

DEER INDUSTRY NEWS

Issue 38 • October 2009 • Official magazine of Deer Industry New Zealand and the NZDFA



Also in this issue:

- New Focus Farm initiative for Southland and Fiordland
- Kellogg leadership paper: cautious strategists needed
- Market focus: United States
- Leptospirosis vaccination
- Tb control overview – role of wildlife
- High country deer farming



**DEER INDUSTRY
NEW ZEALAND**

NZDFA
New Zealand Deer Farmers' Association





Deer Industry New Zealand's roles and function up for feedback

You should have received a report in the mail recently called *Dedicated to Deer*. It discusses Deer Industry New Zealand's (DINZ's)

work over the past five years and the industry's strategic intents for venison, velvet and productivity improvement. The purpose of *Dedicated to Deer* is primarily to seek views on the work DINZ does. Are there areas DINZ does particularly well or poorly? Are there aspects of its work you believe should be decreased or increased?

I sincerely hope that you will take the time to read *Dedicated to Deer* and provide feedback by 16 November. The document is not intended to only talk about the positives; in fact there are explicit points made on where DINZ believes it needs to improve. Your comments will be read and properly considered by the Executive and Board, and they will assist in determining the work that DINZ does or does not do over the next five years.

As thoughts turn to the European game season (see Venison Market Report on page 20), producers will be aware of the balance: on one side, a strong New Zealand dollar and weak European economy and on the other, lower venison supply and a well-positioned, sought-after product. In Europe, most diners are extremely value conscious. The restaurants which are managing well are the ones which have adapted to this. They might be using smaller portions of venison,

but incorporating it innovatively. They might be using more shoulder or leg items. They know their break-even points and are working to lower them. This gives them more flexibility to deal with the current volatility. There is a good message in that for New Zealand venison producers.


In a softer market, it is more important than ever to be promoting the many benefits of New Zealand venison to keep it in people's minds as the game season commences, and to continue to develop good niche positions. Following a recommendation by venison marketers, DINZ has just completed food service campaigns in Belgium (because it's an important market for middle cuts) and Germany to remind chefs that it is time to be ordering venison for their winter menus. The campaigns have been received well by importers.

On the velvet front, there appears to be a general market perception of a lower availability of velvet, including New Zealand deer velvet. Exporters report some early enquiry and interest for New Zealand deer velvet. This needs to be put in the context of a strong New Zealand dollar against the Korean won at about 830 (see the Velvet Market Report page 21).

The Minister of Agriculture has recently announced a proposal to amend the National Pest Management Strategy (NPMS) for bovine Tb which will seek to contain Tb in existing areas and totally eliminate it from some 2.5 million hectares. (See page 25 for an article backgrounding bovine Tb control in New Zealand and the role of wildlife in its spread.)

DINZ is largely supportive of the NPMS proposal but is concerned about funding shares. The proposal recommends maintaining existing shares. DINZ believes there is a fair case for the deer industry's share to be reduced, and points out that if this does not occur, the cost per deer farmer will increase significantly. I recommend that deer farmers read the proposed strategy and then make a submission on it. From my read, deer farmers are largely supportive of the work.

To access a copy of the strategy review proposal, visit <http://tbfree.ahb.org.nz> and click on the link for **Bovine Tb Strategy Review**, or call the AHB toll free on 0800 4 824 636 to request a hard copy. Submissions close on 30 November.

I hope you enjoy this edition of *Deer Industry News* and I look forward to receiving your feedback on *Dedicated to Deer*. 

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

Deer Industry News is published by Deer Industry New Zealand six times a year in February, April, June, August, October and December. It is circulated to all known deer farmers, processors, exporters and others with an interest in the deer industry. The opinions expressed in *Deer Industry News* do not necessarily reflect the views of Deer Industry New Zealand or the NZ Deer Farmers' Association.

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Cover: New Zealand venison was centre stage on Silver Fern Farms' "100%" themed stand at the ANUGA food fair in Cologne, Germany, earlier this month. Photo: Innes Moffat.

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New Focus Farm initiative for southerners

A large-scale Focus Farm project of interest to deer, sheep and beef producers is taking shape for Southland and Fiordland farmers.

Deer Industry New Zealand, the New Zealand Deer Farmers' Association, Landcorp Farming Ltd and Meat and Wool New Zealand have joined forces to support a new partnership in technology transfer. The project, led by a Southland NZDFA Branch steering committee, will develop, co-fund and support a three-year Focus Farm programme. The "more calves, heavier and earlier" theme of the other *Making the DIFFerence* Deer Industry Focus Farm projects will be continued.

The properties do not exclusively run deer: the advantages and challenges of integrated livestock farming (i.e. with sheep and cattle) within and outside the deer fence will be explored. The project will be of interest to all livestock farmers, not just the deer industry.

Steering committee chairman, Craig North, says the key to this initiative is the mix of nine public field days over three years. The initiative involves:

- a commercial finishing property
- an extensive commercial breeding property with finishing options (across species but predominantly deer)
- Landcorp Farming's finishing, extensive breeding, breeding and finishing combinations and elite breeding unit in the Te Anau basin, again with livestock integration featured.

The group has secured the services of Riversdale farm consultant and facilitator, Alastair Gibson, with veterinary input from Dr Dave Lawrence, Winton, and specialists from Landcorp Farming, Meat and Wool New Zealand's monitor farm team and DINZ's *Making the DIFFerence* Focus Farm project.


The first field day to explain the concept and visit and overview the commercial finishing property is planned for midday Thursday, 22 October at *Strathmore*, the Pukerau,

Southland property of George and Mary Scott. (The Scotts were Premier winners of the 2004 Sir Peter and Fiona Lady Elworthy Environmental Award.)

It is also planned to form a self-funding discussion group, using Deer South methodology and analysis of the management behind key performance indicators (KPIs) to really get inside the farm management systems and the drivers of productivity and profitability on the properties. It is hoped to implement the Farmax™ pasture production utilisation and efficiency programme within this smaller group and access the farms two or three times a year in addition to the open days.

The following issues, ranked in descending order of importance, were identified by NZDFA Southland Branch members and will feature in the project's field days and discussion groups:

Issue	Commentary
Relative enterprise profitability	Profit expressed as c/kg/DM consumed and enterprises compared on an equivalent basis were important. As far as possible commercially relevant farm inputs and returns should be transparent.
Fawning and weaning performance	Ability to understand factors behind mating success, calving, lactation and post-weaning management.
Integration of other classes of stock	Improved DM utilisation means more earned per hectare. A systems approach to mixed livestock grazing, emphasising synergies and difficulties.
Disease risk and animal health factors in general	Integration implications for parasitism and John's disease, management, behaviour, welfare and environment issues.
Seasonality and climate change	Link to climate cluster discussion group and on-ground realities in Te Anau basin and Southland.
Feeding levels and actual performance	Seasonal growth patterns and production patterns to slaughter or live sale.
Vehicle to attract new farmers	Opportunity to showcase the deer industry under strong financial performance and give confidence to long-term deer farmers and new entrants who have thoroughly researched the options.
Pasture management	Appropriate to grazing species, mix, cultivars, rotation patterns, crops and overall management
Environment and sustainability	Emission, climate change, water quality, plantings and environmental protection, habitat enhancement.
Social	Social sessions associated with events and field days. Includes speakers and keynote presenters; aims to have the discourse on the farm in groups rather than in the vehicle on the way home.
Passion, land-use options	Land use choices, encouragement of new staff,
Single farm as a multispecies unit in operation	
Skills of Landcorp staff in operation	

The steering group believes this initiative is an exciting new development in the concept of monitoring and comparative performance based on KPIs and the bottom line of gross margin expressed as cents per kg dry matter consumed. 

- For further information please contact: Chairman, Craig North, Wilkins Farming Ltd, deer@wilkinsfarming.co.nz, 03 201 6246 or 027 249 9309.



George and Mary Scott's *Strathmore* property east of Gore will be the commercial finishing property in the grouping of contrasting farms that make up the project.

Velvet handling and identification reminders

Velvet antler is a human food product and therefore should be handled hygienically. It should be placed in clean plastic containers or bags and deep frozen ready for sale.

It is a condition of the National Velvetting Standards Body (NVSB) programme that velvet must be hygienically handled during storage and freezing, up to the point where it leaves the farm.

Storage of velvet requires:

- velvet to be frozen as soon as practicable to minimise bacterial growth
- velvet to be handled so as to retain even distribution of blood content
- freezers to be dedicated to storing velvet
- work surfaces and the freezer interior to be clean and hygienic.

Any velvet with food safety risks must not be sold for human consumption. Deer parapox and ringworm are contagious and can be transferred to humans and other stags (see Appendix III in the *NVSB Farmer Velvet Antler Removal Manual*).

The following can affect velvet antler:


- deer parapox
- ringworm
- cattle ticks

- viral wart condition
- bacterial infections
- fly blow.

Velvet identification

Velvet must be identified at the time of removal using an NVSB-approved identification system to ensure traceability and to provide assurance that the velvet was removed humanely.

- Each stick must be identified with an approved NVSB identification tag. Exceptions are made for spiker and regrowth velvet, which can be sealed in a bag with a single approved NVSB identification tag.
- Each stick removed using local anaesthetic without chemical restraint (local only) must also be identified with an NVSB-approved black-coloured ring fitted to the tag.
- Velvetters must keep records of the approved NVSB identification tags used to identify their velvet in their velvet record books.

NVSB identification tags are issued solely to the velvetter by the supervising veterinarian. They must not be used for any other purpose or given to any other person(s). 

WARNHAM PARK & EASTERN EUROPE

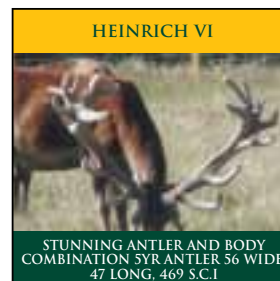
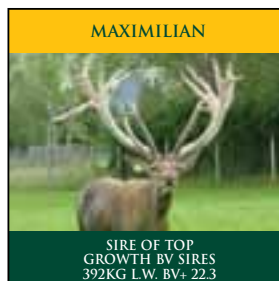


2ND ANNUAL HAWKES BAY SALE

FRIDAY 18TH DECEMBER, 1.30PM

AT THE PROPERTY OF JEREMY AND ANDREA DEARDEN,
324 WHAKAPIRA ROAD, RD4 HASTINGS

FEATURING OUTSTANDING R 3YR SIRES WARNHAM AND EASTERN TROPHY,
VELVET AND VENISON GENETICS SUPREME



PLUS SONS OF NORTON, DARTAGNION, HERMES, ANDREW III, MERLIN,
SERGEI, MAXIMILIAN II AND MILAN

FOR ALL ENQUIRIES CALL CLIVE JERMY 021 924 317, JEREMY DEARDEN 027 285 4643,
PAUL LAMP 027 442 6477, KEITH BURDEN 027 597 5801 OR GRAEME CHURSTAIN 027 473 5853

DINZ APPROVED: CARCASS TRIM COMPLIANT

Are you comparing apples with apples?

Venison producers should begin to look out for a new service being offered by Deer Industry New Zealand: an assurance that they are being paid on a like-for-like basis by different venison processing companies.

While producers may assume they are being paid on a similar basis, the New Zealand deer industry does not have a national standard carcass classification system. Venison processing companies are free to apply their own carcass grading and classification system to the deer they buy.


The industry does, however, have an industry-agreed standard for carcass trim. This is the basis for the collection of industry levies, and generally is the basis for payment to farmers.

At the request of venison processing companies, DINZ will begin a voluntary audit system to provide verification that if a company says they are paying on the basis of the industry standard carcass trim, there is a system in place to ensure that the correct weights are being recorded and used for payment to farmers.

Over the coming months, DINZ will audit participating venison processing companies and these companies can then carry a "DINZ Approved: Carcass Trim Compliant" notification.

Producers will be able to check on the DINZ website to see which companies have agreed to be part of the verification programme. If a company chooses *not* to be part of the DINZ-approved programme, they may still be paying on the basis of standard carcass trim.

In addition to the carcass trim verification programme, companies can also request to be subjected to the industry-agreed standards for venison processing. These are standards for processing venison – designed, agreed and monitored by the Venison Processors Technical Committee – which ensure that systems are in place to produce consistently tender, wholesome venison. Audits are undertaken on the industry's behalf by Deer Industry New Zealand.

DINZ will begin listing companies that comply with the standards. While individual companies may have their own processing standards in place which ensure the quality of their products, compliance with the industry-agreed standards provides a level of certainty that good processing practices are in place. This ensures a minimum standard of quality is maintained for exported New Zealand venison. 

North Island Velvet Competition: 28 November 2009

North Island velvetters: as you begin to cut this season's velvet, please consider keeping back your best heads and entering them in the 2009 competition.

Should you wish, there will be plenty of time to get heads from the North Island Velvet Competition down to the National Competition in Invercargill, with the added benefit of having them benchmarked before you send them!

The 2009 North Island Velvet Competition is being hosted by the Central Regions Branch and the viewing and dinner will be held at the **Travelodge**, Cuba Street, Palmerston North on 28 November. (It is at the same venue that was used for this year's Deer Industry Conference and is changed from the venue that was advertised in earlier issues of *Deer Industry News* and in *Stagline-online*.) If you book in good time, there is plenty of accommodation at the Travelodge – \$150 per couple, including breakfast, is their best rate.

Central Regions and Taihape Branches will be holding their own velvet competitions in conjunction with this event. Even if you have no velvet to enter, consider coming along to the viewing and the awards dinner – it is a very social occasion and with a voting popular choice for Champion of Champions there is an opportunity for you to put forward your opinion. Central Regions Branch is putting on nibbles in between the viewing and the dinner and providing wine

for the tables. They have also organised an MC for the evening – Don Carson of TV3's *No8Wired* – so prepare to be entertained!

All of last year's classes are again sponsored and we now include an additional class for Fallow Hard Antler, supported by the New Zealand Fallow Society. The committee would like to thank PGG Wrightson for again being the major sponsor for the competition and for facilitating the shipment of velvet and hard antler to and from the event. Our thanks also go to Duncan & Co who are kindly providing the competition with high-quality venison for the awards dinner.

Entry forms will be posted out to all previous entrants, but if you haven't entered before and would like a form, there are several options:

- For entry forms or further information, contact Rachael Mitchell on 07 333 2151 or Rodway@xtra.co.nz
- For entry forms contact Hannah Hsu, Deer Industry New Zealand on 04 471 6110
- To download an entry form from the PGG Wrightson website, visit www.newzealanddeer.co.nz

Kellogg leadership paper:

Wanted: industry stability and cautious strategists



The deer industry faces diminishing numbers of both capital stock and active deer farmers caused by a variety of factors including low product prices, an ageing deer farmer population and the lure of alternative farming options. But a positive future lies in attracting more cautiously entrepreneurial people into the industry.

Photo: Vanessa Crowley

These are some of the conclusions drawn by NZDFA Southland Branch Chairman **Brian Russell** in the research paper he wrote for the 2008 Kellogg Leadership Course, titled *Deer O Deer: Psychological Predisposition of an Industry*. (Brian's participation in the Lincoln University course was made possible with support from Deer Industry New Zealand and the Ian Spiers Memorial Trust.)

Brian said the industry was burdened by a lingering perception of its exciting and risky history, which could be off-putting to new entrants.

"The deer industry struggles to shake off the perception of being a young industry with growing pains. Product price volatility contributes to banks, farm advisers and the media being wary of promoting this relatively small industry. The entrepreneurs who initially developed it are now retiring, exposing a lack of new and younger deer farmers. Encouraging a new generation of low-risk-taking and successful farmers is needed to stabilise and grow the perception of deer as an attractive and viable farming option."

Disproportionate value

He said past leaders had been passionate about deer and its products, especially velvet.

"A survey of DFA branches in September 2008 showed that 29 percent of active farmers on the committees were focused on antler genetics, and the total deer numbers that made up this sector of the industry were fewer than 15 percent, with a direct revenue stream of about 10 percent, year end 2007.

"The challenge is to encourage more entrants into the industry without too many entering at once and shorting

supply as they retain breeding hinds, which eventually leads to a rapid increase in production as they start breeding. The people that need to be attracted must understand industry fundamentals and be committed long term.

Brian said credit must go to the Deer Industry New Zealand Board for recognising these issues, providing strong leadership and developing three key industry-agreed strategies in response: venison marketing, velvet antler marketing, and productivity.

"The DINZ Board has a strong working relationship with the major venison exporting companies, some of whom have representatives on the DINZ Board, and they generally work positively with each other in the market. Thanks to this co-operation, most of the venison produced during the period of oversupply was marketed without dumping or sacrificing the lucrative long-term markets. The protection of these high-value markets was essential once the predicted drop in supply occurred."

Focus Farms had been instrumental in attracting a new and much younger group of farmers to field days, he said.

Industry poised to gain from protein shortage

Brian sees the move to promote deer farming as being profitable on the Class 2 and higher land, where it is not competing against dairying, as a positive strategy to encourage people back to the industry. Publication of Key Production Indicators (KPIs) – \$/KgDM produced, \$/SU or return on capital and labour – would all contribute to the revitalisation of the industry, he said.

Which type are you? Deer farmers at a glance

The entrepreneur

Entrepreneurs are confident in their business decisions and are prepared to take a risk in pursuit of success. They regard the industry as a business rather than a hobby. This person does not necessarily need an agricultural background. They are the optimist within the industry; they do the background homework and seek advice before making decisions.

The entrepreneur has wide networks both within and outside the industry, and devotes considerable time to planning and management before making any decision. They identify opportunities that others fail to see. Entrepreneurs are vital to any industry as they develop new ideas in marketing, production and direction for industry, but only a small percentage of the population fall into this category. They will generally be followed by the cautious strategist and gamblers. Most entrepreneurs that could be attracted to deer farming or the industry are already involved. Hence there are few more to be attracted and they will not provide the sustained growth that the industry requires.



In business, they fly by the seat of their pants today and think about the consequences tomorrow. As long as the industry is perceived to be profitable they will continue to be involved, but are the first to abandon it when the going gets tough.

They are self-consumed, egocentric and generally blame or criticise others if the consequences of their own decision making don't meet their often misinformed expectations. The gambler is not afraid to take significant risk and their decision making is very impulsive. Most people in bankruptcy or in a situation of crisis have the characteristics of the gambler. They can be reasonably successful in the short term but are usually unsuccessful long term.

The deer industry sees the *gambler* appear when product prices are high, and they are the first to go when product prices drop. In the deer industry, this contributes to radical production and price fluctuations. They are not a stable backbone to the industry and cause more harm than good for others.



The defensive strategist

The *defensive strategist* typically avoids risk and fears debt. They do not look outside the square. They are consumed by their own defensive decision making, resulting in a lack of re-investment of ideas, capital or resources back into the business.

They generally don't accept new ideas or technology and will not enhance the industry with their negative outlook. They are usually the last people left before the total collapse of an industry or business. Often they are in a position where the assets they own have been inherited. Typically they fill up the non-performing statistics of industry KPIs, and believe that their business is performing as well as could be expected given their own individual circumstances. The older the industry, the more the defensive strategist will become involved, typically through farm succession. Age generally does not greatly alter people's psychological predisposition, but motivation can, as people near retirement focus on alternative goals or become disillusioned.

An element of this has been creeping into the deer industry lately owing to negative or low returns and the focus on alternative profitable industries. This could explain why there are still a small percentage of people exiting the industry as it improves in profitability.

The gambler

Gamblers are involved with any industry or investment that is in vogue. Their reasoning is dominated by media hype.



The cautious strategist

The *cautious strategist* provides consolidation and the gradual growth that will enhance the perception of the industry among the wider farming

community, attracting even more people. They also provide the commitment to ensure steady growth and strong leadership. However, they need positive information to make informed decisions. The industry must portray success and profitability and consistently produce sustainable returns. Representation at industry functions that attract progressive people is one way of providing the information to the right audience. A combined monitor farming approach integrating all species of stock would help expose the industry to more people of this type. The more of them in the industry the more stable it becomes, but this is a "chicken-and-egg" situation as the industry needs to be stable to attract them in the first instance. Slow-to-moderate industry growth is also required, without large attention-grabbing headlines which would attract the gambler.

The cautious strategist is typified by velvet producers, who are individually successful and moderate risk-takers. Even though velvet exports now only make up less than 10 percent of total export earnings, they still represent 29 percent of farmers on Deer Farmers' Association committees. In emotional terms, sire sales prices are dramatically affected, even when a buyer is only seeking high body growth rate

continued on page 10

The cautious strategist: from page 9

genetics, if the animal has had its antlers removed before sale. Deer farmers have an emotional and at times irrational affection for antler. This could have historical roots – in the past, velvet has represented closer to 50 percent of total export value. Velvet producers spend a long time breeding up the genetics required to be successful, hence they tend to be committed long-term. Currently, however, there is only a limited market for velvet and velvet products, restricting the number of specialist velvet producers.

Brian said that when an industry or idea is first developed it is generally “entrepreneurial” people who first enter. In a stable, developed and successful industry, most are “cautious strategists”. When there is rapid and unsustainable growth, “gamblers” come on the scene: these people are prepared to take higher risks as the perceived returns increase, but they haven’t investigated why prices have increased, and believe irrationally in long-term profitability based on the initial rush that prompted their first interest.

As product prices drop, gamblers exit the industry and cautious strategists begin to dominate. They have faith in a sound industry and are in a position to profit after the exodus of gamblers and the production supply/demand curve moves back into balance.

In industries that have boomed and then failed, the “defensive strategist” starts to dominate. The other three types of people exit the industry after making informed decisions at the right time or because the industry is unprofitable. Some industries will be dominated by gamblers (e.g. the share market when it is booming), while other industries will be dominated by entrepreneurs (e.g. the initial dairy expansion into Southland during the late 1990s, or the initial deer industry years.)

The wider agricultural industry perceives the deer industry as relatively risky (boom/bust cycles) and not very successful (low returns during 2001–07). The challenge the deer industry faces is to become less risky and improve its profitability, which in turn would encourage more cautious strategists into the fold.


“With a reduced reliance on traditional European markets and the lengthening of the consumption period, the deer industry is well poised to take advantage of a worldwide shortage of protein and search for healthier eating habits. People need to be pragmatic over these issues and embrace the image of deer on hill country. Most people have now had exposure to well-managed deer farms and realise they are high-performance systems. There used to be a perception that deer were difficult to work with; however that is now becoming less of an issue due to the intensive culling forced on the industry over the last few years of low product prices.

“Of all the pastoral species being farmed in New Zealand it is recognised that deer potentially have some of the biggest improvements to be made in genetics and on-farm production.”

Confidence, stability needed

In interviews for his study, bankers, economists and farm advisers all indicated to Brian that if the industry showed some confidence and stability they could more confidently promote deer farming as a viable industry on the right class of land.

“As the industry grows and is proven to be viable, the cautious strategist becomes more prevalent,” Brian said. “At the same time, the gambler also sees opportunities and fuels the peaks and troughs caused by market fluctuations. The deer industry had few defensive strategists in the initial years, but after a prolonged period of low returns, and attractive alternatives enticing the gambler elsewhere, it’s now dominated by the cautious strategist. But with venison prices currently increasing dramatically, the industry is potentially vulnerable to the gambler.

“The role of cautious strategists is vital to stability as they don’t make rash decisions based on price fluctuations and have a longer-term approach. We don’t see a large drop-off in the number of cautious strategists during times of low product prices; conversely when prices rise dramatically they don’t rush into the industry like the gambler, because they make well-informed decisions. Cautious strategists can comprehend the available information, realise that the industry is fundamentally strong or weak or being influenced by forces outside its control, and react accordingly. They also have the ability and confidence to endure periods of low returns.” 

The typical cautious strategist: does this sound like you?


- Successful
- Competent
- Understands risk
- Takes low risks economically, environmentally and socially
- Generally less highly leveraged
- Has the ability to wait through periods of industry cycles
- More prevalent later in life cycle
- Agricultural producer, thorough knowledge of the farm’s resources
- Farming is a way of life, motivated to preserve farm for next generation
- Plans informally
- Uses group discussions
- Wide information-gathering sources

“However, they were reluctant to promote it while there was still upheaval and highs and lows. Most people recognise that farmers have relatively short memories and would need at least 4–5 years of stability and economic returns before being attracted into or back into the industry.”

He said the lack of confidence was affecting corporate investment, in contrast with the dairy industry where there is confidence in the brand and structure of Fonterra. “The banking industry has no fundamental concerns about deer compared to other industries, and the capital cost of setting up a deer farm is not seen as prohibitive.”

The benefits of low labour units, lower costs structure, return on investment, lifestyle and being part of a young invigorating industry must be extolled in any marketing plan to encourage sustainable investment within the industry.

“Business people need information about profitability and market forecasts, media need success stories, policy makers need a standout industry that they can quickly relate to and other farmers need to see an industry where the ‘grass is greener on the other side of the fence’.”

Brian said that although the industry has strong leadership, the perception of long term instability lingers. This could be changed if the right people can be encouraged. 

COMING EVENTS

Date	Event	Time/Location	Contact for further details
28–29 October 2009	Branch Chairmen's Meeting	Wellington	Tony Pearce, 021 719 038, tony.pearse@deernz.org or Hannah Hsu, 04 471 6110, hannah.hsu@deernz.org
9 November 2009	Whiterock Station Focus Farm Field Day	Whiterock Station, Rangitata, 12.30, BYO lunch	Nicky Hyslop, Macfarlane Rural Business, 027474 4149, nicky@mrbusiness.co.nz
12 November 2009	Duncan & Co Venison Carcass Competition	10am Duncan & Co Mamaku plant	Bob Dunn 07 856 4899 or 0274 948 716
20 November 2009	Waipa Velvet Competition	6pm Brian and Jackie Wellington's	Brian Wellington 07 872 7702
21 November 2009	Wairoa & Poverty Bay joint Velvet Competition	Mahia	Ian Pickering 06 837 5977
21 November 2009	Hawke's Bay velvet competition and function (velvet viewing at PGG Wrightson coolstore Onekawa)	The Filter Room/ Cider Tree Café, Awatoto Road, Meeanee	Philip Irwin 0274 233 566
27 November 2009	Wairarapa Annual Velvet Competition	To be advised	Roger Wood 06 378 7488
27 November 2009	South Canterbury/North Otago Velvet competition and Xmas dinner	The Poplars, Pleasant Point, from 5.00 pm	Murray and Jan Coutts 03 686 2982
28 November 2009	North Island Velvet Competition and Central Regions	Travelodge, Palmerston North	Wilton Turner, 06 328 4771, wapitiwilt@farmside.co.nz or Rachael Mitchell (Secretary) 07 333 2151
29 November 2009	Waikato Branch Xmas function and local fun velvet competition	Mel & Morty Moon's Hunting Lodge, Kuranui Park, Mamaku	Steve Borland 07 872 4679
1 December 2009	Marlborough Branch Velvet Competition	Woodbourne Tavern from 5.00 pm	Justin Stevens 03 575 7180
2 December 2009	Otago Branch Velvet Competition	Alexandra, 4.00 pm	Grant Cochrane 027 223 4053
3 December 2009	Northern Southland Velvet Competition	TBA	Eddie Brock 03 207 6822
3 December 2009	Taranaki Branch Velvet Competition and Annual dinner	Quality Hotel International, New Plymouth	Mary Cusdin 06 765 5180
4 December 2009	Canterbury: Oxford A&P Society Summer Show	Oxford	Tim Bristow 03 312 1581
7–10 December 2009	National Velvet Competition/ Southland Branch Competition (9th)	Ascot Park Hotel, Invercargill. Guest speaker: Davey Hughes, Swazi. From 5.30 pm	Southland Branch, NZDFA, janet.horrell@woosh.co.nz, 03 236 8720
13 December 2009	Kaipara Branch Velvet Competition and Xmas BBQ	Astra Deer, Richard Benson Cooper, noon	Ian Bristow 09 420 2852
18 December 2009	Rotorua Branch Velvet Competition and Xmas BBQ	TBA, 5 pm	Andrew Mitchell 07 333 2151
23 January 2010	Elk and Wapiti Society National Velvet and Hard Antler competition	PGGW Coolstore, Prebbleton and Latimer Hotel, ChCh	Tony Pullar Secretary 03 473 8740
30 January 2010	Fiordland Branch Annual Velvet Competition	Lochinvar, Chris Carran's, 4 pm	Chris Petersen 03 249 8996
20 February 2010	National Rising Stars 2 yo velvet competition & 1, 2, 3 yo hard antler, supported by Waikato Waipa, SCNO and Canterbury Branches	Tower Farms, Discombe Road Cambridge from late afternoon	Joe Crowley 07 823 3309 or 027 472 7436 or Sharon Love tradedeer@xtra.co.nz, 027 486 4341
18–20 May 2010	Deer Industry Conference	War Memorial Hall, Napier (field day 20 May at The Steyning, Central Hawke's Bay)	Tony Pearce, 021 719 038, tony.pearse@deernz.org or Hannah Hsu, 04 471 6110, hannah.hsu@deernz.org
27–28 July 2010	Fifth World Deer Congress	Changchun, China	Tour proposed via velvet processing centres in China. To register interest contact Ron McPhail, PO Box 2091, Palmerston North, Ph 06 357 1644, enquiries@crmcphail.co.nz



MARKET FOCUS:

United States

In the second of our overviews of the main markets for the New Zealand deer industry, we will examine the place of venison in the world's biggest economy, the United States.

Strong headwinds

Despite all the talk about the rise of China, the United States remains by far the world's biggest economy. In US dollar terms, GDP (nominal) of \$14.2 trillion is the same as the combined economies of China, Japan, India and Germany in 2008. Per-capita income is not the highest in the world. But the proportion of the population who have sufficient disposable income to afford expensive meats outstrips any other.

Eating out is a national pastime; by some estimates three of every five meals eaten in America is outside of the home, and while a surprising – and disturbing – proportion of these are in the car, and most are at low-cost outlets, America still has more high-class restaurant seats than any other market.

To generalise, Americans like their meat. They have a familiarity with venison, they eat big portions, and have the money to pay for it. So it is a market with tremendous potential. Nevertheless, exports of venison to the United States have perhaps never quite achieved the volumes which early venison marketers aspired to. Exports peaked at 1,600 tonnes in 2005/6, valued at NZ\$20 million. Since then, the volume and value has fallen as economic conditions have deteriorated and New Zealand venison export volumes have fallen.

Distribution

Venison is mainly distributed by “exotic meat” specialists. As a very low volume item, venison has benefitted from the more personal attention that specialist game and exotic meat distributors can provide. The main importers are based in California, Nevada and Connecticut, but their network of distributors criss-crosses the country.

Restaurants the main outlet

New Zealand marketers have made important strides in securing shelf-space in some of the country's leading retailers. Several companies are successfully selling venison via Whole Foods, and other up-market gourmet stores like Dean and DeLuccas and Fairway Markets in New York City. However, as we know, venison has retail issues. Poor colour stability and an intolerance to overcooking mean that it is a tough sell at retail.

Therefore, the vast majority of New Zealand venison is sold via restaurants where trained chefs can work their magic.

Issues

The hunted game effect

In the United States each year, many millions of hunting permits are issued. Hunting deer in the Fall is a national pastime; consequently the main experience most Americans have with venison is from wild deer shot by enthusiastic amateurs. Due to the standard of field dressing and the lack of integrity in the cold chain, the resulting venison is sometimes of questionable quality, providing a less than optimal eating experience. The image of venison therefore remains one of a gamey product, suitable for grinding or chilli, but not much else. It is against this misconception that New Zealand venison competes.

Continued on page 14

IMPROVING THE PERFORMANCE OF THE NZ VELVET SUPPLY CHAIN



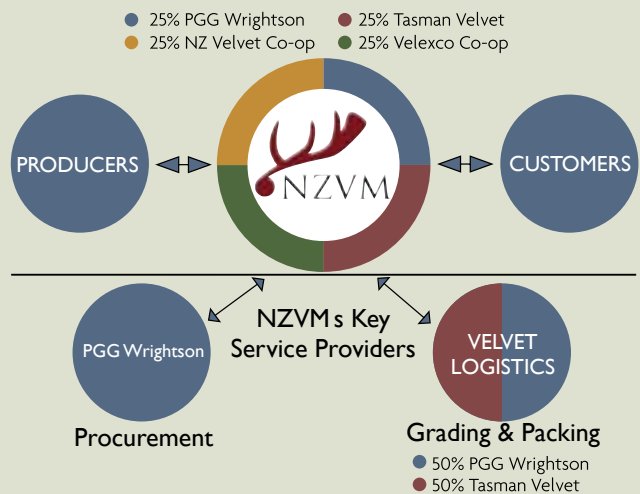
NZVM is responsible for marketing over two-thirds of New Zealand velvet, driving further efficiencies and marketing initiatives.

This is the first step toward improving returns for New Zealand's velvet producers through a focus on marketing rather than commodity selling.

Thank you to all those who attended our recent supplier meetings, your support and feedback was very much appreciated.

For more information visit www.nzvm.co.nz

Contact your local PGG Wrightson representative or contact Nick Taylor on 03 3667078, email nick@nzvm.co.nz



US market focus: from page 13

Competition

It is illegal to offer uninspected venison for sale in the United States, therefore the millions of deer shot there each year cannot be sold for restaurant use. Only inspected deer can be offered for sale; several deer farms and professional companies such as Broken Arrow Ranch produce quality-assured venison sold direct and to fine dining restaurants across the United States. As such, New Zealand is the main supplier of venison to the restaurant trade.

Position of Cervena® in the United States

Cervena remains an asset for the New Zealand industry, although one whose value is probably eroding with time. There remains a level of familiarity with the name among chefs who were working in the 1990s when the expenditure on the launch and subsequent promotional activity created a high level of awareness of the appellation, and the quality assurance procedures behind it. Cervena in the 1990s was a new product and the pasture to plate assurance that it carried was rare among meat products in the United States at the time.

Many other products now offer similar promises as Cervena. New, exotic products are being offered to chefs, and the mainstream beef, pork and poultry industries are constantly developing and marketing new offerings and “meal solutions”. Many of these offer the same benefits as Cervena, i.e. “natural” production, QA and guaranteed tenderness.




In many ways, Cervena has lost much of its uniqueness, and although it is still one of the only venison items available, the venison category now faces more competition.

Future trends

The changing supply in New Zealand, the depreciation of the US dollar, the recession in America and the stronger demand for New Zealand venison in Europe have all combined to reduce the volume of venison exported to North America since it peaked in 2006. With the current recession and the expected reduction in the volume of venison New Zealand will produce in the years following 2009, it is not realistic to expect any significant

increases in the volume of venison exports to North America for some years to come. Nevertheless, North America remains an important market for New Zealand. The restaurant trade provides opportunity for selling significant volumes of middle cuts, and niche opportunities for specialist retail sales.

History has proven several times that oversupplying the traditional European restaurant trade can lead to substantial falls in venison prices in Europe. Venison marketing companies have successfully developed alternative markets to mainstream Europe, including North America, and their commitment to continue supplying North America even during the dire market conditions of 2008/9 indicates the importance that marketing companies place on the long-term business relationships they have established. 

Venison news roundup



ANUGA: our product was there

ANUGA is the largest food fair in the world – in fact it is an amalgam of ten specialised food shows under one roof. More than 160,000 food and beverage professionals from 100 countries gather in Cologne, Germany, for five days every second year to find new products, negotiate contracts and renew acquaintances. About 6,000 companies exhibit their goods and services at the fair.

Many of the world's largest food companies use ANUGA as a showcase for their new products, and as an assertion of their commercial power. Many stands will cost more than \$1 million to design and construct.

Among the heavyweights of the international food business, marketing companies are waving the flag for New Zealand venison. Silver Fern Farms, Alliance Group (in conjunction with one of their key importers), AFFCO and Taylor Preston all had stands displaying their own brands of New Zealand venison as part of their offerings at ANUGA this year.

New Zealand venison items were on display on many importers' stands including Europe's biggest meat company, VION, plus specialist importers like Luiten and Vesty Foods. Other companies who use New Zealand venison in their manufactured items like Polarica, Ager and Geti Wilbi also had stands at the fair and were discussing supply with their New Zealand companies and demand with their customers.

The general mood among the meat trade people at the fair was one of determined optimism. Among sales staff it is agreed that "the recession is a state of mind" which will be overcome through hard work and superior customer service. Among the chefs and restaurant operators there is resignation to another year of tough trading conditions, but relief that the last year had not been worse.

Demand for venison is sufficient at present. Chilled venison sales to restaurants are beginning to pick up pace with the arrival of autumn, and the deliveries of frozen venison for manufactured venison items continues satisfactorily. Demand for frozen middles is described as "sticky" but marketing companies are determined to avoid the temptation of discounting middles in order to generate sales. Nevertheless,

beef prices continue to languish at multi-year lows, providing stiff competition for volume sales to price-conscious chefs.

Star Chefs – ICC New York City

This year, two companies independently showcased their venison at the International Chefs Congress in New York. Terra Pacific Ltd and NZ Lamb Co participated in a New Zealand pavilion at the chefs' gathering. New Zealand chefs prepared a luncheon for the 300 participants on one of the days of the gathering, including Szechuan Spiced Cervena® Venison with Pickled Vegetables, Spiced Miso Dressing and Wasabi Mayonnaise and Spice Crusted Cervena Venison Shortloin with Avocado, Cucumber and Micro Greens.

Benelux promotion

October sees more advertising in the food service press to reinforce the message that New Zealand venison is excellent quality. To date, six national trade magazines are running features on New Zealand venison as a result of the press releases DINZ issued in September. We look forward to sharing the resulting press coverage. DINZ advertising has been complemented by a number of New Zealand venison marketing company promotions with their importers and wholesalers: store tastings, advertising via wholesalers' fliers, attending consumer food fairs and newspaper advertising.

German food service promotion

Neuseeland Hirschfleisch features in Germany's most popular professional chef magazines through September and October. Advertisements, coupled with favourable editorials extolling the quality of the venison and the purity of the country appeared in six chefs' magazines with a combined circulation of 80,000 German chefs. It is expected that the publicity achieved by the advertisements will encourage chefs to seek New Zealand venison for their seasonal menus. The advertising and editorial has been well received by German importing companies, who were consulted prior to the implementation of the seasonal advertising initiative.

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Venison Industry Strategic Intent 2009–2014

What's being done since it was agreed?

The Venison Industry Strategic Intent (VISI) is not a document that, once agreed, goes on the shelf to be brushed off in five years' time. VISI forms the guide for all DINZ activity, and new initiatives have been started since the agreement of the strategy earlier in the year. These are some of them.

1. Premium positioning of venison

- Advertising in high chefs' magazines in Germany and Belgium, accentuating the quality standards which underpin the reputation of New Zealand venison.
- Advertising in Food Arts – the premier culinary magazine in the United States.
- Ambassador Chef, Brad Farmerie, used New Zealand venison on the US cooking show, Iron Chef America.

2. Reduce volatility

- More work in non-seasonal markets. Chef Graham Brown will be conducting chefs' tables at top hotels in Hong Kong and recently conducted another round of culinary school demonstrations in the United States. Four schools and about 200 students have benefitted from an introduction to the quality of farm-raised venison, and its applicability to a wide range of cuisines.
- More work in non-traditional markets. DINZ assisted with costs of a Dutch promotion through national retailer selling ready-to-cook venison meals.
- DINZ co-sponsored a chefs' function organised by one exporting company in Northern Italy.

3. Demonstrate commitment to market development


- DINZ asks: what have you as a supplier done to help your marketing company provide their customers with certainty in these uncertain times, to help with market planning and assist price stability?
- Introduced the new Deer Industry New Zealand-approved programme to provide producers with more information on the basis by which they are being paid by processing companies.
- DINZ will provide opportunity for venison marketing companies to showcase their market development activities on the web and in future editions of Deer Industry News.

4. Improve productivity

- Continue Focus Farms programmes with emphasis on benchmarking community groups' KPIs against the Focus Farm and further understanding the management systems behind top performance.
- Extend "More calves, heavier and earlier" theme to incorporate better use of proven genetic merit and most appropriate farming systems for land class.
- Continue to analyse and publicise profitability model analysis in terms of profit per Kg/DM grown and consumed.
- Emphasise reducing wastage in reproduction and identifying lost growth opportunities.
- Build awareness of planned deer health programmes and publicise key messages to encourage improved productivity.

5. Freedom to operate

- The start of the venison life-cycle analysis.
- Development of a draft response plan to the discovery of Chronic Wasting Disease in New Zealand.
- Input into the development of the National Pest Management Strategy for eradication of Bovine Tb.
- Submission to MAF on its proposed Animal Welfare Compliance Strategy.
- Continued participation in NAIT, with amendments to NAIT achieved to better reflect the needs of the deer industry.


For more on the DINZ strategic intents and an opportunity to have your say about the role and functions of DINZ, see the consultation document, *Dedicated to Deer*, sent to all producers and others with an interest in deer earlier this month. If you didn't receive a copy or need another, contact the DINZ office on 04 473 4500. 

Venison news roundup: from page 15

German recipe competition



Dipping toes into the world of web-2, DINZ has launched an online recipe competition for German consumers in conjunction with the culinary website **Bongusto.de**

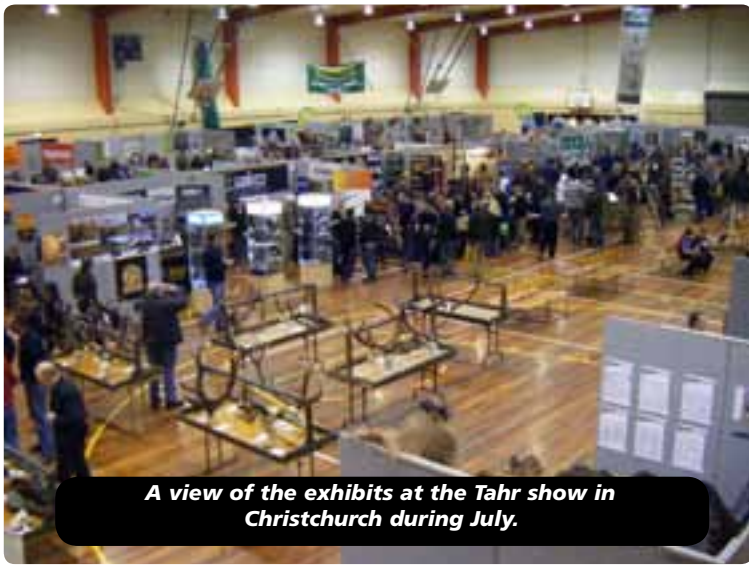
Home cooks are invited to submit their recipes electronically and share their ideas with others. The winners will be announced in December and treated to a gourmet meal at their homes cooked by a well-known German chef. 

GAME ANIMAL SHOWS

Two major game animal shows this winter drew record crowds: over 6,000 to the 16th Annual Sika Show in October in Taupo, and over 2,000 to the Tahr Show in Christchurch during July. The trophy competition at Taupo fielded more than 190 entries with some great red and sika heads. Attendees were also treated to game cookery demonstrations and live entertainment. The 2010 shows are planned to be even bigger.



Chef Tony Smith demonstrating venison cooking to an appreciative audience at the Tahr show.



A view of the exhibits at the Tahr show in Christchurch during July.



A fine collection of heads at the Sika Show in Taupo.

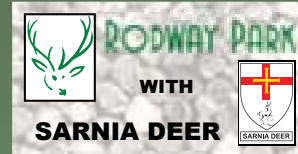
Photos: Mike Bradstock.



STAG WALK

Friday 11th December 2009

10.30am



12.30pm



2.00pm

LOVE RED DEER
AWESOME TROPHY GENETICS

3.30pm



ROTORUA

Saturday 12th December 2009

10.30am



12.30pm



2.30pm



WAIKATO

IN ASSOCIATION WITH:



Venison

As expected, a sharp decline in volumes is now beginning to show up in export statistics. This drop was offset to an extent by a large increase in per-kg values during the year to June 2009. As the new northern season begins, wholesalers remain confident that prices can be maintained and stocks moved.

Production

Latest available national production figures confirm a sharp decline in venison production. Figures for June production show a 38% reduction in comparison with June 2008. Production for the 12 months ending June 2009 are 18% down on the same period a year earlier at 27,938 tonnes.

Exports

Export volumes continue to fall as the reduction in the national herd begins to affect production. In the 12 months ending June 2009, exports were recorded as 16,941 tonnes, a 22% decrease year-on-year. The value for the 12 months increased year-on-year by 2%, and the value per kg increased 31%. The 12 months to June 2009 includes the game season 2008, when commodity prices peaked, pushing venison prices in Europe and North America up too. Since then, prices have eased back a little. The \$/tonne values for the month of June were back a little on the previous year.

Exchange rate

While the NZD is at about the same level it was this time in 2008, market prices are a little less; therefore returns to New Zealand are a little less. Hopes for a depreciation of the NZD against our main trading currencies remain just that. At 48 euro cents, the NZD dollar remains below its 10-year average against the euro.

Schedule

In week beginning 5 October, the national average schedule for AP stags, 55–60kg was \$8.59. This was 10% below the same week in 2008, but remains 20% above the 5-year average.

Market conditions

Cool weather arrived in Europe in the first week of October, at last turning consumers' attention to game menus. Chefs had not been prepared to buy venison at last year's prices when all other game items and red meat options had come down in price. Wholesalers have adjusted prices down a little to ensure that venison pricing retains its relativity to other options, but the price adjustments have not been as great as for other goods. Chilled venison for retail customers has been selling well, as have chilled and frozen leg cuts. Frozen middles in some sectors remain slow moving, but wholesalers remain confident that with the expected lower volume arriving from New Zealand this year, prices can be maintained and stocks moved into the system.

Recent promotion activities

In the past few months, the DINZ Executive has been busy spreading the good word in New Zealand, through:

- completion and distribution of Healthy Venison pamphlet
- completion and distribution of Healthy Venison booklet for health professionals
- exhibiting at the New Zealand Dieticians' Conference
- inserting recipes into Healthwise magazine
- inserting recipes in New Zealand Diabetes Association magazine.

On a more hedonistic front, venison was the main sponsor of a beer and wine matching dinner at the opening function of the Beervana beer awards in Wellington.

Venison cooking demonstrations were also carried out at 14 polytechs around the country.

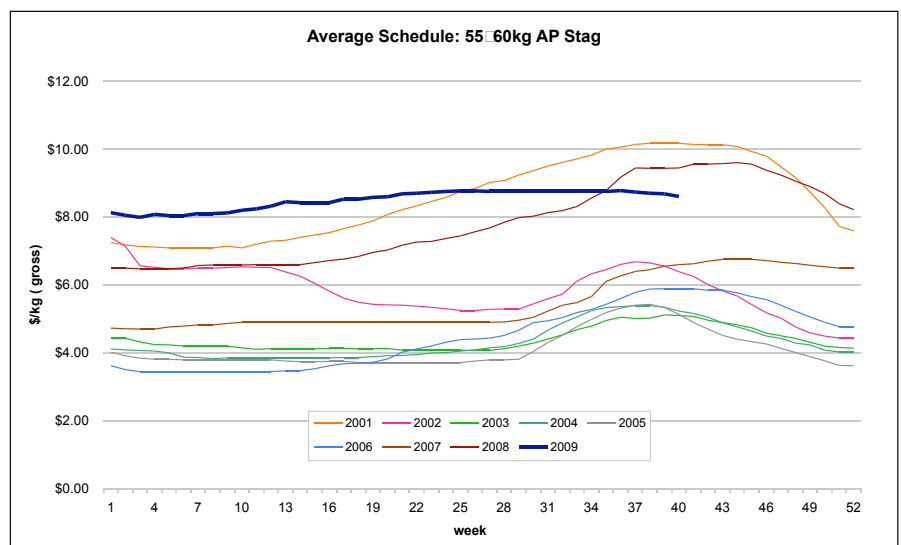
Venison on a plate: venison features prominently on TVNZ



Three award-winning chefs are using venison in the culinary series currently screening on TV1 prime time at 5:30 pm on Saturdays. Dunedin chef, Michael Coughlin, Christchurch's Phillip Kraal and our own Graham Brown all have their own episodes of *New Zealand on a Plate*, and all three are using venison as classic examples of their region's cuisine. Two farmers supplying the local market – Grant Cochrane and John Douglas – sponsored their respective episodes, while DINZ arranged for Graham Brown to highlight venison as the best of Canterbury cuisine.

Catch the episodes if you can – they screen on 10 October, 24 October and 28 November.

See <http://tvnz.co.nz/nz-on-a-plate> to download the recipes or catch up with missed episodes.



Velvet

Demand for New Zealand velvet is increasing as a potential supply shortage leads to an industry first: New Zealand wholesale prices rose slightly above Russian velvet for a brief period. While there are positive signals for New Zealand velvet in the coming season, some importers caution that if the New Zealand price rises too much at retail, Oriental medicine doctors may reduce their use. The revised and translated Velvet Technical Manual received a very positive response from Korean, Chinese and Taiwanese importers and marketers.

Global velvet stocks

Most Korean importers suggest that the potential for reduced volumes from North America, China and New Zealand has increased retail prices. Russia has reportedly increased production by as much as 30–50 percent. This led to a temporary switch in lead pricing to New Zealand velvet. One prominent importer suggests that Russia will continue to increase production through government support, and within the next three years may double velvet output from what it was two years ago.

Velvet stocks in New Zealand and Korea are low. While there may be stocks in China, some Chinese importers suggest that going into the main season the quantity is down on global inventory compared with previous years.

Korean economy

The second quarter of 2009 achieved an economic growth in Korea of around 2.5%. Although this is positive, New Zealand Trade and Enterprise in Seoul suggests that it is influenced by the government stimulus package. With around 70% of their stimulus package spent, the third quarter results will better reflect the true state of the economy. While growth is expected to be back, leading economists in Korea are predicting the third quarter GDP will still be positive. A meeting between the heads of industry suggested that economic recovery could be "saw tooth" in nature. One key issue is the lack of orders moving forward in the heavy industry sector. For example, shipbuilding orders run dry from mid 2010. Long-term recovery will depend on the private sector and is largely dependent on the US and European economies.

The strong New Zealand dollar is creating a headache for importers. This adds further pressure on price to Oriental medicine doctors, and some Korean importers suggest product substitution could occur from velvet to other medicines.

Market activity – Korea and China

There has been a flurry of activity as importers gear up to secure stock for next season. Some are citing reasonable confidence with the recession over and there has even been talk about a potential for a positive impact on velvet consumption due to the H1N1 virus. The spread of H1N1 is of great concern in Asia as they move toward their peak flu season.

Timed in with the start of the season, the Velvet Technical Manual was updated and, in line with the new velvet industry strategic intent, translated into Korean and traditional and simplified Chinese. The Technical Manual was greatly appreciated in New Zealand's core markets, Korea, China and Taiwan as it closely aligns health benefits with research.

Two sets of brochures were also created to promote New Zealand velvet. One is aimed at consumers, highlighting health benefits for taking velvet, complementing the Technical Manual. The second brochure highlights benefits of New Zealand velvet and is aimed at wholesalers. Also in line with

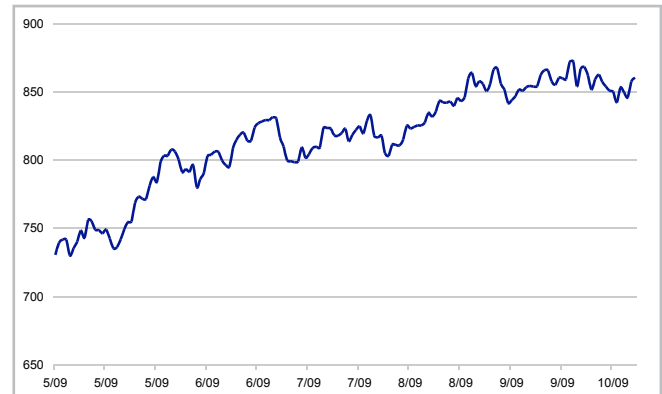


Figure 1: Strengthening NZD against the Korean won, 1 May to 8 October 2009

the strategic intent, the brochures were translated into Korean and traditional and simplified Chinese.

Work continued on promoting velvet in the companion animal market with further advertising in Hong Kong and attendance at one of the largest pet expos in Shanghai during late September. Sales of further processed product continue to grow in Asia for companion animals.

In Korea, a company promoting a novel drink compound reports very good success with its other New Zealand-originated velvet products. One product, a concentrated 30 ml vial containing 37.5 grams of velvet in one dose, has sold 10,000 units over the last three months (traditionally the low season).



DINZ entered a joint promotion with a New Zealand-based exporter selling branded, sliced New Zealand velvet direct into Korea. The promotion ran over September, timed early enough in the season for Oriental medicine doctors to consider this option to ensure they are buying New Zealand velvet through a transparent and direct route. The objective was to create an awareness of New Zealand sliced velvet by advertising in the main Oriental medicine doctor industry publication. The first

Continued on page 22

Leptospirosis vaccination makes economic sense: Wilson

Leptospirosis remains so widespread on New Zealand farms, especially mixed-species operations, that it's worth seriously considering vaccination solely for its benefits on weaner survival and growth response. These are the conclusions presented by Dr Supatsak (Art) Suharat and Professor Peter Wilson at the Deer Industry Technical Conference in July.

"There are few situations in farming where such high gains in productivity are available so simply, for so many," Peter said.

In mixed-species farms, contamination and cross-grazing is a significant risk factor, with inter-species transmission probably taking place across sheep, cattle and deer. Prevalence in sheep is slightly lower than in other animals, but to manage the disease risk all species should be considered.

A regional seroprevalence survey shows the commonest serovars are Hardjobovis (77 percent and prevalent in all species) followed by Pomona (20 percent, sporadic in all species), with an overall even distribution of serovars throughout New Zealand (high at about 85 percent), Art Suharat said. "The real-time PCR technique used is highly sensitive and specific."

Decide in consultation with vet

Whether to vaccinate is a decision for the farmer to make after collecting all the evidence, weighing up the alternatives, and discussing the issue with a veterinarian, said Peter Wilson. "Vaccination will induce an immune response without interfering with maternal antibodies. It prevents or reduces urinary shedding, reduces kidney culture and kidney lesions, and therefore reduces the risk of human infection. Whether the human health aspect in itself justifies

vaccinating depends on how risk averse the farmer is for themselves and their family. Leptospirosis in humans is seriously debilitating, and the peace of mind alone will be a good enough reason [to vaccinate] for some."

With previously unexposed animals, vaccination has a greater effect. Some precautions, such as not mixing weaners from different sources, will also reduce the likelihood of outbreaks, Peter said. "But none of those practices is likely to be more effective than vaccination."

Production response

Even if the farmer does not consider all the above good enough reason to vaccinate, he or she should consider the benefit of the production response that will result, Peter said. "Hardjobovis causes economically significant subclinical losses, even at a modest prevalence. Experiments using Leptavoid® have shown vaccination can improve average growth by up to 6.1kg and produce a 5–10 percent higher weaning percentage. These growth effects have been astounding and were confirmed by a repeat experiment which almost exactly replicated them."

Vaccination was highly economic in most situations, in terms of number of animals saved through reducing reproductive losses and through improved growth, he said.

"Anywhere that leptospirosis causes more than 0.7 percent mortality in weaners, or 0.3 percent in hinds, vaccination becomes economic.

"In addition there is a massive cost-effectiveness once the seroprevalence exceeds 19 percent. This means that on about two-thirds of farms, vaccinating will be economic just in terms of its benefits on growth, let alone reproduction. Even on farms that don't get a response in any particular year, the odds are that the benefit will be felt in another year when the prevalence of infection is higher owing to factors like management, environment or climate."

Peter said that with only about 10 percent of farmers vaccinating deer for leptospirosis, many had yet to take advantage of the large potential production response.

"This is unfortunate because when prices are low it's probably more important than ever. A five percent loss is bad enough in good times but could be the straw that breaks the camel's back when times are tough. Each farmer should consider whether their financial system can withstand an outbreak, or the loss in reproduction or growth."

Response depends on prevalence of infection

Nevertheless, there was still no simple answer to the question whether vaccination was always economic in any

Continued on page 24

Velvet market report: from page 21

shipment of sliced velvet occurred later last year and provides an option to add value to velvet before it leaves New Zealand. This could gain more favour as doctors are increasing their desire for authentic New Zealand velvet.

Market access

The second round of negotiations for a possible free trade agreement (FTA) between New Zealand and Korea has occurred in Wellington late September. It is expected that more information will become available as the negotiation process continues to progress.

The Korean Deer Breeders Association is continuing to increase its opposition against a possible FTA with New Zealand, particularly where it includes velvet.

The Korean Government has issued its intention to tighten up on traceability of traditional medicines. This is supported by the Association of Korean Oriental Medicine, which has put its own scheme in since the start of this year, and which includes velvet. One report suggests that the Korean Government wishes to have a robust traceability programme in place by the end of 2010.

Market access into Australia continues to be an issue as the Therapeutic Goods Administration questions stall the process for a third time. 

Leptospirosis: from page 22

Vaccination programme

If you do vaccinate, these are Peter Wilson's recommendations:

- Consider all the issues including improved productivity as well as stock survival.
- Vaccinate weaners at 3 months, as their first autumn is a high-risk time and because their response to the vaccine will be best at this stage.
- Vaccinate for clostridia at the same time.
- An annual booster to hinds helps pass colostral immunity to calves for about their first 12 weeks.
- Two vaccines are approved for use in for deer: Leptavoid® (developed in New Zealand) and Leptoshield®.
- Leptavoid® 2 is effective against serotypes Pomona and Hardjobovis. It is approved for use in cattle, deer, sheep and pigs, and prevents urinary shedding for


12 months. (Registered pursuant to the ACVM Act 1997, No. A1948. PAR Class 1. For use only under the authority or prescription of a veterinarian.)

- Leptavoid® 3 is effective against the common serotypes Pomona, Hardjobovis and Copenhageni. It is approved for use in deer and cattle, and prevents urinary shedding for 12 months. (Registered pursuant to the ACVM Act 1997, No. A3876. PAR Class 1. For use only under the authority or prescription of a veterinarian.)
- Leptoshield® vaccine is effective against the common serotypes Pomona and Hardjobovis. It is used for the prevention of leptospirosis in cattle, sheep and goats and as an aid in the control of leptospirosis in deer. (Registered pursuant to the ACVM Act 1997 No A3734. PAR Class 1. For use only under the authority or prescription of a veterinarian.)
- Above all, discuss the whole question carefully with your veterinarian and familiarise yourself with all the issues.

one year, Professor Wilson said. "The response depends largely on the prevalence of infection. The epidemiology of lepto is very environment dependent and you can only ever find out that effect after the fact. But in the final analysis, it is the risk model that should be applied rather than the purely economic model."

In cases of clinical disease there is a more than two percent annual herd prevalence and a mortality rate in outbreaks of up to 20 percent depending on the speed of intervention, he said. "The numbers of deaths per case submitted average 14, but have ranged up to 80, so losses can be significant and rapid. The costs of an outbreak also include antibiotics, stress, time, recuperation and of course production losses."

So are there alternatives to vaccination? Reducing exposure of at-risk animals is one option, but this is only relevant if the herd prevalence is zero to start with, Peter said. Reducing stress and other environmental factors was "laudable but unproven", he added. "Even rapid early intervention remains tricky and ignores the subclinical effects."

He said that research was continuing toward determining when reproductive losses occur, and how they were manifested. In addition to abortion, the possibilities include absorption of the foetus, and a reduction in postnatal or perinatal survival. "We are continuing to explore these questions by looking at deer that are later in gestation." 

Collaboration to deliver optimum "plate to pasture" model

Silver Fern Farms and Livestock Improvement (LIC), have jointly developed a pilot programme to deliver "enabling knowledge" to implement an integrated supply chain from farmer partners of Silver Fern Farms to their international customer partners.

The pilot, which began last month, involves around 150 farmers and 150,000 lambs for export to Europe, paving the way for an integrated supply chain for red meat.

The pilot will utilise EID tags to link into MINDA, LIC's herd/flock control system. This is combined with on-farm input and production and X-ray analysis from Silver Fern Farms' processing plants, linked back to genetics to provide farmers with an overall market-genetic-production performance measure.


The lamb trial will be followed by a beef and venison project early next year.

Launching the pilot trial, Silver Fern Farms' Chief Executive Keith Cooper said the current supply chain for prime beef, deer and sheep was fragmented, inefficient and could not effectively optimise the value chain to retail customers' specifications and supply profile. Farmer preferences and climatic conditions impacted volumes and quality of

livestock along the chain, he said.

"The integrated supply chain 'modelling' for red meat that we're proposing, under our 'plate to pasture' model will bring farmers closer to the consumer and create potential for greater on-farm productivity and profit."

Mark Dewdney, LIC's Chief Executive, said the opportunity to make available his company's expertise in individual animal recording, coupled with the market-relevant data from Silver Fern Farms, creates an exciting opportunity for the red meat industry.

He said the successful implementation of an integrated supply chain model will enable the partners to meet more sophisticated customer product requirements, improve the performance inventory management along the supply chain and improve on-farm results through monitoring performance of individual animals against customer specifications and benchmarked against other animals. 

NZ leading in Tb eradication – but pressure must be maintained

Wellington hosted the fifth International Mycobacterium bovis (bovine tuberculosis) Conference in Wellington in August, organised by staff from the Animal Health Board (AHB). A total of 211 delegates attended from 29 countries. Dr Paul Livingstone, technical manager of the AHB, provided an overview of bovine Tb control in New Zealand – past, present and future.

Controlling Tb in livestock is relatively easy if there is no reservoir of Tb-infected wildlife, but of the countries with a wildlife-Tb problem New Zealand is the only one that has made significant progress in beating Tb. This results largely from the early recognition and addressing of the issue, early determination of the role of possums as a reservoir and the effectiveness of subsequent possum control. The continued success owes much to research and joint ownership of the programme by farmers and government, Dr Livingstone said.

Infected possums found in 1960s

Tb control in New Zealand began in the mid-1900s, with large initial reduction in livestock infection. However, Tb could not be cleared from some areas, and in 1967 it was found in possums. Possum control was initiated in some of the problem areas, and Tb levels in cattle fell. Unfortunately, in 1978, coincidentally the same year disease was first found in farmed deer, the Government decided to discontinue funding of possum control. There was no stakeholder input to that decision, and insufficient scientific knowledge to predict the rapid and widespread of infection by Tb possums that followed.

Possum control funding was renewed in 1984 and made



Tb was first found in possums in New Zealand in 1967.

“user pays” three years later, culminating with the formation of the AHB, with stakeholders representing farmer and industry groups. By 1989, Tb testing of farmed deer was compulsory and the Biosecurity Act 1993 led to the establishment of a National Pest Management Strategy (NPMS) for bovine Tb. This is administered by the AHB, whose sole mission today is to eradicate Tb, thereby safeguarding dairy, beef and venison production as well as safeguarding future exports. Today the scheme is highly

organised, and projected expenditure on vector and disease control for 2009/10 is \$82m.

Since 1994, the number of infected cattle and deer herds had fallen by over 90 percent, with only 131 infected at 30 June 2009. Dr Livingstone said assessment of herd breakdown analyses had shown that more than three-quarters of all Tb in New Zealand farmed cattle and deer herds originated from possums or, to a far lesser degree, from ferrets. While Tb has been found in all mammals in New Zealand except for tahr, chamois, bats, rats and mice, possums are by far the most important Tb vector.

Possums spread Tb back to pigs and deer

High-density possum and ferret populations are able to maintain and spread Tb among themselves, and spread it further afield through the migration of young animals. While high levels of Tb have been found in some wild deer and feral pig populations, their densities are usually far too low for these species to pass Tb to one another. Rather, they become infected as a result of contact with Tb possums, either as a result of deer attacking or sniffing possums sick with Tb, or as a result of pigs scavenging infected carcasses.

Thus wild deer and feral pigs are regarded as “spill-over” hosts, rather than as a self-sustaining reservoir host. However, an important factor is that deer and pigs can still live quite natural lives when infected, and therefore carry the disease through time and over long distances. This has implications for control.

Pigs and deer can also be used as “sentinels” to detect infection among possums in their territory. Feral pigs are the



Feral pigs are excellent sentinels for Tb.

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most sensitive and best sentinel species in the wild. Radio-collared feral pigs are being released as sentinel animals, then recaptured and tested. Models have been developed and tested that show these pigs are almost certain to detect any lingering source of infection, as they range widely and pick up the disease very easily. This remains the best way of confirming whether an area is indeed Tb-free, and the methodology and models are continually being refined.

Ferrets become infected after scavenging Tb carcasses and through cannibalism. In high population densities, cannibalism may cause them to act as a maintenance host. They may be an important Tb vector among farmed deer, and are often the best sentinel species for detecting Tb on farms.

Control and containment

Possum control strategies include containment, control and eradication – targeting infected possum populations, containing the disease in the wild, reducing numbers of infected herds, and eradicating the disease from wild animal populations.

Containment means using either major geographic barriers or low possum density buffers to contain wild animal infection to a defined area. The location of the outer boundary in each infected area is determined by Tb surveillance of cattle, deer and wild animal populations. Low-possum-density buffers are established around the boundaries of areas where wild animal infection is established. Tb surveillance continues outside the boundary to detect any Tb wild animals that migrate across the buffer. Control includes killing possums and in some places ferrets, within a containment area.

This minimises the opportunities for the disease to spread between species. Well-managed aerial application of 1080 poison remains the most cost-effective control measure over large tracts of rugged terrain or difficult vegetation cover.

Eradication requires maintaining possum populations at very low density for at least five years without further incursions of infected animals, after which time there is predicted to be a more than 95 percent probability that the disease will have been eradicated from possums. One of the greatest challenges now is knowing when to stop possum control, as it is impossible to know exactly when the last infected animal has been killed. After this point, any further control work obviously wastes resources and effort, but if stopped too soon (before the last Tb possum is killed) its whole purpose is lost.

Success to date

So how successful has the New Zealand Tb control programme been? The number of infected deer and cattle herds have fallen dramatically from a peak of 1,700 in 1994 to 131 at June 2009. Further, since 2001 the herd prevalence has been consistently better than targeted and is now below 0.4 percent. A key objective is to reduce this to 0.2 percent by 2013. This success is attributed to strong support from farmer and government stakeholders, and increased control funding leading to larger areas under control and greater efficiency. Research has played a crucial part in all of this, especially modelling and evaluation of historical information which showed that establishing and maintaining a low

possum density would eradicate infection from wild and farmed animals alike. Veterinarians and animal ecologists have played an important part in this process.

Bovine Tb strategy review

However, since 2005 the AHB has had difficulty meeting the twin demands of eradicating infection from wild animals and reducing numbers of infected herds on farms to meet the objectives of the NPMS. The strategy is currently the subject of a full review, with the Minister of Agriculture calling for public submissions on the Animal Health Board proposals to amend the National Bovine Tuberculosis Pest Management Strategy.

To access a copy of the strategy review proposal, visit <http://tbfree.ahb.org.nz> and click on the link for **Bovine Tb Strategy Review**, or call the AHB toll free on 0800 4 824 636 to request a hard copy. Submissions close on 30 November.

The proposal aims at eradicating Tb from wild animals over 2.5 million ha by 2025. It includes proof-of-concept eradication of Tb from large areas of forest and rugged country, rolling back Vector Risk Area boundaries, and maintaining the level of expenditure. Short-term goals will include developing better Tb tests and new possum poisons, more targeted vector control and a focus on eradicating Tb from vector populations. Medium-term goals are development of an oral Tb vaccine for possums and cattle, and possum-specific toxins. A vector-transmitted immuno-contraceptive for possums remains a longer-term goal. With support from its stakeholders, the Animal Health Board is proposing that the next step should be to eradicate Tb from domestic and wild animal populations.

No room for complacency with Tb

Landcare Research wild animal ecologist, Dr Graham Nugent, told *Deer Industry News* that the present Tb control measures were a great success and led the world but there was no room for complacency.

“New Zealand has mostly eliminated the disease from livestock and is continuing to lead the world where it comes to control in the situation where the disease is established among wildlife. Badgers in the United Kingdom and Ireland are a problem host, and in mainland Britain the situation is deteriorating with numbers of reactors rising exponentially. In the United States, there is a lingering reservoir of Tb in a whitetailed deer population in Michigan, where hunters are unwilling to allow wild deer numbers to be reduced to levels low enough to break the Tb cycle in that population. The United States also still has minor incursions of Tb-infected cattle imported from Mexico but these are being well controlled.

“In places such as Africa and India the situation appears even worse. For example, in Kruger National Park, South Africa, it’s beyond managing, as Tb is endemic among buffalo which contaminate other animals all the way through the food chain, right up to lions. In India, because cattle are revered the people have not come to grips with the problem; and they can’t afford vaccination anyway.”

So it was important that we should see our achievements in this perspective, he said.

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“If we don’t at least continue working intensively to keep on top of it, we will lose control and revert to the expanding problem we had in the 1980s. The problem is that as a result of the recent success there is so little infection around today, that it is difficult to persuade stakeholders that it is still an important problem. But if we ease up again, as we once did, even briefly, we would just have another blowout like in 1994.

“The other big threat at present is the possibility that we may lose 1080 as a control tool owing to public pressure before we can develop something to replace it effectively. Whatever the pros and cons of 1080 it is certainly the cheapest measure by far for control in remote places. Dollar for dollar, all other control measures greatly reduce the area you can cover with the fixed amount of money available.”



An infected whitetailed deer population in Michigan is proving an obstacle to the United States becoming Tb free.

The experience in Michigan illustrated how fraught management of Tb in wildlife can be, he said. “Deer are usually minor players in the epidemiology of Tb, but in Michigan they have a disproportionate effect. The problem is in a small area with a high density of deer, combined with the local people’s habit (since outlawed) of artificially feeding the deer, which further draws them together and heightens transmission of Tb that would not normally take place in the wild. This has changed them into a maintenance host capable of carrying the disease independently of other animals like cattle.

“Although a small problem in itself, the Michigan case remains the major stumbling block to the United States becoming Tb free, even after 50 years of effort and an expenditure that probably exceeds \$50 billion.”

There was a similar situation with wild boar in Spain, he said, where it appeared that high-density wild boar populations had become maintenance hosts while in New Zealand they were spillover hosts. 📄

Spillover and spillback

Spillover and spillback between deer and possums remain key issues in the eradication of Tb in New Zealand, says Dr Nugent.

“We have long known that occasionally deer become infected as spillover hosts from contact with possums. The problem this creates is that some of these deer, especially the adult hinds, can remain infected for ten years or more, and throughout that period they have the capacity to further spread the disease. This means that while possums can be made disease-free within as little as five years, after that there is a risk of disease transfer back to them from the infected deer.

“This is what is meant by ‘spillback’, and it makes it necessary to keep up possum control for at least another five years, maybe more. During that time the infection among deer is almost inconsequential in terms of infecting stock, but it still remains a major stumbling block in the eradication of the disease.”

Dr Nugent believes this process may even explain how possums originally became Tb-infected. “For a long time, Tb-infected cows



Scavenging ferrets may have helped spread Tb from North Canterbury.

co-existed with possums in New Zealand but Tb wasn’t actually recorded in possums until 1967. Around that time, many different strains of Tb appeared in possums. This coincided with the upsurge in commercial hunting, when there was suddenly a large increase in numbers of severed deer heads lying about with the one of the most common infection sites (lymph nodes at the back of the jaw) openly exposed. This would have created increased opportunities for scavenging animals to come in contact with the disease compared to previously, when most deer were killed by skin hunters and cullers who tended to leave the whole carcass. If they took the skin, the head remained attached and uncut on the carcass so the infected site was not exposed.”

This is just a theory, but other observations appeared to support it, Dr Nugent said.

“A similar process involving Tb in pigs may have taken place in North Canterbury in the 1990s. At that time, Tb in livestock spread from the north at a speed that appears to have been too fast to be caused by spread in possums. I suspect this came about because pig hunters travelling to North Canterbury and South Marlborough to hunt were bringing animals home with the head attached, then disposing of the severed head later, sometimes by dumping it where scavengers like ferrets and possums could get at it, become infected, and then pass the disease on to cattle.

“An important lesson from all this is that the heads of pigs and deer should be disposed of properly. Nowadays all commercial hunters are required to bring in the animal complete with its head, but recreational hunters also need to be educated on the importance of doing this.” 📄

deer industry technical conference

High country deer farming



Photo: Chris Petersen

Competition for finishing land has seen more deer being run on hill and high country, according to Invermay scientist Geoff Asher, who presented a roundup on high-country deer farming to the Deer Industry Technical Conference in July.

High-country deer farming was mainly concentrated in the foothills of the Southern Alps and in the Kaikoura Ranges, usually at elevations of more than 300m and on non-arable land (Land Use Capability 5–7), he said.

“While this land is the traditional preserve of sheep and beef production, changing times have seen an increase in its use for deer, largely in response to competition for Class 2–4 land to use for intensified farming.” Today about 10 percent of the national breeding hind herd is located in the high country and more still are on hill country pastures, Geoff said.

He outlined a recent survey conducted in association with social scientist, Sue Peoples, investigating why people choose to farm deer in the high country and the issues they face.

The 20 farms included in the survey had a mean stocking rate of around four stock units (about two deer) per hectare, at elevation 270–800 m above sea level, on tussock-dominated land of which 30,000 hectares are deer fenced. (This accounts for 28 percent of the total farm area.) It includes both wet and dry zones, and native vegetation is a very important component of primary production.

“From the farmer’s perspective, the advantages [of farming high country] include cheaper land, a better breeding environment – meaning better weaning rates – and the ability to operate profitably, despite high fencing costs. Summer calving fits in well with the high-country environment and calving rates are good in most areas. Deer farming also fits in well with other, longer-established production systems by allowing scope for a multi-species stock inventory, and these operations integrate well with the seasons. This helps with risk management; deer fences are more than adequate to keep all other stock under control too.”

There is also the “Monarch of the Glen” factor, Geoff said. “Deer farmers get a real kick out of seeing their animals in this sort of habitat.”

On the other hand, high-country deer farming had some special problems.

“Farmers recognise their environment is iconic and want to keep it that way. They don’t want to destroy the tussock, but they remain concerned about long-term viability and

Elk on US farm slaughtered to contain CWD

Federal sharpshooters in the United States have destroyed a herd of about 700 elk on a farm in southeastern Minnesota where chronic wasting disease (CWD) was discovered this year.

Sharpshooters with the US Department of Agriculture's (USDA's) Wildlife Services shot elk on the farm after the federal agency reached an agreement with the herd's owners concerning compensation and cleanup.

A cow elk at Elk Farm LLC – the largest such farm in the state – was found to have the disease in January, and the herd has been quarantined since.

All of the elk were killed and tested for the fatal brain disease, then disposed of. Although there is no evidence that it causes disease in people, none of the meat could be salvaged for human consumption.

To prevent the spread of CWD to wild deer, the top couple of inches of topsoil on the farm will be removed and stored behind a fenced area for five years.

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) also plans to test 3,000 deer for CWD that are expected to be killed by hunters this autumn in southeastern Minnesota.

Though no elk have escaped from the farm, two wild deer had managed to get inside the fenced farm and were destroyed. Since the disease was first found in the state in a captive elk herd in 2002, DNR officials have been concerned that it could spread to Minnesota's approximately 1 million wild deer. There are about 20,000 captive deer and elk in the state, and the disease can be spread through nose-to-nose contact. The infected elk at the farm was the sixth captive deer or elk in the state found to have CWD.

The DNR has tested more than 30,000 wild deer, and none has tested positive.

overstocking on tussock lands. You would never find wild red deer at a similar density of 200 per square kilometre – peak wild deer densities seldom exceed 3–5 per square kilometre. Many farmers were unsure of the long-term impact of farming deer at these densities.

“Research needs to include better management, mitigating environmental damage and developing better finishing systems. Some health issues are particularly poorly understood: for example, is parasitism a greater or lesser problem here than on the low country?”


High-country deer farming is often inter-generational and those involved have an acute sense of stewardship of the land, he said. “They regard native vegetation as an asset, but one that needs some integrating with more productive pastures, and so they have to strike something of a balance there. Many of them also have a strong historical association with sheep and cattle and continue to keep these as part of their overall operation.”

Geoff presented the results from GPS tracking of hinds during the calving season in two very different farming scenarios: Haycocks at Te Anau (wet, red tussock lands) and Whiterock Station in South Canterbury (dry, snow tussock). The objective was to study differences of behaviour and resource utilisation, and to quantify aspects of calving behaviour. The animals proved tricky to study: it was extremely difficult to develop a GPS collar that was resistant to deer behaviour. “Water damage from wallowing was a problem and some hinds even chewed the antenna off ... it took us a year to get all these problems sorted out.”

Results showed that some animals confined their movements to a small area; they tended to have separate territories; and a surprising number – almost a third – found ways through fences. “Invariably they went under the fence, not over. They would find places where erosion or stream crossings had created gaps. The stocking rate was three per hectare, which is high, so the issue may simply have been one of overcrowding.”

At calving, a very distinct pattern emerged. The hind would suddenly move much less than usual for a few days, after

having wandered about apparently searching for a good calving site.


At Whiterock, the study was on a northern face which was being farmed for the first time, and the deer caused some dramatic vegetation changes including flattening out large tracts of bracken. None of them went on to the steepest country. The average altitude they frequented changed with the time of day, with all animals moving steadily upwards until about 2pm, after which they would descend. 

Hind sale reports

Windermere Stud is pleased to report a buoyant female sale on 23 July. There was spirited bidding on all lots resulting in a virtual total clearance with 50 sold out of 52 offered for an average price of \$1,580. The top price paid was \$4,000. In addition, six lots of semen (five straws per lot) were also sold. This included strong bidding for semen from the pure Warnham sire Walton, who cut 8.06kg at 3 years of age. The entire offering comprised Warnham Park and Woburn Abbey genetics and their combination.

Stanfield's European Red Deer Stud is pleased to announce a successful hind sale on 14 August. Thirty-seven lots were offered: seven in-calf hinds and 30 weaner hinds. Of these, 25 lots were sold. The sale average was \$3,210 and the weaners averaged \$3,375. Prices for both hinds and weaner hinds ranged from \$5,000 to \$2,000.

The sale highlights were weaners by Sir Edmund, son of Aragorn, purchased by Donald and Kathy Hudson for \$80,000 bred by AI, weaners by Mars and Norton, plus hinds in-calf to Norton II, top equal price sire in our 2009 sale and now owned by Craig Wilson and Stanfield's.

Principle Clive Jermy said the depth of top new genetics and strong sale sire performance in the dam lines carried the day. “While a total clearance would have been ideal, the interest level since the sale has been very encouraging.” 

NAIT progress made

The NAIT Governance Group has agreed to changes in the national animal identification and tracing scheme in response to changes suggested by NZDFA. In its September newsletter, NAIT announced the following changes:

Additional year for deer before compliance mandatory

The mandatory requirement for deer will now take effect a year after the date at which it becomes mandatory for cattle to be tagged and registered with NAIT. This agreement by NAIT came after NZDFA had requested a two-year exemption. NAIT says the one-year exemption agreed will help address concerns about a relative lack of understanding among deer farmers about how to use RFID technology effectively. The delay will also allow farmers to take advantage of an expected price drop for eartags following the mandatory introduction for cattle.

Three years to transition existing capital stock


Both cattle and deer capital stock will be allowed a three-year transition to NAIT following the mandatory inclusion of each stock class into NAIT. Health and safety issues with tagging mature animals, and administrative and financial pressures were behind the decision. There are conditions, however:

- Capital stock can't be moved off the property unless they are properly tagged and registered.
- Farmers will be required to provide NAIT with holding inventories of capital stock during the exemption period.
- All cattle and deer born during the exemption period must be tagged and registered with NAIT regardless of their production purpose (e.g. slaughter or breeding).

UHF Trial underway

A separate project is underway to trial ultra-high frequency (UHF) tags. UHF technology enables multiple tags to be read simultaneously and also has the potential to allow longer read ranges. The NAIT newsletter says the current NAIT standard for cattle and deer is based on low-frequency (LF) technology, but that the system will be flexible enough to adopt new or proven technologies in future.


DINZ Producer Manager Tony Pearse said the trial was to be carried out on Grant Cochrane's South Otago property, Totara Hills, and Landcorp Hindon, behind Mosgiel, on 8 October. Tony is part of the project group and was to be present at the trials. He said DINZ has also asked that the LF tags and new Aleis-type high-speed readers also be evaluated under similar conditions.

In the NZDFA's *Stagline-online* newsletter, Tony said an announcement was imminent that the NAIT Governance Group had approved the deer industry's suggestion to accommodate a small change in the currently approved NAIT specifications to allow all three tag companies (Allflex, Zee Tags, Leader Tags) LF button tags approved by AHB as secondary tags in cattle to be available and approved for deer. 

Tagging age extended

The age by which new-born cattle and deer must be tagged and registered has been relaxed from 90 to 180 days, or at first muster, whichever comes first. However, with the exception of bobby calves, all young animals must be tagged before leaving the farm, regardless of age.


Development of lower-cost eartags

NAIT and the deer industry will encourage RFID manufacturers to develop lower-cost eartags. This will be especially important for those sending most animals direct to slaughter. 

Young UK chefs in waiting introduced to farm-raised venison

At DINZ's instigation, and in collaboration with the British Deer Farmers Association (BDFA), several venison producers in the United Kingdom agreed to participate in a joint farm-raised venison demonstration at Thomas Danby college in Leeds on 7 October. UK-based marketing and public relations consultant Ian Damms coordinated the event. With New Zealand chef Graham Brown available for a culinary class, the producer organisations joined together to teach a class of 40 chefs in training about the availability and quality of farm-raised venison.

The students and several tutors attending were all very impressed by the demonstration and by Graham's recipes.

DINZ and BDFA have been asked to sponsor the end-of-year dinner that the students will be preparing in June 2010, the highlight of the school's calendar. 



Graham Brown talks to the trainee chefs about the virtues of farm-raised venison.



Climate change doubts

Dear Sir

The opening paragraphs of Innes Moffat's article [Fitting climate change concerns into the New Zealand venison story, *Deer Industry News*, June 2009, page 23] demonstrate an ignorance of both science and history.

During both the Roman warm period, 250 BC to 450 AD, and the medieval warm period, 900 to 1300 AD, the earth was warmer than at present and the seasons more consistent. Agriculture flourished, grapes were grown in England and in Germany grapes were grown to 780 m altitude whereas they can only be grown to 560 m today. This shows that the temperatures were around 1 to 1.5 degrees warmer than at present. None of the catastrophic scenarios painted by the

IPCC and their cohorts happened. Both warm periods were times when populations increased and food was plentiful. CO₂ had nothing to do with it and the earth did not cook.

Can models predict future?

All the projections of doom and gloom come from computer models that have not even predicted the present cooling let alone the two warm periods and the mini ice age of 1300 to 1850. If the models cannot model the past or the present, why do you believe they can model the future? The models are based on assumptions and one of the main assumptions, that increased moisture in the air would cause positive feedback and cause temperatures to rise further, has been found to be false. The warming from 1970 to 1998 and the cooling that is occurring now was and is totally predictable, it had nothing to do with CO₂ and everything to do with the Pacific decadal oscillation which is similar to el nino/la nina but has a regular 27-30 year periodicity.

As for the science, there is no correlation, either in the data collected today or historically, between CO₂ and climate. CO₂ absorbs infrared (IR) radiation in three very narrow bands at 2.7, 4.3 and 15 micrometres but the IR radiated from the earth ranges from about 1 to 50 odd micrometres. Satellites measuring IR from space cannot detect any IR from the earth at 2.7, 4.3 and 15 micrometres. In other words, all the radiation that it is possible for CO₂ to absorb is already being absorbed. Therefore, adding more CO₂ will not have any effect. Furthermore, in times past CO₂ has been much higher than at present and caused plant life to flourish.

Biological nonsense

The idea that animal emissions are causing or contributing to global warming is absolute biological nonsense. Millions of bison used to roam the plains of North America and along with millions of other herbivores around the globe they are now history. They did not cause global warming then and are not responsible now. Not to mention that every atom of carbon in an animal has first to be removed from the atmosphere by plants in photosynthesis; they do, after all, eat grass. It only took 23 years from 1280 to 1303 to go from the warmth of the medieval warm period to the mini ice age. Crops failed, Greenland had to be abandoned and starvation prevailed. With today's population we have far more to fear from global cooling than from global warming. The worst periods of the mini ice age were characterised by prolonged

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solar minima (periods with no solar flares). Since 2002 the sun has been cooling (less radiation reaching earth) and the 24th solar cycle of sunspots has yet to start, more than a year behind normal in an 11-year cycle is quite a delay. Should this continue then substantial cooling in addition to the Pacific decadal oscillation can be expected, historically such an event has caused major droughts world wide. At the moment, the public does not understand the science, but when they do those blindly supporting the global warming scenarios will look pretty stupid. It is time to call a halt to this nonsense.

■ **Peter Foster, Waikouaiti**

Innes Moffat replies:

Mr Foster makes many good points, and demonstrates a grasp of climate science significantly in excess of my own. However he misses two important points:

1. I do not contend that man-made emissions are causing global warming; and
2. The debate about whether man-made emissions are causing global warming is over in the public mind.

Among the majority of the public, and among policy makers the world over, the debate is no longer **if** man's activities are contributing to global warming, but **how** can we reduce our emissions.


Governments from Australia to Zambia have decided that man-made emissions are responsible for global warming. They have decided that doing nothing about the issue is an ecological and political risk they cannot take. Developing and developed countries are not arguing about whether emissions should be cut or not, but how the burden of the reductions is allocated. These governments, scientists and consumers may be wrong (and judging from the winter we've had this year, global warming seems a bad joke!) but the weight of political, scientific and public opinion is firmly in favour of man-made global warming.

Virtually all western governments are pursuing measures to limit greenhouse gas emissions, and most are developing economic disincentives to the emission of greenhouse gases, either through complex cap and trade schemes, or simple carbon taxes. The European Union has had a greenhouse gas emissions trading scheme in place since 1 January 2005. The new US administration is drafting legislation to implement an emissions trading scheme. World maritime and air transport bodies are currently negotiating emissions reductions regimes with the intention of devising schemes to limit their emissions, without having governments impose limits instead.

Emissions reduction is a political and market reality which the New Zealand agricultural industry is going to have to deal with until either man-made emissions are proven not to cause global warming, or mitigation techniques are developed to relieve agriculture from the burden of making a contribution to the effort to lower their emissions.

With Paul McCartney joining a growing band of celebrity climate change campaigners around the world calling for less meat consumption, we meat producers face yet another challenge. That is not to say that New Zealand should impose an emissions trading scheme on agricultural greenhouse gases. We must not hobble ourselves if our trading partners do not. We should try wherever possible to avoid the imposition of costs which have no benefit, even if our trading partners impose them on their own agriculture sectors.

The editor notes:

- At the NZVA Sheep & Beef Conference in May 2009, AgResearch Grasslands scientist Harry Clark commented on the argument about ruminants such as bison having grazed in historically large numbers with no effect on global warming. Clark noted that the bison population (estimated between 30-70 million at its peak) was only a very small fraction of farmed ruminant populations today. (Today's world cattle population is estimated at 1.3 billion.) Clark also noted that wild ruminants are far less productive of methane than farmed ruminants.
- For a concise peer-reviewed scientific assessment of climate change science, there is a paper by the Prime Minister's Chief Science Adviser on www.pmcsa.org.nz/climate_change/ 

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