

DEER INDUSTRY NEWS

Issue 23 • February 2007 • Official magazine of Deer Industry New Zealand and the NZDFA



Buoyant market at sire sales

Also in this issue:

- Deer industry survey results
- Conference preview
- Cervena 2007
- US vets learn about velvet benefits
- Focus farm updates
- What price improvements mean on the farm
- Sire sale roundup



**DEER INDUSTRY
NEW ZEALAND**

NZDFA
New Zealand Deer Farmers' Association



Looking to positive challenges and opportunities

Deer farmers' prospects look more positive than they have for a number of years. The momentum for recovery is building, and at this point there is no reason why it should stall. There are a number of points to take in account when considering prospects in the next couple of months:

1. Venison production will decrease, which should lead to improved returns for producers. The Industry Survey in 2005 indicated producers intended to slaughter 717,000 deer to June 2006 (actual was 737,000). In the industry survey 2006, producers intend to slaughter 638,000 deer to June 2007 (see page 4). An intended 80,000 drop in deer to slaughter is not due to any further major changes in farmer sentiment. The reality is that there are fewer deer on farms.
2. New Zealand produced venison at very high levels in 2006 (YE October 2006, 736,000 deer processed), but prices still trended up towards the end of the year. This is partly due to marketers preparing customers for lower production (see point 3 below), but also indicates an underlying strength in the market which should give deer farmers confidence.
3. Over the past six months, New Zealand venison marketers have prepared their customers for a reduction in supply of New Zealand venison to allow the industry's growth aspirations to continue. This time for planning has been essential. Importers have been able to avoid shorting key customers and realigning promotional plans.
4. Medium term, lower production is likely. Most rational scenarios indicate New Zealand venison production dropping to 450-550,000 deer *per annum* for 2008-2010. Average production in the 10 years 1993-2002 (prior to 'the hump' in production) was 400,000. This puts future production in context.
5. Longer term, venison is well positioned in a world of lifestyle-related diseases as a healthy red meat option. Climate change, sustainable production, and energy efficiency can be (a net) positive for farmed venison. New Zealand venison sits well (but not complacently) in food hygiene and factory farming debates. Competition for venison production is currently not an issue.
6. There are real opportunities for gains from venison

productivity improvement, with a focus on genetic tools to help improve desirable traits through DEERselect, the more frequent application of genetics and reproductive technologies, investment in R&D and effective extension through focus farms and learning packages.




7. Velvet remains volatile, but the widely held view that velvet producers would not demand change once prices improved has not been borne out. There is still a burning desire to cement New Zealand's position in this niche by effective selling and marketing New Zealand velvet through an active Velvet Processors' Association, further developments with *Velexco* and *Velconz* and the existing industry development strategies.

The challenge for venison and velvet is finding the correct supply/demand balance, while investing to grow markets.

Committed deer farmers have been hammered in the past four years. As the situation improves, there will still be some reflection on those difficulties – a process which takes time. However, while still being objective and realistic, it is important that we all look to the positive challenges and opportunities ahead rather than focus on the negative. It's much easier to grow by building on opportunities and knocking down the barriers.

Speaking of positives, I believe that the Animal Health Board (AHB) deserves more credit than we tend to give it. In the mid-1990s, the deer industry had over 160 infected deer herds. Today there are about 30. While its performance has certainly not been perfect, it has consistently focused on its objective and found new ways to achieve it. The industry sometimes views the AHB as a detached enforcer of rules. But it's worth remembering that the deer industry (along with other funders) appoints the governors of the AHB and sets their rules through the Representatives' Committee, currently chaired by deer farmer, Errol Croad. Funders set the broad rules, but then give the AHB autonomy to tackle the challenge without politics or agendas getting in the way. I believe that the better our understanding of the AHB, the more benefit it will be to the deer industry.

I trust you enjoy and get some good information from this 23rd edition of *Deer Industry News*. 

Mark O'Connor
CEO, Deer Industry New Zealand

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Cover: Tower Farms was one of many studs around the country to enjoy a strong sire sale, with average prices nearly three times last year's level. Photo: Ernie Pitcaithly.

Deer industry: Annual statistics review

Results and discussion

This article outlines the New Zealand deer industry as it stood at 30 June 2006 by combining the Industry Survey¹ with Statistics New Zealand's Agricultural Production Survey² (APS, see Point 6). The figures confirm much of what has been evident anecdotally and are consistent with last year's industry survey. The New Zealand deer industry has become smaller and is becoming more likely to enter a 'low production environment'.

1. Sample

The Industry Survey was mailed, then re-mailed to non-responders, then further non-responders were telephoned several times. The Industry Survey received 2,257 responses (2,830 were received in the 2005 survey) of producers who were farming deer as at 30 June 2006. Farmers exiting the industry and an increased reluctance to complete the Industry Survey in 2006 are likely influencing factors in the lower sample size.

2. Herd size and composition

The Industry Survey returns indicated the following herd size and composition mix as at 30 June 2006. The results have been extrapolated to Statistics New Zealand's figures to account for non-responders (APS data).

	Industry Survey ³	Extrapolation to Statistics NZ figures
Weaner hinds	249,414	306,454
R2 hinds	123,870	152,198
MA hinds	515,592	633,505
TOTAL HINDS	906,886	1,092,157
Weaner stags	253,553	311,542
R2 stags	68,745	84,467
MA stags	89,064	109,434
TOTAL STAGS	419,701	505,443
TOTAL DEER	1,334,808	1,597,600
Hinds calving (at 80% of R2 and MA hinds based on responses) ⁴	510,459	627,199

Table 1: Total deer numbers and hinds calving.

- The Industry Survey as at 30 June 2006 indicated a breeding herd (R2 and MA hinds) of 786,000. The APS counted hinds mated to June 2006 at 745,000.
- The Industry Survey counted 1.335 million deer from its 2,257 responses. This is 84% of the APS' reported deer farmed deer population of 1.598 million.
- The APS figures of fawns surviving to weaning as a percentage of hinds mated (which includes, non conception, pre and post natal losses) ranged from 72

At a glance...

- Breeding hind population: 786,000 as at 30 June 2006 (842,000 in 2005)
- Weaner base: 618,000 as at 30 June 2006 (670,000 in 2005)
- Expected weaner base: 564-621,000 as at 30 March 2006 (630-665,000 in 2005)
- Velvet herd (ma stags): 109,000 as at 30 June 2006 (116,000 in 2005)
- Producers' slaughter intentions: 639,000 deer to ye 30 June 2007 (ye 30 June 2006 717,000)
- Producers intended to slaughter 48,000 mixed aged stags to year ended June 2007 which indicated some intention to decrease velvet production (65,000 in 2005)
- Producers generally stuck to the intentions they indicated in the 2005 survey⁵:
 - In 2005, producers indicated that they intended to slaughter 717,000 deer to 30 June 2006. The actual figure was 737,000.
 - In 2005, producers indicated that they intended to reduce total deer numbers by 129,000. According to the APS, they decreased total deer numbers by 108,000.
 - In 2005, producers indicated that they intended to reduce hinds numbers by 80,000. According to the APS, producers decreased hinds mated by 76,000.

to 79% between 2002 and 2006. Applying this range to the breeding population available in the 2005 survey (738,000) indicates total expected weaners in the 2006 survey of between 604,000 and 662,000. The number of weaners indicated by producers in the Industry Survey was at the lower end of this range at 618,000, which is 74% of total breeding hinds.

- The 2006 potential breeding hind pool figure of approximately 786,000 has been calculated to have 80% available for calving, (or 627,000 hinds), 11% less than the 702,000 hinds calculated in 2005.
- If that figure reflects the 10% loss typically recorded in the DeerMaster project and various other recording systems, then 564,000 weaners are expected in March 2007.

continued on page 6

¹ The extrapolated Industry Survey results rely on the accuracy of the Agricultural Production Survey which in turn relies upon accurate completion by producers. The Industry Survey reports producers' intentions at the time they completed the survey. By their nature, intentions may change as industry conditions and other factors change.

² The Agricultural Production Survey is provisional. The provisional survey information provided on 12 December 2006 has a margin of error of 3-4% at a confidence level of 95%.

³ The total hind and stag numbers in the Industry Survey do not equal the sum of the different classes within each gender because in some cases respondents provided total stag and hind numbers only. Further, as some respondents only provided total deer numbers, the total stag and hind numbers do not equal the total deer numbers provided. The extrapolated figures use the relative % in each sex and class from the Industry Survey to estimate total herd composition.

⁴ Estimations based on past returns of calves born and weaned from hinds calving is 95% (i.e. 5% loss from birth to weaning).

⁵ This consistency may be less evident in the 2006 survey given that producers would not have known about the increase in the price of velvet and stronger venison schedule which occurred later in 2006.

Statistics continued from page 4

- Using Statistics New Zealand figures at 75% overall weaning or 75% achievement of reproductive potential, 590,000 weaners are expected to be weaned in March 2007; and
- At 79% achievement, 621,000 weaners would be expected.

3. Intentions

3.a Herd growth or reduction

Respondents provided an indication as to intended changes in hind and stag numbers in their herd. This was expressed either as a change in deer numbers or % changes. Responses were converted to animal numbers and these results are shown below.

INTENTIONS	Stags		Hinds		Stags and hinds
	Number of respondents	Number of deer	Number of respondents	Number of deer	
Intentions to increase	240	11,846	351	20,704	
Intentions to decrease	553	(43,087)	647	(97,803)	
Net change indicated (decrease)		(31,241)		(77,099)	(108,000)
Extrapolated		(37,391)		(92,278)	(129,669)

Table 2: Intentions to increase or decrease herd size.

This intention to decrease deer numbers is very consistent with 2005, which also indicated an intention to decrease by 129,000 deer. This would be a further decrease in the total population of farmed deer of 8% to 1.468 million. Some producers may have changed their intention given higher producer returns for venison and velvet.

There were 154 survey responses which indicated an intent to exit the deer industry entirely. In addition, 42 intended to exit hinds only and 39 intended to exit stags only. The proportion of those intending to exit entirely comprises 7% of all respondents (in comparison to 9% in 2005).

3.b Producers' intentions to slaughter

	Survey	Extrapolated
Hinds for slaughter <2 yo	151,026	180,759
Hinds for slaughter >2 yo	96,042	114,950
Stags for slaughter < 2 yo	191,800	229,561
Stags for slaughter > 2 yo	39,961	47,828
	533,614	638,670

Table 3: Producers' slaughter intentions between June 2006 and June 2007.

NB: care should be taken in using the figures for hind and stag figures by age. Some 55,000 animals intended for slaughter were not broken down by age. Therefore, the individual classes will be understated.

Extrapolated intended total production of 639,000 deer to June 2007 indicates slowing production levels. But given producers indicated an intention to continue killing capital

stock (see 3a) slowing production is likely to be due to fewer deer being available for slaughter given the slaughter of capital breeding stock which has already occurred. This is consistent with Deer Industry New Zealand's Herd Model.

3.c Farms with deer on them

	2002	2003	2004	2005
Classified as deer farms	2,277	2,085	1,741	1,641
Farms with deer (not specialising)	2,058	1,932	2,195	2,121
TOTAL	4,335	4,017	3,936	3,762

Table 4: New Zealand farms with deer. Source Statistics New Zealand, APS 2005

Between 2002 and 2005 (latest available), 573 farms no longer have deer on them. This is a reduction of 13%. There are 636 fewer farms which are classified as deer farms (farms for which income from deer is the largest source of income).

The Industry Survey indicated that 36% of respondents earned 90% of revenue from deer, or deer comprised 95% of livestock.

4. Farm size and composition

No. of animals on farm	Number of farms	% of farms of those responding	% of deer represented on these farms	Cumulative number of deer in each range (ascending)
0-50	251	11%	1%	100%
51-150	474	21%	3%	99%
151-250	347	15%	5%	96%
251-500	469	21%	13%	91%
501-1,000	422	19%	23%	78%
1,001-2,000	213	9%	22%	55%
2,001-3,000	44	2%	8%	33%
3,001-4,000	12	1%	3%	25%
4,001-5,000	9	0.40%	3%	22%
5,001-10,000	12	1%	6%	19%
>10,000	4	0.18%	13%	13%

Table 5: Herd size distribution among survey respondees.

- Herd size is very similar to the 2005 survey.
- The average herd size is 560 in comparison to 583 in 2005. The decrease is consistent with producer intentions in 2005 and subsequent APS figures.
- The average size of farms with deer on them is 660 hectares, of which an average of 143 hectares are deer fenced (22% of the property). This is similar to 2005 and is an indication of the prevalence of mixed farming operations and therefore the ability of most farms to move in and out of deer depending on their circumstances.

5. Production

Aside from the Industry Survey, venison production statistics over time give an indication of changes within the national herd. If one assumes that the velvet herd remains relatively constant over time⁶, it is logical that the difference between

⁶ Clearly this is a large assumption. For example, at present velvet production is decreasing, and there was a significant decrease in the late 1990s following the Asian Economic Crisis. However, the purpose is to provide a 'rough guide'.

hind and stag production is an *approximate* indicator of changes to capital stock. That is, if more hinds are being slaughtered than stags, it is a basic indicator of a reduction in capital stock and *vice versa*.

Table 6 below shows production for the year ended September 1994 to 2006. This is also shown graphically in Figure 1.

	Total	Stags	Hinds	Hinds less Stags
1993	420,374	248,878	171,088	77,790
1994	351,699	180,803	170,665	10,138
1995	408,678	181,212	227,133	-45,921
1996	309,066	184,295	123,995	60,300
1997	311,749	222,324	89,425	132,899
1998	407,405	271,690	135,715	135,975
1999	420,337	245,676	174,661	71,015
2000	404,471	230,898	173,573	57,325
2001	508,995	286,320	222,675	63,645
2002	464,620	288,576	176,044	112,532
2003	550,263	297,056	253,207	43,849
2004	683,234	343,312	339,922	3,390
2005	762,427	364,484	397,943	-33,459
2006	735,936	345,232	390,704	-45,472
TOTAL	6,739,254	3,690,756	3,046,750	644,006
		55%	45%	

Table 6: Production for YE Sept 1994-2006

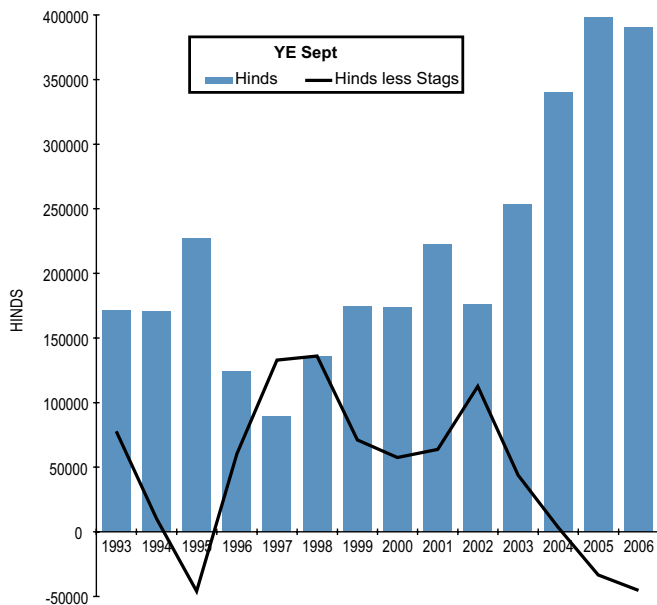


Figure 1: Hind production and stag less hind production.

And the winners are...

The Branch with the largest proportion of producers who returned the mailed survey was Wairoa. They have been sent a cheque for \$1,000 towards Branch activities. Don and Mary McLeod of Nelson won the draw of producers who completed the survey. They have also been sent a cheque for \$1,000. Our congratulations to the Wairoa Branch and the McLeods.

The last significant retention of hinds was in 2002 when 113,000 fewer hinds were slaughtered than stags. Since then, this has decreased to (45,000) despite a large increase in stag kill.

6. Statistics New Zealand's Agricultural Production Survey

For completeness, Statistics New Zealand's provisional results from its APS are reprinted below.

Deer Numbers ⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾⁽³⁾⁽⁴⁾					
	Year to 30 June		At 30 June		Year to 30 June
	Female deer mated ⁽⁵⁾		Total deer		Fawns born on the farm ⁽⁶⁾
Series ref: AGRA	SARCZZZ		SAGXZZZ		SAR3ZZZ
2002	891,300		1,647,900		654,700
2003	885,600		1,689,400		670,400
2004	867,900		1,756,888		699,700
2005	821,200		1,705,100		648,400
2006	745,000	P	1,597,600	P	591,200 P

(1) There was no agriculture production survey conducted in 1997, 1998 and 2001. In 2000 the survey related only to horticulture. In 1994 and 2002, an agricultural census was conducted.

(2) The population for the 2002 Agricultural Production Census and subsequent surveys differs from that of previous agricultural censuses and surveys. Figures from 2002 onwards may not be directly comparable with previous years.

(3) Estimates have been rounded to the nearest 100.

(4) Changes were made to the question design in the 2004 and 2005 Agriculture Production Surveys. Figures for 2004 and 2005 may not be directly comparable with those from previous years.

(5) Number of female deer mated and still on the farm at 30 June.

(6) In 2005 and 2006, data relates to fawns born on the farm that were alive at four months. In 2003 and 2004, data relates to fawns weaned on the farm. In 2002, data relates to fawns born on the farm.

Symbols: P provisional

Table 7: Statistics New Zealand deer herd figures from Agricultural Production Survey.

Thanks!

Deer Industry New Zealand sincerely thanks producers for completing the survey. We hope you find this information useful and that you examine the numbers so that you form your own view on industry prospects. We welcome your comments and any discussion. Contact Mark O'Connor, Deer Industry New Zealand, PO Box 10-702, Wellington or mark.oconnor@deernz.org.

Further information

- Last year's Annual Industry Survey Results: www.deernz.org/resources
- Statistics New Zealand's Agricultural Production Survey: <http://www.stats.govt.nz/agriculture>, then click on Agricultural Production Survey
- 2005 Deer Monitoring Report: <http://www.maf.govt.nz/mafnet/rural-nz/statistics-and-forecasts/farm-monitoring/index.htm>, then click on 'deer'.

Deer Industry New Zealand Annual Report

Industry development continues strongly despite difficult conditions

The New Zealand deer industry remains strategically well placed for both venison and velvet products, says DINZ Chairman John Scurr in the 2005-06 annual report (enclosed with this mailing of Deer Industry News).


While opportunities for further developing markets remain to be exploited, he also notes areas where the industry requires further work and vigilance. These include:

- better management of costs to the industry, including government charges
- development of a more effective way of selling velvet and avoidance of any complacency brought about by higher prices
- the industry's need to embrace the minimum standards and their legal implications in the soon-to-be-released *Code of Welfare for Farmed Deer*
- the need to get past concerns about compliance costs associated with animal identification and traceability, and stay involved in the development of a system that suits the industry and is not forced upon it.

John Scurr says it is not acceptable for the industry to have "shrunk its way to profitability". In his report he concludes that the deer industry must be "growing based on increased market demand, and growing at a faster rate than competing land use options."


In his report, DINZ Chief Executive Mark O'Connor says that by the end of the 2006 year the industry is considerably stronger than it was 12 months previously. After sticking to the task of market development by implementing the industry strategies during the difficult times, the industry can now capitalise on this groundwork, he comments.

A reinvigorated Cervena programme and 73 joint promotional campaigns with venison exporters and their partners were features of the venison programme for the year. It was a similarly active year in the execution of the velvet strategy, Mark notes. Activities included promotion of velvet as a sports nutrition supplement and promotion of velvet as a healthy food in a top Korean hotel.

He also highlighted the importance of the productivity strategy, and the key goals of a 10 percent improvement in both the percentage of young deer born and in their growth performance. 


- **Copies of the 2005-2006 Deer Industry New Zealand annual report are being posted to all deer farmers. If you did not receive one or would like another copy, contact info@deernz.org or call 04-473 4500.**

Culinary Challenge Winner 2006



Chris Hagan of Fischer's Restaurant, Baslow Hall in Derbyshire sweating his way to victory in this year's cook-off final at the Restaurant Show in London for the NZ-UK Link Foundation Culinary Challenge. His main course, 'Smoked peppered loin of farm-raised New Zealand venison, glazed in sweet chilli jam, Anna potatoes, Derbyshire cabbage and pink grapefruit salad' ticked all the boxes for the judging panel led by celebrity chef Peter Gordon, ably assisted by food writer Glynn Christian, Nick Watt of Roka, Sidney Aldrige of the Hoxton and Nick Vadis of catering group Compass.

Sheffield-trained Hagan was one of eight under-21-year-olds who reached the finals of this year's competition, designing and creating a three-course meal for two fusing British and New Zealand cuisine. He used New Zealand farm-raised venison supplied by PPCS Brooks, seafood, pipfruit and Trinity Hill wines. Hagan wins an all expenses paid four-week work experience in New Zealand early this year. His opposite number, young New Zealand chef Heather Kanuik of the 'dine by Peter Gordon' restaurant in Auckland's Sky City Convention Centre, won the reciprocal NZ-UK Link Foundation Modern Cookery Apprentice of the Year in the Hospitality Standards Institute's excellence in training awards. She will travel to the UK.

Now in its fourth year, the competition is attracting more attention and achieving a higher profile for New Zealand venison in Britain, alongside awareness for the dynamic culinary links between New Zealand and the UK. 



Welcome to country!

Industry conference 2007, Hamilton 22 – 24 May 2007

The NZDFA, Host Branch (Waikato) and Deer Industry New Zealand warmly invite you to the 2007 New Zealand Deer Industry Conference which will be held at the spacious and comfortable Kingsgate Hotel, Te Rapa, Hamilton on 22 – 24 May 2007.

Innovation theme

Themed *INNOVATE*, the conference will build on the initiatives launched over 2006 with venison versatility on display along the *Impress Your Guests* style campaign, velvet marketing developments, background to velvet as a food work in Korea, the advancement of the productivity strategy and focus farms, associated technical sessions on DNA technology, electronics and local agribusiness success stories from the Waikato Innovation initiatives.

Programme outline

The industry is returning to a full conference format this year, returning to Hamilton for its annual get-together for the first time in 11 years. The programme outline is:

Tuesday 22 May:

- Branch Chairmen's meeting
- Major welcome and social event (evening) featuring innovation in venison cuisine.

Wednesday 23 May

- DINZ Formal General Meeting and NZDFA AGM
- Annual awards dinner, featuring the traditional annual Deer Industry Award and the Matuschka Award.

Thursday 24 May

- Waikato Branch-hosted field day and technical sessions, in the mould of the successful 2006 visit to Lincoln

University's Deer Unit.

Participation the key

As always, industry issues will be debated on the conference floor. The emphasis is on an inexpensive and effective meeting that allows the industry to inform, delegates to participate in debate, questions and answers from industry leaders, and a balance of good innovative social events and entertainment.

Strong partner support

We appreciate always the loyal inputs of our industry partners and sponsors, and are proud to have the committed support as industry partners from **Rabobank, Ravensdown, Intervet, Telford Agricultural Polytechnic, PPCS and Duncan and Company** to date.

Registration/contacts

Registration will be handled through the experienced DCMS conference management team (pat@dcms.co.nz) 03 477 1377, or through the Producer Manager 021 719 038, 04 471 6118 tony.pearse@deernz.org. An advance registration form will be available electronically from the end of February through DCMS, your local Branch or from the Deer Industry New Zealand Office. Details are being finalised with the local conference committee who have a long track record of producing outstanding events with some surprises and innovations of their own. Accommodation requirements for the Hotel must be coordinated through the Conference

AGM, constitutional and other matters

NZDFA Annual General Meeting: Hamilton, Wednesday 23 May 2007

Remits, tight timelines, plenty of discussion areas

In 2006, the Branches responded to a call for early remit submission and discussion. This allowed time for discussion around the Branches prior to the conference and lead to a very productive, informed and active AGM. Remits to the AGM are customarily submitted through Branches. Branch members are urged to submit all remits to the Association offices by **Wednesday 11 April 2007** to enable them to be published in the pre-AGM *Deer Industry News* and meet our constitutional demands, which have 30 day window prior to the AGM.

This provides the opportunity to develop remits in advance at your AGMs and have time during April/May to meet again locally and fully discuss remits and other industry issues to bring forward at this important conference. Discussion of remits that arrive late and have not had a Branch input, irrespective of the wisdom of your Chairman and committee, is not a responsible industry process.

It is to **everyone's advantage** for them to be published and circulated to all members. Remits will be posted on the website and circulated to Chairmen as they are received.

Matuschka Award 2007

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

The award recognises the grass roots farmer and unsung contributor to local area activities, functions and core spirit of deer farming. It will be announced at the 2007 Deer Industry Conference dinner on the evening of Wednesday 24 May at the Kingsgate Hotel, Hamilton.

Given the nature of the Award that recognises the unsung heroes at Branch level, the Award itself will be presented at a special mid-winter function in the Branch of the recipient.

Nominations should be made through the appropriate Branch. It is not a requirement of the award that the nominee be aware of the fact that a nomination has gone forward. Nominations must be submitted to the NZDFA no later than **close of business on 1 May 2007**.

Rumpole Cup

Entries are invited for the 2007 Rumpole Cup, which is awarded to the best Branch or Associated Society newsletter. Newsletters submitted routinely to the NZDFA office will be entered. The inaugural competition for this trophy was held in 2000. Past winners have been:

2000	Coastal Bay of Plenty Branch
2001	Tongariro Branch
2002	Hawke's Bay Branch
2003	Wairarapa Branch
2004	Otago Branch
2005	Waikato Branch
2006	Held over



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

Please submit your entry to the Rumpole Cup, NZDFA, PO Box 10-702, and Wellington by **Tuesday 1 May 2007**. You can submit either one or a number of issues of the newsletter, provided it was published during the previous 12 months.

AGM constitutional matters: NZDFA and DINZ nominations, 2007-08 year

A) Executive Committee Nominations

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

Nominations are now called for the following positions:

- Executive Committee member, North Island, one vacancy. (Current Member **Andrew Mitchell**, Rotorua, retires by rotation.)
- Executive Committee member, South Island, one vacancy. (Current member, **Bill Taylor**, Winton, retires by rotation.)

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

Each nomination must:

- be in writing and specify the Island which the nominee seeks to represent
- be moved and seconded by two other full members or levy-paying members of the Association **resident in the same Island as the vacancy**
- be signed by the nominee
- be delivered to the Association's office by **5.00 pm on Friday 30 March 2007**.

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

Should an election be necessary, details of postal voting and procedures, candidate profiles and the confirmation of time lines will be sent with the April edition of *Deer Industry News* or by separate post to meet deadlines. Postal voting runs for 21 days and must close 7 clear days prior to the AGM on Wednesday 23 May, 2007 (i.e. **voting opens on 25 April, closing on 15 May 2007**).

B) Selection and Appointment Panel (SAP)

The role of the SAP is to make producer representative appointments to the Deer Industry New Zealand Board and to meet with those appointees at least once a year to discuss industry matters and their roles as Deer Industry New Zealand representatives.

The 8-member SAP is made up from:

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

The elected non-Executive Committee members whose term expires at the forthcoming AGM are **(NI) John Cusdin**, Taranaki (retirement by rotation) and **(SI) Keith Orange**, Geraldine.

Nominations are now called for the following positions:

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

Each nomination must be in writing and moved and seconded by two full members or levy paying members, signed by the nominee and delivered to the Association offices by **5.00 pm Friday 30 March 2007**.

The nominees must be full members or levy-paying members. Further, nominees:

- must **not** be a member of the Deer Industry Association
- **can not** hold more than a 20% interest in any organisation which is a member of the Deer Industry Association

- **can not** be a candidate for membership of the Deer Industry New Zealand Board, or a current member of the Deer Industry New Zealand Board.

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

C) NZDFA Appointments to Deer Industry New Zealand Board

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

The Deer Industry New Zealand Board comprises four producer representatives and four representatives from the processing/exporting sector. The producer representatives are selected by the New Zealand Deer Farmers' Association, and have been appointed on recommendation by the NZDFA's Selection and Appointment Panel according to its detailed operating Code of practice and then advised to the Minister

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

- 2 vacancies : Deer Industry New Zealand Board members retiring by rotation (Jeffrey Pearse, Waitohi, South Canterbury and John Scurr, Cardrona Valley, Wanaka);.

Each nomination must be moved and seconded by two levy-paying members, signed by the nominee and delivered to the Association's offices before **5.00 pm on Friday 30 March 2007**.

The NZDFA Constitution (2004) refers:

37.10 NOMINATIONS FOR DEER INDUSTRY NEW ZEALAND:

The Selection and Appointment Panel shall appoint a Returning Officer who shall publicly announce, in writing, the names of the retiring deer farmer nominees of Deer Industry New Zealand and call for nominations for their replacement, prior to the end of March each year. Nominations shall be:

- made by any two Full Members or Levy Paying Members
- in writing; and
- in the hands of the Returning Officer at a date to be specified which will be before the Annual General Meeting of the Association each year.


37.11 ELIGIBILITY FOR SELECTION AS NOMINEE TO DEER INDUSTRY NEW ZEALAND BOARD

All persons interested or engaged in the deer farming industry shall be eligible for nomination, with the exception of employees of Deer Industry New Zealand or of the Association. Each nominee for selection shall be required to make a written declaration of any office held or managerial position or financial interest that either the nominee or any of the nominee's immediate family or any partner or fellow shareholder in any deer farming project has in any organisation which deals directly in the products of or materials for the deer farming industry. The products of the deer farming industry refers to the commercial processing or commercial trade in venison, velvet, co-products and similar products but excludes live animals and velvet sold from the farm.

Nominations for the positions will be considered by the Selection and Appointment Panel following the 2007 AGM within 21 days of that meeting, with recommendations and appointment to the Board being advised the Minister of Agriculture at that time subject to the Operating Code of Practice procedures.

Nomination forms

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

Nomination forms are also available through your local Branch Chairman, Secretary or the Producer Manager and will be posted on the website: www.deernz.org at time of publication of *Deer Industry News*, Issue 23, February, 2007. 

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



Branch Chairman profile: Colin Baynes – Wairoa

Colin Baynes has been involved with the Wairoa Branch for the last nine years and has been Chairman for the last three.

He bought his Wairoa farm 13 years ago and now runs 350 Red deer on 100 hectares, calving 150 hinds. He also has 270 breeding cows and 1,400 ewes but says he has a passion for deer farming.

“Not having to crutch and shear or worry about too many animal health problems frees us up to do so much more,” he says.

The total property is 1,500 hectares. About 800 hectares is bush, and home to wild deer which help sustain Colin’s business. He captures about 60 wild deer each year and runs a trophy hunting business. About a third of the 30 visitors who come each year for trophy hunting are from overseas.

“They come for two days,” says Colin. “We provide accommodation and I guide them myself. I’ve met some neat people and it’s very rewarding to see someone go out happy with a good genuine wild Red deer head.”

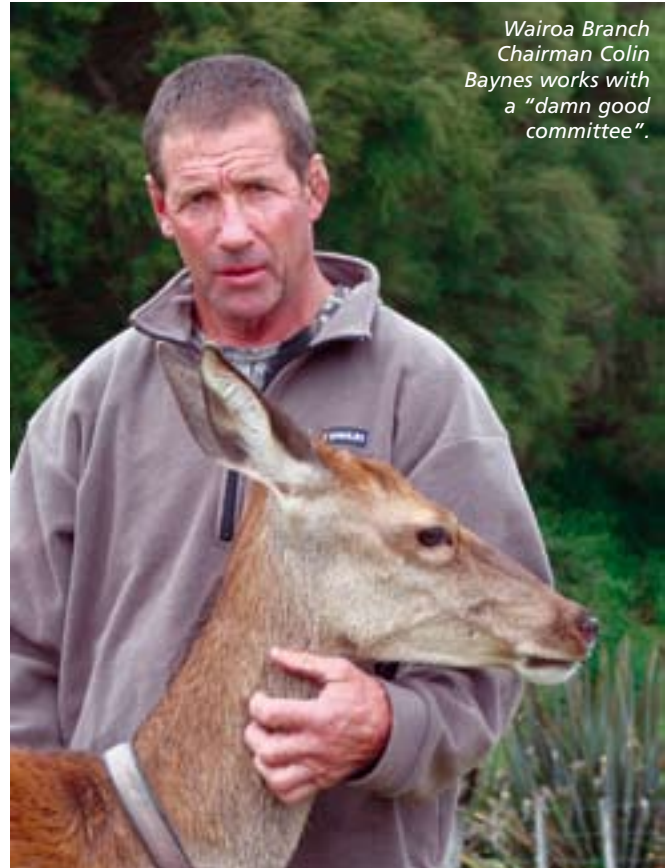
Colin says competition is on the increase as more and more farmers with suitable country are getting involved in the trophy business. He believes one of the great advantages of his property is the potential for developing the land. On average, he breaks in 16 to 20 hectares a year through scrub cutting, burning, regressing and fencing of regenerated kanuka.

Although Wairoa is a small Branch from a small community, Colin says they’re very active. (The fact that the Branch won the \$1000 prize for having the greatest proportion of its members complete the recent deer industry survey is testament to that.)

“We’re a very motivated Branch and I have a damn good committee behind me.”

Among the Branch’s annual activities are a field trip, a Christmas party combined with a velvet competition and a possum shooting competition. Possums are a real problem in the area and the Animal Health Board is currently running a possum control programme which has Colin’s full support.

“They’re full noise ahead, moving through the district at present at a very steady rate to control the buffer zone and the spread from the southern areas. I’m very happy with the job AHB is doing,” he says.



Wairoa Branch Chairman Colin Baynes works with a “damn good committee”.

And the feeling must be mutual. At the last possum shooting competition, over 2,000 possums were shot. A representative from AHB and a local vet are invited to take the floor and local businesses sponsor prizes.

“The competition is well supported by the Wairoa community. Last year we had a four wheel motor bike as first prize,” says Colin. “It’s a great day out with hot dogs, steak sandwiches, alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks – we have a great party.”

In his spare time Colin hunts, is learning to fly a microlight and supports his five children, ages 18 to 27, in their sports, including rugby, rowing and shearing competitions. 🏡

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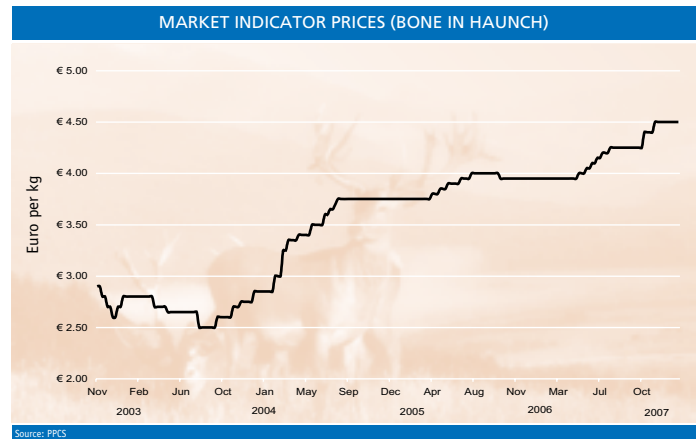
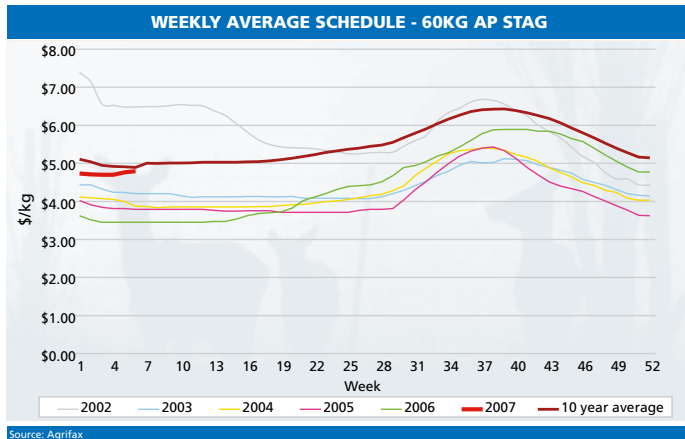
— Feet King — Feet Colin
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Venison

The schedule price is sitting at over 37% above the same time last year and just 2% under the 10-year average. The export season has gone well, with an increase in chilled exports illustrating European importer confidence in the trade.



Schedule

- In Week 6, the average published schedule for AP 55-60 kg stags was \$4.79. This compares with \$3.45 in 2006, and a 10 year average of \$4.89 (1998-2007).
- The currency position has improved marginally in recent weeks, but the weak US dollar and threat of higher interest rates in New Zealand continues to maintain the New Zealand dollar at higher than anticipated levels.
- In week 6, the New Zealand dollar was buying 68.3 US cents, and 52.4 Euro cents. This compares with 68 and 56 respectively during the same week last year.

Europe

- The season has gone well and prices rose steadily through the year. A big increase in chilled exports over the game season indicated the confidence the importing trade had in purchasing venison from New Zealand. Sales of middles were very strong, with airfreights being sent to cover increased demand.

- Shoulder items continue to be ordered at a higher price level than last year. Importers are discussing orders for manufacturing items now with manufacturers and retailers.

North America

- The weaker US dollar, and more demand for Europe means that higher prices for some items are being asked. Resistance to price increases for manufacturing items has seen a fall off in sales as this product goes to Europe.

Top US chefs fly in for Pinot Noir/ Cervena pairing

- Cervena™ Ambassador chef Brad Farmerie joined two other top US chefs, Shawn McClain and Josie Le Balch, in early February to exhibit their skills with Cervena at Pinot Noir 2007 – the biggest inbound wine event of its kind ever held in New Zealand.
- The three, who are all NZ Trade & Enterprise Ambassador Chefs, joined DINZ consultant chef Graham Brown in each designing a Cervena venison main course to perfectly match

Velvet

The encouraging start to the season's pools has seen prices lift 38-82% over last season. Price rises in Korea have been received relatively well, as country-of-origin labelling requirements commence there. Promotions in Korea and China help keep New Zealand velvet in consumers' minds, while, in the United States, pet velvet products received a promotional boost with exposure to veterinarians.

New Zealand

- After an encouraging start to the season with velvet prices initially up 10-15%, interest and tenders have continued to grow. Pool prices are now up between 38% (E grade) and 82% (Super A) in comparison to weighted average prices from last season.
- PGG Wrightson reports that, as first cut volumes begin to decline, competition (and therefore prices) are responding accordingly with both prices for spiker and regrowth lifting.

Korea

- Recent increases in costs to Korean importers initially caused some unrest in the market but have not slowed velvet returns to producers in New Zealand.

- Two 24-strong delegations from the Korean Deer Breeders Association (KDBA) attended parts of both the North Island and National Velvet Competitions during their visit in December. Their visits also took them to a processing facility, velvet cool-store, Invermay, artificial breeding companies and numerous farms. Talks between DINZ Chairman John Scurr and the KDBA Chairman were able to briefly touch on the Special Excise Tax issue and agreement was reached to discuss the matter further.
- A promotion at the Millennium Seoul Hilton Hotel in Seoul where New Zealand velvet was showcased as a healthy ingredient in Korean Cuisine was well received (see Industry News page 15).

Pinot Noir at the Gala Dinner. This was held on the last night of the four-day event in Wellington's TSB Centre from 29 January – 1 February 2007.

- Pinot Noir Chef de Cuisine, Ruth Pretty said the chefs' guest appearance was a fitting culmination to the 2007 event. "They all serve Cervena and New Zealand Pinot Noir in their restaurants and I really enjoyed their interpretation. It was exciting to have the opportunity to work with them."
- The 1,000 guests at the Gala Dinner, held in a special marquee on Wellington's waterfront, were treated to four courses: a sumptuous seafood entrée, followed by the Ambassador Chef's Cervena main course, then a Whitestone Cheeses buffet and a dessert perfectly matched to New Zealand dessert wines.
- The Cervena was sponsored by Deer Industry New Zealand and the event will be featured in publicity material distributed to US food writers.



Cervena Ambassador Chef Brad Farmerie (right) shares a joke with New Zealand chef Rex Morgan at the Pinot 2007 conference in Wellington. The chefs were part of a workshop on matching food with Pinot Noir. Brad demonstrated the versatility of Cervena by creating the Cervena sausage which was served to the appreciative audience. Photo: Mark Coote

Venison breezes in

- Up to 5,000 attended the Meridian Energy Mossburn wind-farm gala day, which gave people a close-up view of the wind farm under construction. There will eventually be 29 turbines, each 120 metres high, generating up to 58 megawatts. The open day was also a fundraiser for northern Southland community projects.
- DINZ-sponsored venison cookery demonstrations at the gala day made a solid contribution to the fundraising, with around 1,000 venison kebabs sold on the day at an associated food stand. Chef Graham Hawkes did two demonstrations and a further 200 people were able to get a taste of venison thanks to his efforts.



Chef Graham Hawkes demonstrating venison cookery at a family open day held on 4 February at Meridian Energy's Mossburn wind farm site.

- Recent Korean Customs Service regulations are now being enforced – all countries are required to label velvet being exported to Korea. Others appear to be following suit: the KDBA, the Korea Rabbit and Deer Co-operative and the Korea Deer Farmers Alliance jointly established a supervisory group to monitor the alleged illegal distribution of imported deer velvet. The Korean Government has been asked to investigate alleged illegal distribution and the exact usage of imported deer velvet by each importer and also announced in early January that it will be conducting a month-long campaign to detect labelling violations of imported agricultural goods. The nationwide effort is aimed at detecting imports that are labelled and packaged as locally grown products.

China and Taiwan

- The Chinese retail/distribution company that has imported products from three New Zealand processors is gearing up the promotion of the products with advertisements on China's CCTV.

- A Taiwanese film crew recently spent time in the South Island sourcing footage of the deer industry to be used to produce a 30-minute segment on a New Zealand deer velvet product to be sold on a television home shopping network and aired on four channels in Taiwan.

United States

- DINZ Executive recently joined a New Zealand processor and marketer at the North American Veterinary Conference in Orlando, Florida, attended by over 15,000 veterinarians and their associates, to promote New Zealand velvet as a pet supplement (see Industry News page 17).
- A renewed joint promotion contract with a New Zealand company that has recently entered the multi-million dollar GNC retail chain will see the New Zealand velvet product on show at both the Supply-side East and West trade shows during this year.

MARKET TALK: French-style velvet cuisine first: Laxmi Nakarmi

A New Zealand promotion held at the Millennium Seoul Hilton in the Republic of Korea, has taken an innovative approach to position new Zealand velvet as a healthy food. It is, possibly, the world's first inclusion of velvet in French-style cuisine. Event organiser, Laxmi Nakarmi of Saturn Communication, the Korean PR company engaged by Deer Industry New Zealand talks to Market Talk about the promotion.

Targeting affluent diners is key to influencing others to try the product and the Millennium Seoul Hilton was a great place to raise awareness of New Zealand velvet, Nakarmi says.

Running from 2 – 11 December 2006, promotional menus, created by Executive Chef Park, were offered in the hotel's 135-seater upscale Seasons restaurant serving French and continental cuisine and the mid-range Cilantro buffet restaurant. Both received good feedback. Twelve dishes, including New Zealand venison and velvet, were on the Cilantro buffet which also offered a very popular traditional Chinese recipe, incorporating velvet called "the monk jumps over the wall," – considered a vitality dish.

A special fine-dining dinner was organised in the Seasons restaurant at the beginning of December for 35 guests, including executive chefs, food and beverage directors from other hotels, top food journalists and importers. This introduced a number of innovative new dishes including Baked Deer Horn Baked Consommé Soup, which has since found a place on the à la carte menu, Deer Horn Cinnamon Sorbet and Deer Horn Chocolate Petit Four.

It was possibly the first ever attempt in the world to include deer velvet as an ingredient in French and continental recipes, says Nakarmi. "Due to the popularity of the deer velvet-based items, Chef Park added deer horn cappuccino soup and deer horn soufflé permanently to the Seasons' à la carte menu. Each item is served to diners at US\$25 a person."

December 7, 8 and 9 saw 240 high-ranking guests attend the 45th Gourmet Circle to positive acclaim, which drew former Korean President Chun Doo Hwan and his wife in to dine with a group.

Fifteen journalists also attended a press lunch in Cilantro at the start of the promotion.

"Since December is the busiest period of the year, there was a high number of guests during the promotion and an estimated 1,800 passed through the hotel," reports Nakarmi.



Chef Park's stunning sliced velvet sorbet.

Items appeared in *Guest Room* the hotel's newsletter, an in-room leaflet which was given to guests when they arrived at the hotel, on the plasma screens in the hotel, an e-flyer sent to 2,000 potential guests, a press release sent to major local and English papers and on the restaurant menus.

While it is impossible to measure in dollar value terms, from his personal experience Nakarmi estimates that the promotion has been at least twice as successful as last year's promotion at the Imperial Palace, garnering some good consumer feedback.

The Hilton was pleased with results and has requested assistance with other fine-dining events and a velvet promotion in December. Other major hotels in Seoul have also shown interest in running promotions.

Enthusiasm about the results is spreading. One exporter reports that the promotion has far exceeded his expectations, with the appearance of several positive news articles raising product awareness of New Zealand velvet in Korea, the chance to further new product development and retention of velvet dishes on the Seasons menu. However, perhaps more importantly, it has also stimulated contact from other foodservice companies eager to explore opportunities with finished products containing New Zealand velvet, the exporter says.

On another front, Nakarmi is considering a new challenge: use of velvet in the popular *Samkyetang*, a Korean chicken-ginseng broth cooked with rice stuffed inside the chicken. It is consumed in August, to help deal with the summer heat. The dish is also widely popular among tourists from Japan, China, Taiwan and Southeast Asia.

Chef Park is also working on a project to develop Korean deer-horn based food additive using deer horn that could be sold off the supermarket shelf. 📺



Both venison and velvet were used in this dish from the Seasons restaurant.

Ambassadors, sustainability and taste for Cervena 2007

Ambassadors, sustainability, taste and glamour cuts are all featured in the innovative 2007 Cervena™ promotional programme for the United States.

Agreed by licensees to support sales of Cervena, elements of the \$245,000 programme are intended to be integrated into distributors' programmes where possible. Renewing awareness of Cervena as a quality product to established chefs will be key, but the programme will also introduce the product to the younger generation of chefs emerging from culinary schools.

According to DINZ Venison Marketing Services Manager Innes Moffat, the "glamour cuts" – loins, racks, saddle – will be the focus of a national public relations programme targeting thousands of chef customers, primarily through the trade media. Denver Leg will also come in for secondary attention.

A recipe competition under the title Cervena Plates is being run, although not on the scale of previous similarly named events. "We're asking professional chefs to create a spring recipe with a focus on light, healthy and innovative uses of any cut or cuts from the loin. The winner will receive a Cervena Plates award and a cash prize, while four runners-up will receive a Cervena Plates award," he says.

The New Zealand Pinot Noir conference (see page 12) benefited last month from the attendance of a Cervena Ambassador chef – Brad Farmerie of Public restaurant in New York. He was brought out to New Zealand by New Zealand Trade & Enterprise for a national tour of food and wine producers together with Shawn McClain chef/owner of Chicago's Spring, Custom House and Green Zebra restaurants and Josie Le Balch, of Josie Restaurant, in Los Angeles. DINZ hosted the trio for a day on Charlie Ewing's Cattle Flat Station to give them an overview of extensive deer farming in New Zealand.

"Brad's experience with Cervena will be boosted by his greater awareness of this country, making him an excellent representative for Cervena demos and other events," Moffat says.

Cervena will lend support for up-and-coming culinary talent through sponsorship of the Rising Star Chefs Honorees Dinners in 2007. Star Chefs editors will be dining in Chicago, San Francisco, New York


and Atlanta to identify up-and-coming culinary and sommelier talent. Selected chefs are promoted nationally and locally on the web-site www.starchefs.com. A local Cervena distributor will be involved in each market to use the tasting events for networking and sales opportunities. Monthly editorial features on the Star Chefs web-site, sponsored by Cervena, will look at sustainability, deer farming and other relevant topics to drive chefs to www.cervena.com for more product information.

Sustainability in the food chain is becoming ever more important to those in the US food industry. Chefs Collaborative – a culinary network – has been set up in the United States for those members who promote sustainable cuisine by celebrating the joys of local, seasonal and craft cooking. "Cervena's quality standards will be used by the organisation to show what can be achieved on an industry level and still provide great taste," Innes Moffat says, adding that a 'white paper' on game meats is being prepared by the group in 2007.

An educational programme funded jointly by Deer Industry New Zealand, Meat and Wool New Zealand, Mussel Industry Council and Pernod Ricard Wines will be launched this year at five US culinary schools. 'Pure New Zealand Cuisine' will highlight how New Zealand's agricultural and environmental standards have enriched the quality and flavour of its food and wine exports as a whole.

To support all of this, Cervena will feature in national food service magazines and websites over the US autumn period. Three advertisements have been taken in chefs magazine *Nation's Restaurant News* and the American Culinary Federation's newsletter. In addition, Cervena will be featured throughout the year on www.nrn.com and www.starchefs.com.

Moffat says that good coverage of Cervena in North American food service media is expected in the year ahead, providing distributors with a more informed clientele as they push Cervena to their chef customers.

"The weak US dollar will put price pressure on the North American market in coming months, so we must ensure that the Cervena story remains relevant in order to continue to create demand and ensure people will pay the price for this excellent product." 



"Cervena's purity of flavor makes it a favorite choice for me. It has a taste that most beef cannot match, with a subtlety that everyone can enjoy. I have used Cervena from New Zealand for over 11 years and it has been on my menu at Public since day one."

**BRAD FARMERIE,
HEAD CHEF, PUBLIC, NYC**

cervena®
NATURAL TENDER VENISON



www.cervena.com

One of the new advertisements appearing in US chef trade magazines.

recipe

Cervena, Duck and Oregano Sausage Scented with Vanilla

While we're celebrating the sausage, these delicious cocktail sausages, created from one of Cervena Ambassador Brad Farmerie's recipes, were served by Ruth Pretty Catering at Pinot Noir 2007.

Makes 50 x 35g breakfast-size sausages.

INGREDIENTS

1kg Cervena Denver Leg (trimmed and cut into 2 cm dice)

665g boneless duck leg meat (you will need approx seven legs for this)

SAUSAGE CASINGS

4 tsp dried oregano

4 tsp cinnamon

2 tbsp + 2 tsp flaky sea salt

1 + 1/3 tsp freshly ground black pepper

40g finely chopped parsley

15g finely chopped chives

40ml (2 tbsp + 1 tsp) extra virgin olive oil

40g panko crumbs (or breadcrumbs)

METHOD

- Remove duck meat and fat from skin, discarding the skin and keeping the fat and meat. Cut meat into 2cm dice.
- In a large bowl combine Cervena, duck, oregano, cinnamon, salt and pepper, parsley, chives, oil, panko crumbs and seeds only from vanilla pod. Mix well to combine flavours.
- Refrigerate for one hour.
- At the same time put all the mincer attachments in the freezer. Fit the mincer with a medium grind and a sausage funnel.
- Process meat into sausage casings, twisting off breakfast-size sausages.
- Refrigerate for 1 hour.
- Place sausages snugly into the base of a pot. Pour over chicken stock. Add scraped vanilla pod, bay leaf and thyme.
- Place pot over a low heat and cook sausages for 4-5 minutes till they are cooked medium-rare.
- Remove sausages from pot and place onto trays.
- Refrigerate till required.

TO SERVE

Preheat barbecue grill plate to high. Lightly oil sausages and place onto grill to brown the outsides (3-4 minutes). Serve hot.

Venison sausages amongst the winners

Four venison sausages were amongst the 57 award-winners in this year's Great New Zealand Sausage competition.

Hungarian Smallgoods in Auckland won silver for its venison sausage entered into the gourmet category of the competition, which also saw two bronzes awarded to Ultimate Carwash Café in Christchurch for its Venison, Garlic & Dark Cherry Sausage and Hastings City New World for a straight venison sausage. The judges also gave a special Commendation Award to Kapiti Coast Meats (2002) Ltd for its Venison, Cherry & Port Sausage.

So what makes a great venison sausage? *Deer Industry News* went to head judge, food-writer and educator, Kerry Tyack to find out. He says the key to success for any sausage is that the key ingredient is easily identifiable so a good venison sausage should actually taste like venison.

"In all three cases this year, venison stood out as the hero ingredient in the sausage and no other ingredient dominated.



Something to aim for: Supreme Winner Westmeat Wellington's Hunter Sausage, gets the chop in the 2006 Great New Zealand Sausage Competition.

"Another thing we look for is the appropriate texture, and in the venison entries it was great to see the meat had not been over-processed. They were tasty, well-made, excellent examples of the style and confirmed that venison is an ideal choice when considering the meat in a sausage."

The Supreme Winner of the competition, chosen from the 10 gold medal winners from each category, was a Hunter Sausage from Westmeat Wellington. "The Hunter is a truly delicious sausage that contains all pure meat products and is gluten-free and non-GE, which makes it the real deal," delighted Westmeat winner, manager Grahame Law said.

Organised by Retail Meat New Zealand, the sausage competition is into its 12th year and is highly regarded by the industry. The 2006 competition received a record number of 512 entries across 10 categories. Contained within the gourmet category were 22 venison entries.

Entries are accepted from all sausage makers supplying retail meat outlets. Entry forms for the 2007 competition will be sent out in mid September and judging for this year's competition will take place in Wellington on 2 – 3 November.

For further information contact Retail Meat New Zealand at:
enquiry@retailmeat.org.nz, 04-472 0807.

Venison sausages in vogue in restaurants

Venison sausages are currently in vogue in Wellington region's restaurants, according to Vic Smith of Meat Direct in Wellington, who has seen a lift in his orders from butchers for reasonably lean venison trim as a result.

"Currently, the venison price is very competitive with beef," he says, adding that fashion trends change very quickly in the restaurant trade.

Smith says, from his experience, good raw product complemented with herbs and other flavours is the secret behind a good sausage.

For more information about Meat Direct: www.meatdirect.co.nz

US vets learn about velvet

The largest international veterinary meeting in the world was recently held in Orlando, Florida and New Zealand deer velvet was there.

In an effort to crack into a new market and promote New Zealand deer velvet as a pet supplement, DINZ joined New Zealand processor UB Bio and marketer Adeerco at the 24th Annual North American Veterinary Conference (NAVC) held from 13-17 January. The conference included 350 speakers, presenting for more than 1,400 hours of lectures, seminars, symposia, over 50 hands-on laboratories and about 3,200 exhibitors. With about 15,000 attendees (veterinarians and associates) from over 70 different countries and the NAVC mission being “to provide world-class continued education for all members of the veterinarian health care team” the event was an ideal platform to launch the relatively new product.

Success and uptake of deer velvet in Israel has been heartening, with over 60 percent of vet clinics there stocking the product (see *Deer Industry News* October 2006). In the United States, however, velvet and its positive effects on pets is not well known. However interest was strong at the vets’ conference, says DINZ Velvet Marketing Services Manager Vanessa Crowley who took part in the event. She says the most encouraging feedback came from holistic vets and from those managing some of the country’s largest zoos.


“All attendees had electronic cards, and exhibitors were provided with electronic swipe machines to enable them to record the details of interested people who visited their booths. At the end of the conference, other exhibitors were boasting of numbers in the early hundreds. The New Zealand velvet stand managed to acquire records of more than 700 interested people,” she says.

Vanessa puts the success down to a combination of running daily competitions, small giveaways, a promotional DVD on a big screen and large posters of deer drawing people onto the stand.

“The most common question from mainstream vets was whether there was any scientific research to back the products,” Crowley says, adding that a University of Montreal paper on the evaluation of velvet antler for treating osteoarthritis in dogs impressed many.

“Pages upon pages of testimonials from the Israeli vets, 12 of whom attended the conference, and several brochures on deer velvet and its perceived benefits all helped to raise their awareness of New Zealand velvet.”

With four people on the stand (DINZ, New Zealand processor, marketer and an Israeli veterinarian), no question remained unanswered. “The positive and friendly atmosphere created was definitely infectious,” Crowley reports.

Several meetings were held with potential US distributors who expressed interest in taking on the velvet product. At the time of writing, the New Zealand company reports it is currently in negotiations with a US distribution company as a result of the presence at the NAVC. 



Barry Cuttance of Adeerco (left) and Youn Lee of UB Bio (right) were on the stand with Dr Doron Zur (centre) to answer the many questions they had from US veterinarians attending the North American Veterinary Conference.

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3yrs	4.7kg	SA2	National Velvet Competition 2006
4yrs	7.45 kg	SA2	
5yrs	10.7 kg	SA2	1 st Open Red & Allcomers
6yrs	12 .0kg	SA2	@ Oxford Velvet Competition 2006
7yrs	13.75kg	SA2	
8yrs	12.3 kg	SA2	

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Cervena™ pairs up with Seresin

Cervena will take pride of place at the annual Waterfall Bay Dinners to be held at Michael Seresin's residence in the Marlborough Sounds at the end of February.

The Seresin Estate organic vineyard hosts a series of four dinners and two lunches around the same time as the Marlborough Food and Wine Festival.

Cervena will feature prominently on the menu and in all the publicity following the event, which will include releases and images to the main food media in New Zealand plus some international wine and food publications. DINZ will support this with a Cervena electronic mailer to high-end consumers in New Zealand, Australia and the United States.

The events cater to about 270 people who each pay about \$250 a head for five courses, carefully paired with matching current and vintage Seresin wines. Guests are collected from Picton by a luxury launch, enjoy Seresin bubbles on board and then walk a garden path to the restaurant/boat shed from the Waterfall Bay Jetty. Each year, Seresin winery

brings in a different chef from somewhere in the world to preside over the kitchen for the week – Peter Gordon has done it twice and last year saw Peter Doyle from Est in Sydney in charge. This year, their ninth, Melissa Perrello, previously from 5th Floor in San Francisco will lead the culinary team. The 45-seater venue, Waterfall Bay, includes an old rowing club room which Seresin renovated and established as a dining room with commercial kitchen.

Seresin events are always booked out – some sessions a year in advance – with people attending from as far away as Australia and California. 📧

Regular Deer Industry News readers will be interested to hear former DINZ CEO, MJ Loza, is now General Manager at Seresin Estate.

Johne's work progressing well

Work to put the infrastructure in place around the Johne's Management Ltd (JML) project is proceeding well, under the guidance of interim manager, Dan Lynch.

He says work to assemble data from venison processors is going slightly ahead of schedule, with most data flows expected to be set up and in place by the end of March.

Jaimie Glossop, science adviser to JML, says work to ensure compliance with the Privacy Act is also moving ahead well. "Farmers whose deer are found to have lesions which are tested as suspicious for Tb will be asked by the AHB for permission for that information to be included in the JML database," she says.

"A brochure outlining this process is being prepared at the moment with a simple reply-paid disclosure form. Farmers signing the form will be giving permission for any test data from Tb-suspicious lesions to be available to JML for a period of three years.

"The information on individual properties will of course remain confidential, but it will provide the essential links we need to feed back information to farmers on how they can best manage Johne's if it has established in their herd."

Jaimie says the owners of any deer for which suspicious lesions have been sent for histology or culture will receive the data permission request through the AHB.

Work is also being done for JML by Massey University to ensure the integrity of the JML database. Working with the 50-60 deer ticketed Asure NZ meat inspectors, work is being done to 'calibrate' the way they apply standards when they are identifying suspicious lesions in slaughter animals. 📧

To contact Johne's Management Ltd call toll free on 0800 456 453

- See **Johne's Disease Report No. 1** enclosed with this issue of **Deer Industry News**. This report, on the Johne's monitor farm, can be kept in the pocket of your manual: **Johne's Disease: The Way Forward.**

Double trouble



Tower Farms' Todd Crowley noticed one of the stud's hinds 'Cleo' making heavy weather of fawning just before Christmas. "I thought it was a bit odd when I put my arm in and felt eight legs instead of four," Todd recalls. Cleo, a quiet hind, seems pleased the hard work's over.

Correction: Tooth wear comment

In our article on the November 2006 Branch Chairmen's meeting (*Deer Industry News*, December 2006, page 8) we reported George Thomas (Waikato) as suggesting a study into reasons for tooth loss in weaners. George was actually referring to tooth wear in hinds; we apologise to George and readers for the mistake. He says different hinds in the same mob, farmed under identical conditions, can experience very different rates of tooth wear. In his experience, some are getting worn-out teeth by about age six. This can mean several years of productive life from individual animals are lost, and George believes it would be worth while trying to find out why some animals suffer faster tooth wear than others. 📧

FOCUS FARM UPDATE: OTAGO

Grant and Andrea Cochran: Bushy Park, Glenomaru

It was a wet, cold spring for the Cochranes in 2006, but the season quickly caught up over the summer. Growth started needing control, especially on the first-calvers' block at the back of the farm, which had been understocked by about three hinds/hectare. Cows and calves have been helping clean up the excess growth.

Grant says fawn survival has always been an Achilles heel on the property, which is bounded by three gravel roads. "The proximity to the roads definitely causes some disturbance during fawning, and we've only been tagging about 85 percent," he says.

However fencing the hill block for the first fawners was a great success. With the good natural cover on the block and distance from the roads, the 85 hinds put 80 fawns on the ground. Lanes and gate positions in the new block worked well, with hinds and fawns being able to be brought off the hill in late December for rotation on the paddocks.

Grant is also planning to do some more subdivision closer to the yards for the velveters, a move that will also help reduce the disturbance of hinds during fawning.

A highlight for the season has been the success of their 8-year-old stag "Ridger" being placed 4th in the Open Red Section of the National Velvet Competition, with a tidy 8.74kg. This stag has been one of the sires used to build the velvet herd over the last few years, and with the increase in

velvet prices, his progeny will be identified (DNA parentage test) to spread his influence further. Grant, who has been an accredited velveter for the past two years and enjoys this side of the business, is hoping to increase the velveting herd to about 200. Some hinds will also be DNA tested as part of a separate AgResearch study into early calving.

The Cochranes are continuing to invest in top genetics with the purchase of a 19.7 EBV₁₂ stag this season from Black Forest Park. This purchase was funded by the sale of an older trophy stag, which has been the policy in recent years. "We have bought all our sires from Black Forest – they're the leaders for both growth rates and early fawning," Grant says.

At the end of December there were about 50 yearling works deer left to kill, including tail end hinds. Some mixed-age velveters and two-year-old velvet stags were still to be culled.

Growth rate yearling hinds were selected as replacements in mid January, with a minimum cut off liveweight of 100kg (range 100-117kg). Second cut yearling hinds (90-100kg) were sold for \$290.

Grant's target stocking rate for the deer is 15.0su/ha, made up of 900 hinds, 800 farm-bred weaners, 120 mixed-age stags and 80 R2 stags, with an eventual ratio of 55 percent deer, 30 percent sheep and 15 percent cattle.

At present the property carries 100 breeding cows and 90 calves. The yearling cattle did exceptionally well through the spring, grazing behind the weaners on their rotation. They put on 2.08kg/day between 28 September and 10 January, with steers now averaging 516kg and heifers 469kg. All heifers were mated.

The deer and cattle on Bushy Park are currently complemented by 1600 ewes and 300 hoggets. To simplify the operation and reduce the number of mobs, 75 percent of the lambs were signed up in December for sale in early January at \$1.60/kg. These netted an excellent \$49 per head, also freeing up paddock space for rotating the hinds and fawns.

Grant Cochran: Enjoying a great season after a slow start.



A long way from New York

The Cochranes are relative newcomers to the rural sector, having bought this, their first farm in 1998. Previously, Grant had been a foreign exchange dealer, in London and New York. However, he had always been keen to farm, and to learn.

After converting part of the 595 hectare property to deer in 2002 (250 hectares is now deer fenced), the Cochranes jumped at the chance to apply to be a focus farm when the opportunity came up.

They are now two years into the three-year programme and enjoy working with the focus farm committee of local farmers, vets, scientists, fertiliser company representative and regional council staff.

Grant says the Otago Regional Council has been helpful with planning some of the sustainable farming initiatives, including the fencing off and planting of a riparian strip along one kilometre of creek, as well as the construction of six sediment ponds to help improve the quality of the water leaving the property. 🏡

FOCUS FARM UPDATE: SOUTHLAND

John and Jacky Mclean: Coleraine Farm, Lumsden

A change in the wintering system last year has paid big dividends for John and Jacky McLean, opening the way to increasing stocking capacity by 300 – 400 hinds. This would lift the stocking rate from 12.4su/ha to around 15su/ha (excluding the dairy grazing operation). The focus farm committee met to plan this in early February.

Hinds were taken off pasture and fed between May and October on a self-feed silage pit (see photo). Third regrowth on a rape crop helped provide extra feed for the weaners in June last year, and break feeding swedes to weaners rather than giving them the whole paddock also helped improve feed efficiency.

The season is going well after a slow start to spring, and after being rested last year, growth has boomed away in hill calving blocks, which are currently understocked.

To the end of December, 85 percent of yearlings had been killed at 53.7kg and \$277 per head net. This compares with 82 percent at the same stage last year at 54.8kg and \$216. Remaining stags are being taken on to heavier weights with the pressure now off feed supplies.

Yearling hinds were weighed and drafted on January 17, with 207 averaging 86kg tagged as replacements. This remains below target, but the feed available should allow some of the difference to be made up before mating in April. Poor weather in December delayed cutting the 40ha of silage by a month, which limited the extent that R1 hinds could be rotated. Preference went to R1 stags for best paddocks. Subdivision remains high on the farm development agenda.

Eleven hundred tonnes of silage was made in the first week of January, which more than filled the hinds' wintering pad. The surplus will be used to supplement dairy cows on swedes, without touching the 800 tonne drought buffer in reserve from last year.

This year's Goliath rape crop (16ha) was measured on January 18 and looks like yielding 8,000 kgDM/ha at the first grazing in early February. This will be grazed by hinds and calves once they are tagged. Ridged swedes are looking all right but slugs took out about 10 hectares of direct-drilled swedes, which will be redrilled in soft turnips.

On the cattle front, 120 dairy yearlings are still on board and 41 R1 beef cattle were bought in December. Another 90 weaned dairy heifer calves arrived on 31 January. The market has restricted the purchase of further beef cattle.

The current stock unit split on Coleraine farm is 80:20 between deer and cattle, with dairy heifers making up the bulk of the cattle. John says the



Visitors at a field day on the McLeans' farm last winter inspecting the self-feed silage pit.

cattle are useful for controlling pasture and also for cash flow – especially important in recent times with such poor returns from deer.

The farm is venison focused, concentrating on Eastern hinds (they are now carrying just under 1000). The McLeans were delighted with the results of a Deer Improvement AI programme last year, with an 83.5 percent conception rate, and the 70 hinds eventually producing 53 fawns (74.5%). Weighed at the end of January, the stags averaged 45.75kg (not bad, considering they included

a couple of 30kg tail-enders) and the hinds, 42kg.

"A lot of breeders are very focused on velvet, but Deer Improvement is concentrating on growth rates for venison, which suits us," John says. "Velvet stags don't need the good body weights we're after."

John says that while the focus farm programme means a little extra work, the results make it more than worth while. "It's keeping us focused on the things we need to do, like weighing and monitoring, and we're learning all the time. There's not a lot of information out there on managing deer, and this is helping fill the gaps."

He said Richard Copland, the focus farm facilitator, does an excellent job, and the outside perspective of the committee is a big help. The committee meets bi-monthly and includes a mix of Elk and Red farmers, commercial operators, breeders, scientists and others.

He said the environmental benefits are also showing through. Monitoring has confirmed that the fencing of sensitive waterways has helped improve water quality. The farm has two QE2 Trust-covenanted areas, and a small area on the Waimea stream covenanted through Fish & Game.

The couple also run a farmstay in summer. While not a big money spinner, John says they enjoy meeting new people through the business, and it adds a different dimension. With a growing family (daughters, 11 and 13, and a son, 7) and Jacky's strong involvement in the local community, the couple lead a busy life. John says the opportunity to increase the stocking rate will also open the way for bringing on some outside labour, and restore some work-life balance.

"I would recommend taking the opportunity to become a focus farm for anyone looking to push the envelope a bit with productivity and also improve the environmental sustainability of their farm," John concludes. 📺



John and Jacky McLean and family: focus farm effort well worth while.

Meanwhile back on the farm...

In this issue of *Deer Industry News* we've published the results from the annual industry survey (see page 4). These give us invaluable information about the overall shape of the industry and likely production trends. But while the numbers are very useful, the figures and graphs don't tell the individual stories behind the data.

In an effort to redress the balance, *Deer Industry News* spoke to two commercial deer farmers, Kevin Ramsey from Northern Waikato (see page 23) and James Reardon from Canterbury (see this page). We asked them what the recent industry trends and improved returns have meant for them, and how they'd like to see things progress from here.

Speaking to reporters when you're flat out in the middle of a busy season is never high on the priority list, and we thank Kevin and James for taking the time to share their ideas and comments.

Better growth and prices welcomed

This time last year, James and Fiona Reardon were already starting to feed out, and had to keep doing so right through into mid September. It was a tough winter and a late spring on their 430 hectares of terraced land bordering on Canterbury's Rakaia River.

But the late burst of warmth and moisture, underpinned by much improved returns from both venison and velvet, have meant they go into autumn this year with their deer business in a much healthier position than it was 12 months ago.

The Reardons have been farming in mid Canterbury for around 30 years, gradually trading up since buying their first 10 hectare property in the 1970s. The current farm, which they've had four years, carries 3000 ewes, with 750 deer on a 130 hectare block. The deer include 120 velveters (currently cutting about 500 kg), 200 hinds and 170 yearlings plus weaners.

James has been farming deer for about 20 years and believes he has a good balance between livestock classes and between venison and velvet. The move to the current property four years ago meant rebuilding the deer operation, as they only brought 50 hinds and 60-70 velveters from a much larger herd. With that group came some good velvet genetics through a son of Harvey, purchased about 7 years ago.

The Reardons have rebuilt the herd relatively quickly, and like others in the industry, they are taking the opportunity offered by the better season and prices to keep building the productivity of their animals through better genetics. Two years ago they bought a European stag, and now they have purchased some Eastern genetics through a son of Maximilian from Stanfield's Bushey Park.

James says this should inject about a 15kg growth rate advantage into the 150-160 finishers he sends to the works each year.

On the sheep side of the business, he's counting himself fortunate that he managed to get about 70 percent of his first cross Border-Romney lambs away to the works before Christmas, receiving \$70 a head and avoiding the post-Christmas slump in lamb prices.

He says the improvement in velvet genetics in recent years has been very rapid, with newcomers into velvet taking just 2-3 years to reach levels of productivity that used to take far longer to achieve.

In addition to the investment in genetics, James is also

investing in irrigation for his deer block. The water will come straight from the river, and although this means supply is dependent on flows, it is far cheaper than having to pump the water from the ground. The water will mean a better match with feed demand requirements, and getting to better weaning weights faster. Currently they grow about 20 hectares of feed barley, with 7 hectares of turnips and grass for finishing the deer.



James Reardon: Irrigation will help bring young deer through to weaning weights faster.

While he's been pleased with the lift in the schedule this season, James says it really needs to get back over \$7 to give deer farmers the margin they need to farm profitably.

He is a Velexco shareholder, having become disillusioned with Wrightson's performance. "They were just price takers. They weren't really interested in doing anything to boost our returns."

He's now concerned that PGG Wrightson and the Velconz initiative could end up using the strategies developed by Velexco – but shove Velexco out of business at the same time. "That would annoy me." 📺

Simple systems and quality genetics priorities for Waikato farmer

Looking at the raw numbers on Kevin and Clare Ramsey's Pukekawa farm in northern Waikato, you could be forgiven for thinking that, like so many in the industry recently, they are starting to ease out of deer. But you'd be wrong.

The rolling property is about 50:50 deer and dairy bull beef finishers, with about 320 ewes lambed (mainly kept for ragwort and race cleanup duties).

The Ramseys wintered 2,300 deer in 2006, but this year the number carried through will be closer to 1,900. The reason, Kevin explains, is that they had been forced by the very low schedule in 2005 to hang on to more animals than they would have liked. But starting in July last year, market conditions allowed them to start getting rid of the surplus stock and culling many of the lower-performing hinds.

Kevin is heartened by the improvement in market conditions for venison and velvet, but rather than racing to build numbers and capitalise on higher farmgate prices, he's thinking a little more strategically. The focus is going to be very much on quality rather than quantity.

This season, for the first time in many years, he went to the sales and came home from Tower Farms the new owner of two sons of Watson. "Our original herd was built using bloodlines from Warwick Gregory and John Hunter, but for a long time we've been pretty self sufficient. We saw the lift in prices this year as a good opportunity to invest in some improved genetics."

The Ramseys' deer operation, started by Kevin's father in the mid 1980s, is a mixed venison and velvet business. Production from the velvet herd (currently 250 stags including 2-year-olds) peaked at over 2 tonnes, but they've reduced that to around 1.2 tonnes, with the emphasis now on improving quality and quantity per head.

"Velvet's holding quite well now. You certainly can't beat the returns per acre this year, but it's cost us a lot getting to where we are now!"

Kevin does a bit of AI on farm, but says despite the improved velvet returns, he still can't see an economic return from buying in semen from specialist velvet sires for \$300 a pop. He's pleased with the Velconz initiative. While he doesn't anticipate it making any radical differences to the returns, he strongly believes the industry should take greater collective responsibility for regulating the amount of velvet it produces. "We can actually plan velvet production more accurately than the dairy industry can plan."

He's also pleased with the shape of the venison schedule graph for this season. They breed and finish all their own stock, with about 500 Red hinds going to a Wapiti terminal sire and about 200 to Red sires to breed replacements and stags for the velvet herd. About 150 hinds are recorded for velvet.

The flatter, more sustained chilled season peak gave more farmers a fair go – in marked contrast to the 2005 season. Kevin, who farms only about 20 minutes from PPCS's Te Kauwhata plant and sends most of his deer there, was not happy with their treatment that year. "We planned well ahead and discussed with them what we could supply and when. Then we were simply told what we would get. As it



Kevin Ramsey with the Wapiti sires: He says people won't stay in deer farming if the boom-bust patterns continue.

turned out we missed the peak by about two weeks. We felt a bit used."

The 2006 season has seen much more competition between processors and a healthier market all round. But Kevin warns that he and others won't continue to tolerate sharp end-of-season drops in the schedule. "People simply won't stay in deer farming if we keep getting these boom and bust cycles."

As well as investing in improved genetics, the Ramseys also continue to invest in the environmental sustainability of their property. Kevin is the fourth generation of his family on the farm – the first of the fifth generation is 'on the ground' with another on the way.


The farm is just over 1,000 hectares (800 effective) and part of it borders the Waikato River. There are also some remnants of bush and wetlands. Over the years as time and finance have allowed – and this season has been better than most recent ones – the family has continued to fence off sensitive areas and closely monitor the impact of deer on the land.

"It's wet country and we have to farm it carefully. There are definitely benefits down the track from sustainable practices and we'll continue this work as we can."

As part of this philosophy, Kevin is moving towards more economically sustainable production systems for the deer, steering away from intensive maize silage back towards an all-grass system.

Like many farmers, the Ramseys spread their interests not only between livestock classes, but also into other sectors. A venture into commercial property in partnership with family members has been a successful one. As well as helping smooth any ups and downs in farm income, it also provides another source for investment back into the farm.

Kevin is an active committee member of the Waikato Branch of the NZDFA and is, he notes, by far the youngest committee member. While he's positive about the channelling of funds into industry good activities such as research and focus farms, he has doubts about the political strength of deer farmers.

"In the end I think it's basically the laws of supply and demand that have the biggest impact on our bottom line." 

Sire sale report

Optimism prevailed at this year's sire sales, with a strong turnout of buyers and exceptional top prices.

A buoyant market saw some vendors reporting galleries of over 200 people and a high clearance rate meant that an average of 83 percent of those on offer were sold.

Last year's national top price of \$44,000 was almost doubled this year by Stanfield's Bushey Park, which sold a son of Woburn Herbrand for \$82,000 (a record SCI score stag). Other top prices went to Peel Forest with \$70,000, Tower Farms \$70,000 (and the same purchaser paying \$53,000 for a second sire) and Pampas Heights with \$54,000. Many vendors commented on how pleased they were with the

increased interest in breeding and genetics, particularly for trophy stags. Foveran Deer Park sold \$100,000 worth of semen from their new 2-year-old Pure German sire Amadeus in two minutes.

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

ARAWATA PARTNERSHIP	Pine Bush 16 January.
Stags sold:	34 of 43 on offer.
Top price:	\$11,000
Average:	\$3,000
Comment:	Arawata had the heaviest 2-year-old stags for sale in New Zealand this year. Although the middle order met a restricted price market (Southland deer farmers are still hurting from past years), a good clearance resulted. Some buyers bought more than one sire stag. Top-priced stag an outstanding son of Brutus II, 207kg at 2 years. Second-top stag \$9,500 – this 2-year-old stag cut 4.70 kg SA2 and weighed 220 kg. Both sold to L. Rau, Gisborne. Another stag, that cut 4.50 kg SA2 sold for \$9,000 to T. Cruse. Good 2-year-old stags 180 – 233 kg with cut velvet and others in full antler: \$3,000 – \$5,000. Others with high growth rates for venison: \$2,000 – \$3,000 Three-year-old sires in full antler and weighing up to 258 kg sold up to \$5,000. 2-year-old velvetting stags: \$500 – \$600. Full clearance of 47 thirteen-month maiden hinds, \$360 – \$1,000.

BLACK FOREST	Outram. 13 January.
Stags sold:	45 of 47 on offer.
Top price:	\$37,500 to Peel Forest (last year's top price \$17,500)
Average:	\$8,800 (last year's average \$5,500)
Sales compared with last year:	Much improved
Comment:	Market conditions buoyant. Trophy genetics very strong and also very good demand for high BV stags for early venison finishing. Demand for velvet genetics not so strong. Good gallery of 250 people.
FOVERAN DEER PARK	Haka Valley, 11 January.
Stags sold:	81 of 105 on offer.
Top price:	\$35,000
Average:	\$6,100
Sales compared with last year:	Well up on last year
Comment:	Market very strong for well-presented stags and pitched around trophy-type animals with a smaller interest in velvet stags. Buyers from all over the country, with special interest from the North Island. Also sold \$100,000 worth of semen from our new 2-year-old Pure German sire Amadeus in two minutes. This will be the new record for HH weight and SCI score for a 2-year-old ever produced.

YOU CAN PLEASE SOME OF THE PEOPLE...

While sale results were extremely positive, a few breeders expressed concerns about the timing of the sales.

Trevor Currie of Black Forest, said they held their sale on a Saturday in order to fit in.

"Our sale was near the end of the circuit and while Saturday was not the most favourable day, we decided to go with it. We were still really pleased with the turnout with about 300 people attending and 80 registered buyers. Overall it didn't work out too badly."

Love Red Deer say they sold their stags by private treaty because there weren't enough days allocated.

"We opted out because the Bay of Plenty had two days to fit in eight sales," says Sharon Love. "From our point of view, it suited us to do what we did, but who knows what would have happened if we

had a sale. We're happy with the results we got, but it's a bit disappointing that our decision was based on not having enough time. Next year I hope we can all work together so that everyone has the opportunity to go to all of the sales."

Windermere's John Kempthorne said the fact that some major Canterbury sales clashed with North Island sales meant some buyers couldn't cover all the sales they wanted to.

"We lost significant clients who said they would have liked to be here but couldn't because of the pace of timetables. The lift in confidence this year helped sales more than we thought it would, but it's incredibly important to get a formula correct that works well for everyone and is adhered to and not changed at last minute."

PGG Wrightson agents would not comment until after they meet with vendors, which

they hope will be at the end of February or the beginning of March.

Peter Crowle of Elders Livestock in the South Island said he's had quite a bit of feedback from various disgruntled breeders from the North and South Islands.

"There needs to be a bit of give and take on both sides. People sell different deer – as full antler, three-year-olds and velvet cut – so some could be sold earlier," he said. "I'm not sure what the solution is, but there needs to be a lot of consultation and sticking to what's agreed upon. But what suits this year, with a focus on substantially bigger stags for trophy, might not suit next year, so perhaps it needs to be revisited every season so we do what's right for the time."

It seems that everyone is agreed on one thing – communication is the key.

INGOR DEER FARM	16 January on farm at Waimatua
Stags sold:	29 out of 31 on offer
Top price:	\$4,500
Average:	\$2,000
Sales compared with last year:	Considerably better
Comment:	Stags went to Otago and Southland. Sale prices met our expectations.
LOVE RED DEER	Private treaty
Stags sold:	69
Top price:	\$4,000
Average:	\$3,915
Sales compared with last year:	We sold a lot more by private treaty before sales started.
Comment:	Definitely more interest this year. Pleased with clearance; sold 2- and 3-year-olds. The market is definitely getting better; it's nice for a change – lots of positives out there. There are some awesome genetics coming through and there's been some big interest. We'll have a hind sale in July and we're looking forward to offering some hinds and 2-year-olds.
NETHERDALE RED DEER	On property, 14 Jan
Stags sold:	26 of 31 on offer (58/60 13-month hinds, 46/46 velvet stags)
Top price:	\$31,000
Average:	\$6,750
Sales compared with last year:	All prices well up on the previous year.
Comment:	Much larger gallery of buyers with spirited bidding from both those attending and phone bidders. The animals presented were exceptional this year with velvet weights averaging 5.30kg. The top price 3-year-old red sire stag was a Maximus son cutting 5.80kg SA2 velvet, sold for \$31,000 (this stag was the runner up in the 3-year-old red section at the National Velvet competition). Other notable sales were an Armani son cutting 6.90 SA2 velvet, sold for \$11,000, and another Maximus son grown out to trophy antler sold for \$12,000.
PAMPAS HEIGHTS DEER STUD	
Stags sold:	21 of 26 offered
Top price:	\$54,000 (last year \$44,000)
Average:	\$8500 (last year \$6560)
Comment:	Top price for a Woburn/Warnham cross destined for Timaru.
PEEL FOREST ESTATE	10 January
Stags sold:	32 of 38 on offer
Top price:	\$70,000 (last year's top price \$18,000)
Average:	\$9,000 (last year's average \$4,200)
Sales compared with last year:	Double last year
Comment:	Best ever sale for Peel Forest Estate, with very strong demand for the Furzeland bloodline. Chancellor Peel sons topped the sale with a purebred son fetching Peel Forest Estate record of \$70,000 (purchased by Malcolm Kane). Chancellor Peel's four sons in the sale averaged \$37,000. A purebred Warnham son of Toby sold for \$21,000 to Rodway Stud. Excellent crowd with no overseas buyers which made animals more available to New Zealand farmers.
RAROA DEER	Waikato, 9 January (one of three sales that day in Waikato)
Stags sold:	25 of 30 offered
Top price:	\$17,000
Average:	\$4,250
Sales compared with last year:	Average price well up on last year.

Comment:	Market was a really lovely turnaround with a lot more people and a lot more positive attitudes even if they didn't have a lot more money! Twice as many at sale than last year; the rise in venison prices has been reflected in the mood and attitudes of deer farmers.
REMARKABLES DEER STUD	Queenstown, 15 January
Stags sold:	45 of 60 on offer
Top price:	\$6,200
Average:	\$3,182
Sales compared with last year:	Average price up more than 60%.
Comment:	The market conditions saw strong demand for top stags. A reduced number of buyers as a consequence of previous buyers leaving the industry resulted in a weaker demand for second tier stags. Buyers were looking for BV and size or trophy heads/quality velvet. Deer Improvement has definitely had a big impact with much greater recognition of breeding values. Sold to cross-section of buyers from Otago, Southland and Canterbury. Notable increase in demand from North Island buyers. One independent deer agent said Remarkable Park's superior size, great temperament, reasonable prices and free stag delivery were key reasons for his North Island buyer demand.
RODWAY PARK & SARNIA PARK	8 January
Stags sold:	27 of 30 offered
Top price:	\$12,000
Average:	\$3,560
Sales compared with last year:	Improved
Comment:	This year's auction saw a high clearance rate with firm prices and a number of new clients. Our move to selling only 3-year-old stags at auction has been very successful with clients reporting top results from last year's crop.
STANFIELD'S BUSHEY PARK	Bushey Park, Palmerston, Otago, 12 January
Stags sold:	63 of 67 on offer
Top price:	\$82,000 (last year \$34,000)
Average:	\$11,933 (last year \$8,480)
Comment:	Very strong sale in price and clearance despite having 13 more stags on offer. English very strong for trophy genetics especially. Easterns down by \$2,000 largely due to primary interest in trophies and lack of any significant price lift for venison. Top price in country at \$82,000 for son of Woburn Herbrand record SCI score stag. Other top prices \$41,000, \$40,000, \$34,000.
STEINVALE	Private Treaty
Stags sold:	35
Top price:	19 Fiordland wapiti 3-year-old bulls top price \$3,000 10 NZ Wapiti 3-year-old Top price \$2,350 2-year-old Red x Wapiti stags top price \$2000
Average:	19 Fiordland Wapiti 3-year-old bulls average \$2,234 10 NZ Wapiti 3-year-old average \$2,111 2-year-old red Wapiti cross stags average \$1,916
Comment:	All stags on offer were sold; pleased with the result and the way it has gone. We probably could have put the price up a bit, but gauged mood of industry. We had already committed ourselves and sent out our catalogues at that time, most sold before main sale season started. Plenty of good inquiries.

TIKANA	On farm at Browns, Southland, 6 January
Stags sold:	11 of 17 offered
Top price:	\$7,000 (last year \$4,600)
Average:	\$4,220 (last year \$3,100)
Sales compared with last year:	Very good with average up \$1000 on last year
Comment:	Quality of offering continues to rise. This year's 3-year-old velvet weights averaged 6kg. Good sale with strong demand for better quality bulls. Purchasers from Canterbury, Otago and Southland. Good interest in sales since the auction.
TOWER FARMS	
Stags sold:	28
Top price:	\$70,000 (last year \$18,000)
Average:	\$12,598 (last year \$4,338)
Comment:	Exceptional turn out of people both national and international. Their shopping lists had safari stags at the top, followed by velvet sires. The first 5 lots averaging \$36,400 was a dream start for new selling agents livestock auctioneer Richard Baird. Stags sold to purchasers from Whangarei to Gore. Top price was \$70,000 for an Awesome son out of a Heathrow daughter. Second top price of \$53,000 bought by same purchaser.
WINDERMERE	
Stags sold:	23 out of 27 on offer
Top price:	\$42,000 to an overseas investor who bought three stags.
Average:	\$9,926
Sales compared with last year:	Average double last year's
Comment:	Pleased to see support for velvet genetics, people paying a fair price for quality stags, with pure Warnhams selling in the \$10-15k range. 54 registered buyers and 200 people packed into the sale auditorium. Stags went to buyers from all over New Zealand. Coordination of sales in the area through the "Buy North" group made for a better service to buyers, but organisation nationwide of sales dates a shambles.

Sovereign cracks 50+ points

Midmar Castle Farms in Aberdeenshire has bred the finest Warnham Red deer stag in Britain today, according to Rex Smillie, Rutherglen Estate. A limited amount of semen from, and embryos by the stag, Midmar Sovereign, is available for this next mating season.

Midmar Castle Farms is run by Jackie and Ric Wharton who have been deer farming for over 20 years. The Warnham stock contains bloodlines of Jumbo, Rowland, Richard, Roger, Brian and Peter.

"The Whartons breed multi-point stags that are heavy and well proportioned," Rex says. "Most of their mature stags weigh between 200 and 300kg, and their mature hinds weigh between 130 and 155kg."

Midmar Sovereign is from the Jumbo line, crossed with the Roger and Rowland lines.

"At three years, Sovereign had thirty points and as a four-year-old produced an astounding head with forty-seven points," Rex says.

"Last year, he had forty-nine points and an S.C.I score of 525. The 'Great Warnham Head' of 1892 had forty-seven points. This year he has 51 points and an SCI score of 584. Several spikers among the yearlings at Midmar produce twenty to thirty points."

All Midmar stags are kept until two years old to ensure a full assessment of their potential before selection for sale. Detailed records trace the bloodlines back to Warnham Park.

This closed pure Warnham herd has been Tb-tested since the scheme began, and is certified for live, embryo and semen export worldwide. 🇺🇰

Head mix-up



The photo on the left is of the winner of the 2006 North Island Velvet Competition 4-year-old Red Class, owned by Tim Hope.

Unfortunately the head that was photographed at New Plymouth as the winner of the 4-year-old class was not the correct head. The head photographed and put into the results brochure mailed out with the December *Deer Industry News* was in fact a 5-year-old head belonging to Hatuma Deer. It had come 4th in the North Island maiden class. This same head was sent to Invercargill for the National Velvet Competition where it subsequently won the 4-year class and was once again photographed.

The winner of the 4-year class at the National Velvet Competition will now be the head entered by Chris and Debra Petersen, Te Anau.

The North Island Velvet Competition Committee is very sorry that this has happened and apologises to all concerned. 🇺🇰

Philip Irwin