

## Executive Committee Report

Greetings from windy and horizontally wet Hawkes Bay. We had a relatively dry August (just 28mm at our place) but it wasn't great lambing weather: not bad for the deer, but a bit tough for the lambs. Everyone will be well through their button drop drafting now, and a few very early heads are already off. We have had a reasonably kind winter so the yearlings are doing well, even though they sure look scruffy at this time of year. And now we're docking... the lambs born on the deer farm are not easy to lift!

Last week the NZDFA Executive Committee met in Wellington, timed to coincide with the annual NVSB auditors catch up and NVSB meeting. It is always great to touch base with what is going on in this space.

We took the opportunity to meet with the NVSB as part of our meeting. One discussion was around compliance and reminding farmers velvetting to ensure they have good processes in place to meet obligations with records and timely return of logbooks and drugs at the end of the season. Chasing people for these records and unused drugs has become time consuming (and it should actually be unnecessary). For the integrity of our velvetting standards, which allows us the privilege to continue velvetting, it is important that this is done correctly. Please keep your records accurately and return them in a timely manner at the end of the season.

We had further discussions regarding the upcoming velvetting season and I would like to refer you back to last month's article in Stagline regarding some of the things to consider for the upcoming season. To be fair, we are all waiting with bated breath to see how the season pans out: it has been a rough ride for velvet producers, and we appear to far from out of the woods yet.

The proposed change to the Transport QA Standard for stag transport has stirred up some noise/opposition and so with the upcoming Branch Chairs meeting there is an opportunity to discuss this further. Specifically, it has been proposed that mature stags (two years and older) cannot be transported to slaughter after 14 February, which moves the date from the current "end of February". It is important to remember this a health and safety issue as well as an animal welfare issue, so it is reasonable for the Transport operators to want to better protect staff. They are willing to listen if there is a different practical solution: please let your Branch Chair know your thoughts.

This brings me to another point and that is around effective industry communication. The NZDFA Executive Committee, DINZ and the DINZ Board are working to ensure we have clear pathways of communication to help get messaging from the grass roots up to the decision makers and equally back to those doing the hard yards on the farm.

If you have something to raise, please do it through your Branch to the Executive

# DFA STAGLINE



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committee and we will pass it on. Responses will be dealt with in reverse, as often the same queries are coming from throughout the DFA Branches and DINZ staff have already answered these very queries. We hope this will keep everyone more informed and enable those who have something to contribute to know where to go to do so.

Finally, I hope spring is kind to all.

**Karen Middelberg**

NZDFA Executive Committee

## Deer Farm Number 1

We recently received this email which we thought was worth sharing with the deer farming community and is fitting reminder of our industry's origins:

*Hello,*

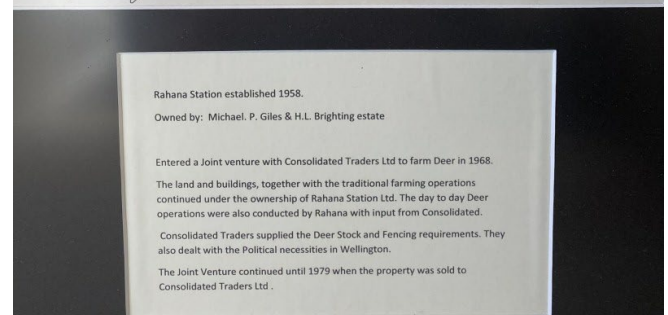
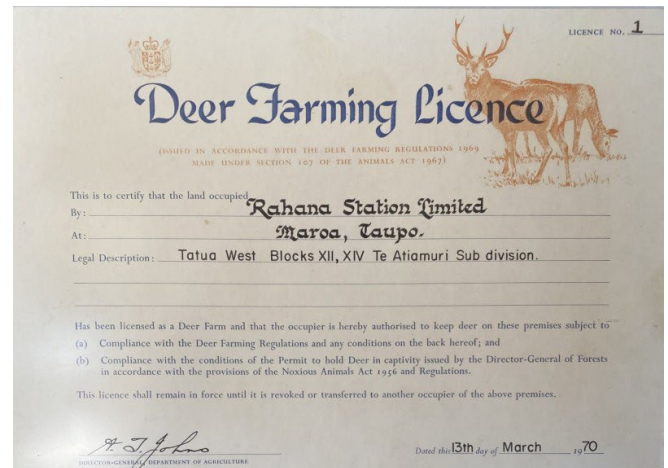
*My family is going through old records and we thought you would like a copy of Deer Farming Licence No. 1 issued to our father's (Michael Giles) station just north of Taupo, in 1970.*

*There are many family stories of the early days of farming deer and fighting the Government of the day.*

*I have also attached a photo of my father as a young man with one of the first deer. Note the fence behind him which he had to quickly erect to stop them jumping out, there was no deer fencing as there is today.*

*Dad sold his farm to his uncle Rex in 1979.*

*Kind regards,  
Fiona Bougen*



## New Branch Chairs

In the July issue of Stagline we introduced three new branch chairs (Rachael Inch, Colin Jordan and Matt Krs). We are pleased to announce three more new branch chairs and welcome Dean Wilkinson (Wairarapa), Justin Stevens (Marlborough) and Vanessa Crowley (Waikato).

The next issue of Deer Industry News (due out in late September) will feature more on our new chairs.

## Mixed species farming

Following the success of the event held at the Macfarlane's property in Canterbury, Beef & Lamb, DINZ and NZDFA are joining forces to hold two Diversified Farm Field Days in the North Island.

The idea of the field days is to show the benefit of running sheep, cattle and deer within your farming business. With the number of properties across the country that have deer infrastructure but no deer there is a real opportunity to decrease risk and increase profitability.

Ginny Dodunski will also be attending to discuss the benefits of multispecies grazing to assist with managing drench resistance.

This is a great opportunity to bring those along that have deer infrastructure on their properties but haven't yet seen the potential that deer offer to their business.

Come along to:



- Longbrook Farm on the 7th of October at 53 Ohurakura Road, Te Pohue, Hawkes Bay, or
- Westview Farming Partnership on the 11th of November at 29 no 2 line, Pohangina Valley, Manawatu

Make sure you register through [www.beeflambnz.com/events](http://www.beeflambnz.com/events)

## Velvet season arrives with updated VelTrak terms

It has been a busy few months behind-the-scenes in the velvet space as new and updated structures and systems are put in place to help add rigour, discipline and transparency to the workings of the velvet industry. While “structures and systems” may not sound the most exciting, these are necessary pieces of

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work that bolster the industry's credibility and professionalism while encouraging good corporate citizenship.

On 1 August 2025, re-registration opened for all VelTrak Accredited Account Owners (AAOs). By 10 September, twenty organisations had submitted their applications. As part of their re-registration, every AAO – typically a buyer, processor, or exporter – must reaffirm their commitment to the updated Terms of Use.

DINZ and the DFA jointly briefed attendees on the changes for the upcoming season at the Annual Buyers' Meeting in Christchurch on 21 August, where an open and constructive discussion took place. Topics discussed included the pros and cons of mandatory grading standards, the use of MPI-approved RMP facilities, and the timing and mechanics of a potential industry vote on export licensing. These inputs will help inform the work of the Export Licensing Working Group (ELWG) as options are considered.

Export licensing remains the goal longer term but won't be in place for the upcoming season, says DINZ CEO Rhys Griffiths. That is where changes to VelTrak's Terms of Use for the 2025/26 season come in.

"Tightening up VelTrak for upcoming season is really all about making sure systems are working as well as they could be for all," says Griffiths. "This includes several areas of increased oversight, such as the timely filing of monthly returns, on-time levy payments,

accuracy of declared volumes, and chain of custody compliance.

"Now, you can take that as encouraging high-integrity systems or disincentivising poor behaviour, but the result is the same. It benefits the industry when everyone is operating on a level-playing field."

To ensure a level playing field, DINZ rolled out an expanded verification programme covering AAOs on 1 September and has engaged a new independent external auditor to complete these verifications. The first verification commenced in early September. Selection criteria for verification include past non-compliance, anomalies in data, scale of operation, and intelligence from other sources.

In response to stakeholder requests, DINZ has also introduced new levels of transparency. These involve publishing a [list of approved AAOs](#) and will also include the publication of any suspended entities from VelTrak.

This openness has been welcomed both within New Zealand and overseas. It provides confidence to farmers, processors, and exporters that all participants are meeting obligations. Equally, new overseas customers – particularly those forming fresh commercial relationships – are seeking this transparency as a signal of trust.

DINZ continues to advance the case for a stronger, more resilient industry through export licensing. In mid-September, efforts are centred in Wellington with central government



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and working officials at MPI in evaluating a path forward for export licensing.



*DINZ Trade Strategy Manager Damon Paling*

“Securing export licensing through legislative change by 1 July 2026 is a highly ambitious goal,” says DINZ Trade Strategy Manager Damon Paling. “The industry is seeking change, and while success is not guaranteed, the work being done now has real value in shaping the future. There are encouraging signs of bipartisan interest and support, giving us the confidence to keep pushing forward. This advocacy is ongoing, and stakeholders are encouraged to ‘watch this space’ for further developments.”

The velvet sector’s credibility is one of our greatest commercial advantages. VelTrak, with its digital chain of custody and independent verification, is a cornerstone of that credibility. When combined with transparent publication of AAOs and active advocacy for export licensing, the industry is taking tangible steps to safeguard integrity, level the playing field,

and reinforce our premium positioning in global markets.

“The message from DINZ is clear,” says Griffiths. “Stay on top of obligations, keep records accurate, and use VelTrak as intended. With these measures in place, every participant – from farmer to exporter – can be confident that we are operating in a system we can all be proud of.”

## Noticeboard

### US Deer Farmer Visit to NZ Deer Farms

If anyone would be interested in hosting a couple of US deer farmers in 2026, please email Nadia.

My husband and I are deer farmers here in the US and are planning to go to NZ in 2026. We would like to make some farm visits there both fallow and red deer. Could we possibly get a listing of deer farms there to start planning our road trip. Thank you!

Nadia Foti  
[fotina929@gmail.com](mailto:fotina929@gmail.com)

### Deer placement for vet student

Hello

I am a first- year veterinarian student at Massey University and I am looking for a deer farm to take my two-week placement at. It is a requirement for me to graduate to get this hands-on work. I will end my first year on

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November 10th and that is when I will be able to start placements. I hope to discuss this further with someone and I appreciate your time in reading this and hopefully responding.

Sincerely,

Loretta Rodman

[loretts777@gmail.com](mailto:loretts777@gmail.com)

## TB Plan Review

DINZ recently hosted a webinar covering the TB Plan Review currently underway. To view the webinar click here: [TB Plan Review Webinar - Deer NZ](#)

The milestone of zero TB infections by 2026 cannot be achieved while the disease remains in possums. The TB Plan Review proposes an increased focus on tackling the remaining infected possum hot spots to achieve TB freedom in both livestock and possums by 2040.

Farmers pay for the TB free programme through levies and will have the chance to comment on the review proposals. You can visit the website [www.tbplanreview.co.nz](http://www.tbplanreview.co.nz) to find out more and have your say.

## Farmer meeting dates are as follows:

### North Island

- *Whangarei*: Thursday 11 September 11am - 12:30pm, Tangiteoria Community Complex, 23 Pukehuia Road, Tangiteoria

- *Rotorua*: Monday 15 September 11am - 12:30pm, Linton Park Community Centre, 16 Kamahi Place, Pukehangi, Rotorua
- *Morrinsville*: Tuesday 16 September 11am - 12:30pm, Tatuani Memorial Hall, SH 27 Tatuani, Morrinsville
- *Carterton*: Friday 19 September 11am - 12:30pm, Carterton Events Centre, 50 Holloway Street, Carterton
- *Gisborne*: Monday 22 September 11am - 12:30pm, Emerald Hotel Gisborne, 13 Gladstone Road, Gisborne
- *Napier*: Tuesday 23 September 11am - 12:30pm, The Crown Hotel, 22A Waghorne Street, Ahuriri, Napier
- *Taihape*: Wednesday 24 September 11am - 12:30pm, Kokako Street Hall, 12 Kokako Street, Taihape
- *Stratford*: Friday 26 September 11am - 12:30pm, Stratford TET Stadium, 62 Portia Street, Stratford

### South Island

- *Kaikoura*: Tuesday 30 September 11am - 12:30pm, Donegal House, 258 Schoolhouse Road, Kaikoura Flat, Kaikoura
- *Ashburton*: Monday 29 September 11am - 12:30pm, St Andrews Presbyterian Church, 130 Havelock Street, Ashburton

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- *Westport*: Wednesday 1 October 11am - 12.30pm, Westport Bridge Club, 12A Lyndhurst Street, Westport
- *Hokitika*: Thursday 2 October 11am - 12.30pm, Hokitika Golf Club, 206 Golf Links Rd, Ruatapu
- *Omarama*: Monday 6 October 11am - 12.30pm, Omarama Hall, 35 Chain Hills Highway, Omarama
- *Wedderburn*: Tuesday 7 October 11am - 12.30pm, Wedderburn Woolshed, 7145 Wedderburn-Becks Road, Wedderburn
- *Otautau*: Wednesday 8 October 11am - 12.30pm, Otautau Connect, 134 Main Street, Otautau

## And while we're on "social" media...

If you missed it on social and in eNews, check out this podcast from Luka Jansen, DINZ Environmental Stewardship

Manager: [Balancing freshwater, farming and 'fair' rules](#)

When it comes to environmental regulations, farmers and contractors know better than most that the devil is in the detail. Rules written in Wellington can look tidy on paper, but they often fail to reflect the complexities of real farming systems.

Luka notes "Many government agencies whether in Wellington or at regional level, don't have the farming experience or knowledge so

they really do rely on seeking knowledge from industry bodies. It's about councils looking at those unique farming systems and recognising what will actually help the region to succeed. We need food, we need exports and we need jobs - it's pretty simple."

## And while we're re-hashing information from eNews...

A new version of the Animal Status Declaration (ASD) form came into effect from 3 June 2025. We are now reaching the end of the transitional period, with the new forms to be mandatory from 1 October 2025. Not using the new forms could mean animals are not processed in a timely manner at the works, or that the resulting product is ineligible for key markets.

We have heard from some stakeholders that the use of the old and soon-to-be-invalid ASDs is ongoing. With only a couple of weeks to go until the transitional period is over, farmers should be replacing their old forms with the new forms immediately.

A new ASD is required due to new animal treatment rules for producing and exporting animals and/or animal products to the European Union (EU). The rules pertain to the use of antimicrobials for the purpose of promoting growth or increasing milk yield, which would make the animals and their products to be ineligible for export to the EU.

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Another option is to fill out an electronic ASD in MyOSPRI. See below to find out more on how to do so if you are unfamiliar.

- [MPI information on updated ASDs](#)
- [How to create a farm-to-farm Animal Status Declaration \(ASD\) in MyOSPRI](#)
- [How to create a farm-to-meat processor Animal Status Declaration \(ASD\) in MyOSPRI](#)

## Joke of the month

There's this farmer who is completely obsessed with tractors. His entire existence revolves around them. He lives, breathes, and dreams tractors, but his wife is tragically killed in a tractor accident. The farmer has had enough of tractors and completely removes them from his life, moving off the farm and attempting to move on without his wife and love of tractors.

He's going on a blind date with a woman he met online years later. The date is going well until the restaurant bursts into flames! Everyone is panicking as they try to put out the fire when the farmer stands up and takes a deep breath in, sucking in all the smoke and fire. He dashes outside, extinguishes all of the smoke, and saves the restaurant. Everyone is in awe of what the farmer has just accomplished as they thank him and return to their meals. His date curls up in stunned silence, saying, "That was amazing, how did you do that?!"

The farmer looks her in the eyes tearing up, and says, "I'm an ex-tractor fan."

## Events

- [Finishing the job of eradicating bovine TB - Westport, 1 October >>](#)
- [Finishing the job of eradicating bovine TB - Hokitika, 2 October >>](#)
- [Diversified Farm Field Day - Hawkes Bay, 7 October >>](#)
- [Pāmu Farm Open Day at Eweburn Station - Te Anau, 30 October >>](#)
- [Diversified Farm Field Day - Pohangina, 11 November >>](#)
- [North Island Velvet Competition - Te Awamutu, 29 November >>](#)
- [National Velvet Competition and Awards Night - Invercargill, 11 December >>](#)

If you have an event that would be of interest to the deer farming industry, please email [info@deernz.org](mailto:info@deernz.org) with details.

Visit the [deernz.org](http://deernz.org) website to view information about these events.