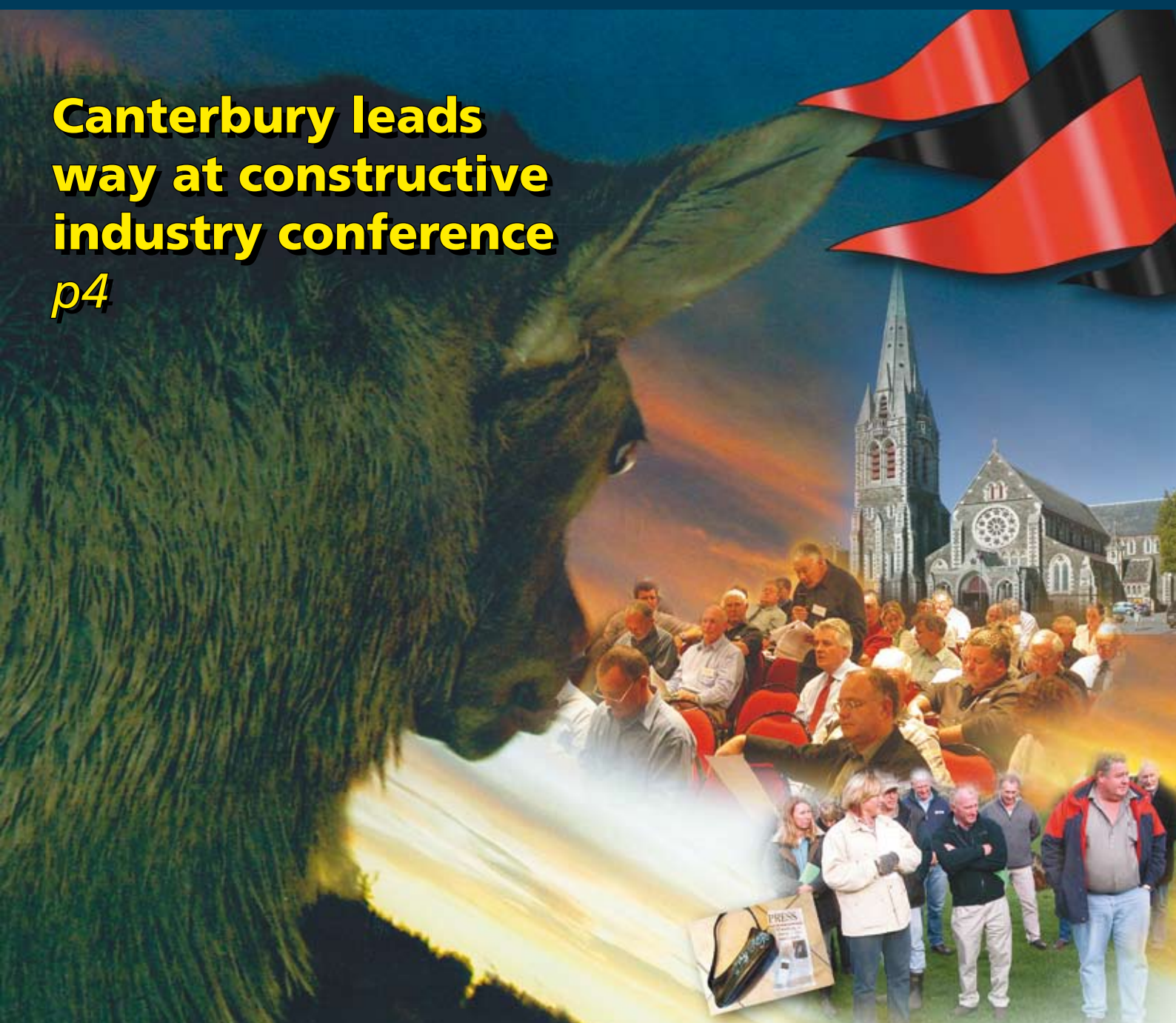


# DEER INDUSTRY NEWS

Issue 20 • June 2006 • Official magazine of Deer Industry New Zealand and the NZDFA

## Canterbury leads way at constructive industry conference

*p4*



### Also in this issue:

- New Science Manager at DINZ
- Velvet for endurance athletes
- New-look venison marketing in Germany
- Lincoln field day
- Johne's Management Ltd concept launched
- Focus farms
- Branch Chairmen's meeting



**DEER INDUSTRY  
NEW ZEALAND**

NZDFA  
New Zealand Deer Farmers' Association





# Profitability critical to sustainability

I'm delighted with the opportunity to offer a MAF Policy perspective on the deer industry, its future prospects and the role of MAF. The deer industry was created by very special people – entrepreneurs, marketers, scientists and, most of all, innovators. As it has developed, the industry has become a

leader in addressing environmental management issues, reflected in the Deer Farmers' Environmental Awards and Landcare Manual, and it is very responsive to issues such as animal welfare and product traceability.

The industry is going through difficult times. However it is asking the right questions in relation to how to differentiate its product and enhance its market access. It does seem to be focusing on how to grow farm-raised venison beyond the limits of a seasonal niche to a more mainstream and high-end premium product that is differentiated by its quality, naturalness, leanness and nutritional properties. Likewise, I am pleased to see the progress that the NZFSA and industry are making in enhancing market access for velvet (as well as venison) in key markets such as China.


MAF Policy is currently focusing on a number of issues of importance to the deer industry. The Sustainable Farming Fund is contributing to deer industry-related projects, and MAF is also advocating increased investment in pastoral research through FRST to lift productivity and to address the negative effects of industry activity on the environment. MAF Policy is also doing some work on the kinds of approaches industries can take to strategy development and to their business models, especially in relation to export performance, product differentiation and reducing dependence on commodity cycles.

MAF's new Statement of Intent sets our three top level strategic priorities, all of which are relevant to the deer

industry. One of these focuses on the regulatory frameworks that impact on industry, with a view to maximising innovation and reducing compliance costs. Another priority focuses on technical rules of trade. As progress is made on trade liberalisation and as tariffs drop, technical rules relating to food safety, biosecurity, product traceability and the environmental impacts of production become more important. These technical rules can create risks as well as opportunities for our export industries. We must ensure we influence the writing of the technical "rules of the game" as well as comply with them, especially in areas such as food safety and biosecurity.

The other strategic priority that I am leading in MAF is sustainable development. "Sustainable development" is often perceived as a vague notion that means all things to all people and gives no real focus for industry or government agencies. Sustainable development is defined as "that which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

In the past, MAF was seen as economically oriented, and environmental issues were perhaps seen as peripheral. MAF is now a sustainable development agency where the environmental dimensions of sector activity are integral to our concerns. Increasingly, the agricultural industry has to address people's wider aspirations for environmental quality and sustainability, for animal welfare, product traceability and for health and wellness. The focus is now as much on how a product is produced as the product itself. At one level this might make business more complicated but it also creates opportunities for product differentiation, for enhancing market access and for potential market premiums.

In MAF's view, the profitability of our agriculture and forestry industries is critical to sustainability – "you can't be green when you're in the red". Economic growth, trade and environmental quality are complementary rather than in conflict. History has taught us that the worst cause of environmental damage is poverty, not prosperity. MAF intends leading thinking in sustainable development so that New Zealand's economic, resource management and environmental policies and the regulations that support them foster rather than impede the sustainable development of our sectors. I look forward to working with the agriculture and forestry industries, including the deer industry, as we progress our work on sustainable development. 

**Dr Paul Reynolds**  
**ADG, Policy, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry**

## Contents

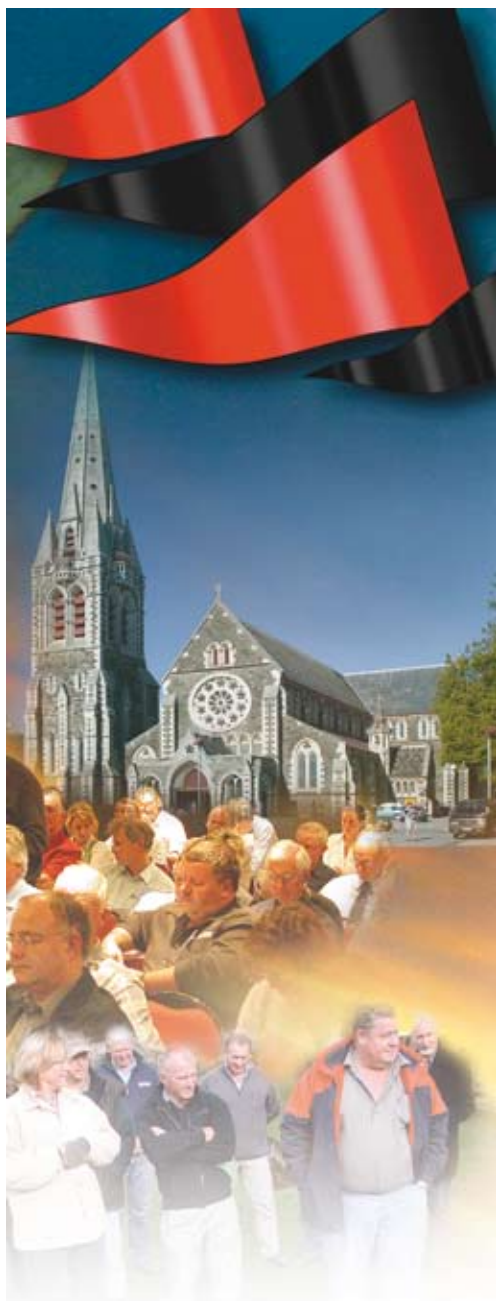
<b>Editorial:</b> Profitability critical to sustainability .....	3
<b>Conference report:</b> Welcome to Canterbury! .....	4
DINZ Formal General Meeting .....	5
NZDFA Annual General Meeting .....	6
Industry awards .....	12
ForageMaster demo impresses .....	13
<b>DINZ news:</b> New Science Manager .....	14
Venison: truly international alternative .....	14
<b>Market Report:</b> .....	16
Market Talk: Todd Gray .....	17
<b>Industry news:</b> Velvet high profile with endurance athletes .....	18
Recipe; Cervena website updated for 21st Century .....	19
Impressing German guests .....	20
<b>Research:</b> Plenty for farmers at Lincoln field day .....	22
Johne's showcase launches JML concept .....	24
Johne's technical papers: Wildlife; Vaccines .....	25
<b>General news:</b> Focus farm update .....	26
Agridata website; Hind sales; Brochette de biche .....	27
<b>Stagline supplement:</b> Branch Chairmen's meeting, Christchurch 23 May ...	28

Deer Industry News is published by Deer Industry New Zealand and incorporates the former *Stagline* and *Market Report*. *Deer Industry News* is published five times a year, in the months of February, April/May, June/July, October and December. It is circulated to all known deer farmers, processors, exporters and others with an interest in the deer industry. The opinions expressed in *Deer Industry News* do not necessarily reflect the views of Deer Industry New Zealand or the New Zealand Deer Farmers' Association.

**Circulation enquiries:** Deer Industry New Zealand, PO Box 10-702, Wellington, Ph 04 471 6114, Fax 04 472 5549, Email [info@deernz.org](mailto:info@deernz.org)

**Editorial and advertising enquiries:** Words & Pictures, PO Box 27-221, Wellington, Ph 04 384 4688, Fax 04 384 4667, Email [din@wordpict.co.nz](mailto:din@wordpict.co.nz)

**Cover:** Canterbury showed the way at the 2006 Deer Industry Conference. See pages 4-13, 22-23 and 28-30. Deer photo: Julie Rogers, Warnham & Woburn Photo Awards 2005 ("Aw, just another Canterbury sunset"). Photo montage: Arvind Sardar, Words & Pictures.



# Welcome to Canterbury!

*The 2006 Deer Industry Conference at the Commodore Copthorne in Christchurch was very much a Canterbury affair from Timaru to Hurunui.*

Canterbury farmers won all three awards presented on the Awards night, a South Canterbury deer farmer stepped into the vacant Executive Committee position, the Canterbury Branch led by Ed Noonan sponsored several successful remits, local MP and Minister of Agriculture Jim Anderton was guest speaker at the Awards dinner, former Canterbury Branch Chairman Bob Kingscote stepped up to chair the Selection and Appointments Panel and – to top it off – the Crusaders strangled the life out of the Hurricanes in the smothering fog at Jade Stadium just three days later.


*(Note to self: just a game – let it go. Ed)*

This was a pared-back occasion in line with the difficult times the industry has experienced for three seasons on the trot. There were no trade stands, no Photo Awards or Rumpole Cup, no sponsors and no glitzy Awards dinner. But there was plenty of what deer farmers really come to conference for: good debate, companionship, networking and some useful technical stuff.

Producer Manager Tony Pearse, who is normally at full stretch at any conference, took on the extra challenge of conference organising this year. While it was a simpler affair than in past years, Tony says he got a good insight into how hard professional conference organisers work to earn their keep and could not have got there without the considerable help of front line Deer Industry New Zealand reception staff and the professionals led by Ken Patterson at the Commodore.

Tony, and the people who run the conference venue are to be congratulated for ensuring the event ran so smoothly. While the format was shorter and simpler, numbers were surprisingly good, and similar to previous years – testament to the strong local support from Cantabrians and a tentative feeling of optimism that the worst is now behind us.

The Branch Chairmen had their 6-monthly meeting on Tuesday 23 May, with the outstandingly successful Awards dinner that night. It was a full-on day at the conference proper the next day. The DINZ Formal General Meeting ran in the morning, followed by the NZDFA Annual General Meeting that afternoon. With business efficiently wrapped up by around 6pm, conference goers had a relaxed evening catching up with friends and enjoying the camaraderie you'll find at any venue packed with deer farmers. The following day a good number stayed for the Canterbury Branch-promoted Field Day at the Lincoln University Deer Unit hosted by Alastair Nicol, Graham Barrell and staff, with a barbecue lunch kindly sponsored by Mountain River Deer Processors.

If you couldn't be there, never mind – this issue features full coverage of all the events. 

## INGOR DEER FARM

**HIND SALE • 27 JULY 2006 • 1.30pm**  
**150 hinds • All mated to purebred sires**

ENGLISH  
Furzeland

GERMAN  
Shultzwrede



Willie 8.6kg SA2 @ 7yr



Kaiza 6.0kg SA2 @ 6 yr

ENGLISH  
Woburn  
Abbey  
Warnham  
Park

Contact: Allan & Joe Wilson, Waimatua, RD11, Invercargill, Ph/Fax 03-216 7999 • Mobile 0274-748 901

# DINZ Formal General Meeting 2006: Holding the industry line

*Holding the line and keeping to the industry agreed strategy, despite being in the fifth year of unsustainably low returns, remains crucial as the indicators slowly begin turning to point in the right direction, FGM attendees were told. Following is a summary of reported action from the Deer Industry New Zealand Executive team.*

Chairman John Scurr believes that the success of the industry will be linked tightly to its ability to work together for sustainable, profitable growth. He noted recent improvements in prices – the venison schedule has moved above \$4, ahead of the same time last year, while the weighted average velvet price (despite remaining uneconomically low) was 7% above last year.

Highlights of activity at the 18 month point of the industry-agreed five-year **venison and velvet strategies**:

- Unusually high stocks are not reportedly evident, showing that product has been sold through to the end consumer.
- Asian and Australian markets for venison have taken 1,700 and 1,600 tonnes primarily of manufacturing product this year, respectively. This means product has effectively been diversified away from Germany, which currently accounts for 40% of export volume. Over-burdening the US and European markets has been avoided.
- More products are carrying New Zealand country-of-origin labelling.
- There is a continued commitment from exporters and DINZ for promotions to target venison at retail outlets.
- For **velvet**, market access issues continue to be an important part of activity. The signing of a trade protocol between New Zealand and China in early April paves the way forward for formal access to the “Sleeping Dragon”, particularly for co-products marketers, but could also potentially open up a valuable retail market for venison. Velvet has some registration issues that will require work.
- Lobbying work in Taiwan to increase the current five tonne quota is beginning to bear fruit.

Chief Executive Mark O'Connor pointed out that the opportunities to expand venison markets as per the Venison Strategic Intent remain real and achievable. He said that promotional efforts should continue during a low production period so that “when we do emerge on the other side, we will have continued to invest in the future”. It will also be an important sign to importers and distributors of industry commitment to venison.

## Venison strategy and progress

Venison Marketing Services Manager Innes Moffat reported that the programme continues to extend the venison consumption period, target retail and develop new markets.



*A new look for the German retail promotion campaign.*



*DINZ Board members Andrew Duncan, Graham Carr, CEO Mark O'Connor, and Warren Moyes, John MacDonald and Jeffrey Pearse field questions from the floor at the conclusion of the Formal General Meeting.*

- The German retail campaign is shifting away from the generic ‘Sommerkampagne’ to a more targeted ‘Impress Your Guests’ campaign, featuring outdoor advertising linked to action at point-of-sale.
- DINZ joint promotion funding of \$900,000 in 2006 has facilitated 50 promotions around the world, worth a total of \$3 million.
- The Cervena venison campaign in the US has been reinvigorated through event sponsorship and a public relations campaign. A new website has just come online.
- Low-cost promotional support continued in New Zealand.

## Broadening demand for velvet

General Manager Marketing Daimien Reynolds said that the programme continues to develop new products in new or developing markets.

- China holds enormous potential with consumers who know velvet and regard New Zealand products highly. In conjunction with two shelf-ready products companies, work is underway on getting some products onto shelves there this year.
- Efforts continue to improve access arrangements for Taiwan and also to open access to Australia.
- New Korean health-food markets are being explored, via a high visibility function at a top Seoul hotel and a New Zealand presence at two food-related trade shows. Advertising and PR has attracted interest also from food manufacturers and the possibility of registering velvet as a functional food is being explored.
- Petfood products, incorporating velvet, both in New Zealand and abroad are getting good acceptance. Sponsorship of a dog-sled racing team in the Alaskan extreme Iditarod Race raised velvet’s profile (see *Deer Industry News* issue 19, April 2006).
- In New Zealand, velvet is becoming more accepted and velvet capsule sales are believed to be at a record high.

*continued on page 6*

# Big decisions and quality debate at 2006 AGM

**The 31<sup>st</sup> AGM of the NZDFA got through a high volume of business with some thoughtful debate on everything from the future of the velvet industry to the structure of the DFA and disease management. Despite fears to the contrary, business was wrapped up in just four and a half hours with the meeting working briskly through 18 remits.**

The following report on the meeting does not constitute the official minutes, but has been checked for accuracy.

Following the formal preliminaries, including the presentation of the Chairman's Report by Andrew Mitchell, DFA's newest life member, Clive Jermy, made the traditional reply from the floor this year. He said the industry had absorbed the market failure of 2001, and despite tough times



*continued from page 5*

This has been helped by TV advertising using Colin Meads, sponsorship of endurance athletic events and sponsorship of aquathlon athlete Jonathan Collett.

- The US sports nutrition market is being targeted through a PR campaign and sponsorship of endurance athletes.



*One example of the type of public relations activity in the US Cervena campaign is 'Cervena Grilling 101' with the New York Giants football team.*

## Research: "surgically mining" velvet

Nevin Abernethy of AgResearch advised that **velvet science** in the VARNZ programme continues to "surgically mine" the potential benefits of the product, with funding of \$2.05 million a year from the Foundation for Research, Science & Technology and DINZ, for research and testing of the *RepairRx* wound healing treatment, plus an additional \$1.8 million from AgResearch to build a new superior research facility. *RepairRx* is protected by two patents and has been peer-reviewed. After its problem-free early run, the product has suffered some setbacks such as some efficacy trials not being as positive as first thought. Small animal tests will run in the middle of this year and, dependent on the results, will move forward to pre-clinical safety testing offshore in 2007, then to a commercial partnership or licence agreement and finally regulatory approval for human clinical trial at the end of that year.

Future product candidates include other biologics that promote blood vessel repair and growth, bioactives that promote repair or growth of nerves, cartilage and bone, nutraceutical agents that improve general health and well-being and other biologics identified through targeted basic research on velvet biology and antler renewal.

## Velvet industry structure

Debate about the struggling industry and low returns led to action. One initiative saw NZDFA, PGG Wrightson and DINZ working together cooperatively not to sell lower grades of velvet until 1 March. The formation of a joint working group with a working name of 0800 VELVET and chaired by Ponty von Dadelszen will consider future velvet industry structure over the coming months.

## New code of welfare for the farming of deer

The New Zealand deer industry is the first pastoral sector to complete a new animal welfare code since the introduction of the Animal Welfare Act in 2000. After four years of work, this has been submitted to the National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (NAWAC) for acceptance and sign off by the Minister of Agriculture. It is expected that the Code will come into force later this year.

## Deer industry annual survey

This survey collated results from 2,800 producers. Of particular note was the intention to reduce the deer herd by 126,000. The results from the survey were combined with latest Statistics New Zealand figures to produce four scenarios for New Zealand's venison production through to 2012 to help producers make their own informed decisions for the future.

## New DINZ team in place

Programme consistency is being maintained with new additions to the DINZ Executive Team in the past year: Venison Marketing Services Manager Innes Moffat and General Manager Marketing Daimien Reynolds have just been joined by new Science Manager Dr Lindsay Fung, 

**A copy of the FGM proceedings is available for download at [www.deernz.org/resources](http://www.deernz.org/resources)**

since, there was now good cause for optimism.

He said the meeting had two big issues to confront: the remandating (or not) of the NZDFA Commodity Levy Order, and the need to clear up misinformation about the effects of the 2002 industry reforms. Clive said the DFA and former Game Industry Board had not merged. While they shared office space with Meat and Wool New Zealand, the DFA had not lost its independence. Moving to a pragmatic structure had saved the industry \$3 million over the past four years, he noted.



Clive Jermy responds to the Chairman's report.

## Remits

Because other decisions and the fate of the constitutional motions depended upon the outcome of Remit 7, a Branch Remit, it was considered first.

### 7. Waikato Branch: NZDFA Commodity Levy

"The DFA be instructed by this meeting to reactivate the COMMODITY LEVY in order to provide funding for NON POLITICAL activities. The \$ per kg value of this levy would be set as per a recommendation from the DFA executive."

Thomas/Marcroft

There had been little support for this remit at the Branch Chairmen's meeting the previous day, and this was reflected at the full AGM. In support of the motion, the mover and seconder said the DFA should have its own funding and should not have to go "cap in hand" to DINZ when money was short. Also in support, Richard Valentine (Fallow Society) said reactivating the levy would ensure that "freeloaders" who didn't pay a voluntary subscription, would pay their share.

A number of members spoke out against the motion which, if passed, would have voided the Memorandum of Understanding with DINZ and, in theory at least, seen the DFA having to set up its own separate administrative structure.

Mike McCormick (Hawke's Bay) said this issue was overshadowed by the later decision (Remit 5 below) whether or not to remandate the DFA's Commodity Levy. He said that since there was little support for going through remandating process, there was little point in reactivating the current levy before it expired in 2007.

The motion was LOST on a voice vote.

The order of business then reverted to that shown in the agenda.

## Executive Committee Motions



NZDFA Executive Committee: Andrew Mitchell (Chair), Tim Aitken, Andrew Fraser and Bill Taylor.

### 1. Budget 2006/07

"That the NZDFA Budget of Income and Expenditure for the year ending 31st March 2007 be approved."

Aitken/Taylor

The Budget as presented in the 2006 annual report was APPROVED. While there was general consensus that a \$10-15 increase in subscriptions was acceptable, that could wait until the following year. The Executive Committee was confident that the budget as presented would be adequate given existing funding levels.

### 2. Commodity levy

"That the NZDFA Commodity Levy (Farmed Deer Products) 2001 on venison and velvet be fixed at NIL for the NZDFA financial year 2006/07."

Aitken/Mitchell

CARRIED

### 3. Remuneration of Elected Officers

"That the Executive Committee honoraria be set at the same levels as the 2005/06 financial year and be fixed at \$7500 for the elected Chairman, and \$5000 for each other Executive Committee member."

Aitken/Taylor

John Spiers (Hawke's Bay) and Errol Croad (Horowhenua/Wellington) both noted that these honoraria were very small given the amount of work involved.

CARRIED

### 4. Appointment of Auditors

"That Deloitte be appointed as NZDFA auditors for the ensuing year 2006/07."

Aitken/Taylor

CARRIED

## Executive Committee Remit

### 5. Remandation of the Commodity Levy (Farmed Deer products)

"That the NZDFA AGM recommends that any CLA remandation process not be pursued at this time and that the NZDFA allows the current Commodity Levy (Farmed Deer Products) 2001 to lapse at expiry in September 2007."

The Executive Committee noted that this motion and its intent were subject to successful further negotiation with DINZ over the present and future MOU and contract for services including NZDFA budget considerations. These discussions have been successfully concluded.

A. Mitchell/Carter

John Derbridge (Tongariro) told the meeting there was strong support for this motion amongst the Branch Chairmen. Remandation would cost at least \$50,000 (nearly half of the DFA's reserves) and would necessarily take up to 14 months to meet the process of consultation demanded. John Cusdin (Taranaki) said the option to mandate a new levy in future still remains – the process would be the same as remandating an existing levy. Ed Noonan (Canterbury) said the MOU with DINZ was now the cornerstone for running the DFA's affairs.

The motion was CARRIED on a voice vote. Brian Marcroft and George Thomas (Waikato) asked that their dissenting votes be recorded.

## Branch remits

### 6. Hawke's Bay Branch: NZDFA President Position

"That the NZDFA constitution be amended to include an elected at large President and a four man Executive Committee."

McCormick/Spiers

This remit provoked spirited debate, something the Hawke's Bay Branch had wanted to achieve. Mike McCormick said the Branch felt concerned that, two years ago, a move to consult with the Branch Chairmen to resolve a stalemate within the new Executive Committee over who should be its Chair had occurred.

They felt the DFA lacked a strong profile because there was not a clearly identified leader elected by the membership. John Spiers was at pains to point out that Hawke's Bay's issue was with the structure, not the performance of the current members and Chair of the Executive Committee.

Clive Jermy (Otago) pointed out that an elected President may cause resentment among Executive Committee members who had been doing the hard slog, and may not have the experience to deal with sophisticated lobbying work, such as that required for Select Committees.

Peter Allan (Southland) said his Branch would consider a "3+1" Executive Committee but wasn't in favour of a five-man group. Mike Holdaway (Manawatu) and John Carter (Warnham & Woburn) were both comfortable with Branch Chairmen being consulted by the Executive Committee for guidance in the case of a split decision.

Andrew Mitchell (Executive Committee Chair) said the stalemate two years ago is ancient history now. He said the Chair has a casting vote in case of a 2:2 split on any issue, and he has never had to use it. "We work well together," he told the meeting.

Peter Aitken (South Canterbury/North Otago, Johne's Research Group) said he saw no evidence of either a dysfunctional committee or lack of a united voice, and commended the Executive Committee for its work.

In reply, Mike McCormick WITHDREW the Hawke's Bay remit, satisfied that the issue had now been well canvassed.

### 8. Canterbury Branch: Velvet antler – lower tynes removal

"That NZDFA request DINZ to ensure that NZFSA (New Zealand Food Safety Authority) enforces removal of lower tynes from velvet antler (frozen or dried) destined for the Korean market, by including it as a requirement in Overseas Market Access Requirements (OMAR). The NZDFA requests DINZ to report conclusions by beginning of 2007 selling season."

Noonan/Fitzgerald

Ed Noonan explained that removing lower tynes prior to export to Korea will lift the overall quality of the velvet sticks sent over, and put upward pressure on price. It would also help prevent New Zealand velvet from being misrepresented as something else.

Daimien Reynolds (DINZ) confirmed that technically the Korean regulations do require the removal of lower tynes prior to export by virtue of maximum ash content requirements, and so could potentially be enforced by NZFSA.

Barry Cuttance (Canterbury, velvet marketer) said 50kg boxes of velvet go into Korea with the lower tynes removed only on the top layer. He thought it reasonable to ask the NZFSA to ensure the complete box complied.

A number of speakers thought Remit 16 (see below) should take precedence as it encompassed many velvet marketing issues including this one.

The following amendment was ACCEPTED by the meeting (change in italics):

Guild/Carter "That in the absence of an accepted velvet market restructuring, NZDFA request DINZ to ensure that NZFSA (New Zealand Food Safety Authority) removes lower tynes from velvet antler (frozen or dried) destined for the Korean market, in accordance with Overseas Market Access Requirements (OMAR). The NZDFA requests DINZ to report conclusions by beginning of 2007 selling season."

A number of the following speakers were clearly squeamish about getting the NZFSA any more involved in export compliance than they already are.

A slightly exasperated Ed Noonan told the meeting that no matter how it was achieved, removing the lower tynes would prevent the Koreans from getting them free, while improving prices.

A number of speakers also showed concern about the current parlous state of New Zealand's velvet processing industry, and it was felt that the retaining of lower tynes in New Zealand could help at least in a small way.

David Ward, now North Island Velvet Manager for PGG Wrightson, said the suggestion was the best he'd heard for some time.

The amended motion was CARRIED on a voice vote. The following asked that their dissenting votes be recorded: Brian Russell, Harry Robinson, Jim Scorgie and Peter Allan.

### 9. Canterbury Branch: Velvet antler – potential of pet market supplements and medicines

"That the NZDFA requests DINZ to utilise a proportion of velvet antler marketing budget to advance the research and promotion of the use of velvet antler in the developing pet supplement market within New Zealand and internationally, and to specifically retain the services of a veterinary expert to initiate and oversee this process."

Noonan/Cuttance

The supporters of this motion said there was clearly potential for velvet in the pet health sector, and recommended that a veterinarian be employed to promote pet velvet products to other vets. Mark O'Connor (CEO, DINZ) said he would be happy to support a bid for research funding to provide a good scientific basis for claims in this market.

The motion was CARRIED on a voice vote.

### 10. Johne's Research Group: The ETB Test and JD

"That the Johne's Research Group ask NZDFA to support the introduction of the modification to the interpretation of the ETB blood test as an ancillary test in conjunction with the standard mid cervical skin test for diagnosing and distinguishing Tb and Johne's disease."

Noonan/Aitken

A discussion paper supporting this remit was circulated at the meeting and had helped bring delegates up to speed on this quite complex issue. Based on work done by the AHB, this move would help prevent wastage caused by false positives to the ETB test

due to *Mycobacterium paratuberculosis* (Johne's Disease) infection. William McCook (CEO, AHB) confirmed that the AHB supported the concept. The next step, following approval by the AGM, would be for MAF's Chief Technical Officer to approve the new interpretation of the ETB test in herds that are in a low Tb risk situation.

The motion was CARRIED unanimously.

## 11. South Canterbury/North Otago Branch: Branch communications

"In order to keep deer farmers better informed of issues being addressed by the NZDFA's Executive Committee the SC/NO Branch requests the DFA to take a more proactive approach in using press releases, *Deer Industry News* and *Deer Notes* to publicise the Executive Committee's deliberations."

P. Aitken/Acland

Speakers agreed that this remit would help address some of the issues raised in earlier discussion about the need for a strong voice by the NZDFA (see Remit 6).

The motion was CARRIED on a voice vote.

## 12. Otago Branch: JD and stag sales assurance

"That the NZDFA requests the Johne's Research Group to prepare a set of voluntary deer industry protocols for the determination of the Johne's Disease status of deer presented to the live sale market.

"It is further requested that the proposed protocols should be developed with the relevant science providers, appropriate government and NGO bodies and the wider deer industry groups with the aim of having the proposals available for endorsement at the 2007 NZDFA AGM."

J. Mitchell/Scorgie

"In support of the motion, Jane Mitchell (Otago) said stock agents were currently the meat in the sandwich over issues concerning Johne's assurances between buyers and sellers. She said there would be a lot of technical detail to negotiate, but her Branch wanted a set of protocols ready for the 2007 AGM to consider and endorse. She emphasised that these protocols would be voluntary.

Peter Aitken said the Johne's Research Group would be happy to drive this, and reported that JRG member Mandy Bell had already done much of the legwork.

The motion was CARRIED unanimously.

## 13. Southland Branch: AHB and financial assistance packages for infected herds

"That the NZDFA request the AHB develop a formal financial assistance system for all Tb-infected deer herds, based on the following criteria:

- Eradication of Tb in these herds must be managed under a DDCM Management Plan.
- For the first test after being declared as Infected status, no assistance available other than reactor price for declared negative animals at slaughter.
- Payment in full for all further tests under the management plan (skin, parallel blood tests).
- All Tb-positive reactors found to be slaughtered within 1 month and lesions cultured.
- All *M. bovis* Positive: no payment.
- All Clear and negative animals: payment at full schedule ruling at the time of slaughter.

- Funds to come from the AHB levy fund, the Chronically Infected Herds Fund. (currently with a balance of \$250,000 approximately)."

Allan/Russell

This remit was motivated by a case three years previously, where a woman had one positive case of Tb in a bought-in stag. Other reactors in her herd were slaughtered with no confirmation of lesions – so she probably lost animals unnecessarily.

William McCook (AHB) said the Board had some protocols to manage cases like this one. However he commended the remit, saying part of it related to cases outside the provisions of current policies. The AHB estimated the remit would add about \$45,000 a year to a total budget of \$2m for the deer industry. Bill Taylor (Executive Committee) noted that this remit would apply to less than 40 herds nationwide and would ease financial hardship. He added that to qualify a herd must be under District Disease Control Management. Malcolm Gilbert (Canterbury) said this issue should be dealt with by the DFA's RAHC Tb working group. The following REPLACEMENT REMIT was put forward:

"That this meeting task the NZDFA RAHC Tb working group to work through the issues identified by the Southland Branch and come back to the NZDFA Executive Committee with recommendations to deal with the issues raised in Remit 13."

Gilbert/P. Aitken

The motion was CARRIED on a voice vote.

## 14. Waipa Branch: Cost of Tuberculin

"That the DFA and DINZ urge the AHB to set a reasonable standard charge out price for Tuberculin."

Wellington/Clarke

Over the last five years the wholesale price of Tuberculin has risen from 9 cents to 31 cents a dose, with some Tb testers reportedly charging 85 cents per dose. There is now only a single manufacturer (AgriQuality) and the price rose after the competition left.

Cam Clarke (Waipa) said mark-ups of up to 175% amounted to unfair profiteering. William McCook (AHB) said price is based on volumes used – tuberculin for cattle testing is tendered and so the price is uniform. He also pointed out that the AHB does not sell the tuberculin, so the wording of the remit was misleading.

Veterinarian Noel Beatson said his practice bought the tuberculin through a buying group, paying 0.32c/dose. He said it was worth shopping around.

The wording of Waipa's remit was changed to the following:

"That the DFA monitors the charge-out standard price for tuberculin and publishes these prices yearly."

A. Mitchell/Clarke

The amended motion was CARRIED.

## 15. Johne's Research Group: Establishment of Johne's Management Limited

"The JRG requests the NZDFA's endorsement of the proposal to establish a body, Johne's Management Limited (JML), to capture and manage Johne's disease statistics from the DSPs in order to operate a voluntary JD on-farm control programme, a QA system and establish a JD database on the prevalence and location of the disease. The aim of the project is to substantially reduce the incidence of on-farm JD."

P. Aitken/Noonan

It was noted that this proposal is both voluntary and confidential. At least one major processor has conditionally agreed to contribute \$0.35c per animal to fund the scheme, which would contribute much to our understanding of the disease's epidemiology. Ed Noonan (JRG) said JML would be of real value to farmers, providing the information flow needed to drive a QA scheme. "It will be the first time we use information technology this way," he said.

Former JRG member Noel Beatson spoke against the remit. "I am passionate about Johnne's, but this scares me a bit. As a vet, I haven't heard how this will help control or eradicate the disease. It's more widespread than we believe, but we don't need slaughter surveillance to tell us that."

Noel commended the epidemiology work being done by Massey PhD student Jaimie Glossop, but said far more investigation into Johnne's is needed.

Andrew Mitchell pointed out that these issues had been discussed at the Johnne's showcase the previous week. Jane Mitchell said the Otago Branch often acted as devil's advocate for the JRG, but in this case the Branch strongly supported the concept. "While [the proposal] is an ideal, it's also practical," she said.

The motion was CARRIED. Noel Beatson, David Acland, Tom May and Donald Whyte recorded their dissent.

## 16. Executive Committee: "0800 VELVET"

"That the NZDFA supports the establishment of an industry-wide velvet producers' organisation to provide producers with representation as to how New Zealand velvet is sold."

A. Mitchell/Taylor

PGG Wrightson Velvet Manager, Tony Cochrane, said his company's door was open to discuss the concept, noting that the combining of the former Wrightson and Velpool pools had allowed for greater grading consistency, transparency and flexibility. (As an aside, Tony noted that the "0800 VELVET" working title may have to go, as it was very close to PGG Wrightson's 0800 4VELVET and if dialed as 0800 VELVET, connects the caller to a wildlife park!)

Mark O'Connor (DINZ) said the concept had been discussed with both Veleco and PGG Wrightson. In response to a comment that the move was hasty, he said there's wide agreement that action is needed soon. A working group of 9 has emerged from DINZ consultation meetings to progress things. They are: David Acland, Neville Cunningham, John Fogarty, Kelly Hudson, David Stevens, Ian Scott, Bill Taylor, Ponty von Dadelszen and Jonathan Wallis. Ponty von Dadelszen Chairs the Working Group. He is a Hawke's Bay sheep, beef and deer farmer and former director of Meat & Wool New Zealand.

The motion was CARRIED unanimously.

## 17. Canterbury Branch: Velvetting declaration

"That the NZDFA insists DINZ and the AHB instruct the NZ Food Safety Authority include a formal declaration on the ASD, that has the farmer's NVSB number or the registered veterinarian identification, that the velvet antler from the deer described on the form that have been velveted was legally removed under the requirements of the law and the industry velvet removal programme."

Douglas/Noonan This remit flushed out the many deer farmers who hate form filling. One was George Thomas (Waikato), who said "If there's a problem with our velvetting, they know where to find us. There's no need for this."

Errol Croad, on the other hand, said the right to velvet deer was precious and if it was just a case of ticking a box, then "let's do it".

James Guild (Canterbury) noted the person filling out the ASD may not be the owner, or have access to the necessary NVSB number. Tim Aitken (Executive Committee) said this proposal would only disadvantage non-accredited people, and that had to be a good thing.

Mark O'Connor (DINZ) said he could understand the frustration expressed. He told the meeting that neither the NZFSA nor the venison processors wanted this declaration added to the form. The only way to have it included would be to add the NVSB number as a voluntary declaration in an "other" category on the ASD form, to demonstrate the velvetting was done responsibly.

For the first and only time during this AGM, a card vote was needed. The motion was LOST by 168 votes to 67, the margin partly swayed by a large number of proxies (75 of 179 in total) from Southland.

## 18. Rotorua Branch: Venison promotion

"That the NZDFA asks DINZ to re-establish an awards promotion for excellence in the preparation and presentation of New Zealand venison within hotels and restaurants."

R.Mitchell/McCormick

Rachael Mitchell said chefs needed more encouragement to include venison as a fourth meat option on menus – not necessarily under the Cervena® appellation. This could be combined with promotion of New Zealand wine, she suggested. Mark O'Connor (DINZ) had earlier indicated that the former Cervena Plates competition had been very expensive to run, and other chef awareness programmes were now in place. Nonetheless, he said DINZ was happy to investigate the options.

The motion was CARRIED unanimously.

## Selection and Appointments Panel election

Mike Holdaway (Manawatu) was declared elected as a North Island representative on the Selection and Appointments Panel, by a margin of 155 to 71.

## Executive Committee

This AGM marked the retirement of Andrew Fraser from the Executive Committee. Andrew told the meeting he had developed great respect for the deer industry leaders he had been involved with, including his colleagues on the Executive Committee.

"I'm still confident for the future of our industry and eagerly await the payoff for the dedication we have shown," he said. Andrew urged farmers to be honest with themselves about their productivity levels and to make full use of tools such as

DeerMaster and Focus Farms to lift the industry to a higher level.

Andrew finished by offering Hurricanes fans his condolences for their upcoming defeat in the following Saturday's Super 14 final. If his predictions for the

deer industry are as spot on as his rugby insights, then the future looks secure.

The meeting closed at around 6.00 pm. 📺



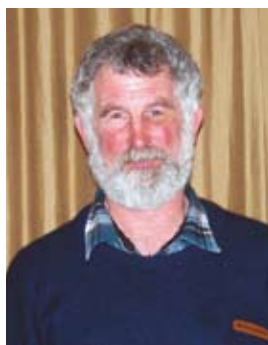
*Andrew Fraser makes his final address to NZDFA members as a member of the Executive Committee.*

# Packed house for industry awards dinner

*The lack of the traditional upmarket entertainment at this year's awards dinner did nothing to detract from an excellent evening. Deer farmers are pretty good at making their own entertainment, and the low-key evening with excellent buffet-style dinner put on by Christchurch's Commodore Cophorne went down a treat.*

Fears of a low turnout vanished, and extra seating was needed to pack in a few last minute deer farmers, their partners and guests to technically exceed the venue's capacity.

## Matuschka Award



Matuschka Award winner Malcolm Gilbert.

It may be a cliché, but North Canterbury's **Malcolm Gilbert** truly was a popular winner for this year's Matuschka Award. Judges Bernie Splitt, Bob Swann, Ruth Orange and Murray Matuschka said Malcolm was typical of the "local hero" honoured each year for their contribution at the grass roots of deer farming.

Characterised as shy and unassuming, Malcolm was revealed as a strong supporter, not only of other deer farmers, but also his community. He has been involved with Outward Bound, helps run courses for troubled kids, served on school Boards of Trustees and is a member of his area's rural fire team.

But it is his work on Tb control that also earned Malcolm Gilbert praise from the judges. His own farm was 30km away from the vector risk area when he bought it, but was eventually swallowed up by the zone. Malcolm is on the local RAHC and works tirelessly on Tb control, both for himself and his neighbours.

## Environment Awards

Now a biennial event, the Deer Farmers' Environment Awards were back this year, and Lady Fiona Elworthy joined guests at the awards evening to present the Premier Award which continues to carry the Elworthy name.

Simon Stokes (Hawke's Bay Regional Council) returned as a Lead judge this year and was there to introduce the winners. He encouraged deer farmers to get 'data rich' environmentally and work in partnership with local government to help promote biodiversity. He was pleased to see the Deer Farmers' Landcare Manual being put to good use, and said every year's awards helped add to the industry's knowledge and experience.

Winner of this year's Sir Peter and Lady Fiona Elworthy Premier Environmental Award and Summit Quinphos package was **Wierton**, Geraldine.

Simon Stokes said **Wierton** encompassed everything the judges were looking for, including good management of water, pasture and crops, and a proper assessment of land types to allow for diversification of the business, with enterprises such as woodlots complementing pastoral farming.



From left: Lady Fiona Elworthy, Rosemary Natrass, Keith Natrass, Marie Neutze, Murray Neutze and Simon Stokes (Lead Judge). Photo courtesy of The Deer Farmer magazine.

Accepting the award was **Murray Neutze**, who has been managing the property for 12 years. He said former owners **Keith and Rosemary**

## Minister entertains guests

Agriculture Minister and local MP Jim Anderton was guest speaker at the Awards dinner and entertained deer farmers with a wide-ranging look at the future of innovation in New Zealand's primary industries. He contrasted New Zealand's strong agricultural economy with that of the UK, where less than 1% of GDP is agricultural compared with our 20%.



Agriculture Minister Jim Anderton addresses guests at the Awards night.

He acknowledged the industry's recent tough period and welcomed the signs of a recovery in the schedule. However, he said farmers should not rely on a weakening dollar to prop up earnings, as the dollar would surely strengthen again as the economy picked up pace. The Minister praised the industry for pursuing the highest quality standards.

As barriers to trade were dismantled, new ones based on animal health, environmental or labour standards may emerge to take their place, he warned.

He was actively pursuing trade issues on behalf of the deer industry with Taiwanese authorities, and was optimistic that this could yield some better market access for deer farmers.

# ForageMaster™ demo impresses

**How much do you make for every kg of dry matter you grow? Which of the 200 or so cultivars on the market are right for your operation? What kind of endophyte is best? Is it worth completely resowing pastures?**

Many farmers used to answer these questions very easily – by looking over the fence at the neighbour's place. But enterprises are now so diverse within a district, what's going on over the boundary fence may not be much help.

Deer farmers are fortunate enough to have access to ForageMaster, a \$1.2 million decision support package developed by Meat & Wool New Zealand and now adapted for deer farmers with DEEResearch assistance.


AgResearch scientist Tom Fraser is to run a series of regional workshops for deer farmers demonstrating ForageMaster. For just \$40, farmers will get a copy of the ForageMaster software to take home, and access to on-line updates as new options become available.

Tom gave visitors to the Deer Farmers' Field Day at Lincoln a run-through of ForageMaster and those there were clearly impressed with what they saw.

He explained that pasture is there to extract as much usable energy as possible, and when farmers feed in the basics on soil types, climate and what they want to achieve from their forages, the package will deliver a range of options suitable for their operation. Do not agonise over which cultivars to choose, he cautioned. ForageMaster lists the suitable ones alphabetically. "All

companies will tell you theirs is best, but in reality any one in the range that ForageMaster sorts out for you will be OK."

He said the package also delivers good advice on the basics of pasture management, to help avoid disasters like a planting failure. White clover, for example, won't germinate if it's drilled more than 20mm deep – not a great margin for error. There is great advice, too, on the right type of endophyte to go for. "These can have an important effect on animal health, so it's important to match what's available in the market with your particular situation."

The ForageMaster workshops will be arranged through your Branches and the Producer Manager. If the response of farmers at the Lincoln Field Day is anything to go by, they come highly recommended. 

## Correction: Tb testing cost refunds

In the April issue of *Deer Industry News*, page 21, the article on overdue Tb testing stated that in Special Testing Areas and Movement Control Areas where herds are subject to annual testing, the AHB will refund the cost of testing every second year. This is incorrect in the case of Movement Control Areas. The policy for refunds every second year applies **only to Special Testing Areas**. Our apologies for any inconvenience this error may have caused.

## industry awards continued

**Natrass**, who still live on the property and are still very much involved in the environmental management, had set a tremendous standard for him to follow. Current owner of the property is the Natrasses' son (and DINZ Board member) Stuart.

Keith Natrass, who came to New Zealand from North Yorkshire in 1953, worked as a contract fencer around Canterbury to raise the capital for **Wierton**, which he and wife Rosemary purchased in 1969. Trees have always been a strong interest, and Keith said it has been very satisfying to watch the various plantings mature, and learn over time what works and what doesn't. Leyland cypress and macrocarpa were two species that have done well at **Wierton**, he said.

Ten percent of the land area is planted in trees, and apart from the obvious conservation and shelter benefits, this has been shown to help boost dry matter production by up to 15 percent, Keith said.

Other Deer Farmers' Environment Award winners were:

### Whego Downs: Ken & Kathy Swainson:

- Environment Award for excellence and commitment to sustainable deer farming
- (New Zealand Landcare Trust)

### Haldon Station: Paddy Boyd:

- Environment Award for excellence and innovation for deer farming in a demanding environment
- (Duncan & Co)

### Raroa Red Deer Stud: John & Dorothy Carter:

- Environment Award for excellence in riparian management
- (Fish and Game New Zealand)

For a report on the award-winning properties and the environmental management that caught the judges' eyes, see the special supplement in this issue of *Deer Industry News*.

## Deer Industry Award

There was a strong field of nominees for the Award this year, which is sponsored by Porter Holders, *The Deer Farmer* Magazine and NZDFA:

- Hub Hall, Maungatere (Master Measurer, supporter of the trophy industry)
- Colin Mackintosh, AgResearch Invermay (leading researcher and expert on deer diseases)
- Tom May (velvet buyer, stock agent, strong advocate for Elk/Wapiti)
- Keith Orange, Geraldine (DeerMaster project, deer transporter, Deer QA)
- Massey graduate students (contribution to deer research over 26 years)
- Ken Swainson, Manawatu (Fallow deer farmer, environmentalist and industry ambassador)

The winner, and again a popular one, was Keith Orange. Keith has farmed deer since 1984, was Chairman of the South Canterbury/North Otago Branch from 1995-99, helped set up DeerMaster with the late Andrew Orbell, helped develop Deer QA standards, established a successful deer transport business (Downlands), has sponsored many field days and raised countless dollars for Branch and John's Research Activities, and was made a Life Member of his Branch in 2002.

There is a fuller report on the Deer Industry Award in *The Deer Farmer* magazine. 

## New Science Manager confident of industry's future

**Deer Industry New Zealand's new Science Manager, Lindsay Fung, emerged fresh from his tri-conference baptism in May – Johnne's Disease Technical Showcase, New Zealand Veterinary Association Conference and the Deer Industry Conference – having taken the plunge in between straight into his first Velvet Antler Research New Zealand (VARNZ) Board meeting.**

Since his start on 1 May, Fung has already met many of the major players in the industry. It will take him a while to fully understand all the projects, he says, but he is ready to take on the challenge as part of the DINZ Executive team.

The clearly able communicator sees his role as having two key functions:

- as an examiner of the science to determine its quality and whether the science is good for deer industry stakeholders – as a newcomer to the industry, he is well positioned to ask hard questions of the research.
- as the interface between the scientists and other audiences where he takes the research and presents it in an appropriate form to external audiences and provides feedback from stakeholders for the scientists.

Before joining DINZ, applied scientist Fung was Horizons (Manawatu-Wanganui) Regional Council's Team Leader for Research, where he was involved in coordinating and commissioning research relating to environmental matters. Prior to that he was a scientist at HortResearch. While his particular speciality is forestry – he has a Bachelor of Forestry Science (Hons) and a PhD from the University of Canterbury, followed by post-doctorate research at Beijing Forestry University – he is known by former colleagues for his ability to articulate complex science effectively to a wide range of audiences.

Although steeped in forestry science, Fung is no stranger to deer. After his PhD he spent two seasons learning about deer and velveting at a South Kaipara Heads deer farm that was managed by a friend. The experience taught him that the animals "are to be respected".

He sees similarities between the two industries, which he says have both suffered poor returns for a sustained period and both tend to be trapped in the commodity cycle but he does not know if the solutions are the same. "Forestry is inherently long-term and there are more global and environmental pressures that serve to help the forest industry. The deer industry needs to make its own future."

He has noticed that the deer industry has a large number of innovators who could play key roles in setting its future. He has been particularly impressed with the long-term commitment to the future of the industry of those he met at the various conferences. "After the past two years of pessimism, the motivation of producers was very positive. Once external factors pick up they will start to see results."

Reporting to DINZ Chief Executive Mark O'Connor, Fung will be networking with a wide range of scientific researchers both inside and outside New Zealand, and will also work closely with Producer Manager, Tony Pearce.

He is looking forward to the challenge of getting to grips with on-farm deer research and environmental issues. He also believes that bio-actives offer "incredible potential" if successful. "By themselves, they could set the deer industry up for the future. They are high risk but a high return is possible."

As a fluent speaker of Mandarin and with a personal interest in Chinese culture, he says he is looking forward also to learning more about Chinese velvet research. However, he says that language is less important than establishing the networks that are culturally important to make inroads there.

The son of a retired neurologist and physics teacher, Lindsay Fung was born in Wellington in the 1960s "sometime before decimalisation, but after the car and electricity were invented". He is married to Xuemei and has two young children, Salvy and Sophie.

His hobbies include being an eternal optimist as evidenced by his support for the Hurricanes, Newcastle United and Tottenham Hotspur, and the thought that one day when the kids are older he will have a life again. 🇳🇿



*Dr Lindsay Fung: impressed by innovators in deer industry.*

## Venison: the truly international alternative

Joint activities with the British Deer Farmers' Association in the UK continue. *Sainsbury's* magazine, *BBC Good Food*, *Stockpot*, *FD* and *Weight-watchers* magazine representatives turned up amongst the audience of 50 press, chefs and trade attendees in two sessions, one aimed at consumer press and the other at caterers, for a truly international alternative presentation of farm-raised venison in London in April. Deer Industry New Zealand's consultant chef Graham Brown worked alongside the British Deer Farmers' Association's venison expert and author Nichola Fletcher to present ideas for fresh, healthy alternatives for Northern Hemisphere menus. Guests were told what those two don't know about venison, isn't worth knowing!



## Venison

The schedule rises despite the European venison trade quietening for summer. Buyers are being prepared for possibly reduced supplies of New Zealand venison ahead of the chilled season. The German retail campaign is being refocused to highlight the qualities of New Zealand venison before stretching the consumption season.

### Schedule

- In week 24, the average published schedule was \$4.36 – 60 cents up on the same week in 2005, 10% up on the three-year average (2002 to 2005) but 16% down on the five-year average.

### European game market

- As European thoughts turn to summer holidays few people think of eating venison, so sales at this time of year are low, as normal.
- New Zealand exporters are discussing the likelihood of lower supplies from New Zealand with importers and distributors. Negotiations for supply leading up to the crucial chilled season will be underway soon between New Zealand exporters and European importers, in the hope that the message of the possible fall in supply has been heeded by the latter.
- Sufficient stocks in the market, however, are limiting any price increases even though the reality of the reduction in the New Zealand venison production moves closer.

- The negative consumer reaction to the 'Game Meat Scandal' that forced the closure of Germany's biggest game trader still hangs over the market. Game items in general have been removed from some menus making buyers cautious about forward orders.

New Zealand venison has not been implicated in any of the reports. In fact, several media articles have reported people declaring their products are safe because they are from New Zealand.

In the future, it is likely that game buyers will seek greater assurance of the safety of their game products. DINZ and exporters, along with their importing partners, will continue to stress the quality assurance procedures and veterinary health status of farm-raised New Zealand venison to buyers in Germany and Europe.

### German retail promotion 2006: 'Impress Your Guests'

- DINZ and Venison Marketing Managers are refocusing New Zealand venison promotion in Germany over the coming year.

## Velvet

Velvet export volume and value declined in the year ended January 2006. The provisional weighted average price per kg of velvet sold through the pools has improved by 6% over last season, and indications are there has been a decline in the overall volume of velvet. A2 Short prices are leading a significant price increase in the pools since February, partially attributable to the strengthening Korean won.

### Velvet exports

- Export volume for the 12 months ending January 2006 is 234 tonnes dried equivalent. This is a decline of 6% over the 12 months ending January 2005, in which the volume of exports was 250 tonnes dried equivalent.
- Export value for the 12 months ended January 2006 is \$21 million, representing a 27% decline over the 12 months ended January 2005 (\$28 million).

### Pools

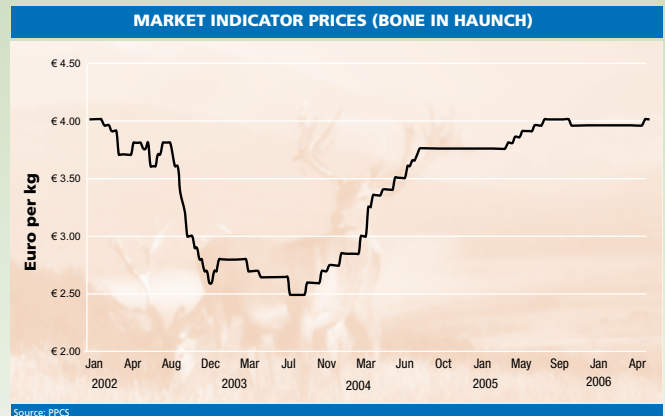
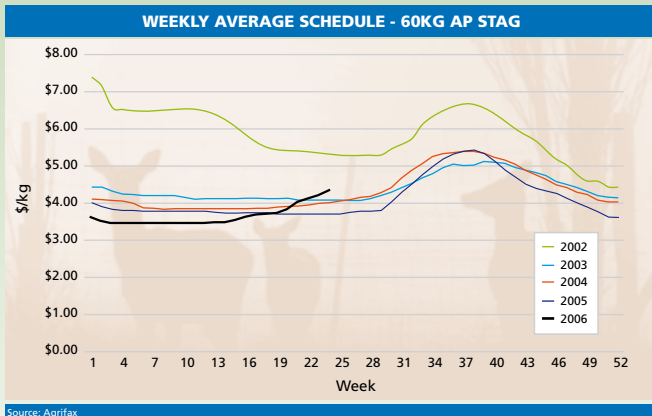
- The provisional weighted average price per kg of velvet sold through the pools is \$47. This is an improvement of 6% over the 2004/05 season weighted average of \$44.
- Pool prices increased significantly from February albeit on small volumes. A2 Short, for example, started the season at close to \$56 and closed in the mid to high 80s, a 55% increase. About half of the increase is attributable to an 18% decrease in the value of the New Zealand dollar against the won during the season.
- Pools report a decline in overall volume of velvet sold compared to last season. The decline in supply is also evident in levy figures, down 6% on the same time last year (end of April figures).
- The volume of Korean grade sold through the pools dropped significantly. Despite overall volumes dropping, the amount of hard velvet and hard antler sold increased almost 40% to

50 tonnes, a result of velvet being grown out for evaluation of trophy potential.

- The graph indicates the price increase evident in the later part of the season and the effect exchange rates had on this increase.

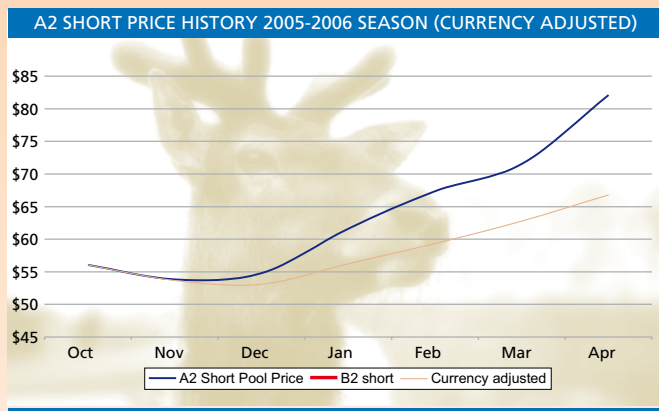
### International Markets

- The South Korean economy, which grew by 4% last year, is expected to grow by 5% this year. However, this is yet to translate into improved demand for velvet.
- Importers report that, with the strengthening of the won, export prices from New Zealand have increased while in-market prices are flat.
- Importers expect market prices to improve from autumn (the New Zealand spring) when consumer demand for deer velvet increases. In market stocks are reported to be low.
- With higher New Zealand export prices, importers are eager to push up prices but have been unable to do so with continued weak retail sales.
- Reportedly, there is significant carryover stock in Russia that is expected to come onto the market. This is as a result of lower demand in the last nine months for Russian velvet given authenticity concerns by Oriental Medicine Doctors. Prices of Russian velvet have fallen as a result.
- On 6 April 2006, a trade protocol for deer products was signed between China and New Zealand food safety



While the Sommerkampagne worked to shift perceptions that venison could be sold through the summer, actual sales were not up to expectations. Overcoming centuries of tradition with a small promotion budget will prove to be a long term task. After a thorough review of the activities with Venison Marketing Managers, and their importing customers, it has been decided to concentrate on highlighting the quality of New Zealand venison to likely consumers when they are looking for it.

- The promotions will be run in conjunction with distributors and localised around supermarkets where in-store promotions will be pointing the consumers to New Zealand venison. Currently there are seven German importers enthusiastically participating in planning the event.



authorities. This provides for formal access to China for venison, co-products and velvet.

### Promotions

- On 13 May, a two-week cuisine promotion using velvet as a healthy ingredient in fine dining dishes was held at the new five-star Imperial Hotel in Seoul. This was the first major promotion of velvet as a food by the New Zealand deer industry in Korea.
- Deer Industry New Zealand, together with National Deer Horn, represented the New Zealand velvet industry at the Seoul Food Show, 21-24 March.
- In the United States, a joint promotional partner has succeeded in gaining access for their velvet product to GNC franchise stores, one of the biggest health supplement retailers in the world.
- Other joint promotional activity continues in Israel and China.

## MARKET TALK

**Chef Todd Gray, co-owner of the acclaimed Equinox Restaurant in Washington DC and executive chef of Market Salamander is one of the three top North American chefs recruited as US Cervena® Ambassadors.**



*Todd Gray: Care and attention given to New Zealand farmed deer is what makes the meat so immaculate.*

Since opening Equinox in 1999 to universal acclaim, Todd Gray has emerged as one of the surest culinary talents in the nation's capital, as well as a tireless champion of sustainable farming and fishing practices, and a leader in promoting Certified Humane meat and poultry products. Gray practises what he preaches every day, and Equinox is widely acclaimed as an oasis of sophisticated yet unpretentious seasonal cuisine. Gray's cooking has earned him five nominations for the prestigious Best Chef, Mid-Atlantic award from the James Beard Foundation. He also is a four-time nominee for Chef of the Year from the Restaurant Association of Metropolitan Washington. Equinox has consistently been rated one of the city's top restaurants by *The Washington Post* and *Washingtonian* and has appeared on numerous "best of" lists in national epicurean magazines.

*continued on next page*

# Velvet is high profile with endurance athletes

**Velvet is continuing to power endurance athletes taking part in adventure races this year, getting online presence and a higher profile with a nutritionally savvy audience.**

*The Powered by velvet.org.nz team placed third in the gruelling XPD event in Tasmania earlier this year.*

After placing third in XPD Tasmania earlier this year, 'Discovery/Powered by velvet.org.nz' captained by Jodi "Rabbit" Zwicky is registered, along with 89 competing teams for Primal Quest. Said to be the world's toughest expedition adventure race, the event starts this month at Salt Lake City, Utah, United States. The 800 km race lasts up to 10 days. Aside from gaining recognition amongst their peers, the top ten teams will share a US\$250,000 prize purse.

'Powered by Velvet' is also backing the Arrow International 24 Hour Adventure Race Series, as a minor sponsor in New Zealand later this year.

This series starts in May with an event in Sydney, followed by others in Auckland, Dunedin and Wellington before the series finale in Christchurch from 21 to 28 October.

Now in its sixth season, the Arrow Adventure Race Series is shaping up for a big year. Race Director for the series, Richard Anderson, says there has been significant interest in the upcoming events – especially an inaugural 200 km 48 hour Christchurch finale event over Labour weekend. "We've chosen to hold it there because of its spectacular mountains, rivers and extensive native bush," he says.

Anderson says teams have already signed up for the 24 and 48 hour New Zealand Adventure Race championship titles, which are based on points gathered throughout the series.

Each of the competitions is supported by sophisticated websites, and for Primal Quest almost every inch of each competition will be detailed – live! Teams will carry GPS

to pinpoint their exact positions. New Zealand Velvet gains recognition through the use of 'velvet.org.nz' in the team's title, product endorsements and direct hyperlinks to the website.

"We are very lucky to have the people racing for us that we have," says DINZ General Manager Marketing Daimien Reynolds. "They are achieving placements on the leadership boards of their events. New Zealand velvet's profile is definitely being raised with the audience of nutritionally hungry and savvy athletes." 📍

**For further information about the events:**  
[www.ecoprimalquest.com](http://www.ecoprimalquest.com)  
[www.24houradventure.com](http://www.24houradventure.com)

## Market Report continued

Gray has long been a fan of Cervena venison, and was part of the original Cervena Venison marketing campaign in the US.

"I have used Cervena venison for over 15 years," he says, adding that his wife and he were first introduced to it when they visited New Zealand and were able to see the farmers' methods first hand.

"The care and attention these animals receive is what makes the meat so immaculate. Cervena is what made us realise that humane care and handling really does affect the product. All this combined with the healthful benefits of venison make Cervena a natural, humane and healthy choice for me and my discerning clientele."

In his current role as one of three Cervena Chef Ambassadors in the United States, Gray keeps Cervena on his menu throughout the year. Whether cutting Denver legs, medallions or whole roasting racks, Chef Gray finds that Cervena's consistency can always be counted on. "It delivers quality, one hundred percent of the time."

On his spring menu, he is featuring a delicious main course dish: *Bacon Wrapped Medallions of Cervena Venison*,

*Fingerling Potatoes, Soft Poached Egg and Tarragon Foam.* "I've had a great response to the dish – it's all about the combination of ingredients on the plate that helps to sell the product in the warmer seasons."

Todd recently hosted a group of Washington DC chefs at his restaurant after dinner service to get together and talk shop. He, of course, served Cervena venison, a product with which many of them were already familiar.

The response? "US chefs have always liked the product. The only downside is the often long time in cryovac bags. Although its taste is rarely compromised, chefs typically like a shorter time in the bags and travel time," he says.

"The price point is challenging, outside the Denver leg cut. Size can also be an issue (the racks run a little large). But overall, the true challenge is getting chefs to understand that venison is no longer just a fall (autumn) and winter cut of meat."

This northern hemisphere summer at Equinox, look for dishes like *Smoked Cervena Sausage with Creamed Ashland Grits, Red Swiss Chard, and Golden Raisin Jus* or a salad of *Frisee and Radicchio with Grilled Cervena Venison, Artichoke Hearts and Port Wine.* 📍

# recipe

## Cervena® Venison Quesadillas with cheese, Avocado and Backyard Salsa



### Ingredients

6 Cervena venison flank steaks/ or stir fry from supermarket  
 Salt & pepper to taste  
 1 tbsp olive oil  
 ½ teaspoon chilli powder  
 ¼ teaspoon cumin  
 ¼ teaspoon garlic powder  
 6 flour tortillas  
 ½ cup grated melting cheese like Edam  
 ½ cup grated cheddar cheese  
 3 avocados, peeled, seeded and cut into 6mm (¼ inch) slices  
 ½ cup backyard salsa (recipe follows)

### Backyard Salsa

3 tomatoes (heirloom if you can get them), seeded and cut into 6mm dice  
 1 small red onion, peeled and diced  
 ½ jalapeno pepper, seeded and diced  
 3 sprigs of coriander, chopped  
 3 leaves "backyard" basil, chopped

Chef Todd Gray of Equinox Restaurant in Washington DC – one of our US Cervena Ambassadors – prepared this delicious recipe for Cervena venison flank steaks. Serves 6. (Alternatively use stir fry packs from supermarket.)

¼ cup extra virgin olive oil  
 Salt and pepper to taste

### Method

1. Combine all Backyard Salsa ingredients and leave to allow flavours infuse for at least two hours.
2. Heat grill to high heat.
3. Drizzle flank steak with olive oil and season with salt, pepper, chilli powder, cumin and garlic powder.
4. Grill steak on high heat until medium temperature (approx six minutes on each side). Remove from grill and cool. Alternatively, quickly fry/stir fry and cool.
5. Take the flour tortillas and lay on a flat surface.
6. Slice flank steak against the grain, approx 6mm (¼ inch) thick.
7. Sprinkle cheese onto tortillas, top with sliced Cervena flank steak and sliced avocado. Fold the tortilla in half, like a sandwich, to form the quesadilla.
8. Place quesadilla back onto grill and cook for approx three minutes per side or until warmed through and cheese has melted. Remove from the heat and cut into wedges.

### Preparation

Serve Backyard Salsa on the side.

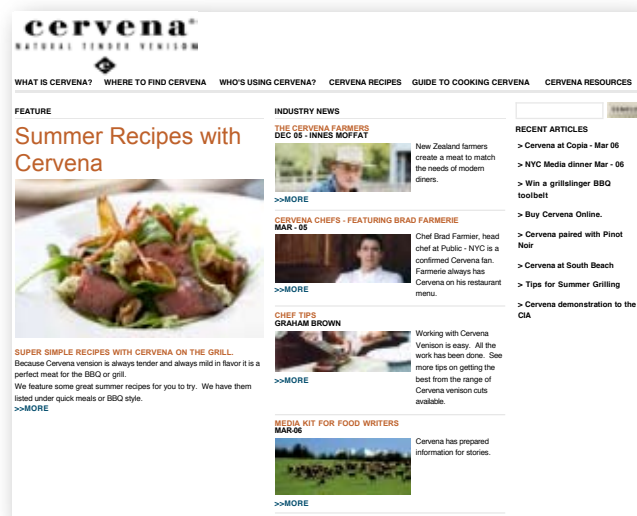
## Cervena® website: updated for new campaign

Updated for the new campaign, the new US Cervena website is now up online at [www.cervena.com](http://www.cervena.com).

New Zealand deer farmers are prominent on the site, in recognition of the US foodservice industry's desire to know more about the provenance of the products they are using, says Deer Industry New Zealand's Venison Marketing Services Manager, Innes Moffat.

"We have also featured the three new US Cervena Ambassadors – top US chefs Brad Farmerie, Todd Gray and Robbie Lewis – and used their endorsement of the product along with video clips of New Zealand farms and cutting and cooking demonstrations to punch home our messages."

Packed with comprehensive information about Cervena natural tender venison, the good-looking site aims to inform prospective consumer and foodservice users about Cervena, where to find it, who is using it, recipes, and the guide to cooking Cervena along with news and releases.



Home page from the updated Cervena website.

# Impressing German guests

*A tactical repositioning of the German venison consumer campaign is aiming to capitalise on the wins of Sommerkampagne and realise more sales at retail.*

New outdoor advertising urging German consumers to 'Impress Your Guests' is being tactically placed at supermarkets, supported by in-store advertising and tastings to create interest and sell more venison.

Designed to pinpoint the 30-60 year old, affluent and 'home gourmet' buyers of venison, the programme builds on the German consumer promotion campaign, *Sommerkampagne*, that aimed to extend the venison consumption period through the summer.

Over two seasons, *Sommerkampagne* featured generic advertising of New Zealand venison in consumer magazines through the summer, supported by internet competitions and in-store tastings. The message was spread to over 10 million consumers; over 10,000 people tasted New Zealand venison at retail stores and 90% said they liked it; and 150,000 people entered the internet competition over the two years.

"These are great results and showed that the message about New Zealand venison was delivered to a huge number of people," DINZ Venison Marketing Services Manager Innes Moffat says. "However, it was clear that with a small promotion budget, overcoming such an entrenched tradition of only eating game in the autumn was going to be a long-term task."

After a thorough review with venison companies' marketing managers, it was decided that the campaign should be



*The new distinctive logo uses a warm, red colour that consumers associate with luxury, wine and food, while the deer and map of New Zealand provide the visual stimulus for New Zealand venison.*

refined to build on the wins of *Sommerkampagne* and to apply the lessons learned from the first two years of the programme.

While the objective remains the same – to increase demand for New Zealand venison outside the traditional autumn season – the timing and method have changed slightly. "We have decided to concentrate on highlighting the quality of New Zealand venison to likely consumers when they are looking for venison at the traditional time of year and then stretch the consumption season," says Moffat.

"Alongside the distributing companies we are looking to establish the identity of New

Zealand venison in the minds of German shoppers, showing them it is a versatile and delicious meal. Once we have a better acceptance of New Zealand venison, suppliers and supermarkets can then begin to stretch out the sales periods, with supply coming into store earlier than traditionally accepted and staying on the shelves later."

As part of the process, the New Zealand venison consumer in Germany was re-examined.

"We chose to reclassify the target consumer, and instead of concentrating on the people we would like to buy our venison such as young families and busy singles, we are going to target those who are already disposed to buy

## Our German venison consumers

Germany is our main market and consumer research of six hundred meat eaters undertaken in Germany in 2004 shows the traditional place venison occupies in the mind of European consumers. We still have a big job to do when venison is considered seasonal, traditional, strong flavoured and difficult to cook by a very large proportion of the buying public.

- 69% of the sample of affluent meat eaters never eat venison, 29% occasionally eat it, and only 2% class themselves as frequent consumers of venison.
- So why do so many **not** eat venison?
  - more than half think venison is too expensive
  - about 50% think it is very difficult to prepare
  - many say they do not like the taste of venison – especially the older age groups
  - many have reservations about the nutritional value of venison
  - many only look for venison in the hunting season
  - **but** about half of those questioned admitted that they never had the opportunity to try

venison; and

- they had no idea of how to prepare venison.

The promotion being undertaken will work to overcome these misconceptions.

- Venison consumers were found primarily among the 40-49 year old age group of this sample. Generally speaking:
  - they have smaller households so the weekly shopping basket is not such a burden
  - their children are at an age where they no longer need to take their eating habits into consideration
  - their financial situation is stable and they prefer to buy better quality meat
  - on a practical level they take more time to make shopping decisions
  - they cook more often and enjoy preparing meals
  - they have more time to cook; and
  - they are very open-minded about trying out new recipes and new ingredients.

venison, a more mature and affluent demographic says Moffat (see box, p20).

“Our core consumer is 30 to 60 years old and affluent. They have a link with tradition. They enjoy cooking and entertaining at home and consider themselves something of a home gourmet. They are not afraid of trying new things.”

The new ‘Impress Your Guests’ programme appeals to these people and overcomes some of the negative perceptions toward venison common among German consumers. The advertising has been designed to appeal to successful people – reflecting their daily situation and providing a solution to their quandary about what to cook for a special occasion.

“The message being communicated to these affluent consumers is that New Zealand venison is a very high quality protein and they will impress if they cook it.”

In conjunction with German distributors, DINZ will be using local advertising to link the message with where New Zealand venison is available.

The advertising will be supported with in-store promotions and tasting, plus press work and website development to make the message available to as wide an audience as possible.

The new look material underpinning the German promotions incorporates a teal background. This has been chosen to reflect quality and modernity and provides a refined and natural base for the new look. There is a new distinctive logo which uses a bold, warm red colour, which consumers associate with luxury, wine and food. A deer and map of

**Mein Chef erwartet viel von mir, meine Gäste auch.**

Neuseeländisches Hirschfleisch, natürlich zart & mild-aromatisch, ist eine Köstlichkeit, das ganze Jahr über. Es ist leicht zuzubereiten und harmoniert mit nahezu jedem Kochstil. Der niedrige Gehalt an Fett und Cholesterin macht es zu einem bekömmlichen, kalorienarmen Genuss.

In einem der schönsten Länder der Erde halten Farmer ihre Hirsche auf riesigen weitläufigen Arealen wo sie sich ausschließlich von dort wachsenden Gräsern und Kräutern ernähren.

**Neuseeland Hirsch**  
neuseelandhirsch.de

Verschiedenste Rezepte unter [www.neuseelandhirsch.de](http://www.neuseelandhirsch.de)

*impress your guests.*

A sample of the New German promotion material featuring a successful, professional woman. Her translated words say: My Boss expects a lot. So do my guests ... New Zealand Venison, easy, tender, mild and quick to prepare. New Zealand Venison, Impress your guests.

New Zealand provide the visual stimulus for New Zealand venison.

“Continental Europeans in general appreciate knowing what they eat. In general they do not share our disquiet about seeing the animal we are eating,” says Moffat.

Finally, the new catchphrase, ‘Impress Your Guests’, highlights the high quality of the product.

“We’ve tested it with German shoppers. They universally like it, and it makes them feel positive toward New Zealand venison.”

Variations of the theme will be used. One features a successful professional woman who says ‘My boss expects a lot...so do my guests’. Another variation is a chef who says ‘Every day I have to inspire 150 diners, but tonight I’ve got friends coming for dinner...’

The material can be customised with each company’s brand.

For Moffat, the ultimate measure of success will be store sales, but the interim

measure will be the participation of the distribution companies. “We are demanding their time, assistance and resources to implement this activity. If they think it is worthwhile, they will continue to request that we run these promotions in future. Initial indications are that they will.”

It is intended that the New Zealand venison messages are integrated into the distribution companies’ own marketing messages. “The tools we are providing them with will be flexible so that promotions can be run when and where they feel they will get the best result.”

Moffat is calling for a long-term commitment to this action. “There is no quick fix to creating awareness and demand for a relatively unknown product in a market of 85 million people. We cannot expect to see immediate results from this activity and must remain committed to undertake this type of programme for years to come. If we do, I believe we will see results from increased loyalty to New Zealand venison from our importing and distributing partners. We will get increased acceptance of New Zealand venison from retailers, and a more stable market for our products in Europe.”

**Neuseeland-Hirschcurry mit Rote Linsen-Püree**

Zubereitungszeit: 35 Min.



- 1. Linsen in einem Sieb waschen, 1 EL Butter in einem Topf erhitzen, bis sie schäumt. Linsen und Garam Masala zugeben und 5 Minuten dünsten, mit Brühe aufgießen, salzen und bei geringer Hitze 30 Minuten weich kochen. Währenddessen Ingwer und Knoblauch schälen, grob würfeln, Öl in einem Topf erhitzen, Ingwer und Knoblauch darin anbraten, bis sie goldbraun sind. Mit dem Zucker in einem Mörser oder im Blitzhacker zerhacken.
- 2. Hirschkühe in Länge, 1 cm dicke und 2 cm breite Streifen schneiden. Frühlingszwiebeln waschen und schräg in Stücke schneiden. Schalotten schälen und vierteln, Möhren schälen, der Länge nach halbieren und schräg in dünne Scheiben schneiden. Limette ausdrücken. Öl in einer großen beschichteten Pfanne, oder einem

**Hirschfleisch aus Neuseeland**

Neuseeländisches Hirschfleisch, natürlich zart & mild-aromatisch, ist eine Köstlichkeit, das ganze Jahr über.

Es ist leicht zuzubereiten und harmoniert mit nahezu jedem Kochstil. Der niedrige Gehalt an Fett und Cholesterin macht es zu einem bekömmlichen, kalorienarmen Genuss.

In einem der schönsten Länder der Erde halten Farmer ihre Hirsche auf riesigen weitläufigen Arealen wo sie sich ausschließlich von dort wachsenden Gräsern und Kräutern ernähren.

Mehr Rezepte finden unter [www.neuseelandhirsch.de](http://www.neuseelandhirsch.de)



*impress your guests.*

Hirschfleisch aus Neuseeland - einem der schönsten Länder der Welt.

**Neue Rezepte für Ihre Küche**



**Neuseeland Hirsch**  
neuseelandhirsch.de

*impress your guests.*

A new recipe leaflet has been prepared to give point-of-sale meal ideas to the affluent German shoppers.

## Plenty for farmers at Lincoln field day



The day following the NZDFA AGM a large group of deer farmers took advantage of the opportunity to shake off the effects of all-day meetings and catch up with the latest work at Lincoln University's Deer Unit. They were also treated to an excellent venison barbecue courtesy of Canterbury DFA Branch principal sponsors, Mountain River Processors.

### Tied ring method

Alastair Nicol explained the work done at Lincoln leading to approval of the tied-ring method for removal of spiker velvet. Many farmers had not seen the method first hand and were keen to see how it worked.

The cable tie method has become necessary for the removal of branched spiker velvet, which gets too wide to allow the NaturO™ ring to be slipped over the top, as you can with a single spike.

The Lincoln researchers had done a controlled study comparing the conventional method on one antler with the cable tie method on the other.

Using an electrical nerve stimulator, responses were checked on each antler for up to an hour after the rings were applied. (The 'nick test' was considered too crude for the experiment.) Absence of an ear or eyebrow twitch was taken as evidence of antler analgesia. As a control, sensitivity below the ring on each side was also tested.

The researchers found that among the 36 stags in the trial, the decreasing sensitivity of the antlers over the hour was the same for both the conventional and cable-tie methods of using the NaturO rings. At the end of the hour, no stag showed sensitivity to the nick test on either side, meaning both methods met the standard test for analgesia.

The new method has clear advantages, including:

- no applicator required
- movement of the stag during application just tightens the tie
- avoids problems of pulling rings over thick pedicles and overstretching them
- faster
- easier to use on unrestrained stags.

Nicol advised farmers to be careful with the choice of cable ties, as some have sharp edges. He also cautioned against using old or previously stretched rings. He said it is usually OK to remove the ring as soon as the antler has come off, and in any event they should be removed within 72 hours.



First-hand view: ring and cable tied set up for the tied-ring method. Arm kindly supplied by Errol Croad.

While the tied ring method has been provisionally accepted by NAWAC and NVSB, a paper on the Lincoln trial was not accepted for publication by the NZ Veterinary Journal, which maintained that analgesia had not been proven. The Journal also suggested that the response, rather than experience of pain, may have been suppressed, noting the stoic nature of deer. Nicol said further evidence based on human pain was being gathered in order to address these issues.

### Human health benefits from antler growth study

Stags suffer a mild form of osteoporosis (bone loss) during the early stages of antler growth, a Lincoln study has found. Graham Barrell told farmers at the field day that stags get slightly "menopausal" during antler growth, as testosterone is switched off.

The researchers used a CT scanner to measure changes in bone density in stags. They found the bone loss occurred during antler casting and early velvet growth. Bone density recovered as the antlers were calcifying.

The Lincoln team are now collaborating in a human health project to help identify a protein that is a marker for bone growth (important, for example, to help understand how to prevent bone loss in children undergoing cancer therapy). In stags, this protein is elevated during antler growth. Barrell told deer farmers that when deer need more calcium they appear to absorb it more efficiently through their normal diet. The research ruled out the notion that antlers and the bones of the skeleton are regulated independently.

## Sheep or cattle – it doesn't seem to matter

It is well known that it's hard to control pasture properly during the pre-fawning period when hinds are set stocked at the height of the spring flush. Integrated grazing using sheep or cattle with the hinds is known to help control this growth, but it hasn't been known what impact sheep or cattle have, respectively, on the performance of hinds and fawns when run together.

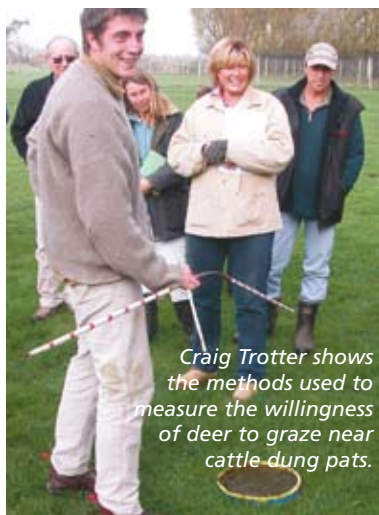
A small trial carried out at Lincoln compared the impact of sheep and cattle. In one trial, hinds were run with some heifers, and in the other, with dry ewes. In each case total liveweight of hinds with the other species was 50:50. The sheep and cattle were gradually withdrawn until they were all gone by the end of January.

The trial showed that the pasture was well controlled in both cases, and there was no difference between the two groups in fawn liveweight gain.

## Been there, dung that

Spare a thought for Craig Trotter, the Lincoln researcher who lugged 800kg of liquid cow dung, all in the name of science. The comparative grazing trial was done to ascertain how closely sheep and deer will graze to cow dung-pats. The work is part of ongoing investigations into mixed grazing systems, and the researchers wanted to find out if deer are prepared to graze as close to cow-pats as sheep do.

The trials carried out in separate 0.4 hectare plots showed that, while deer preferentially graze away from the pats, they will graze in closer as pasture height diminishes, pretty much as well as sheep do.



Craig Trotter shows the methods used to measure the willingness of deer to graze near cattle dung pats.

## An interesting nose

Simone Hoskin tests the aroma of fresh deer milk, harvested at Lincoln as part of a lactation trial. The hinds are milked out using an adapted sheep milking plant, and yield about 400-500ml at a time. Deer unit manager Martin Ridgway assured visitors that deer milk is creamy and delicious. Simone was happy to take his word for it, noting the milk "smelled just like deer".



The solid clover with ryegrass coming through.

Craig concluded that the presence of cow pats on pasture is no real impediment to grazing deer and cattle together, as far as pasture utilisation is concerned. Farmers in the visiting group at the Field Day noted that deer dislike sheep anyway, so generally prefer running with cattle if there has to be another species in the paddock. The issue of any disease or parasite risk to either species was not part of this assessment

## Effect of lactation on calf growth rates

Do hinds lactate more because their faster-growing calves demand more (the 'pull' factor), or do calves grow faster because their mothers produce more milk (the 'push' factor)?

Lincoln researchers led by Graham Barrell are still seeking an answer on this, in a study on the biology of milk production and calf growth, done on behalf of AgResearch Invermay. Although it's known that milk availability influences pre-weaning calf growth, this hasn't been demonstrated directly by manipulating milk production while feed availability stays unchanged.

In 'proof of concept' study, half of a group were treated with BST (under special licence) to stimulate milk production, so the groups could be compared. Interestingly, in the hinds measured so far, the treatment (used overseas to boost dairy production but not allowed in New Zealand) doesn't appear to have had any

effect on either milk production or the liveweight of calves and hinds.

Measurements are still being completed, but Graham Barrell says that even if the BST did stimulate greater milk production, the calves did not seem to respond to the 'push' of more milk. The trial is going to be repeated next summer.

## Getting the best out of clover

Lincoln pasture ecologist Grant Edwards showed farmers at Lincoln a grass:clover system that could be useful on intensive venison finishing systems with good summer rain or irrigation. Noting that sheep, deer and cattle prefer a 70:30 clover:grass mix given the choice, he said that typically only about 10% of annual dry matter production is clover.

He showed a system dubbed "The Switch", which utilises the complementary seasonal growth patterns of clover and ryegrass. The system involves grazing a pure white clover pasture for spring and summer when growth is high, followed by oversown Italian ryegrass for the winter, when clover dies back. This helps get over the problem of weed invasion in pure clover pastures.

Edwards said other legumes such as lucerne or triticale could fit into this system, and there was also potential to use herbs such as chicory in place of the annual ryegrass. He cautioned that this system would not work in hill country. 🐾

# Johne's showcase launches JML concept

**About 60 guests attended a showcase event in Wellington last month to launch the concept of Johne's Management Limited and bring together the leading technical expertise on Johne's Disease in Australia and New Zealand. The showcase and technical day were linked with the NZ Veterinary Association Deer Branch conference.**

Sponsored by the Sustainable Farming Fund and organised by the Johne's Research Group, the two-hour showcase event brought together veterinarians, scientists, farmers, government agencies and others with a key interest in controlling and managing Johne's disease in deer.

Facilitator Mary-Alice Arthur helped guests get their heads around the complex matrix of activities surrounding Johne's disease in deer by using the metaphor of a puzzle with interlocking pieces – a metaphor picked up on by each presenter as they each contributed their “puzzle piece” to build a complete picture.

MAF Assistant Director General (Policy) Paul

Reynolds opened the event and apologised that his Minister who was well aware of the challenges and solutions being developed, could not be in two places at once. He congratulated the industry for taking such a coordinated, proactive approach to the challenge of JD. He said the growth in subclinical cases was of concern, and noted that sheep and beef producers, also affected by JD, could learn something from deer farmers' response.

Katherine McCusker of the Sustainable Farming Fund said it was good to see the strong research and other linkages developing around JD, involving a number of institutions and funders. She said extension through things like the Johne's website and roadshows will play an important part in the response to JD.

The showcase proper was kicked off by Frank Griffin, who gave guests a typically upfront presentation on why JD is such a unique animal health challenge. He said JD is very much like an iceberg, with the most significant impact (subclinical infection) happening unseen under water.

The complex pattern of antigens produced by *Mycobacterium paratuberculosis* and its relatives *M. bovis* and *M. avium* helped confound Tb control, he said. While a link with Crohn's disease in humans hadn't been established and NZFSA have that view in terms of our products, “if there is a *perception* that there's a link, then we have a problem,” he warned.

Peter Aitken, convenor of the Johne's Research Group then filled guests in on the formation of the group and its twin aims of promoting research and disseminating practical information to farmers.

AgResearch Wallaceville scientist Geoff de Lisle followed with an overview of the current science around JD. Although it had been studied in ruminants for over a century, there were still gaps in knowledge about control, even in sheep and cattle. He said research will be slow and expensive and

development of effective tools will take time. Control of both clinical and subclinical JD were key research goals, he said.

Farmers Eddie Brock and Don Johnston then followed with a grass roots view of the impact of JD at farm level. Don Johnston discussed the losses he had suffered, but more importantly of the dramatic progress he had made

with expert advice, personal commitment and the intensive programme of testing through the Disease Research Laboratory, which contributed to the development of the Paralisa™ test. He warned that a negative test does not guarantee a herd is clear of JD.

Eddie Brock described the widely contrasting responses of several farmers to JD on their properties.

He said some farmers find it hard to let go of infected stock when they've paid good money for them. Their response can also be driven by how exposed they are to market signals, he noted.

Deer farmer and veterinarian Mandy Bell of the JRG followed with an outline of the array of tools currently available to farmers, including information, testing, vaccine development and good collaboration between farmers, processors, scientists, vets and other agencies. She took the opportunity to show off a draft of the comprehensive deer farmers' manual for Johne's disease, which is now almost ready for publication and highlighted the development of the Johne's website and the levels of complexity and security and confidentiality that it will operate at.

Veterinarian Adrian Campbell (JRG) then zeroed in on a core objective of the showcase – to launch the concept of Johne's Management Limited. This proposed vehicle will coordinate the capture of JD test data at plants. (The bulk of the funding to develop the rapid blood test needed has been secured through AGMARDT, with the balance to be contributed through NZDFA .)

The voluntary and confidential scheme would assist greatly with the building of a nationwide JD epidemiology picture, so that future research, management and control efforts can be far more accurately targeted. It would also mean that farmers could be quickly brought up to speed on control and management programmes on their own properties. Funding would be through a per-animal contribution by processors, and several have already indicated their support for the scheme and willingness to contribute. This follows extensive consultation by members of the JRG.

The scheme would be modelled on the successful Ovis Management Ltd, which was set up to help control sheep measles. Geoff Neilson of Ovis Management outlined how the scheme works, and the likely governance structure for a Johne's equivalent.



# Johne's conference technical papers

## **Wildlife as host of paraTb?**

***Mycobacterium Paratuberculosis (paraTb) is the bacterium that causes Johne's disease (JD) in livestock, but overseas research has shown it can also infect wildlife. Landcare Research recently conducted the first formal surveys of paraTb infection in New Zealand wildlife. On three deer farms heavily affected by JD, they found a large number of wild animals were infected with the bacteria. The potential implications of this warning signal were addressed by Graham Nugent (Landcare Research) at the JD technical day in a wide-ranging exploratory paper.***

The study indicated that in these heavily infected South Island deer farms, most of the small mammals and even some bird species were infected with paraTb. The most heavily infected were rabbits, possums and hedgehogs – up to half the rabbits on one farm, and half the hedgehogs on another. It is important to note that infestation with the bacteria is not the same as having the disease.

The patterns of infection varied widely between the three farms, Graham said. For example, only 2% of rabbits on one farm were infected whereas the rate on another was 46.8%. Across all three farms omnivores (mainly hedgehogs and possums) tended to be the most consistently infected. In general heavier, older animals were more often infected, indicating that they were probably becoming infected as adults rather than as youngsters. Most of the infected wild animals had few signs of infection, even on post mortem, but despite that some were shedding paraTb bacilli in their faeces.

Although they were not as frequently infected as the rabbits, possums, and hedgehogs, he thought some of the more wide-ranging animals such as cats, ferrets, paradise ducks and seagulls might possibly be involved in spread the disease between farms over a wide area.

Graham said the transmission routes between livestock and wildlife remained largely unknown, but he said one possible route recently emphasised by Scottish researchers was via rabbit pellets on heavily grazed pasture. Because the majority of wildlife were not clinically infected, one scenario is that they may just be spillover, dead-end hosts that get infected by bacilli shed by livestock, but then pass on the disease. In other words, if the disease was eradicated from livestock, the bacteria may well disappear from neighbouring wildlife. Even if they only occasionally pass on the disease, however, wide-

ranging wild animals could help spread the disease – if so, targeted wildlife control may be needed to help contain JD.

In further speculating on these initial results, a more complex scenario might involve wildlife acting as co-host amplifiers – being infected by, and then re-infecting livestock. In a final “nightmare” scenario, wildlife acts as maintenance hosts for JD, and widespread eradication would be needed to protect stock.

The Landcare Research study provides an excellent starting point for further field work to investigate relationships between livestock and wildlife infections. If paraTb turns out to threaten human health as well as livestock, the direct threat to humans from exposure to paraTb-infected wildlife would also need to be explored.

## **Vaccine options limited but still open**

***AgResearch's Colin Mackintosh told the Johne's technical conference that finding the ideal vaccine for JD in deer is a huge challenge.***

Because the disease bacteria multiply inside cells, whole-cell live attenuated vaccines have been needed, and they require a mineral oil adjuvant to stimulate a strong, sustained immune response. The downside of this type of vaccine includes injection site lesions and reactivity to the skin based Tb tests. There is also a danger to people from nasty injuries if they accidentally stick themselves with the needle. There is a risk, albeit theoretical, that a live attenuated vaccine could revert to its virulent form – and linked to all of this is the worry of public health concerns associated with animal disease. For that reason, a killed vaccine may be more acceptable to markets in the long term, because they would be perceived as safer.

The ideal vaccine, Colin said, would have minimal site reactions, create no cross-reactivity with Tb tests, would be available in a single dose for young deer, and would provide sterile immunity.


He said trials for a subunit vaccine, which uses purified antigen for *M. paratuberculosis*, are in progress, but a whole-cell vaccine is likely to provide a better solution. While there was no doubt that a vaccine would be useful, more research was needed into injection site reactions, efficacy and cross reactivity – including its duration.

He added that work on genetic resistance could interact with vaccine research. (Southland farmer Don Johnston told *continued on next page*)

The Animal Health Programme Manager for Meat & Wool New Zealand, Christine Ford, then put Johne's work in the deer sector into a wider livestock industry context, explaining how the research fits into a pan-industry approach to JD.

Mark O'Connor, CEO of DINZ pledging DINZ's support for the JML concept noting that it is currently being considered by processors and producers. He said an equitable, economical funding model was the next step, and is happy for other sectors to use the collaborative model being developed for Johne's Management Ltd.

Tony Pearse then wrapped up the presentation, explaining how the significance of the disease and our response to it flows right through the value chain from farm to processor to finished product. He noted that the collaborative and proactive approach taken by the deer industry and its partners was the way of the future.

Adrian Campbell, Tony Pearse and Mandy Bell of the Johne's Research Group were the driving force behind the showcase and technical day, and were well pleased with the event, noting the excellent networking between key guests long after the formal part of the event was finished. 



Up to their hocks in it. Focus Farm Facilitator Richard Copland (blue shirt) talks with John McLean (right) at a field day on the McLeans' Lumsden Focus Farm in Southland on 7 June. There was an excellent turnout of about 100 on the day. Photo: Tony Pearse.

## Focus Farm Update

The two Sustainable Farming Fund Focus Farms in Southland and Otago are both going into winter with fit stock and feed on hand. The following report is a summary from the Focus Farms May 2006 newsletter.

A focus for discussion at two open days held on 7-8 June was internal parasites and drench resistance. The options for drenching are limited enough for sheep and cattle, and even more so for deer, for which clear (levamisole) drenches are said not to work.

Ivermectins are encountering resistance on many intensive beef properties, but this drench family is heavily used for deer. Pour-ons are the dominant way of applying drench – how do they cope with muddy coats? How often should we drench deer? Speakers at the open days addressing these questions included Colin Mackintosh (AgResearch), Dave Lawrence (veterinarian, deer farmer), Greg Mirams (FECPAK) and Victoria Chapman (Fort Dodge). We hope to bring you some of the discussion in our next issue.

### Otago Focus Farm

#### Grant and Andrea Cochran, Balclutha

- Feed situation on target and hinds are in good condition
- 95 hinds to AI, 73% success rate
- Apart from some fawns from first calvers, weaners have grown on well

#### Johne's conference technical papers continued

the showcase opening about one farmer who has already identified two stags with progeny noted respectively for resistance to, and susceptibility to, JD.)

Trials with Gudair™ and an experimental vaccine at Invermay had had limited success, but Colin told the meeting Pfizer was licensing another JD vaccine, Silirum® for cattle (a killed vaccine) in New Zealand and Australia. If the deer industry could use the vaccine, the company would look at licensing it for deer also, he said.

In discussion, Prof. Peter Wilson (Massey University) said there may be a place for widespread use of vaccines in animals destined for slaughter, and there is no reason a successful vaccine for JD should be excluded. He said losing a small amount of meat through trimming site lesions is vastly preferable to losing 10% of your animals from JD.

Adrian Campbell (Johne's Research Group) said wholesale vaccination is not likely to be the answer, and a successful vaccine would probably be used strategically. Colin Mackintosh agreed that there were no food safety issues that should preclude the use of a JD vaccine for deer.

Although scientists indicate that there are no food safety issues with a vaccine, venison marketers have raised concern with consumer and market perceptions of the widespread use of vaccines. Their use is not consistent with 'natural, clean and green' positioning and may place New Zealand at

- Weaners from MA hinds averaged 65.2kg on 12 April (6.6kg ahead of last year)
- Earlier calving, specialist crops and better pasture quality main reasons for better result
- Animals on specialist pasture performed better than those on ordinary pasture, but there are pros and cons with specialist pasture (to be discussed in a future report)
- Specialist chicory and clover-based pastures undersown with long rotation tetraploid ryegrasses in March to bulk them up for winter
- Overall numbers at 1 June 2006: 1465 (1587 last year).

### Southland Focus Farm

#### John and Jacky McLean, Lumsden

- Good pasture cover, good quality – 300 dairy cows being grazed over winter
- Hinds on hill blocks; baleage every two days, later onto pit
- 120 carryover R2 hinds will be carried through winter to catch better spring prices, as there is the feed available
- 70 hinds AId through Deer Improvement: 83.3% conception
- 200 weaners over 75 kg to be pushed through winter on plenty of grass (plus rape) to see what weight gains can be made over winter
- Pure Red and hybrids separated using AgResearch-developed Wapiti score – will be assessed separately
- Early weaning and rotating weaners has been successful
- Excellent rape crop – will yield around 3-3.5 tonnes DM/ha. 🌱

## Wanted!

Old photographs of early National Velvet Antler competitions!

This year will mark the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the competition, and the Southland Branch would like to mark the occasion with a display of pictures from years gone by.

If you can help, please send your pictures (yes, you will get them back) to:

Peter Allan, Maple Valley, Ben Callum Road, RD, Dipton, ph/fax 03-201-6313,

Animal prices in New Zealand About this site Legal Notice Contact Us Home

**agridata.co.nz** **new !!** saleyard and processor prices trends  
view all the options ... CLICK HERE Schedule and saleyard prices charted

Beef Deer Sheep Resources

**Welcome**

This is a site for decision-makers.

Use the **Beef, Deer, Sheep**, menu above, or the sections below, to explore your options.

Selling or buying animals is a core business skill, and it should be supported by reliable, up-to-date market knowledge.

Our goal is to bring together key price information in a way that is easy to use and access. The processors, agents, and stock companies have this information, and we are now bringing it together so that farm management can know what they know.

Feedback and suggestions are always welcomed.

# agridata.co.nz

## New website with info for deer farmers

**Former deer farmer and NZDFA Councillor Tony Chaston has launched a new website designed to bring key information to decision makers in the agricultural sector.**

Tony says they will publish all available price information and currently has a spread of live sale and venison schedule prices, as well as up-to-date velvet prices.

The service, which also covers other the sheep and beef sectors, is free to all farmers, and will eventually carry sponsorship and advertising. As well as current product price information there is plenty of historical data on measures such as the exchange rate and interest charges.

Tony is keen for feedback and suggestions on how the information service can be enhanced, and can be contacted through the website:

**www.agridata.co.nz**

### Brochette de Biche

This mouth-watering New Zealand venison advertisement, incorporating a recipe for venison kebabs with braised endive, appeared recently in a French food service magazine, *A La Carte*. The copy advises readers that the hind (doe) meat is particularly tender and delicate, suitable for healthy, modern cooking, is quick and easy to prepare and low in fat and cholesterol. An example of joint promotional activity and assisted with DINZ funding, the advertisement was part of a two-page spread in the magazine aiming to increase food service sales and then maintain sales post traditional game period. *A La Carte* circulates to 120,000 food service buyers and chefs throughout French speaking Europe.



### HIND SALES 2006

June				July			
22	1.30 pm	Stanfield's - Bushey Park	Palmerston - Otago	19	1.30 pm	Arawata	Southland
23	1.30 pm	Pelorus Stud	Ashburton	27	1.30 pm	Ingor	Waimatua, Southland
29	1.30 pm	Foveran Deer	Kurow	28	12.30 pm	Windermere Deer	Hamilton
30	11.00 am	Rarua Deer	Cambridge	28	4.00 pm	Rodway/Sarnia	Rotorua
30	2.30 pm	Tower Farms	Cambridge				

*These are the hind sales we were aware of at publication date. List kindly supplied by PGG Wrightson.*



**The Modern Weighing & Drafting System**

- Inexpensive and labour saving
- Fast efficient one-man operation
- Remote controlled weighing & 3 way drafting
- Non-slip RubberDec flooring
- Can use existing weighing systems

**NON-SLIP FLOORING MATERIAL** - for existing sheds or new  
*It's super quiet and just hose to clean*



**The Ultimate Deer Handler**

- Works so quickly we recommend the operator controls it from the still platform
- The only deer handler to successfully hold comfortably and restrain securely both large and small deer
- Designed for easy cleaning
- Just Simply the Best
- Options include - Hydraulically controlled **Wedge Wall**
- Semen collection facility

**Heenan Engineering Company Limited** phone / fax: 64-3-442 2001 N.Z. Freephone : 0800 502 337

**FREE : DEER YARD DESIGNS AND INNOVATIVE IDEAS**

**VISIT OUR WEBSITE : [www.animalhandler.com](http://www.animalhandler.com)**



## Branch Chairmen's Meeting 23 May 2006: **Reporter's notebook**

**NZDFA Branch Chairmen met in Christchurch the day before this year's stripped-down Deer Industry Conference.**

The 18 remits and motions that had been submitted for the AGM were given a good workout by the Chairmen, and discussion of the more prominent ones is covered here. Also covered are special presentations to the Chairmen by Dr Geoff Asher (AgResearch) on new research funding proposals, and by the Animal Health Board. The DINZ Board Q&A session with the Chairmen was carried out in committee this year. Some of the highlights from the day-long meeting are detailed below.

### Membership, voluntary subs and representation

A straw poll of Branch Chairmen confirmed that voluntary membership is likely to fall again this year to some extent, possibly by a greater number than the overall 2.5% decline allowed for in the DFA budget for 2006-07. There was consensus that a rise in voluntary subs of \$10-\$15 next year would be reasonable. A number described the current subscription level as "a pittance".

It was noted that the DFA constitution doesn't differentiate between voluntary subscription payers and non-payers when it comes to representation. Mike Holdaway (Manawatu) said the situation is similar with Federated Farmers. Not all farmers belong, but the organisation is accepted as representing all farmers.

### Waikato remit 7: Reactivation of DFA Commodity Levy

It quickly became clear that, apart from Nelson Branch, there was little or no support for Waikato's bid to reactivate the DFA Commodity Levy, which has been routinely set at zero since the 2002 reforms. (A separate Executive Committee remit recommended that the Levy Order lapse in 2007.) One long-held belief is that money raised under a Commodity Levy order cannot be used for "political" activities. The meeting was told that, as long as the "political" activity was carried out in the interests of all levy payers, then it was in fact an acceptable activity under the name of levy payer representation.

The meeting was reminded that if the DFA did strike its own levy under the existing Commodity Levy order, the new Memorandum of Understanding with DINZ for provision of services would in strict terms be off, and the Association would have to set up and fund its own services, including some level of producer representation and advocacy through an executive or Executive Committee portfolio roles. There was potential to independently subcontract services from M&WNZ as now, although those discussions have not been held.

The DFA has been told by MAF that if it allows its current Levy Order to lapse without remandating in 2007, this would not make it any harder to mandate a new Levy Order at some time in the future. The cost of remandating the existing Levy Order, or mandating a new Levy Order at some later time, would remain the same as the current estimates of about \$50,000.

### Hawke's Bay remit 6: Elected president

As the Branch hoped, this remit prompted healthy debate. A variety of scenarios were floated, including expanding the

Executive Committee to five members to avoid a stalemate, a separate elected president, or a "2 + 1" Committee.

Ed Noonan (Canterbury) urged Branches to look ahead, not behind, and not contemplate spending more money on elected representatives (probably \$8-\$10 per DFA member) with no proof of any benefits.

Most Chairmen agreed that tinkering with the current setup – a four-man Executive Committee electing its own Chair – was not guaranteed to improve the quality of representation. The consensus was that the current Executive Committee and its Chairman can deliver on members' desire for stronger representation and united voice for the industry. The process of selecting that Chair may well benefit from some sort of overhaul and will be discussed this year.

### Canterbury remit 8: Removal of lower tynes

Ed Noonan put the case for removing lower tynes prior to export to prevent operators in Korea from exploiting profits from this lower-grade velvet. He said the velvet exported without the lower tynes should bring a better per-kg price simply on a volume reduction and quality basis, and the opportunity for smuggling of lower tynes would be reduced. There was some unease amongst Chairmen at the suggestion of yet more involvement of the NZFSA in verifying deer export products.

### Otago remit 12: Protocols to establish Johne's status of deer being sold

This remit was rewritten by Otago following its publication in the annual report. Jane Mitchell explained that the intent was to help buyers manage the risk of buying Johne's-infected deer. She said different protocols and strategies were needed for different types of deer, e.g. weaners, sire stags and hinds.

### Johne's Research Group 15: Endorsement of Johne's Management Ltd

Peter Aitken, JRG convener, explained the concept behind JML, a company to be funded by industry to help reduce the amount of JD-infected deer presented for slaughter and provide a data feedback loop from processors to farmers, to help them better manage JD on their properties. Main processors are keen to contribute a small amount per animal to fund JML, which would be modelled on the successful Sheep meat industry sheep measles control programme, Ovis Management Ltd.

A further key to success will be the evolution and validation of the Disease Research Laboratory's Paralisa™ rapid blood test for JD to be available as a carcass side test at DSPs. Of the \$170,000 needed to develop the test, \$120,000 had been committed by AGMARDT, with the remaining \$50,000 to come from the deer industry. The DFA Executive Committee supports a commitment from reserves of \$10,000 and is asking Branches to come up with the remaining funds. Deer Industry New Zealand will also be approached for assistance if required. Two of the smaller Branches were quick to put their hands in their pockets. Richard Valentine committed \$1000 from the Fallow Deer Society, and the Wellington/



Horowhenua Branch is likely to commit a larger amount. With this lead, the larger Branches will hopefully make up the balance with ease.

The meeting was positive about the concept, which was launched in Wellington the previous week at the John's showcase and technical day (see separate article).

### Remit 17 Animal Status Declaration (ASD) : velveting declaration

A late remit to include a declaration on the ASD that stags had been velveted correctly was not welcomed by some Chairmen (along with any suggestion involving further compliance). Discussion prompted a flood of anecdotes about nit-picking quibbles from the NZFSA about the new ASD forms – including calls during the night and a call to complain that the declaration hadn't included a phone number!

### DFA/DINZ Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

Chairman Andrew Mitchell reported that he had negotiated a new MOU with DINZ, which was to be ratified after the AGM depending on the outcome of the remits. He said the DFA drew on the maximum \$10,000 facility under the existing MOU to cover a 2005-06 budget shortfall and allow the DFA to contribute \$10k to DEERSelect. This maximum had been renegotiated to 20% of the expected subscription levels over the next 2 years to a maximum of \$16,000 under the new MOU. The new MOU also allows for a support person for the Producer Manager, although the job description is still being finalised. This funding recognises the Industry good roles that the NZDFA carries out on behalf of all producers and levy payers. Several Chairmen noted that the DINZ support for DFA activities is a good way of ensuring that all levy payers are supporting the DFA's industry-good activities.

### Executive Committee Chairman's Report

Andrew Mitchell reported that the earlier shortage of killing space seemed to have eased just about everywhere, although some Chairmen felt there were still many old velveted out there waiting to go for slaughter. The perking up of the schedule to a \$4.02-\$4.30 range was welcome, although further improvement was needed and anticipated to get back to sustainable levels. There was a consensus that it paid to shop around as there was a spread between plants in schedule prices. Weaner sales had still been weak although were quite variable – prices between \$1.70 and \$2.50 were reported. Straight red smaller males and females are extremely difficult to sell, but for quality stock, some big lines had sold privately and shortages were emerging in some areas.

### Science funding

AgResearch deer programme leader, Dr Geoff Asher outlined for the Branch Chairmen the high stakes involved with AgResearch's latest bid for FRST funding for deer research. The new contract will be bid for six years, starting July 2007. Times have changed since the current 5-year contract was negotiated, and Geoff said it was critically important to show industry collaboration – and funding support – was integral to the proposal for the next contract period.

There has also been a shift away from competition between science providers, with greater emphasis on partnerships between AgResearch and the universities. In the new environment, the emphasis is now on "target outcomes" driven by the objectives of industry productivity strategies. There needs to be consultation with industry through its science strategy, and the industry should have a governance structure for accountability and transparency.

Geoff Asher said FRST will require the deer industry to invest significant direct co-funding alongside the FRST funding. He said they would also be required to demonstrate "end user uptake" of research outcomes (previously known as technology transfer).

He said that, while AgResearch can get the lion's share of funding, some of the work this purchases is subcontracted to university providers who have specialised expertise – for example, parasitology at Massey, microbiology at Otago, and endocrinology at Lincoln.

The "target outcomes" for future research would be very much industry driven and linked to measurable goals such as reproductive productivity ratios, or a shift forward in venison supply dates.

After consultation with the deer industry, the AgResearch bid has been built around four themes

- on-farm productivity (the biggest area by far)
- environmental sustainability
- integration with other livestock (synergies and risks)
- venison processing (e.g. clostridial bacteria contamination).

Technology transfer and genetics underpin all of these themes.

The overall annual deer research budget of around \$2 million will need to be managed carefully, and Geoff emphasised that for research providers to be successful, they need to demonstrate that the knowledge is being used effectively on farms.

"Scientists tend to use the written word, and you'll find a lot of these on the DEERResearch website, but we are now favouring an 'early adopter' approach," Geoff explained. "We already do this to an extent through Focus Farms, and we envisage these farms being contracted to channel research knowledge to farmers."

He reminded Chairmen that any intellectual property generated belongs to the deer industry through its research funding vehicle, DEERResearch.

While the industry wanted relatively short-term solutions, this needs to be underpinned by more basic long-term research with 10-15 year horizons. "Basic research such as reproductive endocrinology and DNA profiling spawns applied solutions like sire referencing, parentage and breed composition tests, CIDRs for deer and trait heritability."

Overall, the industry would need to be contributing around \$500,000 a year for research over the six-year contract period, Geoff said. A significant amount of this has been pledged for specific projects by Landcorp but the bulk of the rest will likely be via DEERResearch. The insecurity of science as a career is making it hard to find students, and there will need to be a concerted effort to encourage young graduates back



into agricultural science. This is one of the aims of the next contract term, Geoff said.

He concluded that the stakes for this latest funding round are high. "If we do not manage to renew the contract for deer research, you'll likely lose 12 scientists who are dedicated to the industry and they will be very hard to replace at a later date."

*Deer Industry News* hopes to carry an update on the latest science funding negotiations in the October issue.

### Animal Health Board report

The Animal Health Board, represented by CEO William McCook, Technical Manager Paul Livingstone and Operations Manager Keith Lewis had good news for the Branch Chairmen. Numbers of infected herds are still falling rapidly, although the Board cautions that the areas remaining to be cleaned up are getting progressively difficult because of terrain and access. Highlights from the AHB's presentation included:

- No. of infected deer herds at April 2006: 37 (down 33% on previous April)
- North Island: 6 infected herds; South Island 31 herds
- All but 2 of the infected herds were in Vector Risk Areas
- Period prevalence: 1.35% (target for 2013: 0.2%)
- Cumulative number of deer reactors to April 2006: 457 (60% down on same period last year)
- Infected cattle herds at April 2006: 153 (period prevalence 0.45%)
- Cumulative number of cattle reactors to April 2006: 514 (36% down on same period last year)
- Combined cattle/deer infected herds at April 2006: 190 (88% down on total at April 1996)
- AHB is consistently ahead of its targets to meet the period prevalence objective of 0.2% by 2013
- AHB is also tracking ahead of its subtarget of reaching <0.2% period prevalence over 85% of New Zealand by 2006
- Of the AHB's \$82.7m revenue in 05/06, \$2.1m was from the deer industry
- About 85% of expenditure is on vector control and disease control.

The Board outlined changes for deer farmers, and commented that the industry's own initiatives had been helping with the good results achieved this year. They reported on spending for payment assistance for those with infected herds, some of which is below budget. For example:

- AHB budgeted \$61,500 for buying reactors and depopulation of high risk infected herds – by April 2006, only \$14,660 of this had been spent, on one herd
- AHB budgeted \$40,000 for testing infected herds – only \$7057 of this had been spent by April.

The \$2/test assistance in alternate years with costs for annual testing in Special Testing Areas (STAs) was initiated last year and \$187,000 was allocated in the 2005/06 budget. The Board said that allocation, assumed to be \$270,000 for a full year, would probably not be fully spent this year. Farmers in STAs were to be contacted soon to ask them to register for the assistance.

The Board also reported on the DINZ-initiated moves to accelerate infected herd clearance by compensating a small number of infected herd owners for reactors and non-reactors in an assisted depopulation as the most effective disease control move.

By April, \$74,500 (budget \$50,500) had been spent compensating three owners. Most were purchased for depopulation and were non-reactors.

The Board noted that there were still some minor issues with the bedding in accuracy of their own DMIS database that are being addressed but that vets were slowly getting trained in the new system.


### Conference 2007

This year's conference was the first for some time not to be hosted by a Branch, and was organised through the Producer Manager. The 2007 conference will revert to the usual Branch-hosting formula, with Waikato picking up the challenge. Branch Chairman George Thomas reported that a suitable venue had been found and the conference is scheduled for the week of 20 May 2007. He said the combined DINZ Formal General Meeting and DFA Annual General Meeting in one day may be continued next year, depending on the success of 2006's conference. Ideas so far include a field trip to look at an integrated deer/other livestock operation. A possible theme for 2007 could be looking at other income streams to complement a deer operation.

### Waikato Branch: Supply management

George Thomas reported that his Branch was still unhappy at what they perceive as a lack of action from Deer Industry New Zealand following its 2004 remit on supply management. He said the support for the producer control of velvet marketing this year should be carried through into venison.

John Derbridge (Tongariro) noted that the product actually belongs to the exporter once it goes off farm, so it is not up to the farmer to control supplies into the market from this point.

Producer Manager Tony Pearse said he had worked hard with Eric Clark of Waikato Branch on a supply management proposal (presented last year at Te Anau), but subsequently a view from the Commerce Commission sought by the Waikato Branch noted that the proposal would probably contravene Commerce Commission rules. This reinforced an earlier legal opinion that Deer Industry New Zealand had been given related to the Commerce Commission on the workability of the Waikato proposal. 

## Lease farm wanted - deer

*Moderate to steep deer fenced block capable of wintering 3000 – 5000 su (1500 – 2500 hinds). Will consider equity share in larger block; lease to buy or other options. Prefer southern half of North Island.*

**Ph 0274 535 838 or 0273 402 344  
or email [tldnz@extra.co.nz](mailto:tldnz@extra.co.nz)**