation scheme, he prefers to work from within the deerfarming industry to affect change.

"People are great at telling you what's wrong, but they're not so good at saying what should be put in its place."

"I agree with some of the points the levy payers' group have been making, but not the way they're going about it."

"We need a year now for the scheme to settle down and to give everyone time to assess the system. At the end of the day I'm confident the scheme will be workable," he said.

Mrs Hughes said her husband had proved he was a good businessman and had never been afraid of committee work. "But I never thought he would get so involved in political affairs."

"At times I think he wondered why he ever got involved — it was not something he went looking for."



16/4/93

By John Stirling
Otago Daily Times
Farm Editor

GRASS ROOTS

Tougher line on Tb

Time is running out fast for New Zealand in the race to roll back the insidious advances made by bovine tuberculosis in the past decade.

No one has any exclusive answers and many past assumptions missed the mark.

After years of shadow boxing the main players in the campaign to eradicate Tb, both inside and outside the establishment authorities, appear to be working together.

If they are, it is a triumph for producers and the veterinarians servicing them. By the 1990s it was obvious the eradication system was falling. Its reliance on the skin test and killing lots of possums was not stopping the spread of Tb.

In the south critics of the scheme went for the jugular. They were supported by deer farmers, who unlike cattlemen, were not compensated for condemned animals reacting to the skin test and slaughtered.

They were angered when some condemned animals showed no sign of Tb.

From Otago University's microbiology department, immunologists Drs Frank Griffin and Glen Buchan said this was to be expected if a test was the only tool available and had been unchanged for 100 years. The test not only identified some healthy animals as reactors, it could also miss the severely diseased animals.

In the late 1980s they developed tests for deer that overcame the limitations of the skin test. These tests have since been used successfully in deer throughout the world.

Drs Griffin and Buchan suggested the possum was being used as a scapegoat and that Tb was endemic in other animals such as ferrets, wild cats and pigs. They also pointed the finger at recalcitrant farmers. These views were supported by several southern veterinarians.

In the past 12 months there has been a new accord. The Animal Health Board in Wellington has accepted the advice of its regional committees (Regional Animal Health Advisory Committees, or RAHACs) and produced a proposed strategy that draws on the expertise of all parties.

Otago RAHAC chairman Bruce McNab said there was a new awareness of the disaster Tb posed for producers and the country. The Animal Health Board recognised that no one group all had the answers. But there was strength in getting everyone working together, Mr McNab said.

There was no doubt the work of Otago University's microbiology department's team was valuable, but they too were part of a total equation that brought together several research stations.

The Government had at last realised the enormity of the Tb crisis and was now putting money into research. They also accepted their responsibility for pest control on their Department of Conservation estate.

Mr McNab said the Animal Health Board approach had been adapted but when it was set up about four years ago there was little money and the skin tests were cost efficient. The board had listened, in particular, to farmers and veterinarians in the field.

"We all realised Tb was out of control around the world. Other countries are throwing millions at the problem and it was expected they would have it at least under control in five years.

"Then they will look hard at countries with Tb and the likelihood was a new type of trade barrier, especially if Gatt talks are successful."

Dr Griffin and his team began working on Tb more by accident than design. They set up the deer research laboratory and have been outspoken on the subject. They are now enthusiastic about the way the eradication strategy is going.

They see it as a programme that could be the saving grace for New Zealand as the international fear of Tb and its close association with Aids increases. Here was a country united in its determination to eradicate the disease and, in most areas of bovine Tb, leading the way.

Most importantly they see producers accepting greater responsibility and control. This had to result in a practical and realistic approach when picking winners.



Deer farmed under quarantine in Otago are a natural model for Tb research in humans.

Researchers pool ideas

By John Stirling

The fight against bovine Tb in New Zealand has taken on a new dimension in recent months as all the different sectors fighting the disease have adopted a united approach.

Associate Prof Frank Griffin and Dr Glen Buchan, of Otago University's deer research laboratory — both long-time critics of the Tb eradication programme — believe a new level of co-operation has been achieved.

They said it was gratifying to see interested groups coming together and pooling ideas. The local regional animal health committees had done a marvellous job getting the grass roots message to the Animal Health Board in Wellington.

"Throughout New Zealand there are researchers doing important work on Tb. The exciting thing is we're now all working together.

"We were not part of the 'establishment' and became in-

volved almost by accident. Because of this we could speak out and not worry about losing jobs. With a fresh approach we pointed out the many weaknesses in the previous eradication campaign.

"There was a paranoia about possums, when this was only part of the problem. Now there is acceptance that irresponsible management by some producers is significant with tough new rules being introduced. There is a greater awareness of other problem animals such as ferrets, wild cats and pigs.

"There is still a need for better tests on cattle. The old skin test is great up to a point, then it fails. We developed tests for deer which are used around the world. These could be adapted for cattle. The Animal Health Board is now looking for a suitable blood test.

"The extra money now being put into Tb research is commendable. Having the Department of Conservation doing more work on possum control is also an important step forward."

Deer model for study of Tb in humans

By John Stirling

New Zealand is not alone in its fight to control an upsurge in bovine Tb. All around the world countries are facing a disease many thought they had beaten.

Virtually all countries with cattle or deer are desperately upgrading their efforts to hold back the spread of bovine Tb. There is now a realisation that any solution will take dedication and vast amounts of money.

Associate Prof Frank Griffin, an immunologist at Otago University's microbiology department, is also leader of the deer research laboratory, which is part of the department. His interest in deer began as a study of the immunology of a wild animal which had been domesticated.

He said the farmed deer was a unique animal. It was several centuries since a wild animal was taken into captivity and farmed. As it happened with deer over such a short period, there were exciting research possibilities.

"We started out looking at several diseases but farmers kept telling us Tb was their greatest fear. At that stage the skin test used to identify infected animals had been around for 100 years and was failing."

"Deer in those days were worth big dollars and farmers were most unhappy when a reactor was slaughtered and there was no sign of Tb."

"The skin test was valuable in identifying clean and infected herds. Its failure was not being able to identify severely infected animals. It also identified as reactors animals which had fought off the disease and avium Tb which was not serious."

Professor Griffin said developing a blood test was not difficult. The real problem was doing trials to prove its sensitivity and specificity. During the six-year period, more than 5,000 animals had been autopsied to determine the validity of the blood test for Tb.

Since the deer research laboratory developed the blood test it had been used successfully in New Zealand, Saudi Arabia, the United States, Canada and South Africa.

With growing world attention focusing on Tb, the work to eradicate the disease in New Zealand deer herd was seen as unique.

"At an international forum on Tb in Stockholm this year the paper we delivered on deer and Tb control was seen as identifying a new model for studying Tb in man through the use of animals," Professor Griffin said.

"Here in Otago we have a deer property which could be a research laboratory for the world. The farm has been quarantined and is de-

liberately stocked with infected animals."

"The deer are a natural model for Tb research. We can undertake experiments that can't be done with humans or mice."

"Bovine Tb research results can be transferred for use in the human population. On the quarantined deer farm, vaccines can be tested or the search for a gene with Tb resistance fast tracked. That farm can be magic and the world is now wanting to share the action."

Professor Griffin emphasised the co-operative nature of the property, which was operated by AgResearch Invermay and funded by the Animal Health Board and the Foundation for Research Science and Technology.

The key factor in the farm's success was the veterinary skills of Dr Colin MacIntosh, from Invermay.

Since the deer research group developed the blood test and another less expensive test called the ELISA (Enzyme Linked Immunosorbent Assay) doors had opened from a world struggling to handle Tb eradication programmes that had fallen apart, he said.

The deer research group had been involved in a \$20 million Saudi Arabian programme to eradicate Tb from the royal oryx herds, a critical operation to save the species from extinction. There were only 40 left in the world at the time.

The group's expertise was used in elk herds in the United States and Canada as well as several zoos and parks.

Another on-going operation was the eradication of Tb from Kruger Park in South Africa. The park was about the same size as New Zealand and bovine Tb was rapidly spreading through the grazing animals, such as antelopes, and then into carnivores such as lions.

"To clean up Kruger Park is a massive undertaking and will take years to achieve," Professor Griffin said. "They're using our testing technology and accept that every animal has to be tested. Tourists bring in millions of dollars and no one wants to look at sick and dying animals."



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Deer model for study of Tb in humans

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Deerfarming strategy outlined

DEER TALK

DAVID STEVENS



Recently deerfarmers would have received a copy of the New Zealand Farmed Deer Industry strategy summary.

This document will form the basis of regional producer meetings which will be held in Southland during next month.

All deerfarmers should take the opportunity to attend one of these producer meetings.

I found the document interesting and it is pleasing to be involved in a primary industry where both producers and processors can sit down and discuss planning and priorities for the future.

It sets challenges for the industry, for producers to becoming more aware of the needs in the market place and both producers and processors to becoming closer partners, changing the historical "opposition" mindset.

As a producer, I found some comfort in the strategic direction — the way to increase profitability for the deer industry.

To achieve that, we must focus on value not volume, be quality driven and differentiate our

products in the market place. All are important points if we want to maintain a competitive edge.

It is important to continue to position ourselves for the longer-term so we are well placed to take advantage of improved economic conditions when they happen.

There is certainly no point in sitting on our hands wishing we had done something when things do improve.

There is only one good position on the competitive playing field and that's playing downhill.

I only hope there are still a few players left on our side when it comes to halftime as many have taken some solid blows in the game of deerfarming.

But we are told the medium to long-term outlook for the industry is good and if you don't agree with that statement I would suggest it's time you looked closely at your involvement in deerfarming.

And as for the industry strategy summary, I see deerfarming has lined up second to dairy on the gross margins stakes for this year ahead of bull beef and sheep.

The document has also highlighted the importance of continual planning for the future of deerfarming in New Zealand.

The end result could well be the difference between being a winner or an also ran on the world market.



From left: David Maling (Chairman of Directors, Venison New Zealand), Tim McMahon (New Chief Executive Officer of Venison New Zealand) both from Wellington. Ted Porteous, Mossburn Lions Club admire the new stag monument; a symbol of the mainstay of the area.

Photo: Daphne Burnby

17/1/93 MOSSBURN: THE DEER CAPITAL OF NEW ZEALAND

Gore has its Romney and Brown Trout, Ashburton a Rainbow Trout and many other places in New Zealand have various Big Fruits to symbolise the mainstay of the region. Now Mossburn has a rather elegant stag, which has been set in natural surroundings on State Highway 94.

The community desired a symbol for the town and with very substantial assistance from Venison N.Z. it now has a symbol it can be proud of.

The stag cost \$6,000 to be made and erected and of that \$5,000 was funded by Venison N.Z., \$500 from the Game Industry Board and \$500 was donated by the Mossburn Lions Club. Already it has become a tourist attraction, with many stopping to photograph Mossburn's latest addition.

Venison N.Z. was formed four years ago, and owns three factories. The two North Island plants, in Fielding and Hastings, are run under a management contract

so the Mossburn Plant is the only one which has its own staff. There are approximately sixty staff nationwide, and in excess of forty of these are employed in Mossburn.

Tim McMahon has just been appointed the company's first Chief Executive Officer and he has just completed a fact-finding tour of the country with the Chairman of Directors, David Maling. The appointment of a CEO is an indication of the changes and growth going on within the company at present.

Mr McMahon is taking the opportunity to meet the staff and explain the future plans of the company. There is a desire to create Venison N.Z.'s own culture and tie the team

together. It is planned that the company will have a united identity, rather than the isolated units being seen at present. There will be a much more focused approach and the management wants to work closely with shareholders, the farmers. The farmers have supported the company with capital and stock for the plant and the company will now utilise that support to maximise the return back to both the company and the farmer.

The company is based in Wellington but Mr Maling and Mr McMahon are keen to see a director from this area on the board. They require someone with commercial experience who

is supported by the local farming community. Farmers now require a commercial orientated board. The strength in the company is in Plant and Management expertise and the weakness which is now being addressed has been the lack of focus.

Venison N.Z. contributes greatly to the local area, even away from the Plant. Venison N.Z. is the major source of employment in the immediate area and without it, many of the people at present resident in Mossburn would be forced to look elsewhere for that employment. It is a mainstay of the population of the town.

Daphne Burnby

Tb resurgence worries world experts

By John Stirling

Last year three million people died of tuberculosis. By the end of this century that figure is expected to be more than 12 million annually.

Tb has resurfaced as a killer of the 1990s, usually in conjunction with Aids. It is no longer a disease of third world countries.

Associate Prof Frank Griffin, of Otago University's microbiology department, is an immunologist with a special interest in Tb as he is also head of the Deer Research Laboratory.

The similarity between human Tb and bovine Tb in animals was close, Prof Griffin said. Both were caused by bacteria that belonged to the mycobacterium family. Humans could contract bovine Tb and animals could be affected by human Tb.

While both forms of Tb could be fatal when left untreated, it was readily treatable. It was important to realise the organism only had a mild effect when its host was in good health. This was true for both animals and humans.

Growing fears

Earlier this year, Prof Griffin was a guest speaker at an international forum on tuberculosis in Stockholm. His topic was the unique opportunities New Zealand farmed deer offered in the study of all forms of Tb.

He said the Stockholm meeting gave a global view of the disease and its resurgence in every part of the world. It also brought home the growing sense of fear that Tb might be out of control.

New Zealand had to understand this fear as this belief was being picked up by consumers and would have an impact on markets.

There was no possibility of this country's meat and dairy products harbouring Tb. In the New Zealand environment there was only a remote chance of humans contracting bovine Tb and this would be through contact with live or recently killed animals or unpasteurised milk. It could be easily cured.

Unfortunately, consumers were increasingly wary of anything that had even the slightest association with Tb.

"In America recently a survey asked the question: 'Would you eat a cookie made by someone with Aids'."

"Even though there is no possible way that Aids could be spread through a cookie, the vast majority surveyed said no."

As New Zealand producers came to terms with implementing a comprehensive Tb control programme, they had to be aware of how the disease was perceived by consumers. They saw Tb as a potential time bomb, to be avoided if possible.

Products from a country with endemic areas of Tb could be suspect, no matter how irrational such a suggestion might be.

He said the full impact of Tb on countries racked by war and poverty had to be put into perspective. The disease now affected one third of the world's population. While more a disease of developing countries, it was a rapidly increasing problem in the West.

Mutation

The most frightening revelation was a strain of Tb which had mutated to become resistant to antibiotics. Anyone with this strain of Tb was unlikely to survive. Like Aids, it was a death sentence.

Professor Griffin said it was important to realise that Tb was only a killer when a body was genetically susceptible and under stress. This was the same for humans and animals. Healthy populations had little to fear.

But in countries such as those in Africa where conditions were primitive and the people fighting wars, drought or famine, Tb was endemic. For these populations their immune systems were already at breaking point. Many countries were also ravaged by Aids.

Aids wiped out the immune system and literally provided an incubator for Tb. The cause of death for most Aids victims was Tb. This was as true in third world countries as it was on the streets of New York, where some drug addicts were dying from a strain resistant to antibiotics.

In some parts of the United States drug addicts with Tb were



Associate Prof Frank Griffin (right) with part of his team of researchers from Otago University's deer research laboratory. From left, they are Kirsten Prendergast, Ngale Chinn, Bridget McMillan, Lynn Slobbe, Jan Hesketh and Sarah Hook.

imprisoned to ensure they completed a course of antibiotics, which usually lasted several months. Research indicated resistance could result from an incomplete course of antibiotics.

Addicts gave up on antibiotics because the "high" from drugs was often lost while on a recovery course.

In the developing countries where Tb was endemic, the size of the problem overwhelms the logistics of vaccination and antibiotics. Those at risk were children and the elderly. In some African villages there were no young or old people.

Those remaining were often HIV positive and likely to die from Aids. Already some African villages were reduced to ghost towns.

"As the world wakes up to the enormity of the Tb problems authorities are beginning to grapple with the cost. If the patient is fighting both Aids and Tb the drugs needed are expensive and the cost is horrendous."

"The tragedy is that the drugs are only delaying the inevitable. In many third world countries the moral dilemma is less of a worry. To treat everyone with these diseases would almost cripple their economies."

"It was the sort of dilemma that made compulsive viewing

on television and the world will see more documentaries. Along the way Tb of any sort will increasingly be associated with Aids. There is now an even greater urgency to eradicate the disease from New Zealand.

"Aids and Tb are the warning signs of a sick world. We have raped the planet and now nature

is telling us we've got it wrong. The massive population increases in recent years are unsustainable and throughout the world resources are running out."

"Throughout history, disease has controlled human excesses with the less fortunate suffering. The signs suggest it's happening again right now."

processing and marketing deer by-products.

The Dai Yat Luk Yuen company has, however, been a performer, incurring substantial losses.

It ceased trading last year after Venison New Zealand decided it could no longer finance its operation.

Mr Maling is the chairman of both the Dai Yat Luk Yuen company and Venison New Zealand.

Mr Maling yesterday said the adverse exchange rate movement was one of the reasons for marketing losses.

De

The collapse of New Zealand's arm has maintained operation of the company's plants tenuous.

That was the gain by a large pliers and share meeting in Mossburn day night.

The meeting was company chairman, chief executive McMahon and Sutton. It was chairman burn farmer Peter

Although feeling high, Mr Swimmers were questioning and th

Deerfarmers irate at demise

The marketing arm of Venison New Zealand Co-operative, one of the major players in the New Zealand venison industry, has gone belly up and Southland deerfarmers are irate.

Shareholders were informed at the company's annual meeting in Feilding on Tuesday that the directors had resolved, because of trading difficulties, to place the company's marketing arm in voluntary liquidation.

Suppliers of deer look set to lose heavily as a result.

Farmers who have supplied deer to Venison New Zealand's two processing plants in the

By JOHN CUTT

North Island and the plant at Mossburn under contract fear they might not receive full payment for their stock.

One local farmer yesterday confirmed he stood to lose \$20,000 for deer supplied but not yet paid for. And others would be a similar situation.

Company general manager David Maling said the processing arm of Venison New Zealand was not in financial strife.

However, farmers fear the shockwaves of the latest development will impact heavily on the

company's processing plants.

South Island deerfarmers account for about one-third of the company's shareholders, the majority of which live in Southland and Otago.

However, in spite of having a such large stake in the company, Southland shareholders are not represented at the board table.

They had attempted to redress that situation at Tuesday's annual meeting by nominating Wayne Hill and Dave Peek as directors. That attempt was unsuccessful.

It appears that farmer concerns, mainly about how the company was being managed

and its products marketed, had been made known to directors many times in the past 12 to 18 months.

One farmer described the response to those concerns as "arrogant."

The Southland Times understands the co-operative's marketing company had been losing money for several months.

Further contributing to Venison New Zealand's financial problems was its March 1992 investment in the Dai Yat Luk Yung company.

Venison New Zealand took a 62.5 percent shareholding in the company to give it access to

The Southland Times, Thursday, October 21, 1993 3

of marketing operation

processing and marketing of deer by-products.

The Dai Yat Luk Yung company has, however, been a poor performer, incurring substantial losses.

It ceased trading last month after Venison New Zealand decided it could no longer continue financing its operation.

Mr Maling is the chairman of both the Dai Yat Luk Yung company and Venison New Zealand.

Mr Maling yesterday cited adverse exchange rate movements as one of the reasons for the marketing losses.

Another factor had been the high prices the company had had to pay farmers for stock destined for the high priced United States Cervena venison market. That market had not realized the anticipated high prices, he said.

Mr Maling was quick to state that the co-operative processing arm of Venison New Zealand was not in financial strife.

Closing down the marketing arm would "stop the bleeding," and protect the co-operative's processing assets.

He said shareholders would soon receive a proposal to convert the company to an unlisted public company.

"We've got people interested (in providing additional capital) if we restructure."

Farmers now had a choice, he said. Either support the restructured company and keep it alive by supplying throughout or let it die.

While what had taken place was "disappointing" and a "real tragedy," Mr Maling hoped the restructuring would produce a good outcome.

deerfarmers spoken to yesterday feel so strongly that some are prepared to let Venison New Zealand fall over completely rather than try to prop it up.

The Southland branch of the

New Zealand deerfarmers Association chairman, Neville Cunningham, endorsed the sentiments expressed by farmers.

What had happened to Venison New Zealand had been the direct result of bad decision-making.

Venison New Zealand's problems should not, however, be seen as deer industry troubles.

"In the eyes of farmers the company has made some silly decisions and I hold the directors directly responsible for what has happened.

"The directors just haven't listened to what people in Southland have been saying for the past 12 months.

"It's a sad state of affairs."

Deer company shaky

The collapse of Venison New Zealand's marketing arm has made the continued operation of the company's processing plants tenuous.

That was the impression gained by a large crowd of suppliers and shareholders at a meeting in Mossburn on Wednesday night.

The meeting was attended by company chairman David Maling, chief executive Tim McMahan and director Keith Sutton. It was chaired by Mossburn farmer Peter Swann.

Although feelings were running high, Mr Swann said farmers were controlled in their questioning and the meeting was

"not as hot as we thought it might have been."

At the company's annual meeting in Feilding last week, shareholders were told the marketing operation was to be placed in voluntary liquidation because of heavy sustained losses.

Because of that many suppliers of farmed and feral deer have not been paid and now also face considerable financial losses.

The Southland Times understands shareholders were told at the annual meeting that suppliers might receive 70c for each \$1 owed.

The Mossburn meeting on Wednesday was told that figure could now be at best 50c and at worst "they may not get anything," Mr Swann said.

The impression those attending the meeting gained was that the situation of unsecured creditors was very tenuous.

Deerfarmers through the New Zealand Deer Farmers' Association invested an initial \$1.2 million in Venison New Zealand four or five years ago. That investment now stands at \$1.78 million.

The investment had been designed to give producers a substantial say in the venison processing industry.

Mr Swann said it appeared the investment had been lost and the company's shares were now worth nothing.

He said the situation was so bad that one farmer stood to lose his farm because of the VNZ's marketing collapse and other far-

mers were considering taking court action to recover their losses.

Feral deer operators also are at risk of losing large sums of money for captured deer processed through the company's Mossburn plant and not yet paid for.

The message farmers received on Wednesday was a virtual reversal of what a similar meeting in Mossburn in August and what farmers who had made direct approaches to the company as late as just two weeks ago had been told.

Mr Swann said a meeting held on Wednesday afternoon agreed to form an unofficial working party to consider options to ensure the Mossburn plant continued to operate.

Phone runs hot after venison marketing company disclosure

22/10/93

The telephone of New Zealand Deer Farmers Association president Clive Jermy has been "red hot" with calls from Southland deerfarmers following the news that one of the country's major venison marketing companies has been placed in voluntary liquidation.

Shareholders at Venison New Zealand Co-operative's annual meeting in Feilding on Tuesday were told the co-operative had recorded a \$1.2 million loss for the past year, a figure which included losses from the liquidation last month of velvet and byproduct processor subsidiary Dai Yat Luk Yung Ltd.

They were told that as a result of the ongoing losses, the co-operative's marketing arm was to cease trading.

In spite of VNZ's chairman David Maling's assurance that the co-

operative's processing operation remained sound, Southland farmers are concerned the company's processing plants will also suffer from its withdrawal from marketing.

Farmers are also concerned that their investment in VNZ, originally to the tune of \$1.2 million in shares and now close to \$1.8 million might be at risk.

As part of the share-buying deal in VNZ, the Deer Farmers Association gained the right to appoint three of the company's eight directors.

Mr Jermy said yesterday the association had not itself taken a hands-on role in the management of the company because that was an area for which the directors were responsible, he said.

He said the association had been advised at VNZ's annual meeting of the decision to wind up the marketing company.

"We were informed that to ensure

ongoing viability and to protect shareholders' assets, the company will focus on its historic core activity of processing and will seek strategic alliances with other companies to fulfil the marketing function.

"The company intends to restructure its board and operations to reflect the proposed change and focus."

Mr Jermy said the association, as a major shareholder in VNZ, was concerned for the welfare of producer shareholders.

The decisions taken by the board to protect assets by refocusing its operations to its core business would be carefully monitored.

"We have asked the chairman (David Maling) to convene an early special general meeting to restructure the board and bring shareholders up to date with details of the restructured company.

"While we are very disappointed with the situation VNZ finds itself in, we believe the current board has taken the only option in the interests of both creditors and shareholders.

"We hope that the prompt action taken by the board to manage VNZ difficulties will also minimize any disruption to domestic and international markets."

Mr Jermy said he was confident the company would return to profitability.

"The NZDFA will play whatever role it can in assisting the company to achieve that goal."

He was well aware of the depth of feeling and concern of farmers in Southland, he said.

However, Mr Jermy urged farmers not to react negatively but to continue supporting the company's Mossburn processing plant once a successful agreement had been reached to transfer marketing to another exporter.

LIANNE MACKAY

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marketing problem
and the need for large amounts

Farmers forming creditors' group

2/11/93

By LIANNE MACKAY

Farmers owed money by Venison New Zealand are setting up a creditors' group in the hope of getting some payment from the company.

The situation of unsecured creditors has been the subject of some concern among deer farmers since the company announced two weeks ago its marketing arm was going into voluntary liquidation.

Money owed will seriously affect the cash flow of some farming operations, but farmers and helicopter deer recovery operators are just as worried about the long-term impact.

The future of Venison New Zealand's processing plant in Mossburn is far from secure and, apart from possible problems getting stock killed during the peak

demand season, farmers believe the company's problems will probably drive down the venison schedule and further affect their incomes.

The schedule was already down on last year but dropped further last weekend, Five Rivers farmer Ian Hamilton said.

He is owed about \$2500 for 12 hinds he had killed at the Mossburn plant and he learned last week his 2800 shares in the company would now have little value.

He said yesterday he was angry the company allowed its works to carry on killing deer when top management must have realized they would have problems paying for them.

Farmers had been kept in the dark about the problems and the company's announcement had been a bolt from the blue.

"A year ago things were looking so positive; they were talking about expanding," Mr Hamilton said.

"About a month ago, we were aware they were starting to delay killing payments, but there wasn't any indication they were in this much trouble."

Mr Hamilton hoped to get stock killed elsewhere, but was not optimistic about prices.

He said the situation would "knock farmers' confidence around," but he believed the long-term outlook for deer was good.

"It's a good product — it should be okay."

However, for some farmers coping with the short-term consequences will be a worry.

One Lumsden farmer, who did not want to be named and who is owed a substantial amount of money, said he was angry about the lack of information.

"I want to know who to blame."

"Other companies were working in the same situation ... and they made a profit."

Meanwhile, the Mossburn plant has been working under contract for the North Island company, Duncan and Co, and has two weeks' more work in the pipeline.

Manager Ian Stewart said the plant was also killing feral deer on behalf of owners who could find a market and had helped organize a feral meat sale for one owner.

The plant had been "opened up" and was now available to kill for any company interested in using its facilities, but with the chilled meat season winding down Mr Stewart did not expect "too much."

In spite of the uncertain future for staff, morale in the plant was not too low, he said.

Shareholders and suppliers are still considering options for taking over the Mossburn works and hope to have a proposal to consider within 10 days.

worried about whether they could
get their stock processed else-
where, he said.

"Farmers are trying to get stock
booked into other works, but they
are putting on restrictions."

Three other facilities existed in
the Otago-Southland region, but
Mr Swan believed they were
booked to capacity.

Venison NZ chief quits

4/11/93

HASTINGS

Venison New Zealand said yesterday its chief executive of five months, Tim McMahon, had resigned in the wake of the company's decision to wind up its marketing arm.

Chairman David Maling said Mr Mahon had resigned as a cost-cutting measure because Venison NZ did not need the same administration levels with its Auckland-based marketing company closing.

Mr McMahon would continue working with Venison NZ for the next three months until his contract ran out.

The financial problems Venison NZ was experiencing had nothing to do with Mr McMahon, Mr Maling said.

The company's Auckland office, which employed 10 people, now had a skeleton staff who would continue working until it closed, Mr Maling said.

Rationalization of every facet of the company would be undertaken. The number of directors had been reduced by half.

Those to retain their positions were Mr Maling, Nigel Gould, of Lower Hutt, and Keith Sutton, of Wellington. Feilding farmer Don Linklater had been elected to the board.

The directors planned to form a "creditors' committee" to represent those owed money by the company during the winding up of its marketing arm.

Venison NZ had stopped procuring stock on October 15 and would wind up the company using its own resources.

Mr Maling said placing the company into liquidation or receivership was considered premature and was likely to prejudice the ability of the company to dispose of stock and inventories in an orderly fashion.

Liquidation or receivership would also result in further costs in court proceedings and liquidator or receiver's fees, he said.

"Such costs will only deplete the pool of assets available for distribution to the company's creditors."

The creditors' committee would consider options for asset realization.

Mr Maling said the directors strongly urged all creditors to support these actions as they believed they were the best way to maximize the value of asset realization and to retain the value of those assets for the benefit of all creditors. — NZPA

MOSSBURN FERAL SCHEDULE

We are pleased to announce that procurement of Feral deer from Marketing Limited.

The below prices will be paid for our Mossburn Depot or at the Airstrip, Te Anau. These deer will be inspected to declare them fit for consumption.

Times for receiving deer at the Mossburn Depot:

- Between 8.30am-2pm Monday-Friday
- Between 8.30am-11am Saturday

Payments will be approx 28 days after receipt.

Prices for all animals above 30kg:

- Clean shot, \$2.80
- Body shot, \$1.50
- Animals under 30kg's will not be paid for.

alter at any time.

Meeting for 26/10/93 deer farmers

By LIANNE MACKAY

Southland deer farmers might consider taking over the running of Venison New Zealand's Mossburn processing plant at a meeting of shareholders in Mossburn this week.

Running the plant as a farmer-operated concern will be among the options to be discussed at the meeting, which is expected to be held tomorrow evening.

However, marketing problems and the need for large amounts of cash will be among many barriers to the plan's success.

Shareholders, suppliers and employees at the Mossburn and other Venison Nw Zealand plants have been in turmoil since VNZ announced last week its marketing arm was going into liquidation.

While the company said its processing plants were not in jeopardy, large amounts of money are owed to suppliers, many of whom now have cash flow concerns themselves.

Southland deer farmers are believed to be owed amounts ranging from \$5000 to \$60,000 for stock supplied to the works and some farmers doubt they will receive a full pay-out.

Many more suppliers are now worried about maintaining their cashflow because of a shortage of killing facilities.

"We're not so worried about our shares but cash flow becomes a critical thing," Mossburn deer farmer Peter Swan said.

With the main killing season coming up, many farmers were worried about whether they could get their stock processed elsewhere, he said.

"Farmers are trying to get stock booked into other works, but they are putting on restrictions."

Three other facilities existed in the Otago-Southland region, but Mr Swan believed they were booked to capacity.

Keeping the Mossburn plant operational had become a prime concern and he was trying to organize a meeting of shareholders in Mossburn tomorrow evening to discuss the situation and consider options.

"We want to try and get this works going in one form or another," he said.

"We have to be able to get stock killed."

Mr Swan hoped Venison New Zealand would have a proposal ready this week to keep the works operational. Shareholders would then be able to consider it at the Mossburn meeting.

Meanwhile, messages of support have been flowing in to the Mossburn plant since the Venison New Zealand announcement last week.

Plant manager Ian Stewart said the support had been one positive aspect in the situation.

"Around 80 percent of the callers ringing up have been in support of the works here," he said.

Many of the callers had expressed their support for the idea of farmers carrying on the works if VNZ decided to pull out.

"Everyone's positive and wants to see us carry on," he said.

"We've got a good reputation for quality and performance."

However, the 28 permanent staff at the plant were nervous about the future.

"People who work here aren't feeling so wonderful."

The staff met on Friday to talk about the situation and would return to work tomorrow.

Mr Stewart said in the meantime he was trying to organize work for the plant, which usually kills 30,000 farmed deer and 7500 feral animals a year.

Mr Stewart hoped some feral deer could be killed on an "owner's account" basis.

"We could start processing tomorrow if an outside exporter came along with an order," Mr Stewart said.

30/10/93

Venison

Grade	Weights	Fortex	Mair	Venison NZ	PPCS	Duncan Otago
Grade	kg	\$/kg	\$/kg	\$/kg	\$/kg	\$/kg
AP Hind	30-35	2.60	2.60	—	4.29	2.85
AP Hind	35-40	3.60	3.80	—	4.29	3.85
AP Hind	40-45	4.35	4.50	—	5.14	4.70
AP Hind	45-50	4.50	4.70	—	5.14	4.75
AP Hind	50-55	4.70	4.90	—	5.54	5.00
AP Hind	55-60	4.70	4.90	—	5.54	5.00
AP Stag	45-50	4.60	4.80	—	5.24	4.85
AP Stag	50-55	4.80	5.00	—	5.64	5.10
AP Stag	55-60	4.80	5.00	—	5.64	5.10
AP Stag	60-65	4.80	5.00	—	5.64	5.10
AP Stag	65-70	4.65	4.75	—	5.54	4.90
AP Stag	70-75	4.65	4.75	—	5.19	4.85
AP Stag	75-80	4.65	4.75	—	5.19	4.80
AP Stag	80-85	4.65	4.75	—	5.19	4.75
AP Stag	85-100	4.35	4.00	—	4.85	4.55
AF1, AT	55-65	3.85	4.20	—	3.92	4.15
AF1, AT	75-85	4.20	3.80	—	3.92	4.10
AF2	50-70	3.35	3.20	—	3.22	3.30

CHANGES:

FORTEX: AP Stag/Hind 35-50kg -15c; over 50kg -20c/kg.
FORTEX: AP Stag/Hind under 35kg -20c; 35-40kg -40c; 40-45kg -50c; 45-50kg -40c; over 50kg -20c/kg.
Over prime reduced by up to 40c/kg.
MAIR: AP Stag/Hind under 40kg -25c; 40-85kg 30c; 85-100kg -20c/kg.
PPCS: All AP Stag/Hind over 30kg -6c/kg.

NOTES:

1. Gross venison prices are shown above in dollars per kg carcass weight. The GIB levy (26c/kg) and Animal Health levy (4c/kg) need to be deducted along with transport to works.
2. MAFQual inspection charges need also be deducted. They are (\$ per head) Sld \$7, Venison NZ Mossburn \$7, Kennington \$7, Mair Hokitika \$7, PPCS Sld \$5, Duncan Otago \$7.

INFORMATION SUPPLIED BY AGRI-FAX

companies.

Venison

Grade	Weights	Fortex	Mair	Venison NZ	PPCS	Duncan Otago
Grade	kg	\$/kg	\$/kg	\$/kg	\$/kg	\$/kg
AP Hind	30-35	2.30	2.30	—	3.70	2.30
AP Hind	35-40	3.30	3.30	—	3.70	3.40
AP Hind	40-45	3.95	3.90	—	4.56	4.15
AP Hind	45-50	4.10	4.10	—	4.56	4.20
AP Hind	50-55	4.25	4.30	—	4.91	4.50
AP Hind	55-60	4.25	4.30	—	4.91	4.50
AP Stag	45-50	4.20	4.20	—	4.66	4.30
AP Stag	50-55	4.35	4.40	—	5.01	4.60
AP Stag	55-60	4.35	4.40	—	5.01	4.60
AP Stag	60-65	4.35	4.40	—	4.91	4.60
AP Stag	65-70	4.20	4.15	—	4.91	4.40
AP Stag	70-75	4.20	4.15	—	4.64	4.25
AP Stag	75-80	4.20	4.10	—	4.64	4.20
AP Stag	80-85	4.20	4.10	—	4.64	4.15
AP Stag	85-100	3.90	3.80	—	4.29	3.95
AF1, AT	55-65	3.50	3.60	—	3.92	3.80
AF1, AT	75-85	3.70	3.35	—	3.92	3.70
AF2	50-70	3.05	2.90	—	3.22	3.30

CHANGES:

FORTEX: AP Stag/Hind under 45kg -20c; over 45kg -15c; All AT and AF grades reduced by between 10c and 15c/kg.
MAIR: AP Stag/Hind over 40kg -10c/kg.
DUNCAN: AP Stag/Hind under 40kg, 50-70kg and over 75kg -10c; 40-50kg -15c; 70-75kg -20c; AT 50-75kg -30c; over 75kg -40c/kg.

NOTES:

1. Gross venison prices are shown above in dollars per kg carcass weight. The GIB levy (26c/kg) and Animal Health levy (4c/kg) need to be deducted along with transport to works.
2. MAFQual inspection charges need also be deducted. They are (\$ per head) Seafield \$7, Venison NZ Mossburn \$7, Kennington \$7, Mair Hokitika \$7, PPCS Sld \$5.00, Duncan Otago \$7.00.

INFORMATION SUPPLIED BY AGRI-FAX

MOSSBURN FERAL PARTNERSHIP

SCHEDULE NO 001 20/11/93

We are pleased to announce that we have taken over the procurement of Feral deer from Venison New Zealand Marketing Limited.

The below prices will be paid for Feral Deer delivered to our Mossburn Depot or at the Depot at the Waiatu Airstrip, Te Anau. These deer will also have to pass a Vet Inspection to declare them fit for Export.

Times for receiving deer at the Mossburn Depot will be: Between 8.30am-2pm Monday-Friday

Between 8.30am-11am Saturday

Payments will be approx 28 days from packaging date.

Prices for all animals above 30kg (Skin on) are: \$3.50 Clean shot, \$2.80 Body shot, \$1.50 Saddle shot

Animals under 30kg's will not be accepted. Prices could alter at any time.

27145

Tenders for venison 11/12/93 factory still open

Potential buyers of Venison New Zealand's Mossburn deer processing plant have been given a few extra days to submit their bids.

Offers were to close yesterday but receiver Tony Lewis, of Wellington, said bids would now be accepted until 5pm on Thursday.

There had been significant interest in the plant and the extra time had been allowed to give possible buyers a chance to inspect it, Mr Lewis said.

Mossburn plant manager Ian Stewart said six parties had gone through the plant but he understood there were many others interested who had not yet visited the operation.

Mr Stewart said he could not disclose who the parties were.

He and some partners would be putting in a bid for the plant but they would wait until the deadline on Thursday.

"A new angle seems to crop up each day," he said.

Since going into receivership last month the plant had been busy processing mainly feral deer and would be working this weekend to catch up.

All staff, except for a few taking holidays, had been working at the plant and they would continue processing feral deer through the Christmas period, Mr Stewart said. Venison New Zealand was placed in receivership last month with debts totalling \$15 million.

Velvet scheme well under way

28/10/93

VET TALK



The deer industry's Velvet Training Scheme is well under way with the theoretical exam behind us.

Congratulations to those farmers — more than 97 percent — who sat and passed the exam.

Once again the Game Industry Board must be congratulated for its foresight in promoting the scheme. The intention is simple, to ensure any velvet harvested in New Zealand is done with the welfare of the stag paramount.

Philosophically, human nature will reject change when it is forced on us. However, we must understand the need for change. We live in changing times.

Farmers must be aware of factors in the international marketplace which affect their farming practices. Veterinarians must accept a loss of income from velvetting. But there now exists an internationally credible farmer-velvetting scheme which has integrity.

With this in place, vets should feel comfortable to prescribe velvetting drugs where they didn't previously.

The acceptance of these changes by both farmers and vets is imperative for the healthy business partnership that exists between them to continue.

The deer industry has once again shown to be an industry leader in recognizing the importance of animal welfare. The scheme is based on the welfare of stags and as such, a huge amount of misinformation has been published.

It is with real concern that I note two recent headlines which are not only misleading but reflect a very superficial understanding of the scheme and a poor standard of journalism.

The first was in The Southland Times on October 19, "Velvet training certification needed for access to drugs." This is not a scheme about drug access.

Some background comment about the drug aspect is warranted. The Animal Remedies Board has been performing gymnastics over the classification of velvetting drugs for the past 12 months and on more than one occasion has found its own decisions embarrassing.

Had the decisions been made on scientific data and not politics, the board would have spared itself a lot of embarrassment.

The latest move by the board to reclassify velvetting drugs as Class II next year is recognition at last of the dangers the drugs can pose to those who handle them.

The other headline, "Velvet scheme investigated — levy payers fire latest shot against vets," was in the October issue of The Deer Farmer.

It is ironic that vets have been actively promoting the scheme throughout New Zealand for the benefit of farmers and yet it is vets who are wearing the flak.

Much of that flak has come from the Deer Farmers Levy Payers Group which has opposed the velvet training scheme

from the start — but how can that group be taken seriously?

The articulate spokesperson for the group has commanded huge media attention. His latest antic in lodging a complaint with the Commerce Commission again received huge attention, but at the end of the day the commission "did not feel the case warranted further action."

There is a handful of deer farmers who have and will try to circumvent the velvetting training scheme. They will find ways to gain access to velvetting drugs and so velvet without accreditation.

We trust that their inability to see outside their own farm gate does not jeopardize the future of the thousand farmers in Southland who enjoy and seek income from deer farming.

Enough of the negative — let's focus on the positive and there is plenty of it.

More than 150 farmers or 16 percent of the province's deer farmers wanted to join the velvet training scheme.

All Southland veterinary practices and veterinarians fully support the scheme and offer the assistance that deer farmers require.

As mentioned before, the theoretical exam is behind us and farmers now move into the practical aspects of velvetting.

No doubt aided by the kind season this year, casting was up to three weeks early on some farms.

With velvetting of the older stags underway the real question must be, what is velvet going to be worth this year?

After hearing tales of gloom during the winter about the Russian scene and slower than usual sales of last season's New Zealand crop, we have been conditioned to the payment being less than last year — \$100 compared with \$150.

Although nobody knows for sure until the time, the "word" from a couple of local "in the know" buyers suggests prices will be similar to last year. — *Contributed by Dave Lawrence, senior practitioner in Central Southland Veterinary Services.*

Dee

Venison New Zealand shattered when the company's financial chairman David Maling

Venison New Zealand Ltd and its market into receivership by the National Bank called in request of Venison

Mr Maling, chairman said directors were surprised because the marketing company was

Venison NZ directors under fire for 'fiasco'

11/11/93

HASTINGS Venison New Zealand directors were assuring farmers that the company was secure 10 days before its marketing arm went under.

Waipukurau farmer David Petersen said he had asked about the state of the company as he was concerned about a late payment for his stags. A director told him everything was all right.

Mr Petersen said he found it incredible that directors were giving assurances to people like himself one to two weeks before the company was beyond salvage.

"The fact that directors had no idea that the company was in such a sad state is quite incomprehensible."

Directors were not adequately informed, he said.

"Whether that was because they were not asking the right questions, as prudent directors should, or whether the information was not provided, I do not know.

"However, as a company director (of Farmlands Trading Society) I find it bewildering that the directors of Venison NZ did not know the position of their company.

"That is why farmers are so angry and bitter. Because the representatives they elected did not seem to know how bad it really was."

Questions would be asked about accountability and some respons-

ibility for the "fiasco" accepted, said Mr Peterson.

Venison NZ's chairman of directors for five months, David Maling, said directors were giving farmers assurances because they believed the marketing company was close to budget.

The company recorded a loss in August but that was expected to have been picked up in September transactions. It was not until the September accounts were released on October 15 that directors realized losses were excessive.

Directors had encouraged the marketing company to sell existing frozen stock as rapidly as possible.

They realized if those stocks were still on hand by December it would mean having to carry them over for another five to six months before sale.

But directors did not know some product was sold at less than its book value, said Mr Maling.

"It comes back to a management factor and creditors can rest assured that questions are being asked."

Mr Maling said the bulk of what was happening in the deer industry was an international problem.

"It's not just a Venison NZ problem. Prices have fallen overseas. The money offered in contracts to farmers in autumn was too much, and there is an over-capacity of killing space," he said.

Venison NZ had low equity and would have needed to change its structure from a co-operative to raise further capital.

Farmers had agreed in June and July that further capital must come from outside the farming sector as they were not in a position to provide that money, said Mr Maling.

"While these issues had been debated and are on the agenda to happen this year, the time frame was too short over these mid-winter months."

The company had no alternative but to stop trading.

"It's easy to point the finger and say who is to blame, but creditors need to realize that as directors we worked hard and believed everything was running close to budget."

Farmers and other unsecured creditors would be sent individual summaries of what they were owed.

Mr Maling said farmer meetings would be held throughout the country once directors knew how money had been recovered. That would take about two weeks.

The company was working through a programme that would go toward meeting the shortfall for unsecured creditors by using the co-operative's processing plants.

Mr Maling said he could not yet be specific. — NZPA

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A major Southland Venison Co-operative into receivership today, triggering taint about the company's burn proof and its 22

Southland creditors or shareholders to lose hundreds of dollars with the co-operative and subsidiary, Venison Marketing Ltd.

Venison NZ at Feilding and

One of the receivers appointed Lewis of Cooper visit the Mossburn discuss process with managers.

Mr Lewis plans to come after his appointment of trying to future.

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Farmers may seek compensation from venison company directors

By Helen Keir

Southland farmers owed money by venison New Zealand may seek compensation from the directors, says Federated Farmers Te Anau representative, Mr John Morrison.

Unsecured creditors have been concerned about their financial position since last month, when the company announced its marketing arm was going into voluntary liquidation.

Mr Morrison said many farmers felt venison New Zealand would not pay its debts,

so they were considering alternative methods of retrieving their money.

"Farmers intend seeking compensation from the directors because they have been negligent in their actions.

"They may not get the company to pay out, but they'll try other avenues open to them to get their money."

He said deer farmers were outraged the company had allowed its works to continue killing deer, when management must have realised they would have problems paying for them.

"I was pretty damn mad about it, when I heard and lots of other farmers are too.

"Farmers should have been told about the situation and not left in the dark."

The announcement had been a shock to farmers, who had thought the company was doing well.

"The company was talking about expanding a year ago, and now this happens.

"Some farmers are owed \$50,000 to \$60,000 which is a substantial amount.

"It will put a lot of farmers in a very precarious financial situation."

Mossburn farmer and venison New Zealand shareholder, Mr John Turner, said the local community was devastated by

the announcement.

"A huge number of people have been effected by this.

"Everyone thought the company was going along nicely. This was a total shock to everyone.

"The company has sent cheques to a lot of farmers, but they have been dis-honoured which is putting their cash flow situation in strife.

"Those who have shares in the company have had to write them off as well."

Mr Turner said farmers were uncertain about the plant's future.

"Farmers want to know if the

plant will remain open and who will own it.

"Farmers don't know what is going on and they have a right to. They are confused and angry about the whole situation."

Another Mossburn farmer said he was owed about \$65,000 and had little hope of seeing his money.

"I will be taking legal advice to see what my position is.

"It is pretty clear the directors have been negligent in their actions."

He said a creditors group had been established, to discuss legal strategies and offer mutual support.

Deer company directors 'shattered'

Venison New Zealand directors were shattered when they found out how bad the company's financial problems were, chairman David Maling said yesterday.

Venison New Zealand Co-operative Ltd and its marketing subsidiary went into receivership yesterday. The National Bank called in the receivers at the request of Venison NZ directors.

Mr Maling, chairman for five months, said directors were giving farmers assurances because they believed the marketing company was close to budget.

The company recorded a loss in August but that was expected to have been picked up in September.

But it was not until the September accounts were released on October 15 that directors realized losses were excessive, he said yesterday.

Directors had encouraged the marketing company to sell existing frozen stock as rapidly as possible. They realized that if those stocks were still on hand by December it would mean having to carry them over for another five to six months.

But what directors did not know was that some product was sold at less than book value, Mr Maling said.

The bulk of what was happening in the deer industry was an international problem.

"It's not just a Venison NZ problem. Prices have fallen overseas. The money offered in contracts to farmers in autumn was too much, and there is an over-capacity of killing space," he said.

Venison NZ had low equity and would have needed to change its structure from a co-operative to raise further

capital. "Creditors need to realize that as directors we worked hard and believed everything was running close to budget."

Main shareholder of the co-operative is the Deer Farmers' Association. Association president Clive Jermy said last night the appointment of receivers was a "tragic blow" to the deer industry.

"Our first concern is for the unsecured producer creditors who, according to a provisional opinion of the receiver, now appear to be totally out of pocket," he said.

Venison NZ goes under

A major Northern Southland employer, Venison New Zealand Co-operative Ltd, went into receivership yesterday, triggering uncertainty about the future of the company's Mossburn processing plant and its 22 employees.

Southlanders who are unsecured creditors or shareholders are likely to lose hundreds of thousands of dollars with the collapse of the co-operative and its marketing subsidiary, Venison New Zealand Marketing Ltd.

Venison NZ also operates plants at Feilding and Hastings.

One of the two Wellington receivers appointed yesterday, Tony Lewis of Coopers and Lybrand, is to visit the Mossburn plant today to discuss processing arrangements with managers.

Mr Lewis, who hastily made plans to come south only hours after his appointment, has the task of trying to secure the plant's future.

The receivers were appointed by the company's first debenture holder, the National Bank, at the request of Venison NZ directors.

By MARK PEART

Since October 15, when it was proposed the marketing company stop stock procurement for Mossburn and the company's two other plants, stocks had been reduced and efforts made to collect debts, the directors said.

"Over recent days, growing difficulties in the collection of debtors and the threat of unsecured creditor action have undermined this proposal," they said.

Mr Lewis said yesterday no "fire sale" of company assets was planned, and efforts would be made to ensure the supply of export products.

But it was unlikely the marketing company's unsecured creditors would receive any payment from asset sales after the National Bank was repaid, he said.

It was too early to assess the financial outcome of the company. There are about 500 creditors in both companies.

Mr Lewis last night confirmed the bank, as sole secured creditor, was owed about \$8 million. Unsecured creditors of the co-operative are owed about \$2.5 million.

Of the \$4.5 million owed to unsecured creditors of the marketing

company, \$3.5 million was owed to farmer-suppliers, Mr Lewis said.

Invercargill chartered accountant Roger Wilson represents a Southland group of about 20 unsecured creditors owed between \$500,000 and \$750,000.

Southland and Otago shareholders had contributed about \$900,000 in capital to the companies, although most of that — about \$700,000 to \$800,000 — was held by Southlanders, he said.

A total of 900 shareholders have contributed to the companies' paid-up capital of \$9 million.

Mr Wilson, who was retained to safeguard the interests of Southland unsecured creditors, acknowledged there was probably not a lot that could be done for them.

A Southland shareholder and unsecured creditor, who did not want to be named, said last night he knew of others in Southland who were owed up to \$60,000 for stock.

This was in spite of assurances they would be paid, given by directors three weeks before the marketing company went into voluntary liquidation on October 15, he said.

In some cases, cheques had been issued to cover outstanding payments but were dishonoured when the creditors tried to present them, he said.

Factory back at work

22/11/93

The 27 staff at Mossburn's venison processing factory are at work again today but receivers plan to sell the plant as quickly as possible.

The plant's owner, Venison New Zealand Co-operative Limited, went into receivership on Friday along with its marketing subsidiary. It owes the National Bank — the sole secured creditor — \$8 million and unsecured creditors a further \$2.5 million. The marketing arm also has debts totalling \$4.5 million.

Mossburn plant manager Ian Stewart said he first heard about the receivership when The Southland Times contacted a factory staff member on Friday night.

"It came out of the blue but it wasn't totally unexpected. Deep down I had a feeling the company would not be able to keep trading," he said.

A meeting with receiver Tony Lewis was held on Saturday afternoon and Mr Stewart said the factory would keep processing in the meantime, but receivers wanted to sell the plant as soon as possible.

A meeting will be held with staff this morning to explain the situation. They might receive less pay and be working fewer hours from now on.

By DAVID COSGRIFF

Previously the processing staff were guaranteed to be paid for a 40-hour week, but now they will only be paid for the actual hours worked and that will depend on how much stock is sent for processing.

Twenty-two wage earners and five salaried staff work at the plant.

"To get through the next few weeks will depend on the co-operation of the receivers, myself, staff and the union," he said.

The Meat Workers' Union will be holding a meeting with staff tomorrow.

Farmers sending stock in from today would be paid under the same system which had been running for helicopter recovery operators since October 18.

Mr Stewart had some strong personal feelings about the reasons for the financial troubles the company was in but was not yet in a position to make those public.

"Let's just say I think the marketing arm of Venison NZ has been unfairly blamed for the downfall of the company."

Mr Stewart said he was a potential buyer of the plant but it was difficult to know how

many staff would be employed under a new operation.

Mr Lewis, of Coopers and Lybrand, Wellington, said the Mossburn plant would be offered for sale as a going concern and he would be seeking expressions of interest in the next two or three weeks.

He had already been approached by three parties interested in buying the plant.

"Our objective is to see the plant with new owners ... and (meanwhile) to ensure the plant is operational and services the needs of helicopter operators and farmers."

Mr Lewis said he hoped the sale of the plant would be "well down the track" by Christmas.

"It needs ownership by Southland people and we want to do everything possible to make that happen."

All unsecured farmer creditors would receive a letter from the receivers this week explaining the process of receivership but Mr Lewis said it might not tell them much more than they already know.

It was important to remember the company directors called in the receivers of their own volition and the action was not initiated by the National Bank, he said.

Venison NZ collapse damaging

23/11/93

The collapse of Venison New Zealand could damage the image of this country's deer industry, according to Southland Deer Farmers' Association president Neville Cunningham.

Venison New Zealand went into receivership last week owing farmer producers and the National Bank more than \$10 million.

Mr Cunningham said it was unfortunate the company was called Venison New Zealand because the perception overseas would be that the whole of this country's deer industry had gone broke.

"But we've got to get this into perspective — Venison NZ was one of only about six players in the venison export market, but the publicity surrounding its collapse is having ramifications for the whole industry," he said.

The company's woes were a double tragedy for many deer farmers and he was concerned for them and the staff at the plant and the Mossburn community.

"Some farmer shareholders will be financially crippled by this."

"Many of those who haven't been paid for the stock they had killed also held substantial shares in the company."

Losing capital tied up in Venison New Zealand shares was bad enough but not many could afford to lose trading account funds as well, he said.

It was important for everyone that receivers acted quickly to minimize any further losses. Lengthy delays would cause more financial hardship for those

with shares in the company and prolong the damage being done to the industry by the adverse publicity.

"Being so close to Christmas it could drag on until February and by then the amount owed to the bank will have accrued a substantial amount of interest further eroding shareholders funds."

Mr Cunningham was pleased the Mossburn plant would keep operating under receivership.

It meant the experienced staff would stay in the area and that would make it easier for future owners to get the operation back to full strength.

Some of Mr Cunningham's comments were echoed by Mair Venison managing director Michael Rice yesterday.

He said the negative publicity surrounding the collapse of Venison New Zealand was making him "very uncomfortable."

"There is not a malaise through the venison industry ... the people who are talking it down at the moment are doing it a great disservice," Mr Rice said.

It was possible to make a good return in the industry. Mair Venison posted a \$4.8 million pre-tax profit this year on a \$39 million turnover.

"In other words, we made \$6 million more profit than Venison New Zealand even though our turnover was 10 percent below theirs."

Mair Venison has operated its Kennington plant since March 1992.

Urgent discussion

The New Zealand Deer Farmers' Association said yesterday it was having urgent discussions with the receivers of Venison New Zealand about its unsecured producer creditors.

The company went into receivership last week and among the unsecured creditors are about 45 Southland farmers, who are owed between \$500,000 and \$750,000.

Association president Clive Jermy said he had met twice with one of the receivers, Tony Lewis, and another meeting was planned for this week.

"We'll know more after that meeting but it looks as though the farmers who are owed money by the company will be totally out of pocket."

The association's main push now would be to ensure the receivers get the best price they can for the company's assets so the impact on farmer shareholders was minimized.

Mossburn deer farmer Peter Swann said he doubted if any deer farmers would be interested in getting together

to buy the company's Mossburn plant which was now for sale.

"Farmers would be reluctant to buy because they consider they've lost it once already and they've lost that money."

Mr Swann said if it looked like the plant was going to be mothballed, farmers might step in to stop it and it would be a last resort.

"Farmers are not experts on buying or marketing and the key is having competent marketeers."

Assuming the Mossburn plant sold it would probably receive farmer support as long as the owners offered a competitive price, he said.

Mr Jermy said Venison New Zealand's problems did not indicate a widespread problem through the deer industry.

"The deer industry is big enough to handle this and there are plenty of positive signs to continue to progress."

Hope for venison plant

22/11/93

The closure of the venison processing plant at Mossburn would be a major blow for two Northern Southland towns.

About 18 of the plant's workers live in Mossburn and the other nine reside in Lumsden.

Complete closure of the plant looks unlikely with several possible buyers lining up in the wings, but under new management the factory might employ less staff than it does now.

Lumsden Community Board member Russell Kelly said it would be an anxious time for the Northern Southland area until the future of the plant was known.

"They've got a good workforce and the plant has always performed well for the company."

The feeling in the district was that the Mossburn plant had made all the money but it was soaked up by other less profitable areas in the company's operation.

The impact of the company's troubles were widespread. Some farmers in the area were owed tens of thousands of dollars and they may never see their money. Unsecured creditors in Southland are owed a total of at least \$750,000.

Mr Kelly said his own timber company was owed \$2000 and he did not hold out much hope of getting the money.

Venison NZ Mossburn plant manager Ian Stewart said he would be interested in buying the factory and even if he did not, he was sure someone else would.

"I still have faith in the industry and am confident overseas venison buyers would support the company under new ownership."

Mr Stewart said he would be a definite bidder for the plant in partnership with "a few other interested parties" but would not elaborate.

Last financial year the Mossburn facility processed 30,000 deer plus 7500 feral deer, although that was expected to drop slightly this season with increased competition from rival processors PPCS and Mair Venison.

"Realistically, under new ownership, the plant could expect to process about half those numbers in its first season," he said.

There would be no trouble selling product from 30,000 deer but it would be a matter of building up farmer confidence in the new setup.

Manager interested in buying venison plant

23/11/93

By LIANNE MACKAY

The manager of Venison New Zealand's Mossburn works is one of several potential buyers showing interest in the plant, which will go on the market this week.

Ian Stewart, who has been in the industry for 19 years, said he and "two or three" partners were keen to buy the plant and interest had also been shown by other potential buyers.

The Mossburn plant — and possibly others owned by Venison New Zealand Co-operative Ltd — is likely to be sold, after Venison New Zealand went into receivership on Friday.

The company's first debenture holder, The National Bank, appointed Coopers and Lybrand as receivers at the request of Venison New Zealand directors.

The bank, as sole secured creditor, is owed about \$8 million. Unsecured creditors of the co-operative are owed about \$2.5 million, and a further \$4.5 million is owed by the co-operative's subsidiary, Venison New Zealand Marketing Ltd. About three quarters of the marketing company's debt is owed to farmer-suppliers.

Tony Lewis, one of two Wellington receivers appointed last week, visited the Mossburn plant on Saturday and spoke to Mr Stewart, who said the receiver had been "very honest and very fair."

The Mossburn plant would this week be advertised for sale, Mr Stewart said.

According to his information, Coopers and Lybrand hoped to sell the works within two or three weeks, with a view to having the new owner operational in the New Year. However, the company would not be letting it go at a "fire sale" price.

Government valuation of the plant was \$2.2 million, Mr Stewart said.

However, about \$450,000 worth of improvements were required soon to bring the works up to EC standards, mainly because of an insufficient hot water supply.

In spite of Venison New Zealand's financial troubles, Mr Stewart believed the deer industry had a good future.

"I wouldn't even be looking at it if I didn't think that," he said.

However, even if he missed out on buying the plant he said he would welcome any buyer who would "take it over and keep it running."

Morale was fairly low among the 22 permanent and five salaried staff at the works, he said.

"Everyone's uneasy, including myself."

"There's no-one at this plant now whose job is secure."

Arrangements made after discussion with the receivers and the Otago-Southland Meatworkers Union meant 10 employees owed annual leave would take it at once, while others would be called in to work as and when required.

Efforts would be made to share work out so everyone had about the same amount, Mr Stewart said.

The arrangement was not perfect but was "the best we can do."

Mr Stewart hoped everyone would "pull together" to keep the works operational.

Meanwhile, he said criticism of the marketing arm of Venison New Zealand was not completely justified.

"The marketing arm has been slated — but it wasn't marketing as far as I was concerned."

"A lot of the blame should go elsewhere."

Neither Mr Lewis nor local Coopers and Lybrand representatives dealing with Venison New Zealand were available yesterday.

Community rallies to help redundant workers

28/12/93

The Mossburn community is rallying around the 27 staff made redundant from the town's venison plant on Friday, with offers of temporary work flowing in.

The plant was sold to Dunedin-based Primary Producers Co-operative Society Ltd by the receivers of Venison New Zealand on Friday. The plant has closed until February 15 for upgrading, leaving staff out of work and without redundancy.

Plant manager Ian Stewart said the factory closed at 11am yesterday after processing a further 25 deer helicopter pilots had supplied before being told of the plant's sale.

Plant worker and Mossburn Development Area committee

By GINA ROBSON

chairman Jim Guyton said many people in the community were offering short-term work, such as farm labouring.

Staff were in limbo until they knew if they had a job again, Mr Guyton said.

"The morale is pretty low, not knowing, but once (a decision on jobs) comes out it will be up to strength again."

The one positive factor was knowing the plant had been sold to a stable company.

"You hear that many rumours that the plant's been sold and will be taken away or they'll

mothball it. At least now we've got an owner there's a chance to get jobs again in the town," he said.

The biggest fear in the community had been that the plant would close permanently.

Many workers were married, some with children. Hopefully there would be enough casual work for families to keep the bills paid, Mr Guyton said.

PPCS had not discussed with staff the numbers likely to be re-employed but the area committee was keen to meet chief executive Stewart Barnett, he said. Mr Barnett is overseas.

"If (the plant) is built up to the strength it was, everyone will be needed again."

Lumsden Anglican minister the Rev Chris Rodgers said the sale of the plant to PPCS was good news, as it was a progressive company.

The decision by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries in refusing to allow feral processing to continue while the plant was upgraded was over-vigilant, Mr Rodgers said.

"The workers and helicopter pilots cannot put their lives in limbo for two months," he said.

PPCS's offer of a \$5 killing rebate to farmer-shareholders, who are still owed a total of \$2.5 million by Venison New Zealand, was a "disgustingly blatant sop," he said.

Prospects brighten for some Mossburn workers

31/12/93

Some of the 27 staff at the Mossburn venison plant should be back at work next week following a back down by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Workers were told on Christmas Eve there would be no work until at least mid-February because MAF was refusing to allow processing of feral (wild) deer while the farmed deer killing plant was upgraded to meet new European Community requirements.

The seven-week closure also affected five helicopter pilots and their staff who supply feral deer to the plant.

Last week's announcement followed the sale of the plant to Dunedin-based PPCS. The former

owners, Venison New Zealand, went into receivership last month owing about \$15 million.

Associate Agriculture Minister Dennis Marshall said yesterday his officials had discussed the situation with Venison NZ receivers, PPCS and MAF. The officials then agreed to allow the feral killing section to continue operating while the farmed deer killing section was upgraded.

"This will enable processing of an export consignment of feral venison destined for the European market to continue and save the 27 jobs," he said.

The news was treated with some caution by Te Anau-based helicopter pilot Kim Hollows and Mossburn plant manager Ian Stewart.

Mr Hollows said it was good the plant could keep operating, but the five pilots did not yet know where they stood with PPCS.

He would try contacting the company today to tie up the loose ends so the pilots could restart capturing as soon as possible.

Mr Stewart said not all the plant's 27 staff would be back at work as only about 14 or 15 workers would be required to process the feral deer.

It was unclear why MAF had originally refused to allow the feral processing to continue.

Mr Stewart hoped to talk to Venison NZ receiver Tony Lewis today.

Mr Lewis could not be contacted for comment last night.

Quality aim in deer industry

In spite of short-term problems the deer industry is fundamentally sound, according to the Game Industry Board chief executive Richard Janes.

He listed short-term issues as:

- The early year venison procurement battle precluded the more normal chilled season premiums.
- Recession in major European markets.
- New Zealand's strengthening currency reduced export returns.
- Venison New Zealand's financial difficulties has caused many producer suppliers financial problems and consequent loss of confidence.
- Velvet income which dropped for many producers last season was originally forecast to be unsettled for this season.

From 1990 to 1993 the industry recorded a 360 percent increase in the national kill.

The overwhelming priority was finding markets for huge increases in venison production, without collapsing either market prices or producer returns. That was achieved, Mr Janes said.

"Forecasts for the next few years show steady venison production, which is a big marketing advantage.

"It means we can concentrate on getting the most value per kilogram, instead of placing those large volume increases.

"Industry projections show the \$130 million venison export earnings in the year to September 1993 will grow to \$194 million by 1998 as a result of increasing export values.

Mr Janes said in the six months since the launch of the Cervena (trademark) venison programme in the United States, export volumes of venison had increased by 90 percent.

"Of course, these are early days. The brand has only been in the market since April and we cannot claim it is established.

'Healthy start' to velvet pool

The first velvet pool for the season, held earlier in the week in Napier, has produced better prices than some industry commentators had predicted.

Wrightson's South Island velvet pool manager Russell Henderson said the sale of about two tonnes of velvet attracted widespread buying support.

Well cut A and B grade velvet was especially sought after.

Some grades sold at prices slightly ahead of the opening sale last season.

"However, it does show that increasing volume in higher value markets is achievable."

Producer returns for A and B grade velvet are expected to hold at last season's levels.

The season's first velvet pool on November 2 confirmed this with prices for both A and B grade virtually identical to opening prices last season.

Mr Janes said industry emphasis must continue to be on producing and marketing top quality A and B grade velvet.

He urged producers to cull stags cutting below C grade at two years.

The financial difficulties of Venison New Zealand Marketing were an obvious setback but should not be equated with industry wide difficulty, he said.

Mr Janes said the Game Industry Board had been invited to be a part of the creditor committee which would work with Venison New Zealand to ensure a good flow of information and support for the strategies which have been implemented to minimize the losses of Venison New Zealand Marketing's unsecured creditors and the co-operative's shareholders.

Discussions with Venison New Zealand Marketing's customers are under way and the three plants have restarted killing to process chilled product, for other exporters account to fulfil forward orders.

Mr Janes said it was a time for producers to hold their nerve.

The industry had a strong future in spite of the short-term distress being felt by some.

"Gross margins for deer have been consistently competitive over many years. All primary sectors have cyclical issues, and the deer industry is no exception.

"The industry's strategic approach and competitive advantages place it in a very strong position to capitalize on the investment made so far," Mr Janes said.

"Really, it was a pretty healthy start," Mr Henderson said.

Sales will be held in Napier and Christchurch each Tuesday from now on until the volume of velvet falls off again.

Prices were: SA1 and SA2 \$133.99; A1 long and medium, A2 long and medium \$116.99; B1 long and medium \$109.99; B1 short \$105.99; B2 long \$107.77; B2 medium and short \$100.66; C1 long \$76; C1 medium and short \$82; C2 long \$62; C2 medium and short \$73; D1 long \$60; D1 short \$68; D2 long \$55; D2 short \$51; E long \$35; E short \$40.01; TW1 \$100; TW2 \$90; TW3 \$70.11; TW4 \$70; spiker 1 \$55; spiker 2 \$35.

MAF denies order

The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries says it never ordered feral deer processing to stop at the Mossburn deer plant.

MAF operations manager Richard Hopkirk said yesterday the ministry had been getting the blame for something it didn't do.

Last week staff were told there would be no work for seven weeks while the feral deer unit was upgraded by new owner PPCS. The upgrade is required to meet new European Community requirements, which come into force today, for farmed venison.

The plant was sold to PPCS two weeks ago by Venison New Zealand, which had gone into receivership.

Receiver Tony Lewis said last week "attempts to negotiate interim processing arrangements with MAF, particularly for feral livestock, while the upgrade was being completed ... have been unsuccessful."

Mr Hopkirk said the implication from that statement and subsequent reports was that MAF had stopped the feral processing, but that was not true.

"We never said they could not process feral deer. Such a decision was more likely to have been made for commercial reasons."

On Thursday night Associate Agriculture and Employment Minister Denis Marshall announced an agreement had been reached to allow the unit to continue operating during the upgrade.

But the plant might not get going immediately as the five helicopter pilots who supply feral deer will not be meeting PPCS executives until the middle of next week.

One of the pilots, Kim Hollows, said there were various issues which had to be resolved before they could start supplying the factory again.

Feral processing will keep about 14 of the plant's 27 staff employed.

DEER 8/12/93

National Velvet and Hard Antler competition results were:

Wapiti-Elk: N and S Cunningham, South Hillend, 14.2kg, 300 points, 1; Bringans, Day, Calder, Lawrence, Winton, 11.7kg, 268.6, 2; N and S Cunningham, 9.8kg, 250.53, 3.

Pure New Zealand Red: J and W Gregory, Richmond, 6.75kg, 398, 1; D H and L M Stevens and Swann family, Balfour, 6.75kg, 386, 2; J S Scorgie, 6.75kg, 384, 3.

Maiden New Zealand Red: J and W Gregory, 6.75kg, 398, 1; J and W Gregory, 5.75kg, 355.86, 2; D H and L M Stevens and Swann family, 5.5kg, 339.96, 3.

Imported Red: Ramasses Syndicate, 8.2kg, 365, 1; Stanfield Oaks, Hamilton, 7kg, 297.72, 2; Stanfield Oaks, 7.3kg, 279.04, 3.

Three-year Red: D H and L M Stevens, 4.1kg, 378.5, 1; D H and L M Stevens, 3.5kg, 350.22, 2; D H and L M Stevens, 3.7kg, 324.48, 3.

Three-year Wapiti-Elk: I H Pullar, Winton, 5.85kg, 362, 1; N and S Cunningham, 5.3kg, 352.2, 2; I H Pullar, 5.5kg, 346.04, 3.

Maiden New Zealand Wapiti-Elk: I H Pullar, 9.85kg, 266.72, 1; B J Kenton, Timaru, 8.75kg, 265.24, 2; M and J McWhirter, Merivale, 6.95kg, 243.89, 3.

Restricted Southland Red: D H and L M Stevens, 5.1kg, 386, 1; D H and L M Stevens, 5.65kg, 339.96, 2; D H and L M Stevens and Swann family, 5.5kg, 338.4, 3.

Wapiti Supreme: N and S Cunningham, 14.2kg, 392.5, 1; Bringans, Day, Calder, Lawrence, 11.7kg, 347.8, 2; B J Kenton, 8.75kg, 317.24, 3.

Hard Antler: P Fraser, Rotorua, (red), 12.35kg, 259.68, 1 and winner of Landcorp Trophy; Manawahe Deer Farm, Bay of Plenty (red), 10.40kg, 255.4, 2; Stanfield Oaks, (red), 10.55kg, 237.53, 3.

Champion overall, N and S Cunningham (wapiti-elk), Reserve, J and W Gregory (red).

Venison company closes, to be sold

11/12/93 NELSON

The Takaka-based New Zealand Venison Co, which began trading in February, has ceased operations pending a possible sale, according to a letter sent to creditors.

In the letter, a lawyer acting for the company, Mick Hollyer of Pitt and Moore, in Nelson, said the venison processing company stopped production from December 3.

The National Bank, which held the first debenture on the assets and undertakings of the company, had frozen the accounts and demanded repayment, he said.

Mr Hollyer said the directors were negotiating a sale of the plant to a consortium which had already expressed interest in the company.

It was hoped these negotiations would be successful and the transaction concluded within 60 days.

Mr Hollyer said a financial statement showing the position of the company was being prepared and would be sent to all creditors, who would then be asked to enter into a "formal compromise."

The plant was formerly run by Atas Beef Packers before being transformed into a state-of-the-art deer slaughtering works owned jointly by Atas and the New Zealand Fish Company. — NZPA

PPCS buys deer plant

27/12/93
Jobs uncertain for 27

Twenty-seven staff at the Mossburn venison plant are out of work until at least mid-February while new owner Primary Producers Co-operative Society Ltd carries out upgrading work.

The plant's sale to Dunedin-based PPCS was completed and announced on Friday. It was formerly owned by Venison New Zealand which, with its marketing subsidiary, went into receivership last month with total debts of about \$15 million.

Plant manager Ian Stewart laid off staff on Friday afternoon following news that attempts by Venison New Zealand receivers and PPCS had failed to continue interim processing arrangements with the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries while upgrading.

The plant must be upgraded to comply with new EC requirements, which take effect from January 1.

The plant will reopen on February 15, when PPCS takes over ownership. PPCS has access from January 5 for upgrading work.

The Southland Times understands Wallace MP Bill English had been told about MAF's decision to withdraw the services of its inspector at the Mossburn plant and will talk to involved parties on Wednesday.

Mr Stewart said he was disappointed MAF would not allow feral livestock processing to continue.

"They could have given us a little bit of leeway," he said.

Five helicopter pilots who supply feral deer to the plant will also be out of work until February 15. A further 10 people have been made redundant, with each pilot laying off two employees.

Mr Stewart said there was no redundancy for plant workers. No indication had been given

By GINA ROBSON

yet on the number of people PPCS was likely to re-employ. PPCS has indicated it would approach staff as soon as practical.

Venison NZ receiver Tony Lewis, of Wellington, said he was extremely disappointed the plant had to close. Along with disrupting staff employment, it would inconvenience stock suppliers and could cause problems for Venison NZ Marketing Ltd's European customers.

Te Anau-based pilot Kim Hollows said the plant closure came "right in the heat of the season, at the most productive time."

All five effected pilots would face financial hardship but it was possible some could be bankrupted as they were reliant on feral income at this time of the year, Mr Hollows said.

Each pilot had to put off two staff members. Once the plant opened again there would be only about six weeks work left for the season, he said.

"It's been a hard enough season as it is without this coming on top of it."

Mr Hollows felt there should have been more contact with pilots about the situation as they had been left "completely in the dark."

Farmer-shareholders in the Mossburn plant are still owed \$2.5 million by the company.

As part of the sale arrangements PPCS will offer all farmers who are unsecured creditors of the company supplying the Mossburn plant a killing rebate of up to \$5 an animal "as a concession to recognize possible past losses." The company did not specify how long the rebate would run.

Farmer-shareholder Kevin Woolhouse said \$5 a head was not a big deal for a \$300-\$400 animal.

"It doesn't even pay the cost of cartage," he said.

Mr Woolhouse said he felt sorry for staff.

New Zealand Deer Farmers' Association Fiordland branch chairman Chris Carran said it was good to see a stable company had bought the plant.

Venison NZ to PPCS 7/2/94

By Peter Owens

The receiver of Venison New Zealand has disposed of the failed company's venison processing plant at Mossburn to PPCS.

The sale which was announced just before Christmas, is for an undisclosed sum.

It is understood the Mossburn plant is being overhauled to the EC standard required for the facility to continue processing venison for export to the Community. This should cost the new owner about half a million dollars and it must be completed before the plant can resume exporting.

The total amount owing to secured and unsecured creditors has not yet been finalised. Venison New Zealand was placed in the hands of receivers at the invitation of its board by the debenture holder, The National Bank.

The statutory requirement to file with the Registrar of Companies, a statement of assets and liabilities as at the date of receivership was due to be filed by 20 December 1993.

So far this has to been done and it is understood that the Registrar has granted an extension of time for compliance with

the Companies Act 1955.

In the meantime, the chief executive of PPCS, Stewart Barnett has offered a reduction in processing fees for each carcass presented to the Mossburn works for processing by local deer farmers who are unsecured creditors of Venison New Zealand.

There is still anger in northern Southland at the behaviour of the board of Venison New Zealand.

One farmer, who did not wish to be named, said that he had lost more than \$50,000 from the company failure.

He had heard rumours in mid-1993 that Venison New Zealand was unsound and had communicated with the directorate. He had been assured that the rumours were untrue and that the co-operative company was sound.

On that basis he forwarded product for processing at the Mossburn plant but a short time later the company was placed in the hands of receivers. He is angry at what he sees as his property now being sold to pay the National Bank, the debenture holder.

Northern Southland creditors have taken legal advice and will take steps appropriate to the circumstances when the statutory statement of affairs has been filed with the Registrar of Companies at Wellington.

Venison suppliers seek protection after collapse 7/2/94

By Dale Park

A farmer protection clause being inserted into a contract is one option being considered by farmers to protect themselves in case of company failure, says Ray Vincent.

Mr Vincent heads a committee of five unsecured creditors of New Zealand Venison, a Takaka-based plant which went into receivership on December 10.

He says ownership of stock should remain with the farmer until it is paid for.

The committee is working closely with Federated Farmers to change the system as it is. Mr Vincent says the group is currently trying to find out what money is owed by New Zealand Venison, who to, what the assets are worth and what money is available to be paid out, if any.

If the company assets can be sold at a reasonable price to a

new owner existing creditors could be interested in transferring their debt to an equity shareholding.

Mid-Canterbury Federated Farmers is providing administration background and expertise to the committee and farmers concerned.

Federated farmers is advancing the concept of the reservation of title clause in transactions between farmers and purchasers of farmers' goods.

Currently the title changes from seller to buyer the moment the title is signed, which means the farmer is vulnerable until he is paid.

A reservation of title clause extends the title until the goods are paid for.

It is normal commercial practice in other than farming transactions for the words to be written into a contract that the product remains the property of the seller until paid for.

Concern at Tb control breakdown 5/4/94

GREYMOUTH — Confirmation of tuberculosis in a cattle beast at Haast has prompted a demand for greater care on the part of farmers.

"This animal was one of a line of 21 purchased through a stock and station agent from a property on movement control in the endemic area," West Coast Animal Health Board representative Geoff Volckman said.

Mr Volckman told the quarterly provincial meeting of Federated Farmers in Greymouth, no declaration card or permit to move the cattle had accompanied them after sale.

"Another three animals of this line have died from unknown causes," he said. The case was being investigated with a view to prosecution.

Mr Volckman also said a feral deer shot south of the Waitangitona River had a Tb lesion.

"This was a concern, as the area was thought to be free of Tb," he said. — NZPA

No decision on venison jobs yet

By DAVID COSGRIFF

MOSSBURN venison plant workers still do not know how many of them have jobs, even though the plant was sold to new owners two months ago.

Employees were reluctant to talk about their concerns because they fear it might affect their prospects of employment with the new owner, Dunedin-based Primary Producers Co-operative Society.

One source said PPCS did not like publicity.

The plant was operated by Venison New Zealand until it went into receivership in November and was sold to PPCS before Christmas, with possession fixed for February 16.

14/3/94
The company gained early access so it could start upgrading the farmed deer processing section to meet new European Union requirements. Feral (wild) deer processing was allowed to continue.

Former manager Ian Stewart was replaced. About eight of the remaining 24 staff have been employed processing feral deer but the future of the other 16 is still uncertain.

Lumsden Anglican minister the Rev Chris Rodgers said it was a pity PPCS had not made a final decision about staff numbers as the delay was causing unnecessary stress.

"We are glad PPCS bought the plant because they are a strong company and they should put it on a firm footing," he said.

"But we have heard only about half the workforce will be employed

and we are very concerned about those who will miss out."

PPCS chief executive Stewart Barnett yesterday declined to answer questions about staffing issues, or how long staff would have to wait to hear their job prospects.

He also declined to discuss the number of staff required at the upgraded plant.

Mr Barnett said people have to realise the plant requires work to bring it up to EC standard and until that is completed we can not make decisions on staffing levels.

Some Mossburn area residents, who did not want to be named, said the delay was preventing workers who might miss out on jobs from looking for alternatives.

Mr Rodgers said the church was also concerned about the farmers who were out of pocket with the collapse of Venison NZ.

Some deerfarmers had lost thousands of dollars because they had not been paid for stock processed at the plant.

Receiver and manager Robert Thompson, from Coopers and Lybrand in Wellington, said it was too soon to know the final position of the company or how much it would be able to pay creditors.

The company's three plants, at Mossburn, Feilding and Hastings, had been sold but there was still other assets to sell.

Venison NZ owes its sole secured creditor, the National Bank, about \$8 million and unsecured creditors about \$7 million.

Call for renegotiation of Wapiti contract

14/3/94
THE New Zealand Deerstalkers' Association says the crown wapiti herd management contract needs urgent renegotiating.

Association executives met the Department of Conservation in Invercargill recently to discuss their concerns.

The group claimed the herd was being mismanaged but DOC said the lack of profitability was because of market conditions for deer products.

The herd was formed when wapiti were removed from Fiordland National Park in 1982 with the aim of re-establishing a feral herd elsewhere.

About 1700 animals were removed to reduce conflicts in the national park between wapiti and takahe and 130 of them were put into the relocation herd.

But no suitable relocation site has been found for the herd and the animals cannot be legally released back into the park.

The herd was farmed for the crown by a private farmer until 1988 when Landcorp agreed to take over, with the aim of

breeding animals with superior trophy antlers. DOC was appointed the crown's agent.

Profits were to be split between DOC and Landcorp and the crown's share was to be set aside for the benefit of recreational hunters.

Deerstalkers' Association president Ian Wright said after the recent meeting his organisation was less anxious about the physical management of the animals but wanted changes to the contract between DOC and Landcorp.

"The whole contract needs renegotiating. We believe unless the contract is modified it will be impossible for Landcorp to ever manage the herd profitably," Mr Wright said.

Under the contract Landcorp could charge all direct expenses against the herd plus administration costs, depreciation and interest on farm capital.

It was clear the herd would never be relocated or released into the wild so hunters had to decide what they wanted to happen. If it continued to be farmed at

a loss then sale of the wapiti might be the only option left, he said.

When the agreement was struck with Landcorp in 1988 it included the condition that profits would be shared between the crown and Landcorp.

A trust was to be set up to control distribution of the money "for the benefit of recreational hunters" but the trust had not been formed because there had been no profits.

Deerstalkers also discussed with DOC their concerns about the department charging for the issuing hunting permits.

Mr Wright said there were constant rumours Treasury was pushing DOC to start charging for the permits to recoup some of the \$800,000 spent each year administering the scheme.

Hunters did not consider they should have to pay to hunt animals, which they were helping to control in the nation's forests and bush areas.

DOC denied the charges were imminent, but the association was unconvinced, Mr Wright said.

1080 opponents should consider implications

WELLINGTON — People opposing the use of 1080 poison to control possums should think hard about the economic implications of what they are saying, Federated Farmers says.

Farmers had a strong interest in 1080 as a control method because possums spread bovine tuberculosis in cattle and deer herds, acting president Bill Shepherd said yesterday.

A newly formed organisation, 1080 Action Network New Zealand, this week strongly criticised aerial drops of 1080 by the Department of Conservation to control possums in areas of native bush.

The group wants an independent evaluation of 1080 poison, saying aerial spraying kills fish, birds and other wildlife in the drop areas.

It said authorities in New Zealand should take note of the restrictions on 1080 use imposed in the United States recently.

Mr Shepherd said Tb in cattle and deer posed no threat to human health because of pasteurisation and cooking. But its presence could undermine overseas markets worth \$5 billion each year to the New Zealand economy.

"At the moment the average consumer in our overseas markets isn't concerned about Tb in New Zealand stock, but if our trading competitors inflamed perceptions the results could be very serious," he said.

If Tb became a non-tariff barrier, countries such as Australia, which is Tb-free, would be winners and New Zealand would be a loser. — NZPA

Venison creditors might sue

9/7/94
HASTINGS — Creditors of the failed deer processing company, Venison New Zealand, say they are considering legal action against the company's directors.

The creditors, mainly deer farmers, are likely to receive less than 10c in the dollar when Venison NZ is finally wound up.

Company chairman David Malin said he had not heard of the possible action and did not have director's liability insurance.

Venison NZ, with plants in Hastings, Feilding and Mossburn in the

South Island, collapsed in November last year owing millions of dollars.

The debenture holder, the National Bank, called in the receivers which has now finished their job and a liquidator has been appointed to oversee the final wind-up and distribution of funds to creditors.

A committee working in conjunction with the liquidator is seeking support from the 400 creditors to appoint a lawyer to assess if the directors have a case to answer.

John Wildman, of Te Kuiti, said the committee was seeking between \$70

and \$80 from each creditor to employ a lawyer.

Mr Wildman said he had had responses so far from about 100 creditors and had started discussions with a Hamilton lawyer. If legal opinion supported a case, creditors would be asked for more cash.

One point at issue is the relationship between the two companies involved with Venison NZ, Venison NZ Co-operative Ltd and Venison Marketing Ltd.

The marketing company, which bought and sold stock, is the company

which holds most of the debts. The co-operative holds the assets.

Some of the co-operative shareholders are saying the marketing arm is a different company and the co-operative should not be liable for the marketing arm's debts, estimated at about \$4.9 million.

But Mr Wildman said he expected legal argument to find that the two companies are both part of Venison NZ.

Reasons given for the collapse have been undercapitalisation, too rapid an expansion and a stock procurement battle. — NZPA

Venison company collapses have hit board's levy income

5/5/94
AUCKLAND — The Game Industry Board has lost more than \$500,000 in levy income with the collapse of three venison processing companies.

However, the board hopes a change in legislation will offer protection in the future.

Board chief executive Richard Janes told the board's general meeting in Taupo yesterday almost \$340,000 was lost in the Venison New Zealand receivership last year and a further \$49,000 in the

subsequent collapse of New Zealand Venison.

Furthermore, the receivership this year of Fortex resulted in a loss of \$118,000 in levy money.

Mr Janes said that levies collected by processors was required to be forwarded to the board by the 20th of the month following slaughter.

"They can owe money for seven weeks and not be in arrears, but then we put a 10 percent penalty on," Mr Janes said.

Penalties were included in the money owed by the three failed companies.

The board had placed both Venison New Zealand and New Zealand Venison in liquidation because of the wider powers of a liquidator on behalf of unsecured creditors, Mr Janes said.

"We have also taken steps to strengthen the position of the board in future to prevent such situations arising again," he said.

Agriculture Minister John Falloon had agreed to change in the board's regulations to ensure that levy money is kept separate from other funds.

Trust accounts for this purpose are expected to be in place by July or August for the coming season.

Mr Janes said the board had budgeted for \$7 million in levy income this season but that had already been lowered to an expected \$6.3 million because of a drop in kill, from 380,000 animals to 300,000. — NZPA

Deerfarmers urged to back quality assurance

19/7/94
NELSON — Overseas markets will eventually force deerfarmers on to a quality assurance programme if they do not adopt it voluntarily, the chairman of the industry on-farm accreditation scheme said.

Canterbury deerfarmer Bob Simpson told Nelson deerfarmers at a field-day last week that customers were increasingly demanding quality assurance and to remain competitive the industry had to comply.

The on-farm quality assurance programme had been released to the industry two and a half months ago and already 600 farmers had listed their intention of joining it, he said. But the rest of the country's deerfarmers had to follow.

"If they don't get behind the programme, it will be imposed upon them. At this stage it's only voluntary," he said.

"We can guarantee when they bring down the tariff barriers they'll (countries) put on non-trade barriers, like animal health."

Customers were already becoming suspicious of additives in products and different farming practices, Mr Simpson said.

"Just because we've had success establishing our deer industry doesn't mean we need to become complacent."

"We need quality assurance for the ever-increasing competition from new players after a relatively small market," he said.

The Game Industry Board was funding the first three years of the programme to get it up and running but after that it would move to a user-pays system or be self-funding, Mr Simpson said.

A working party of 42 farmers had put together a manual for farmers to follow when they joined the programme to prepare

themselves for a farm accreditation.

The manual identified required standards for farm facilities, animal production and welfare, and animal health.

Assessments would be carried out by locally trained assessors who could accredit a property and random audits would follow.

An independent auditor would in turn check the assessor to make sure the programme was an internationally recognised standard, Mr Simpson said.

Deer transporters had also adopted their own quality assurance programme to cover freight design, driver's training and animal welfare.

So far 126 transport companies around the country had registered with the programme and 197 truck crates had been approved out of 256 inspected. — NZPA

Internal parasites a problem in deer

SOME internal parasites not originally thought to be a problem in deer look like they are becoming important, Lincoln University's veterinarian Alex Familton told deerfarmers at a field-day at the university recently.

With increasing stocking rates and continual deer grazing of paddocks, some of the intestinal worms were showing up more in deer.

"In some cases the damage done to the stomach could be permanent," Dr Familton said.

Originally only lungworm was considered to be a major problem but now "ostertagia-like" species were turning up.

Deer hobby patch has grown out of sight

IN 1981, Te Tua farmer David Peek set aside 4ha as a deer hobby patch. That patch has since grown to become one of, if not the largest deer finishing operation in the province.

Mr Peek is the third generation farmer of a 160ha exposed coastal property a few kilometres south of Tuatapere. Deer now occupy 120ha, with just 360 mixed-age Romney ewes pushed into one corner.

Eventually they, too, will go — especially after being hard hit by the early September southerly storm and "the worst winter I can remember."

The deer area wintered 200 red and hybrid breeding hinds, 40 two and four-year-old velvet stags, 810 rising yearling stags and hinds and 160 rising two-year-old stags and hinds.

In addition, 45 fattening bulls are carried through the winter and when necessary are used for pasture management on the deer paddocks.

Mr Peek said as he became aware of the potential of deer farming and grew to prefer working with them to sheep, the hobby patch "grew out of control."

The dollar return from deer had also been significantly higher than sheep even during the industry's down periods, he said.

However, rather than chase live sales or velvet, Mr Peek set his sights on specialising in finishing deer for venison production.

Up to 150 finishers are bred on the property each year and a further 700 or so are bought in as weaners for fattening.

Careful and flexible pasture management ensures the young animals are continually grazing top quality pastures.

Mobs are moved on as pastures reach their most productive stage, not when feed in one paddock runs out.



Te Tua deer farmer David Peek

Slaughter drafts are made according to bodyweight and an estimated carcass weight of 50 to 60kg.

The first draft of top rising yearling stags is usually in late November, with regular drafts until the following May.

"Those that don't make it by early May are carried through a second winter and the hinds killed the following late September or early October," Mr Peek said.

"Carry-over stags are killed in late December and early January after being velveted.

"They might only velvet on average 1kg but everything helps."

For the most part, deer farming is a relaxed operation, except the June to September period, when the weather can make stock and pasture management "horrendous."

Each year Mr Peek conserves surplus pasture and this past summer turned his surplus into 800 tonnes of silage, 140 bales of baleage and 700 conventional bales of hay.

Animal health consists of a three to four-weekly weaner drenching programme from February to July, a weaning Yersinia vaccination and a

mid-September and early December B12 injection to combat a cobalt deficiency.

In early November, Mr Peek separates the finishing hinds and stags and grades the animals into mobs according to size.

He anticipates his Romneys will produce \$530 a hectare gross this season, the bulls \$972/ha and the deer \$1125/ha.

This past season, Mr Peek tried fine particle application instead of his regular fertiliser programme.

"I had great results. The grass growth got ahead of the stock and carried on right through the winter," he said.

The application rate, based on a soil test, was for DAP, elemental sulphur, sulphate of ammonia with lime flour and a range of trace elements at 75kg/ha.

"I'll do another soil test at the end of October and if it matches up with last year,

then I'm happy to do another application. At the moment I'm all in favour of it."

Mr Peek is totally committed to producing a quality product, so much so that he has agreed to be an assessor for the Game Industry Board's on-farm Quality Assurance scheme.

He attended the inaugural two-day Quality Assurance meeting in Wellington in March last year, attended by 42 people drawn from throughout the country, to discuss and set up the quality programme.

Mr Peek said the aim of the on-farm Quality Assurance programme was to have 200 farmers assessed and on the scheme by September this year.

"And we won't be too far away."

Mr Peek is confident the Quality Assurance scheme will have far-reaching benefits for deer farmers, not the least of which will be to lift their

management skills, as it has already done for him.

"It's made me more aware of animal health and welfare issues and that by having healthier animals I will have less downgraded product — be it pelts, velvet or meat — and, therefore, more dollars.

"What the scheme is doing is guaranteeing our consumers of a pasture to plate quality and farmers are naturally first in that chain," Mr Peek said.

"By introducing the on-farm QA scheme and similar quality schemes for deer slaughter premises and deer transporters, the industry is leading from the front rather than waiting for quality standards to be forced on it by our overseas markets.

"Farmers might not see any immediate lift in their returns but eventually properties that are QA accredited will achieve premiums as well as consistently higher returns than non-accredited farms."

FARM

Thursday, September 15, 1994 11

Deer system leads rest

THE deer industry is leading the way with its Pasture to Plate quality management system and it is simply a matter of time before other agricultural sectors adopt similar programmes.

That is the view of Agricultural Chemical and Animal Remedy Manufacturers' Association executive director Ian Blincoe.

Most deer slaughter premises had audited quality assurance programmes in place.

Deer transporters had a quality assurance code and deer farmers

could also choose to join an on-farm quality programme.

"Quality is a message which is here to stay," he said.

Mr Blincoe said his association had a four-month user awareness campaign underway aimed at farmers and horticulturalists.

"Agrichemicals and animal remedies are essential to our way of life.

They allow New Zealand to export quality food, fibre and forest products around the world," he said.

"They protect us from vermin and disease. They improve the welfare of animals."

But agrichemicals and animal remedies were widely misunderstood by many urban consumers, Mr Blincoe said.

"When customers ask for quality food and fibre they want it to be essentially free of harmful residues.

They are demanding that farming methods are humane and kind to the environment."

Farmers and other users of agrichemicals ignored or dismissed con-

sumer concerns at their peril, he said.

Chemical misuse also brought a risk of regulations or overseas trade barriers.

Mr Blincoe said most agrichemical and animal remedy manufacturers were either ISO accredited or in the process of gaining accreditation.

"The industry is a strong supporter of quality management systems.

"It will be doing everything it can to support on-farm quality initiatives like the Growsafe campaign and the deer industry's quality assurance programme."

'WAC' Act still governs

Outlining the laws

by Bill Fleury of DOC, Wanganui

MANY NZ FARMERS think most of the restrictions on deer farming have gone. Not so.

Apart from specific 'farming' type legislation, deer farming is still governed by the Wild Animal Control (WAC) Act, 1977 (the Act was amended in 1978, 1979, 1982 and 1985); the Noxious Animals In Captivity Regulations 1969, and the Deer Farming Notice No 4, 1986. The Act and its attachments are administered by the Department of Conservation, (DOC).

Although it is probably 'old hat' to most established deer farmers, it may be of value to others to review what those rules and regulations require of deer farmers.

The Wild Animal Control Act basically defines what wild animals are and provides the mechanisms for their control. Deer are included in the definition of wild animals but the Act makes provision for them to be farmed.

Farming is allowed provided a permit is obtained for the purpose from DOC. The Act says the person who wants to farm deer must 'ensure that the enclosures on the land are suitable to contain the deer and prevent their escape and comply with any specifications prescribed by regulations'.

The Act also says the director general may specify, in the New Zealand Gazette, where deer farming is permitted or prohibited, or where any particular species of deer may or may not be farmed.

The Noxious Animals in Captivity Regulations 1969, prescribe the fencing specifications that must be complied with.

This regulation has detailed schedules. Some deer farmers may be surprised to know it specifies that the maximum spacing between verticals on a post and wire fence for Red deer is not allowed to be more than 24 inches and that 'top up' fences 'may be approved in special circumstances' using 4' x 3" x 4" treated timber extensions. Not quite the standard batten on every post — the type of top up fence that you commonly see being erected.

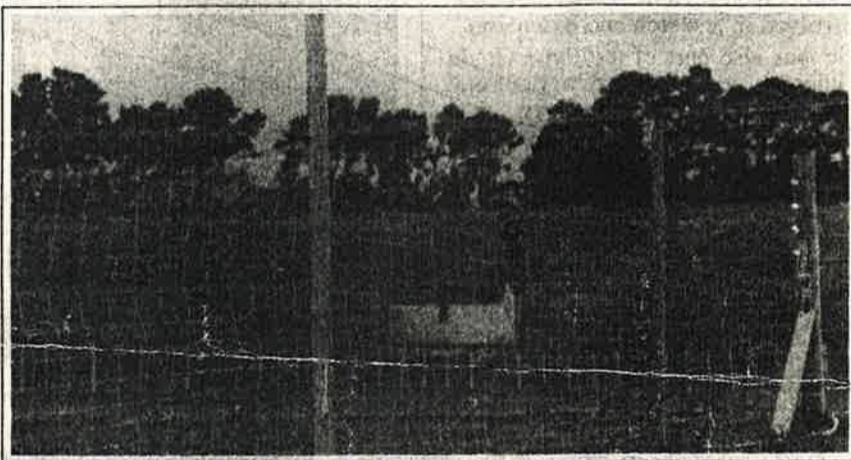
The Deer Farming Notice, No 4

1986, specifies where deer farming is generally permitted and specifically identifies those areas where it is not — some parts of Northland, Auckland and Taranaki, as well as most offshore islands.

It also specifies restrictions on the farming of some species, like not allowing the farming of Sika deer outside the central North Island area.

The specifications for deer fencing and the restrictions on species and areas have caused some problems as the deer farming industry has developed.

The NZDFA is soon to present a case to DOC to modify the fencing standards to take into account new materials and practices, as well as the degree of risk that escaped animals really pose in specific areas.



Deer fencing regulations may soon be modified

The status quo rules until then

To obtain a permit to farm deer, an intending farmer is usually only required to notify DOC of the intent to farm deer and sign a declaration that his/her enclosures meet the specified standards.

If the notification is in order, deer farming is allowed in the area and the species involved are not prohibited, DOC will acknowledge receipt of the notification; this constitutes the permit. DOC offices can supply a suitable form for the purpose.

Where the farm includes land classified as Land Use Class VII or VIII then DOC must consult with the local catchment authority (Regional Council) and be satisfied that the land is not unsuitable for such farming because of its susceptibility to erosion, is equipped with adequate fences and the animal to be farmed is within its feral range before a permit can be issued. An inspection is usually required in these cases and a fee may be charged.

In the meantime the old rules apply. DOC does, however, take a pragmatic approach, being more proactive in enforcing the rules and regulations more stringently in areas where deer are not already established in the wild than in areas where they are.

Another section of the WAC Act that deer farmers and others should be aware of is the prohibition on the liberation of wild animals.

There have been cases recently of people releasing deer to establish a recreational hunting herd or to dispose of animals of little value.

Apart from the threat these animals could pose to the natural environment and bovine Tb control, it is an illegal act subject to a fine and recovery of expenses arising from finding and destroying the animals.

Consult your local Department of Conservation office for further information on the Wild Animal Control Act and deer farming. □

Deer conversions urged

TIMARU — Cashed-up Southland sheep farmers should look at converting to deer, according to a deer farming leader.

Deer Farmers' Association South Canterbury-North Otago branch chairman Keith Orange Southland sheep farmers looking to buy properties in Canterbury should be looking at their own "deery" conversions.

Returns for deer, on a stock unit (SU) basis were superior and deer farming tends to require less

labour than sheep. Average gross returns on sheep was at \$35, with a net figure of \$10, compared to the average gross return on deer (venison and velvet) at \$60 with a net figure of \$30, Mr Orange said.

"Returns from sheep farming have been going back in real terms for the past 20 years."

With the lamb schedule racing backwards this season and wool prices nearer \$3 in real terms, buying power from sheep had

reduced by 800 percent in 20 years. Conversely, with a venison schedule consistently around \$5, velvet prices around \$100/kg and the Cervena strategy in place, there was room to hope for significantly improved prices.

In addition, there was an apparent anomaly with two-tooth ewes (life expectancy five years) selling at Lornville for \$100 and rising two-year hinds (life expectancy 15 years) selling for \$150 to \$300. — NZPA

Deer proposals excellent

DEER TALK

DAVID STEVENS



THE 1994 annual conference of the New Zealand Deer Farmers' Association was held at Wairakei during May.

Like many deer farmers from the south I was not able to attend, but if the reports from those who did and information through literature I have received since is anything to go by, the labelled "Industry Conference" was a success.

Preceding the conference, the Game Industry Board and Deer Industry Association held a formal general meeting.

This gave all deer farmers the opportunity to question the board about its future involvement and the present direction the deer industry is taking.

This was followed by seminar sessions, society annual general meetings, industry awards and the annual general meeting of the Deer Farmers' Association.

At the annual meeting, association president Clive Jermy introduced structural reform proposals designed to:

- Unite the production sector and formalise accountability mechanisms with the Game Industry Board.
- Strip the politics out of the board operations and give the board a mandate for their strategies and funding.
- Require annual consultation to agree to levies formally with shareholders as well as reporting outcomes against objectives.
- Introduce a multi-tiered subscription.

What the proposals will mean in short, if supported by deer farmers, are that all deer farmers (levy payers) will be given the right to vote for the president, council, local branch chairmen and the committee of the Deer Farmers Association.

The board will be required to seek approval from all levy payers for its five-year plans, annual budgets and before setting levies.

The process will be managed by the Deer Farmers' Association on behalf of all deer farmers. The board will report to the association each six months on its achievements and financial performance.

I believe these proposals are excellent as many deer farmers have not had any formal representation on the board. All farmers have wanted more

consultation with the board, particularly in the areas of levies and performance.

Farmers have felt in the past the board smelt a little bit of state sector mentality — if you receive funding you must spend it within that financial year or you won't be able to justify the same level of funding in the following year.

Two frequently used words of the 1990s are accountability and transparency — the above proposals should go a long way towards achieving both.

The keynote speaker at the conference was John Parker, of the New Zealand Dairy Board.

He spoke on what it meant to develop a brand marketing strategy in terms of time, commitment, risk, sacrifice and rewards.

He warned of the folly of expecting too much, too soon.

Mr Parker also stated the number of companies involved in the food business was shrinking and the power of branding was becoming immense.

In the UK, Australia and (soon) in New Zealand, there are really only three supermarket chains which control the retail food business.

Deer farmers, he said, ignored that at their peril. For deer farmers to escape the horrors of commodity price decline they had to differentiate venison by making it more desirable in consumers' minds.

To achieve that, he said, there must be high standards of quality, a consistent supply of product, superior packaging, portion control, education, swift and efficient distribution and service, good advertising and promotion.

This is all wrapped up in a brand, or alternatively, some other form of distinguishing mark — the cervena strategy is spot on.

But for cervena to succeed it means the sacrifice of short-term returns for long-term gains.

With the reduced kill, there will be zero production growth for the next two years and then stable growth of 10 percent per annum forecast each year thereafter.

This will create an opportunity for the first time in many years to experience stability and focus on added-value, not shifting volume.

Stability will breed confidence.

I was pleased to learn of Mr Parker's comments as I, like many other deer farmers have always believed that brand marketing is an excellent strategy.

Like farming, the market strategy is an investment-commitment made on the best information available. The returns won't happen overnight but that is not a reason to walk away from the commitment.

Many of us started deer farming in the belief of better returns, a challenge, a vision and an opportunity — but there were no guarantees.

Margins topic for debate

DEER TALK

DAVID STEVENS



THE subject of gross margins always creates the opportunity for a good debate on how to justify the resulting figures.

After reading the results of several so-called experts in the field of gross margin analysis I question the usefulness of the information, which is quite often published with little or no accompanying information.

Deer farming is still a relatively new farming industry with a wide variation in farmer performance and management practices, which play a large part in gross margin returns on individual properties.

Another factor which should be taken into account is the majority of deer farms are not large and as we all know, the larger the unit, the more efficient in cost per stock unit.

An example of this is the difference in returns between an average and top velvet producer.

The average velvet price for 1993-94 season was \$93/kg (at \$93,000 a tonne velvet is the most valuable product produced from the pastoral sector in New Zealand.)

The top velvet producers last year achieved an average of \$120-\$130/kg on an extra \$27,000 to \$37,000 a tonne more than the average velvet grower (the difference in value of A grade and D grade velvet in 1993-94 was \$55/kg).

Those same top velvet producers are producing a low volume, high quality and value product which will probably return \$120 to \$130 gross margin per stock unit or \$1320 to \$1430/ha gross for the 1994-95 season more than rating against dairying.

The same can be said for top venison finishers — instead of the \$40 gross margin per stock unit average, some will be achieving up to \$60 to \$80 gross margin per stock unit or \$660 to \$880/ha gross.

Both venison finishing and velvet production are specialist jobs with venison finishers in many cases having supply arrangements with the breeders and processor and the velvet producers having built up top velvet herds over a period of 15-20 years of selection (both are aiming for top quality and weights).

So what use are gross margins to the farmer? It does give you an idea as to what the average farming operation is returning — so if you are above average do you have a warm fuzzy feeling or if you are below average do you think about giving up — or do farmers take notice of them?

If farmers could get more information on what the top producers are achieving and how and why without all the breed prejudices, I am sure that would be of more use than any gross margins.

New venison processing venture

A NEW venison processor is about to begin operations near Rakaia.

Mountain View Processors Ltd will process deer sourced from the Canterbury region, partly filling the vacuum left following the closure of the Fortex plant at Seafield.

The major shareholders in the new venture are Doug and Keith Hood, of Mt Hutt Station. Minority shareholders include Venison New Zealand's former Mossburn plant manager Ian Stewart, who will become plant manager.

Ne on

PREVENTING stopping, earlier, is altering the being investsity.

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Further helicopters 22/11/94 could pose danger

By DAVID COSGRIFF

ALLOWING more helicopter operators in to Fiordland National Park for deer recovery work could jeopardise safety and livelihoods, deerstalkers say.

Conservation Minister Dennis Marshall is considering an application from two additional helicopter operators for permits to recover wild animals from the park.

The Southland conservancy originally turned down the applications but the operators lodged an appeal with the Minister.

A spokesman for Mr Marshall said a decision was expected before Christmas "and the Minister is anxious to make sure it's fair because he realises people's livelihoods are at stake."

Four operators currently work the park but those contacted yesterday said they would wait until Mr Marshall's decision before commenting.

But a Westland operator, who did not want to be named, said the application should be declined on safety grounds alone.

"If there's not tight controls put on the numbers of helicopters flying around Fiordland there's going to be more accidents."

It was also his experience that having more operators did not mean more deer would be shot.

"The deer get that spooked from all the helicopters they don't come up."

"DOC would be better off leaving the park to the guys working it at the moment rather than have them all chasing each other," he said.

The New Zealand Deerstalkers' Association is also concerned about the prospect of extra helicopter operators in the area.

Vice-president Roger McNaughton, of Kapuka, said the present recovery operations were working well but the extra competition would make them less viable.

The association also feared that if the two applications were granted there would be a flood of applications from other companies.

"If the Minister allows one extra operator in then he cannot really stop others."

"We do not want a return to the 'deer war' years as no one gains from this," Mr McNaughton said.

But one of the companies seeking permission to work in Fiordland said the fears were groundless.

Beta Aviation operations manager Andy Mardon, of Haast, said the helicopter it planned to use in Fiordland would complement rather than compete with the existing operators.

"We see a niche market for a smaller aircraft taking on the tasks which are unsuitable for bigger helicopters."

The company wanted to relocate to Southland and do other work such as training and agriculture.

But Mr Mardon said it was "hard to go in cold" and the venison business was needed to provide cash flow.

Concerns about safety did not stand up because there would only be the five helicopters working the 1.25 million hectares in the park. The West Coast conservancy was a similar size and had 20 aircraft operating in it, he said.

Mr Mardon said the issue had dragged on for months and it "would be beneficial for all concerned" to have a decision as soon as possible.

New approach 19/7/94 on deer breeding

PREVENTING the breeding season stopping, rather than starting it earlier, is a new approach to altering the breeding season of deer being investigated at Lincoln University.

PhD student Greg Anderson told 150 farmers who attended a recent deer field-day at the university that if, instead of switching off about July-August, the breeding season of hinds could be kept going, stags could be put out in January and calves born in August.

This would coincide with spring rather than summer, the normal calving season.

Mr Anderson's work involves researching the effect the thyroid gland has in determining deer breeding.

The thyroid gland, situated in the neck, is involved in switching off the breeding season in both hinds and stags.

Removal of the gland keeps both sexes fully reproductive, but the surgical removal of the thyroid is not considered feasible in farming practice.

Some way of blocking the action of the thyroid during the critical period of the year needs to be developed before this novel way of changing the time of calving can be commercialised.

Mr Anderson's work is being supported by a grant from the Canterbury branch of the New Zealand Deer Farmers' Association.

MP says management 9/3/95 of Wapiti makes sense

SOUTHLAND hunters should push for a management plan for Fiordland Wapiti deer, regardless of whether the crown herd is sold, Wallace MP Bill English.

The Department of Conservation has decided to sell the 300-plus herd which is farmed on a Landcorp property, Freestone Farm, near Manapouri. The herd was started when Wapiti were

captured in the Fiordland National Park in the early 1980s with the intention of establishing a feral herd outside the park.

A suitable relocation site could not be found and in 1987 the herd was transferred from a private farm to the Landcorp property to be farmed for the crown.

It was proposed half the profit would go to DOC for enhancing

recreational hunting, but the farm has never made a profit.

Mr English said he had met Conservation Minister Denis Marshall several times, but he was determined to go ahead with the sale by June 30.

"The Wapiti and red deer are there and no one pretends we can get rid of them, so it makes sense to manage them."

Existing deer hunters upset

21/1/95

By DAVID COSGRIFF

A DECISION to allow an additional helicopter deer recovery operator to work in the Fiordland National Park has horrified recreational hunters and established operators.

Conservation Minister Dennis Marshall has upheld an appeal by Beta Aviation, of Reefton, and granted it a permit to commercially hunt and recover deer carcasses in the park.

The company's original application for a permit was turned down by Department of Conservation Southland officers in September 1993.

DOC staff told Mr Marshall established operators were killing enough deer to maintain conservation values in the park and another hunter might reduce the effectiveness of existing commercial operations.

However, Mr Marshall said he allowed the appeal because the park management plan required wild animal numbers to be reduced to as low a level as possible.

In the absence of adequate information on the condition of the park vegetation, he had to allow Beta Aviation to hunt.

One of the four established operators, Richard Hayes, of Te Anau, said he was astounded at the decision especially as Beta Aviation had been given a permit to work the park's special areas, such as the Wapiti area.

"Deerstalkers are horrified because it could dramatically affect the number of trophies they shoot."

Mr Hayes said he thought DOC's policy had been for "a sustainable industry harvesting a sustainable yield" to avoid boom and bust periods.

"This decision seems to go against that. It takes us back to chaos with people chasing each

other around catching fewer and fewer animals."

DOC in Southland was satisfied the four existing operators had been working effectively, he said.

Another operator, Kim Hollows, said the decision could cause a flood of applications from other helicopter hunting companies.

"If you let one in you're going to have to let them all in. It's going to make it even tougher for what is already a fragile existence."

The Deerstalkers' Association last year lobbied for the status quo.

In a submission to Mr Marshall, the association said it did not see why extra operators should be allowed into the area when existing operators were carrying out their jobs satisfactorily.

Commercial operators wanting to hunt deer from helicopters on Crown land require a permit issued under the Wild Animal Control Act.

10/3/95 Wapiti herd

CONSERVATION Minister Denis Marshall, along with his ill-informed advisers, have done more to destroy the remnants of the wapiti herd, one of the nation's rare and more unique treasures, in the past few months than anything else in the past 10 years, by letting outside fly-by-night helicopter operators in the park to shoot willy-nilly at the few remaining animals and the selfish decision of a minority to sell the crown herd.

The wapiti were gifted to the New Zealand people from the people of the United States with the help of President Roosevelt in 1905 and were later to become for a short time a world-class trophy herd and the only free ranging wapiti herd in the Southern Hemisphere.

The excitement and thrill of seeing, photographing and trophy hunting these magnificent animals in some of the world's most awe-inspiring

and challenging terrain must be preserved for our present and future generations of sons and daughters to enjoy.

The wapiti have lived in Fiordland for 90 years and should continue to do so. They belong in Fiordland. They should and must be returned to Fiordland.

The sale of the herd is nothing short of theft from the people of New Zealand.

N J Beker
Queenstown
[Slightly abridged — Editor]

Minister replies on

25/2/95

IT IS most disappointing to see that the Minister of Conservation has upheld Beta Aviation's appeal to carry out wild animal recovery in Fiordland National Park.

Sadly, Beta's licence includes the Wapiti area and they are working there at present. Section 24 of the Wild Animal Control Act (Licencing of operators for wild animal recovery services) requires regard to be given to the need in providing for recreational hunting.

In the past only one operator has been working this area and has carried out the understanding of section 26 of the Fiordland National Park management plan which states control of red deer and hybrids will generally be carried out by wild animal recovery operators. Control of Wapiti-type animals will be carried out primarily by recreational hunters.

I hope the Minister of Conservation will be able to answer the following questions:

1. Why were Beta Aviation refused the Murchison Mountain area but given the Wapiti area?

2. In giving a wild animal recovery licence for the Wapiti area, was the Minister aware of the risk of this operator shooting Wapiti?

3. Was it the Minister's intention that the operator in question be able to shoot Wapiti?

4. Is it the Minister's intention to allow other operators into Fiordland National Park?

Roger McNaughton

Vice-president

New Zealand Deerstalkers

Association

Kapuka

Asked to comment, Conser-

vation Minister Denis Marshall said: "My decision to allow the Beta Aviation appeal was made only after extensive consideration of substantive reports from all parties involved. I also met with representatives of both Beta Aviation and the existing permittees."

"I remain satisfied that my decision was the appropriate one to make in the light of information before me."

"Mr McNaughton has introduced the statutory need under the Wild Animal Control Act to provide for recreational hunting. My predecessors approved/endorsed a range of measures in Southland to meet with this requirement."

"One of our earliest recreational hunting areas was established in the nearby Blue Mountains, and recreational hunting remains the primary mean of controlling wild animals in this area."

"I am also informed that my department's regional conservator continues with a policy of restricting aerial hunting in the 'Wapiti area' during the 'bugle,' that is, the period when Wapiti rut."

"These are just two examples of how recreational hunting is assisted."

"Although I do not intend to debate the content of the Fiordland park management plan, its implementation cannot over-ride matters within the National Parks Act 1980."

"1. Beta Aviation indicated to the department that it was happy to abide by the department's wish to have no commercial aerial hunting in the Murchison Mountains unless departmental staff accompanied the company's crew in the aircraft. Since Beta Aviation's helicopter was

not big enough, it agreed to forego having access to the Murchison Mountains."

"2. The appeal put before me focused on Fiordland as a whole. Although I am familiar with the presence of Wapiti-type animals in the park this in itself was not a significant factor. What type of animals are to be removed from the park is a matter for the regional conservator to decide. The legislation clearly determines the range of matters I should have regard to."

"3. The appeal was allowed on the understanding that the department's standard conditions would apply. In this particular case, it is a condition of the two operative permits that only red or hybrid type deer may be removed from the Wapiti area."

"4. Mr McNaughton also raised the question of allowing further aircraft into Fiordland National Park. Initially, this will be a matter for the director-general or his delegate to decide. My involvement with permitting is limited to appeals."

Wapiti herd 16/3/95

I WISH to show my disapproval in the way the Department of Conservation has handled the Fiordland wapiti and the crown herd of wapiti at Manapouri.

These animals belong to the people of New Zealand and not the Department of Conservation. We should have a say in the future of the wapiti. The Conservation Department should face up to its responsibilities to the herd. I feel sorry for members of the Deerstalkers' Association and other groups who have put hundreds of hours of their own time into the administration of the Fiordland wapiti, only to be let down by the Department of Conservation, at the last minute.

I have seen photos, slides and heard the stories of many of the hunters who have been in the wapiti area hunting. The scenery is magnificent, the hardship endured is unbelievable, all for the hope of seeing or shooting a trophy head. I hope future generations will have the opportunity to hunt wapiti in Fiordland.

Hunter's Wife
East Chatton

Velvet boosts economy

AUCKLAND — It might not be an aphrodisiac but deer antler velvet is showing signs of stimulating the rural economy.

Moves are afoot to further develop and process the velvet for both traditional Eastern markets and a burgeoning Western one.

The New Zealand Game Industry Board is part of a joint venture investigating consumer-ready velvet-based products such as tonics.

New products are expected to be released within the year.

In the 1993-94 season velvet exports rose 25 percent to \$59.5 million.

Average prices rose to \$88 per kilogram and could top \$110 this season.

Game Industry Board chairman Richard Riddiford said there was an increasing market for antler velvet as an alternative medicine.

"There's a misconception that velvet is an aphrodisiac," he said.

In fact, it is used for problems such as blood pressure and arthritis with increasing scientific basis to back up traditional beliefs.

In New Zealand alone deer velvet-based products gross sales of \$1 million annually.

The aim is not only to increase sales to the west but also pitch consumer-ready products to young Asian buyers.

The growing popularity of antler velvet is good news for an industry which has hauled itself out of a difficult year.

The collapse of three processors, including Fortex, and poor prices in European markets wounded the industry early in the 1993-94 year.

It rallied and industry exports increased by 3 percent overall to a record \$193 million to the year ending September, 1994.

Local consumers also increased their appetite for venison with consumption up 40 percent as the industry continues to target restaurant goers. — NZPA

Velvet prices stable

PRICES for the top grades in a second special offering of Wapiti and Elk antler by Wrightson in Napier and Christchurch yesterday maintained prices achieved at the first sale in early December.

Wapiti and Elk velvet made up 1300kg of the total velvet offering of 7.4 tonnes in the Wrightson's South and North Island pools yesterday.

The lower Wapiti grades were back \$10 on the December sale. Prices for another good offering of red deer velvet were firm on previous sales.

Prices were:

Wapiti-Elk: Wapiti Supreme \$251.60/kg; Wapiti One, \$221.40 to \$235.40; Wapiti Two, \$219.40; Wapiti Three \$170.40; Wapiti Four \$152.40 to \$153.40.

Red deer: Super A \$175.99 to \$182.02; A grade \$145.10 to \$153.22; B grade \$138.10 to \$145.00; C grade \$130.00 to \$142.50; D grade \$125.00 to \$135.00; E grade \$105.00 to \$110.20; Taiwanese \$72 to \$143.22; spiker \$82 to \$128.23; overgrown \$60.50 to \$116.00; manufacturing \$66.20; regrowth \$77.07 to \$117.17.

Change in wild deer management sought

21/3/95
BLENHEIM — The Deer Stalkers Association wants fish and game councils to take over the management of selected wild deer herds.

Southland Fish and Game Council manager Maurice Rodway said yesterday his council had been asked to take over ballots for access to Wapiti in Fiordland and asked the national conference of fish and game councils in Wellington at the weekend for advice.

Fish and game councils were established in 1990 to take over from the century-old acclimatization movement which administered deer hunting in the early days of New Zealand European settlement.

The councils manage freshwater sports fishing and gamebird hunting on behalf of the Crown but deer hunters want the

councils to return to big game hunting administration.

Senior conservation officer John Holloway said the Department of Conservation was considering possible changes to the administration of wild animal hunting on conservation land and the transfer of some functions to another body was a logical development.

He said the department would retain the responsibility of setting maximum acceptable deer numbers in each area to ensure minimal impact on native forests.

Using recreational hunting to keep numbers to those levels was the most cost-effective and efficient system available but the department wanted to get out of administering the hunting permit system, he said.

Conservation Minister Denis Marshall, who attended the conference said he was

happy for discussions between the parties to proceed but warned he did not want regional fish and game councils, many of which were under-funded, to take on extra responsibilities they could not afford.

Mr Marshall said it was obvious wild animals, such as deer would never be eradicated from New Zealand and the management plan proved such animals could be effectively controlled with managed hunting pressure.

The South Island Canada Goose Management Plan, drawn up by fish and game councils, which he had recently approved, was a good model for other species and he was interested in the concept of deer management on a similar basis, he said.

The conference accepted an invitation by the Department of Conservation to be involved in discussions on the future management of some deer herds. — NZPA

Conservation Act would free up hunting permits

24/2/95
TE ANAU — Permits to hunt on crown land will be easier to obtain under a proposal to process licences through the Conservation Act.

Conservation Minister Denis Marshall said the Wildlife Animal Control Act licence system had become difficult to administer, was too restrictive on hunters and required too many resources.

"There is no longer a need for a special licensing system under the Wild Animal Control Act. Helicopter operators undertaking other types of commercial activities like transporting skiers or hunters into the back country obtain the necessary permit by applying for a licence under the Conservation Act," he said.

The act would be more appropriate for both land and air-based hunters and would free up the industry.

The Wild Animal Control Act 1977 was rigid and regulatory, requiring the Department of Conservation to gather a lot of information on vegetation health, animal numbers and land condition to make decisions on the number of licences permitted.

Mr Marshall said using the Conservation Act would not affect the ability of private landowners to control who they allowed on their land. But their choice would no longer be limited to the Wild Animal Recovery Service Licences.

Mr Marshall said the proposal would allow DOC and hunters to work more effectively together to achieve conservation benefits.

But helicopter operators and hunters have some reservations about freeing up the industry.

Helicopter shooters in Fiordland National Park are still

smarting from a recent decision to allow a fourth operator work the park.

Beta Aviation had been refused a permit by DOC but won an appeal to Mr Marshall.

DOC Invercargill spokesman Peter Willemse said the concern was that if the existing operators could not make a reasonable living out of deer recovery in the park, they might go elsewhere or be put out of business.

That could cause violent fluctuations in deer numbers.

Southern Lakes Helicopter pilot Richard Hayes said even one additional operator had an effect on viability.

His biggest concern was for the feral Wapiti herd which, although excluded from the terms of Beta's permit, could not easily be identified in their summer coat.

Indoor deer wintering rewarded

31/1/95

LIKE a good many of those in the Te Anau Basin, Russel McDonald got his start from the land development and settlement schemes.

From 1977 he operated as an agricultural contractor, working mainly for the former Lands and Survey Department.

In 1982 he and his wife Norma thought there might be a dollar in deer farming.

They leased some ground and stocked it with captured deer.

Today they have an extremely tidy and profitable specialty venison operation that won them the Lincoln University Foundation 1994 Farmer of the Year award.

More than 120 people attended a field-day on their property on Friday where the centre of interest was their indoor wintering system for weaners destined for the premium chiller trade.

Mr and Mrs McDonald bought their first block of 46ha in 1984 and converted it into a deer unit.

Six years later a further 87ha was bought and last winter the property carried 3000 stock units — 23su/ha — including 300 bought-in weaners.

Until they achieved their full deer stocking rate, surplus pasture growth had been controlled by buying in store lambs, Mr McDonald said.

After attending an Invermay open day and seeing the results of indoor wintering trials, indoor wintering had seemed an attractive option for venison production, he said.

Their first wintering shed was built in 1986.

In 1993 a second shed was built and a third (54m x 9m) shed was completed in time for the winter 1994.

For 100 days from May to September, the larger shed housed 540 weaners with 120 weaners in one of the other sheds.

Central to the success of the indoor system is the use of artificial lighting to increase the hours of daylight.

Research at Invermay had suggested that by artificially increasing daylight hours, the normal shutdown period of deer growth could be counteracted and growth would therefore continue during the winter period.

Mr and Mrs McDonald are using this system to supply 100kg-plus liveweight animals for the chiller market in October and November with lighter animals carried through on pasture to the following July or August.

Mr McDonald said the indoor wintered deer were ad lib fed on paddock silage at the rate of 3.5 to 4kg/head/day supplemented with half a kilogram of crushed barley a day.

Hay is also provided and straw is regularly added to the floor for bedding.

Mr McDonald said the new shed had cost an estimated \$30,000 — “a bit more than originally planned.”

The lighting is controlled by a time switch. And while the system had proved a success with weaners gaining up to 10kg in liveweight in the 100-day period, additional gains were possible if the intensity of lighting was increased.

Wintering weaners indoors also allowed stock to be carried during the winter and therefore more income.

The weaners were drenched before going indoors and once again during the winter. No apparent health problems were encountered.

Each 81 square metre bay housed 60 mixed sex weaners, penned according to liveweight.

Mr McDonald listed the benefits of indoor wintering of weaners as better conditioned stock, winter liveweight gains, lower veterinarian and health costs, pasture was able to be saved for spring flush and winter feed was used more efficiently for the older deer, and the access to the premium chiller market more than compensated for the increased costs of wintering.



Lincoln University Foundation 1994 Farmers of the Year, Norma and Russel McDonald, right, share a light-hearted moment at a field day on their property on Friday with Lincoln University vice-chancellor Bruce Ross.

Manapouri Wapiti to be sold

By GINA ROBSON

MORE than 300 Wapiti deer from the crown Wapiti herd farmed near Manapouri will be sold by auction in June.

Southland conservator Kerry Mawhinney said the Department of Conservation had decided to sell the 300-plus herd which is farmed on a Landcorp property, Freestone Farm, near Manapouri.

The herd was started when Wapiti were captured in the Fiordland National Park in the early 1980s with the intention of establishing a feral herd outside the park.

A suitable relocation site could not be found and in 1987 the herd was transferred from a private

22/2/95
farm to the Landcorp property to be farmed for the crown.

It was proposed half the profit from the herd would go to DOC for enhancing recreational hunting but the farm has never made a profit.

The farm had accumulated a loss of about \$90,000 but the sale of the deer would cover the debts, with some surplus funds remaining, Mr Mawhinney said.

He did not know how much the herd would be worth but said a lot of interest was expected from deerfarmers as the Wapiti were of outstanding quality.

The herd had been upgraded through the introduction of pure Wapiti sires, he said.

The Fiordland Wapiti Foundation had advocated returning high-quality male stock into the

Wapiti area in Fiordland each year to encourage overseas trophy hunters to shoot there.

Chairman Jack McKenzie said revenue from the trophies would go towards managing the remaining deer in the park and helping with possum control.

He did not think the herd should be sold because it left no means of generating income.

The Fiordland Wapiti stocks would be improved by injecting new blood from the crown herd, he said.

Hunting groups were pushing for proceeds from the crown herd sale to go towards managing deer still within the park.

Deer industry sources had estimated the crown herd to be worth \$500,000, he said.

Hopes fade for second missing hunter

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WELLINGTON — Hopes that missing Conservation Department hunter Russell Griebel, 55, of Motueka, would be found alive faded further yesterday as search teams failed to find any sign of him in the Richmond Range.

On Sunday, searchers found the body of his companion, Russell John Waldie, 45, of Mapua.

Mr Waldie was found about 3km from Bushline Hut in the upper reaches of the Motueka River.

Police believe the hut was swept away by floods early on Thursday after heavy rain.

Senior Constable Hamish Blanch, of Nelson, said there was little hope of finding Mr Griebel alive. — NZPA

Stalkers say Wapiti decision regrettable

THE Deerstalkers' Association says it has never pushed for the sale of the crown Wapiti herd, but says other options are unrealistic.

Conservation Minister Denis Marshall has decided to sell the 300-plus herd by auction before the end of June. The herd is farmed by Landcorp at Manapouri.

Southland Conservation Board member Derek Angus has vowed to fight the sale through the courts, if necessary.

Mr Angus supported a Fiordland Wapiti Foundation proposal to retain the herd and return high-quality male stock into the Wapiti area in Fiordland each year to encourage overseas hunters to shoot there.

Revenue from the trophy hunting would go towards managing the remaining deer in the park and helping with possum control.

Deerstalkers' Association national vice-president Roger McNaughton, of Kapuka, said the decision to sell the herd was regrettable.

But if the Government was not going to fulfil its promise to relocate the herd then selling the animals was the most realistic option.

"I don't think they (the Fiordland Wapiti Foundation) will ever get permission to do what they're proposing."

Mr McNaughton said the association's own proposal, prepared in 1993, simply spelt

out to the Government what it wanted to happen if and when the herd was sold.

The proposal called for funds from the sale to go to the Southland Fish and Game Council and for the council to take over issuing hunting permits in the Wapiti area of the park from the Department of Conservation.

If the Government agreed to the proposals, recreational hunters could look forward to their interests in the Wapiti area being maintained.

The association wanted some of the funds from the sale to be used to establish a management regime for hunting in the area.

Sale proceeds could also go towards updating existing research on the state of the vegetation, Mr McNaughton said.

Council manager Maurice Rodway said the council approved the deerstalkers' association's proposal in principle but would have to see the details before making a definite commitment.

There was no suggestion the council would take over management or control of the animals or the land — that would remain the responsibility of DOC, Mr Rodway said.

Estimates of the herd's worth are put at between \$300,000 and \$500,000.

DOC Southland is preparing a report on the options for spending the profits from the herd sale for Mr Marshall.

Hunters divided over Wapiti herd future

SOUTHLAND hunters are divided over the future of the Wapiti deer herd because a sub-branch of the New Zealand Deerstalkers Association has rejected the direction of the association's executive.

The Fiordland Wapiti Foundation also has a legal opinion that the herd could be released back into Fiordland National Park without a law change.

The Southern Lakes sub-branch of the New Zealand Deerstalkers Association has announced its opposition to the sale of the 383-strong herd and has pledged allegiance to the foundation, which wants the animals returned to the park.

This contrasts with association policy which reluctantly approves of the sale provided the proceeds go to the Southland Fish and Game Council.

Foundation spokesman and former Wallace MP Derek Angus said one lawyer employed by the foundation had found that, with the Minister of Conservation's direction, Wapiti could be released into the park without a law change.

Legal advice was being sought from two other lawyers who specialised in conservation law, Mr Angus said.

"We need good legal opinion that will stand up in court for an injunction to stop the sale."

But the foundation hoped negotiations with Conservation Minister Denis Marshall and the Department of Conservation would make legal action unnecessary, Mr Angus said.

Sale of the herd has been scheduled for July but the foundation believes the gradual reintroduction of Wapiti bulls, highly rated by hunters, to the park should be investigated first.

The Southern Lakes sub-branch of deerstalkers' has entered the fray by using sub-branch funds to make a \$350 donation to the foundation on behalf of its 35 members.

Southern Lakes vice-chairman Lester Kidd said members strongly supported the reintroduction of Wapiti into the park.

Foundation chairman Jack McKenzie said he was delighted with the support from the Southern Lakes deerstalkers.

The foundation would continue to lobby Mr Marshall and ask him to give his assent to reintroducing the animals.

Press secretary Harry Broad said even if Mr Marshall could order the reintroduction of the animals he probably would not want to because deer-grazing badly damaged forests on the conservation estate.

Mr Marshall has previously said he does not have the power to override the National Parks Act which orders the extermination of introduced species to the parks.

New Zealand Deerstalkers' Association vice-president Roger McNaughton said the executive had no comment to make about the Southern Lakes decision.

Company fined after deer die

CHRISTCHURCH — A Southland transport firm and one of its drivers were each fined \$750 in the Christchurch District Court yesterday on a charge of transporting deer in a manner causing them unnecessary pain or suffering.

The charge was brought under the Animals Protection Act.

Tullochs Transport Ltd and Lindsay Noel Crosbie pleaded guilty to a charge arising from the transportation of 123 deer from Hawkes Bay to Outram, in Otago, on March 8 and March 9 last year.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries alleged the animals were in a poor condition when they reached the Outram farm because of delays in transportation by Tullochs, causing stress to the animals.

Nine of the deer died before reaching the farm; 12 died from injuries sustained during transportation.

Making submissions to Judge Bisphan before sentence, both counsel for the defendants agreed their clients should have returned the animals to the vendor when it was discovered the deer had not been weaned. — NZPA

Pests pushing native forest to collapse

5/7/95

CONSERVATIONISTS fear noxious pests are pushing New Zealand forests to the brink of collapse.

The Southland branch of the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society has urged all forest users to band together to demand the government put more funding into ridding native forests of pests such as deer, possums, stoats, ferrets, weasels and feral cats.

Spokeswoman Chris Henderson said southern members recently met Dr Geoff Rodgers, of Lincoln University, who provided concrete evidence of degeneration that left even those who already feared the worst reeling.

"What we're seeing... is the actual crashing of eco-systems, it's that serious," she said.

"The whole forest eco-system is in a state of collapse."

Mrs Henderson urged all those who enjoyed the forests to recognise the


risk and demand the government pump more money into pest eradication.

"The stuff in the budget was nothing — it was a sop.

"We're making a move but it needs to be everywhere all at once. Unless it's a big body blow, this tickling round the edges means they'll be back in five years," she said.

Hunters should be encouraged to take as many deer and possums as possible while 1080 poison should also be used where appropriate, Mrs Henderson said. She called on all forest users to write to their MPs and the Minister of Conservation, expressing their concern at the measurable deterioration of the forests.

"It really is very frightening and unless something urgent is done... we're really going to see a huge change in the forest ecology. It's that desperate."

 THE Minister of Conservation informs us that he allowed the Beta Aviation appeal on the grounds that the Fiordland National Park Management Plan required that wild animal numbers should be reduced to as low a level as practical. In the absence of adequate information on the condition of the park's vegetation, he had to allow Beta to hunt there. The Minister appears to have had total disregard to the following:

The Fiordland National Park Management Plan states (section 2.6): In the area colonised by wapiti type deer, control of red deer and hybrids will generally be carried out by Wild Animal Recovery Service (WARS) operators. Control of wapiti-type animals will be carried out primarily by recreational hunters.

Section 24: The Wild Animal Control Act requires information to be collected on vegetation, soils, waters and wild life in the conservation area.

Why hasn't this been carried out? Section 24 also requires the director-general to have regard to "the need to provide for recreational hunting."

We don't feel that the Minister or director-general have had any regard for recreational hunting and feel that DOC should repeal Beta's permit to recover wild animals until DOC carries out its responsibility of the act.

Gary Barnes
Te Anau Rod
and Gun Club

25/2/95

Te Anau
Asked to comment, Department of Conservation regional conservator Kerry Mawhinney said: "Control of wapiti-type animals will be carried out primarily by recreational hunters." This is still the situation. Beta Aviation's Wild Animal Recovery Service (WARS) permit contains conditions in the permit schedule which only allow for the removal of red or hybrid type deer. The writer is obviously concerned about the probability that Beta Aviation may be removing wapiti-type deer from Fiordland National Park. Random inspections to date show no evidence of any additional wapiti being removed.

"Why hasn't the Department of Conservation carried out vegetation and wild animal surveys per Wild Animal Control Act requirement?" — Priorities and limited staff and resources have not permitted this function to be carried out.

"The need to provide for recreational hunting" — Recreational hunting has been well catered for in Southland. The National Parks Act places natural values ahead of recreational hunting values and the provisions of the Wild Animal Control Act in respect of recreational hunting does not as a matter, of course, apply to Fiordland."

Wapiti herd 3/5/95



I REFER to your report of the recent meeting of the Southland Conservation Board.

I feel it is time Mr Angus and his following pushing for liberation of wapiti in Fiordland examine their role and justify their seats on a conservation board.

At an informed guess, deer are consuming about 60,000 tonnes of vegetation a year in Fiordland. This is not only damaging to national park values but is a real long-term threat to the future of the forest itself.

It is fallacious nonsense that purist trophy hunters will pay big money for hunting hybrid animals and, in the presence of red deer throughout the region, they will always be hybrids.

Reasonably economic breeding control in Fiordland is a pipe dream.

Damage to park values, including irreversible habitat impoverishment for natural wildlife is bad enough but we must now add the spectre of Tb.

In areas of New Zealand with possums, numerous examples are seen crawling about in an advanced state of Tb with external lesions of Tb trailing infected material.

Associated with deer already on a declining nutrition plane, this is a bombshell waiting to explode for the tourist industry and our whole farming sector.

I know from my own hunting experience in the Hakapoua region 25 years ago that the deer there were stunted and in very poor condition.

This has been confirmed by a recent hunting party and we can only conclude that we face a grave danger of widespread infection.

The Minister's decision to sell the wapiti herd, rather than encourage expectations of profit from these uncontrollable feral animals, is the right one.

Rather, we should be establishing research and exploring methods whereby this menace can be abated.

The New Zealand Deerstalker's Association's support for the Minister's decision was commendable.

L C Henderson
Te Anau

Wapiti herd 30/3/95

IT was with more than a little interest that I watched a TV news item recently about the sale of our wapiti herd.

Has the Minister of Lands and Conservation Denis Marshall forgotten the means, and the agreement that the nucleus of this herd were obtained? It would appear he has.

Could I remind the Minister of the agreement and ask some questions?

In the latter stages of 1981, then Minister of Lands and Forests for the National Government Jonathan Elworthy, on behalf of the crown, entered into an agreed joint venture with a capture consortium to remove animals from the wapiti area of the Fiordland National Park. This operation started early 1982.

The questions I would like to ask are.

1. Did the crown receive the 300 wapiti herd type animals that were to form the nucleus of a recreational herd? If not, how many?

2. Did the crown receive the 200 hybrid-type animals for their deer farm? If not, how many?

3. When the capture operation finished at the end of December 1983, what was the total number of animals recovered?

4. Were the wapiti type animals for the recreational herd upgrade? What numbers are there at this date?

5. What conclusions did the Scientific Advisory Committee come up with as to their terms of reference over the following five years from January 1, 1984?

It is 13 years since this fiasco started as I believe it is time it was concluded. The questions I have asked I direct to the Minister.

I would like to see the Government honour its part of the agreement and this did not involve the sale of the upgraded wapiti herd. This herd was to be relocated for

the future recreational hunters of New Zealand. It was argued from the outset that relocation was not an option.

I would like to see this upgraded herd farmed, and the present Government change the law to allow high quality animals from this farm relocated back into a managed wapiti area in the Fiordland National Park. This is assuming that these animals have been upgraded.

Alan Rodger
Twizel

Asked to comment, Conservation Minister Denis Marshall, said: "I agree with Mr Rodger in that, after 13 years, this issue has dragged on far too long and it is time it was concluded.

"The crown wapiti herd was removed from Fiordland National Park for relocation in the early 1980s when it was considered that, among other things, the then current pressure from commercial operators would eliminate wapiti from Fiordland.

"The removal of animals was undertaken by a 'capture consortium' under a contract whereby the crown owned all wapiti-type animals captured and the consortium kept the hybrid-type animals.

"The consortium recovered some 1700 animals from Fiordland National Park, of which 108 were deemed to be purebred wapiti and so formed the basis of the 318 animals now in the crown wapiti herd.

"Initially, it was intended that the crown herd would be relocated elsewhere to compensate hunters for the loss of the Fiordland wapiti herd. Al-

though more than 10 separate relocation areas were considered, one of which was investigated in detail, no suitable area was found. Even a New Zealand Deerstalkers' Association report on the herd stated that 'there is really nowhere for the wapiti to be relocated ...'

"Because no suitable area could be found, and because legislation prevents it being returned to Fiordland National Park, it was decided in 1987 that the crown herd would be farmed on a profit-sharing basis with Landcorp and that the Crown's share of the profits would be used for the benefit of recreational hunting.

"The debate about the relocation of the animals effectively ended at this point. Indeed, even the reason to relocate the herd ended, in that, contrary to fears at the time, wapiti were not eradicated from Fiordland National Park.

"To be commercially viable for farming, the herd has required considerable improvement from imported animals. Reaching this improved status has meant that the farming of the animals has generated a loss of well over \$100,000 to date. As such, the continued farming of the herd is of no benefit to either Landcorp, the Department of Conservation or hunters.

"Towards the end of last year, Landcorp advised the department that it wished to terminate the contract to farm the deer with effect from June 30, 1995. Landcorp's termination of the contract allows the department to dispose of the herd as it sees fit, something it was unable to do if it had terminated the contract.

"Therefore, to honour the Government's promise to hunters that proceeds from the herd would be used for the improvement of recreational hunting, I have decided that, given the opportunity that Landcorp's termination of the contract provides, the responsible course of action is to sell the herd at auction.

"I have asked my department to prepare a briefing for me on the options available for dispersing any funds realised from the sale for the betterment of recreational hunting and expect to be able to announce very soon how this will be done.

"I believe that this is the fairest and most reasonable way of resolving the issue once and for all."

Deer recovery

I READ a headline in your paper of November 23, 1994 saying "Further helicopters could pose danger." 31/1/95

Allowing more helicopters into Fiordland National Park for deer recovery could jeopardise safety and livelihoods, deerstalkers said.

Now there was a story on Saturday, January 21, headed "Existing deer hunters upset." The decision to allow another helicopter deer recovery operator into Fiordland National Park has horrified recreational hunters and established operators.

The Southland DOC Conservancy turned down the original application from Beta Aviation and now Minister Dennis Marshall has upheld the appeal.

Did the established operators and DOC staff not write submissions to the Minister?

Why did the Minister rule in favour of Beta Aviation?

Richard Hayes says he was astounded that Beta Aviation

has a permit to work special areas.

What is a special area and why should it be? The National Parks Act states what they are.

Kim Hollows said that this decision could cause a flood of applications from other helicopter hunting companies.

If he gets a flood of applications from hunting companies, he could take on DOC staff to sort them out?

One good reporter could put these people in their place once and for all and stop this nonsense moaning.

Ernie Mason

Tuatapere

[Abridged. — Editor]

Move to limit Tb

TE ANAU basin farmers have taken a decisive step to protect their area from the spread of bovine Tb.

The Te Anau Pest Advisory Group, after consultation with MAF Quality Management, Federated Farmers, the Southland branch of the New Zealand Deer Farmers' Association, the Southland Regional Animal Health Committee, is about to declare the Te Anau basin a Tb protected area.

The move has the full backing of the Southland Regional Council.

The pest advisory group was set up several years ago by the Regional Council to advise and help it implement pest control programmes in the district.

As a result of a series of farmer meetings and the discussions with other groups a set of rules has been drawn up.

The rules relate to cattle and deer entering the protected area either through private treaty or for grazing, Tb testing criteria including the age

that cattle and deer should be tested, testing frequency and the setting up of buffer zones.

The first steps towards declaring the district a protected area were originally made in April.

The proposed rules were discussed in July at a woolshed meeting where they received a favourable reaction from farmers.

The protected area extends from Gorge Hill to the Blackmount Hill with the Takitimu Mountains forming the southern boundary.

Pest advisory group chairman John Mills said farmers in the Te Anau basin protected area should receive a copy of the rules by Friday.

A public meeting in Te Anau on November 2 will further explain the proposal and give farmers a final opportunity to debate the matter.

Animal Health Board chairman Richard Alspach will attend the meeting.

THERE are both advantages and disadvantages for farmers adopting the protected area scheme.

ADVANTAGES

- Reduce the risk of introducing Tb into the region.
- Raise area's animal health status on a national and international basis.
- Possibly improve land and livestock values through the enhanced animal health status.

DISADVANTAGES

- A possible increased financial cost to some farmers through having to pay for extra Tb testing.
- Possible restrictions on some livestock buying options.
- Possible restrictions on seasonal grazing.

"At the meeting it is hoped that all livestock owners will indicate agreement for the scheme by signing their copy of the rules and handing it in to the committee," Mr Mills said.

If farmer approval is given at the meeting, the Te Anau basin will become the first area in the South Island to adopt a protected area scheme.

The advantages far outweighed the disadvantages, Mr Mills said.

"The Te Anau Pest Advisory Group is of the opinion that the consequences of not implementing the scheme and allowing the potential for an outbreak of bovine Tb in the Te Anau basin could result in a financial disaster for all livestock owners in the district."

Deer industry reaches a new export peak

BECOMING a \$200 million export earning industry during the year had been an important milestone for the deer industry, Game Industry Board chairman Richard Riddiford told a meeting of deer farmers at Woodlands yesterday.

With improved returns, especially for venison, there was no doubt 1995 was a good year, he said.

"The challenge is to sustain the growth and value across all sectors of the industry."

But there was a chance for the industry to still perform a lot better compared against the performance of other agricultural industries, he said. And it was essential for the future strength of the industry for farmers to continually lift their production targets.

Game Industry Board velvet manager Collier Issac stressed the importance of abiding by the industry's Code of Practice for velvetting.

Mr Issac was asked why, if farmers were required to maintain high velvetting harvest and storage standards, were velvet buyers allowed to have a lower quality standard.

Mr Issac believed it was only a matter of time before quality assurance standards would be introduced for all other sectors.

Because velvet was considered a food product it was essential quality assurance was maintained through all stages, from harvesting to the market, he said.

Velvet buyers representative on the board Bob Bennett said velvet buyers had been told of the importance of hygiene when grading velvet in farmers' sheds and added that this season farmers would see the first on-the-road buyers' refrigerated trailers to transport velvet.

Mr Riddiford said he was confident velvet had an exciting future and because unlike a lot of western style medicines it had no side effects, he foresaw that velvet would become increasingly accepted by the western world for its health and medicinal properties, in the same way ginseng had.

In Korea, where disposable incomes were steadily climbing, consumers were increasingly turning to western goods and luxury items such as velvet.

While New Zealand velvet at present lost its identity in the processing stage, a changing attitude by the Koreans towards differentiating imported product by its country of origin would help to lift the profile of New Zealand velvet, board chief executive Richard Janes said.

While it was early days yet, the Game Industry Board was pushing towards establishing New Zealand velvet as a branded product.

The board was predicting venison prices for possibly three years out would not drop as suddenly after the chilled end of each season's kill, as had traditionally happened in past seasons.

And that meant stable overall prices and a positive outlook for venison.

Mr Janes also advised that the board was putting up a strong case against any change in the deer industry's contribution to the Animal Health Board's Tb control programme budget.

The board had had a strong commitment to reducing Tb in deer herds and fully recognised the potential for the disease to become a non-trade tariff barrier, he said.

But the Game Industry Board considered the Animal Health Board's funding formula to be inequitable for an industry of the deer industry's size, and because of that was putting its case to arbitration.

That was expected to be heard in mid-November with an outcome the following month.

Skeggs buys venison plant

28/10/95

NELSON — The troubled Takaka venison slaughter plant, National Venison, has changed hands and name again.

Dunedin-based Skeggs Group has purchased 80 per cent of the company, which has been renamed Pacifica Venison.

National Venison general manager Kent Inglis, who will continue in that role for Pacifica, retains a 20 per cent holding.

National Venison was put up for sale in August by major shareholder Nigel Gould, who was at the time running for the Wellington mayoralty.

The company had been operating from the plant for just over a year, after taking over from New Zealand Venison which had collapsed nine months after it opened.

Mr Inglis said there would be some reduction in staff initially because of restructuring to the processing format.

National Venison employed 23 part-time staff during the season. Mr Inglis said the new company would have a few less part-timers but there would be some fulltime work. He said details of staff numbers had not been decided yet.

The new company plans to start processing early next month. — NZPA

Dead pilot unlicensed

7/12/96

WELLINGTON — The pilot who died in a helicopter crash near Gisborne on Thursday night had no licence and was in a fatal crash 15 years ago, according to the Civil Aviation Authority.

Pilot Welwyn Harris (Joe) Collins, 46, and passenger Bryan Robin Cooper, 37, both of Opotiki, died instantly on Thursday night when their Robinson R22 helicopter plunged to the ground on the border of the Urewera Ranges north of Gisborne.

Authority director Kevin Ward said last night Mr Collins was disqualified from holding a commercial helicopter pilot's licence for three years, after piloting a helicopter that crashed on 21 January, 1981, killing two members of his crew. He also had been convicted of a number of flying offences.

In 1986, when Mr Collins re-applied for his licence, the then transport minister ruled him "not a fit and proper person to hold a commercial pilot's licence," Mr Ward said.

The minister had also said: "I am further satisfied that it is not in the public interest for him to hold any such licence or rating."

Yesterday, one source said the Opotiki-based helicopter was believed to have been engaged in deer-recovery operations even though the crash happened in darkness about 10.20pm.

The machine came down on pasture in rugged hill country on Kare Kare Station near the boundary with Journey's End Station, about 70km northwest of Gisborne.

Witnesses said the tail rotor had snapped off and was lying 10m from the main wreckage. Both rotor blades were bent. An air accidents

inspector arrived at the scene yesterday afternoon to begin an investigation.

Mr Ward said Mr Collins first received his licence in October 1979.

"Within 15 months of obtaining the licence he was convicted of 15 offences relating to flying operations. Four of those involved specific instances of operating an aircraft in such a way as to be likely to cause danger."

Others were offences under the Wild Animal Control Act relating to aerial deer hunting.

Mr Ward said after Mr Collins was disqualified he illegally flew microlight aircraft.

In 1986, the transport minister said evidence before him "persuades me clearly that he is a man who should not be entrusted with the operation now or for the foreseeable future."

A decade later, Mr Collins wrote to the authority twice, on 30 July this year and again on 14 October, seeking reinstatement of his licence.

Mr Ward said the authority wrote to him on 6 November saying no time limit was mentioned in the minister's 1986 decision.

Mr Ward said the letter explained the process involved but no reply had been received from Mr Collins.

The bodies of Mr Collins and Mr Cooper were removed from the crash site yesterday morning.

The accident site was covered last night by a salvage sheet.

Robinson helicopters have been involved in a string of fatal crashes over the past year but authority spokesman Martyn Gosling said the accidents were not necessarily the fault of the aircraft make. — NZPA

Deer group to buy eight farms

30/1/97

A NEW corporate deer farmer plans to pay about \$12 million for eight Southland farms during the next 18 months.

Dunedin-based New Zealand Deer Farms, formed in October, has conditional contracts for some properties which it hopes to buy in two stages.

Four of the proposed sales are unconditional now, with settlement due at the end of June. The other four are conditional, with settlement due by June 1998.

The company, backed by interests associated with Dunedin businessman Howard Paterson, plans to become a major player in the deer industry.

Company director David Smallbone said yesterday the company planned to produce 1580 tonnes of venison — from 60,000 head of deer including 31,500 hinds — by the year 2000.

This would see the company producing 8 per cent of New Zealand's total venison production. It plans to export to Germany, the United States and Asia.

NZ Deer Farms already owns three South Island stations — Glen Echo Station near Te Anau, Hakataramea Station near Timaru, and Sunny Downs Station in the Waitaki Valley.

Hakataramea Station is half-owned by Arthur and Rhonda Heckler. All the other properties, once settled, will be 100 per cent owned by NZ Deer Farms.

Buying the three stations during the past three years completed the first stage of a three-stage buy-up.

By the time the present contracts are settled, the company will have 11 farms, nine of them in Southland, and assets worth \$60 million. Mr Paterson's family and business interests are funding the first two stages of development, at a cost of about \$35 million.

Mr Smallbone said the company had not decided how it would fund the third stage, estimated at \$20 million.

Options included private investors, borrowing, or a public share issue. A decision should come next month.

A prospectus was being prepared and a share issue was a possibility, Mr Smallbone said. If the public share float goes ahead, Sir Peter Elworthy and company chairman Phil Pryke would also become directors.

The company has just spent \$1.84 million on the 2800ha Glen Echo Station, 14km from Te Anau. It has put up 178km of deer fencing, more than 400 gates, 33km of new roading and used about 35,000 cubic metres of gravel.

The farm can handle 18,000 stock units, but has 7500 hinds and 250 breeding cows on the land now.

It has expansion plans for all its new properties, including stock purchases.

The four second-stage properties are unconditional but yet to be settled.

The four third-stage properties encompass 4550ha in Western Southland and are conditional. It is these that a share float could affect.

The company has been talking to several major South Island venison processors about possible contracts.

PPCS to reward loyalty

PPCS will operate a killing space allocation system this year that rewards supplier loyalty.

PPCS chairman Robbie Burnside told suppliers at the company's meat marketing expo in Gore on Tuesday that the allocation scheme had resulted from meetings with selected suppliers.

The company had sent out allocation request forms to farmers and had received a 60 percent reply rate, he said.

Suppliers who had a regular supply history, of at least three years, would be given preferential treatment for killing space this season, and would as near as possible, be accommodated in the week in which space was requested, Mr Burnside said.

But the scheme was flexible enough to allow farmers to alter their space requirements because of unforeseen events such as those caused by climate extremes.

And, provided the company was advised of any change in lamb supply numbers or if a draft was to be cancelled no penalties would result.

Mr Burnside advised casual suppliers to build up a supply history to enable them to gain assured killing space in future seasons.

He also strongly advised suppliers who had not yet returned their allocation requests to contact the company through a new 0800 telephone number at least three weeks in advance of their drafting requirements to book in space.

By not applying for space any preferential allocation would be lost, he said.

New suppliers will have to apply to their drafter to gain space.

Mr Burnside said farmers using third party drafters should keep in contact with their

PPCS drafter to prevent communication breakdowns of the past.

Chief executive Stewart Barnett said the company was aware of the pressure farmers were often under to get stock killed.

But they had to accept that the company also sometimes had problems processing stock into consumer-ready products at peak times and was not always able to process farmers' stock when they wanted.

But in a sensible system both parties could be accommodated, he said.

Mr Barnett said PPCS was working to improve its communication with suppliers. Part of that improvement would be new service whereby suppliers would receive their killing sheets by fax and the company's computer software system was being upgraded to allow that to happen.

Venison prospects 'excellent'

PROSPECTS for venison in the next three to five years were excellent, PPCS chief executive Stewart Barnett told a large crowd of suppliers at the company's meat marketing expo in Gore on Tuesday.

The product was seen as healthy and not viewed as a red meat by consumers in overseas markets, he said.

World production of venison was down and although competing countries such as Spain, Britain, Australia and the United States were quietly building up their herds, Mr Barnett said no great volume of venison from such countries was expected in the short to medium term.

Not only was New Zealand perceived as a country that produced healthy and safe products, but its processing plants were of a high standard unable to be matched by those in the markets in which New Zealand traded, he said.

PPCS had created a demand for venison to the extent that the company had successfully moved venison into the retail sector as well as maintaining its established hotel and restaurant trade.

Countries such as France, Belgium, Switzerland and Sweden had expanding economies which meant consumers could afford to pay for top-quality product.

Mr Barnett said where three to five years ago PPCS had been marketing bone-in and saddle products, the majority of its venison products were now broken down into single muscle products that were 100 percent fat free and vacuum packed with a 12-week shelf life.

Those products had been well received and he was confident they would grow in volume.

The major venison market for PPCS was Europe where game meat was a preferred meat

by consumers, he said. Germany for example annually imported 40,000 tonnes of game meat.

The United States had potential for venison but because New Zealand only produced a limited tonnage, PPCS had concentrated on developing other markets, including Asia which offered opportunities for better returns to producers, he said.

Quality assurance which extended from farm to the supermarket shelf was an important facet of PPCS's operation, Mr Barnett said. Unless supermarkets were assured a quality assurance programme was in place they would not buy product, he said.

Mr Barnett was confident schedule prices, which bottomed out last season at \$5.05/kg would be in the \$6.20 to \$7.80/kg range this season.

The prospect for the next three to five years was positive, he said.



PPCS chairman Robbie Burnside, left discusses the range of the company's further processed venison products with company venison marketing manager Glenn Tyrrell and Castlerock Run deer farm manager Hugh Knowles.

17/11/95

Tb control measures welcomed

By JOHN CUTT

THE increased effort to control bovine Tb announced by Agriculture Minister John Falloon yesterday has been well received in the south.

Federated Farmers Southland meat and wool section chairman Alan Wise said farmers would be pleased the Government had "come to the party" and agreed to increase its share of possum control.

Feral possums are a major vector in the spread of Tb to the country's cattle and deer herds.

"The Government has listened to what farmers were saying that the Crown had to pay its share for control on conservation lands. So we are pleased the minister has taken that on board," Mr Wise said.

It was also pleasing to see that greater controls over testing and movement would be placed on cattle and deer herds and that a detailed history of the Tb status of farms would be developed.

The new plan to control bovine Tb was a major improvement on the present system and all its provisions were positive, Mr Wise said.

The tighter controls and reduction in compensation payments to farmers with Tb reactor animals would encourage people to improve their Tb status, he said.

Federation provincial dairy section chairman Peter Phiskie said he had not seen details of the plan but agreed that, in general, dairy farmers would welcome it. But there were some clarifications and concerns that might still have to be addressed.

Agriculture Ministry Southland veterinary officer Brent Paterson said it was good that a concerted effort by the Animal Health Board, Government, farmers and the ministry had at last resulted in a plan for the control of Tb.

The strengthening of herd movement control regulations would make it difficult for a few farmers but would also give greater control over the spread of Tb through domestic livestock.

Mr Paterson said the increased funding for feral animal control was a welcome boost.

But the new scheme pointed towards farmers taking greater responsibility for Tb control on their own properties, with support from the Animal Health Board, regional councils and the ministry.

Mr Paterson said it would take people some time to become familiar with the new designations that would be given to Tb areas and of the new herd classification system.

In future herds will be classified according to whether they are Tb clear or Tb infected and the time they have been clear or infected.

The full details of the new scheme would be released gradually in the next few months, he said.

Southland Regional Council regional pests manager Richard Bowman said the council had been aware of the draft Tb control proposal for some time and had closely followed the development of the new national pest control strategy.

The strategy would have a major impact on the council's own possum control plan and the council would now probably adopt the national plan as the basis for its own future strategy.

And while the council had agreed in principle to be part of the new national Tb control strategy a lot of detail still had to be sorted out, he said.

A plus for the regional council would be the change in funding for feral animal control programmes.

At present, any initial Tb possum control programme is 100 percent funded by the Animal Health Board with the costs of follow up work receiving 46 percent funding and the council providing 54 percent.

Mr Bowman said under the scheme announced yesterday, all possum control work would receive 75 percent funding from the Animal Health Board leaving the council to find 25 percent.

Mr Bowman expected the new proposal would not come into effect until the start of the 1996-97 financial year on July 1.

Poachers endangering the safety of hunters

By DON WRIGHT

POACHERS, trespassers and illegal helicopter operators are endangering the safety of authorised hunters on some Southland high country stations.

"A tragedy is waiting to happen," Rob Glover, manager of Fiordland Trust Ltd's Glen Echo station, in the Whitestone Valley, near Te Anau, said yesterday.

On Monday night, a helicopter hunter swooped in on the station when authorised recreational hunters were in the area.

"The chopper never landed, but 13 shots were fired and deer were shot and hauled away," Mr Glover said.

He said he had reported the incident to police. Sergeant Lloyd Matheson, of Te Anau, last night declined to comment.

DOC Southland compliance officer Chris McMillan, of Invercargill, also spoke to police last night.

He said people could help the authorities by recording helicopter make, type, colour and registration

numbers if their activities seemed suspicious.

The Glen Echo Station is popular with anglers and hunters, but Mr Glover said his patience had run out with poachers and trespassers.

The station had never been open for full-scale hunting, he said.

"I fear for the safety of authorised people and genuine sportspersons who are good enough to ask for permission.

"Competition between legal and illegal helicopter hunters should not spill over to private property.

"We have 2000 of our own hinds in captivity on the station and we don't want them disturbed while they are giving birth to and caring for fawns."

Mr Glover did not object to people he knew shooting a deer for meat. Anglers were also given access if they asked for permission and caught and released trout.

"Wholesale slaughter and profit without permission is not on."

Other landowners and farm managers in the Te Anau basin were also becoming increasingly concerned, Mr Glover said.

He was mustering on horseback near the bush edge recently when a helicopter operator buzzed a nearby clearing. He has heard shots as late as 11pm.

Hunting permits specified that shooting must be done during daylight, he said.

Mr McMillan said landowners could help if they identified gut piles left behind after deer were shot, gutted and hauled away.

Forensic evidence could help identify poachers, he said. "Such evidence could close the noose on poachers if the animals were surrendered for sale."

Mr McMillan said helicopter operators must obtain a licence under the Wild Animal Control Act if they intended hunting on private or Crown land.

An experienced Te Anau helicopter operator, who did not wish to be named, said he had reports about poaching problems.

"But I can't point the finger at any person.

"The vast majority of operators play by the rule book in a fragile industry and so few can ruin it for so many."

Deer shortage hurting processors

By LIANNE MACKAY

VENISON processors are being put under financial pressure and the ability to provide a continuous supply of product to export markets is uncertain because of a shortage of deer being made available for slaughter.

Throughput at venison processing works throughout the country has dropped substantially, leaving processors, marketers, the Game Industry Board and some producers worried about the industry's ability to fill export orders this winter.

Industry representatives confirmed yesterday markets would be under-supplied this year, and described nervousness and uncertainty in the export, marketing and processing sectors of the industry. Spokesmen would not say how short the supply would be, but one expert's guess put the figure at 20 to 25 percent.

Ironically, the shortfall has been caused by a growth of confidence in deer farming, which has encouraged farmers to enter the industry or expand existing operations, causing a substantial demand for stock and forcing prices up.

The national venison kill for the 12 months to last month was 359,000 animals, down 76,000 from the previous year. Last month, just 19,528 animals were killed nationally, compared with 33,904 in April last year.

The figures are worrying for exporters and processors, who have had to lay off casual staff and are concerned they will struggle to keep working through winter.

Procurement problems have seen the venison schedule rise, putting processors under pressure.

Mair Venison Ltd national operations manager Dave Smith said from Rotorua processors throughout the country were affected by the shortage of stock, and the situation was not good for the industry as a whole.

"We need an industry where all sectors are in reasonable shape," he said.

"The processing side of the business is becoming stressed."

His view was echoed by Otago Venison Ltd operations manager Steve Martin. The company's Mosgiel plant is killing about a third of what it was three weeks ago, and has cut staff numbers for winter.

"It's going to be very quiet until the chilled season starts (in spring)," Mr Martin said.

He urged farmers to be sensible about making stock available for slaughter.

"We don't want production to stop completely."

Game Industry Board marketing manager Catherine Smith said from Wellington the board was concerned by the short-term supply problems that would be experienced this year. Part of the board's strategy was for managed growth in the industry, and it was a concern to see markets under-supplied.

However, the tendency towards hind retention meant the shortfall would be only temporary.

Marketers warned yesterday that the gains made in procuring markets would be wasted if they were damaged by exporters' inability to provide a continuous supply.

"Lack of continuity undermines customer confidence in the industry as a whole," Mair Venison's marketing manager, Michael Foate, of Christchurch, said.

"That's not a good thing for anyone in the industry at present."

Farm deer not 14/12/90 feral deer

Escaped farmed deer carrying ear tags, will in future no longer be accepted at game packing houses for processing as wild feral game.

That decision was reached at an internal MAF game conference in Wellington early last month.

MAF considers that to continue to accept such animals, which can be legally shot if they escape from captivity, was a threat to continued market access for wild game.

Refusal to accept escaped deer as wild feral would also discourage theft from deer farms and reduce the danger of sick or injured animals from deer farms being dumped into the feral system.