

# DEER INDUSTRY NEWS

Issue 29 • April 2008 • Official magazine of Deer Industry New Zealand and the NZDFA

China free trade agreement: p22

NZDFA Annual Report 2007/08

## Also in this issue:

- Emissions Trading Scheme: unsustainable in current form
- *Positive Action* Deer Industry Conference 2008: preview
- South Canterbury Focus Farm
- Meat industry restructuring
- Dealing with drought
- Deer Improvement's move into antler genetics: studs respond
- Deer farming author and publisher dies



**DEER INDUSTRY  
NEW ZEALAND**

NZDFA  
New Zealand Deer Farmers' Association





# Initiatives will boost innovation

**While still only a small industry in New Zealand, the deer industry has also been an early leader in environmental stewardship, and has shown a commitment to research.**

It's a commitment the Government is planning to match, through initiatives such as *New Zealand Fast Forward*

and the Sustainable Land Management and Climate Change Action Plan.

*NZ Fast Forward* Fund, \$700 million from the Government and a similar amount to come from our primary industries, is the biggest-ever single boost to innovation, research, and development funding in New Zealand history and will help transform New Zealand's primary industries to meet future challenges.

Through it, there will be heaps of new work done that will take our food and beverage producers to the next level.

In the upcoming Budget, the Government will contribute \$700 million into a separate fund, to be administered by a crown entity similar to the way the Superannuation Fund is run. That fund will accrue interest, as well as contributions from pastoral and food sector groups, including the deer industry.

Over its 15-year life, both the interest and all of the capital will be spent on innovation projects. The total investment in primary sector research and development this initiative represents will be around \$2000 million.

We have long enjoyed a competitive advantage in our primary industries, but that is now no longer a given. We can't be complacent.

We need to lift our levels of innovation on the farm, in the factory and in the laboratory to keep ahead of the rest of the world.

It isn't the only industry the Government is working alongside; other programmes have been in place for some time as part of the Government's industry and regional development programme. This Government wants many

more of our sophisticated and creative industries to become truly global, but only our primary industries have the scale, sophistication and capability to achieve that for now.

If we can make a step change in their performance, then we have an opportunity that doesn't come along very often to change the economic destiny of New Zealand.

This bold new initiative is part of the Labour-Progressive Government's plan for the future to transform our economy into a smart, innovative and high value supplier of goods and services which global markets demand. It's linked very much with other initiatives, such as the new tax credits for research and development spending which kicked in on April 1 this year – that's \$630 million of new tax credits for research and development over four years. It applies across the whole economy and through the tax system.

Also of note is the at least \$175 million allocated over the next five years to develop a comprehensive Plan of Action on Sustainable Land Management and Climate Change. This will provide a platform for us all to tackle the problem of climate change, land management, and adverse events through a partnership approach.


One aspect of this will be the ground-breaking greenhouse gas footprinting studies for land-based primary industries – including for venison. The studies will be done from the farm right through to the destination port and in some cases even further – to the supermarket shelf.

These projects are world-firsts, which will put New Zealand in the forefront by having such comprehensive coverage of sectors at that level of detail.

New Zealand exporters will be in a good position to be able to explain to customers exactly what climate change impact our production systems have and the steps taken to mitigate these.

Your industry has a good record, both on farm and as a sector, and I commend you for this. Deer farmers can hold their heads up high. Your industry has been through some hard times, and you haven't let that stop you from taking leadership roles in innovation and in environmental stewardship – there are other primary industries that could learn a lot from your example.

The Government is working with primary sector industries – including the deer industry – on some other initiatives to be announced later this year. I hope deer farmers will continue to play the same significant role.

And I have no doubt that the deer industry, given your record, will be quick to take up opportunities likely in the new Free Trade Agreement with China. 

**Hon. Jim Anderton, Minister of Agriculture**

## Contents

<b>Editorial:</b> Initiatives will boost innovation .....	3
<b>DINZ news:</b> Rhys Griffiths joins DINZ team .....	4
New look for www.velvet.org.nz .....	4
Emissions Trading Scheme: serious implications? .....	6
Industry takes positive action on leptospirosis .....	7
Deer industry statistics; weaner transport; CWD samples .....	9
<b>Stagline Supplement:</b> Deer Industry conference programme.....	10
NZDFA AGM 2008: Constitutional matters .....	12
Branch Chairman profile: Udo Fuehrer .....	16
Obituary: Graham Cribb; Velvet(t)ing letter; Vets' conference ..	17
Solid lineup for 2008 environmental awards .....	18
Obituary: Les Loveridge .....	18
Expansion on South Canterbury Focus Farm .....	19
<b>Industry news:</b> Meat industry restructuring .....	20
Velvet takes top spot in New Zealand – Australia next .....	21
China FTA getting closer; Gordon does venison at Hotelympia ..	22
Market Talk: Carrol Song .....	23
Recipe: Venison meatloaf with mashed potatoes .....	23
<b>Market Report:</b> Venison and velvet updates .....	24
<b>General news:</b> Meat focus for food technologists; Coming events ..	26
Dealing with drought .....	27
Stanfield's Bushey Park sold .....	27
Profile: Goodwin McNutt – Part 2 .....	28
Tension over Deer Improvement move to antler genetics .....	30
Obituary: David Yerex .....	31

*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.

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

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

**Cover:** A free trade agreement with China, expected to be signed earlier this month, will see tariffs on New Zealand deer products reduced over a five to six year period. See article page 22. Photo: ©iStockphoto.com/Chandra Mendard.

## Flying start for Rhys

Deer Industry New Zealand's new Velvet Marketing Services Manager, Rhys Griffiths literally got off to a flying start when he joined the team on 27 March. Within just three days he was heading for Seoul with Chief Executive Mark O'Connor on the start of two weeks of travel to Asian velvet markets.



Rhys takes over from Vanessa Crowley, who left DINZ last month to get back to her farming roots by doing some farm work in Australia and Canada.

"Timing-wise, it's brilliant that I am able to go over and get an understanding of some of the markets. On my return I plan to get out and about to meet a number of farmers and processors in order to gain a working understanding of the deer industry," Rhys says.

"My aim is to work with those in the New Zealand deer industry to execute a strategy to enable a more secure and stable market for velvet in the long-term."

Rhys comes to DINZ after three years working for a small family-owned agricultural importing company dealing in products out of Asia. Prior to that he worked for eight years in sales and marketing roles at Schering-Plough Animal Health and has also spent some time working in the pig industry.


"I have a solid understanding of farming and marketing and of how the Asian business side of things works."

Life has always had a strong farming focus for Rhys, whose extended family is involved in various aspects of agriculture around New Zealand. Rhys was involved in sheep and beef farming before heading off to study at Massey University, where he gained a Diploma of Agriculture and a Bachelor of Business Studies in Agribusiness.

Coming into the velvet industry at a time of uncertainty, Rhys recognises there are challenges to overcome, but has confidence things can move in a positive direction with collaboration with industry stakeholders.

"Deer velvet is obviously a high-value niche product but it seems to be fighting in a commodity-based arena. The idea is to try and see where we can add value to this niche product."

A rugby fan and a keen outdoors man who loves tramping and camping, Rhys lives on the Kapiti Coast with his wife and two boys, aged eight and six.

"I see this as a good challenging role in a really dynamic industry. I am excited by the possibilities and looking forward to getting my teeth into it." 

## New look for [www.velvet.org.nz](http://www.velvet.org.nz)

The New Zealand velvet website [www.velvet.org.nz](http://www.velvet.org.nz) has been given a face-lift and is now updated with all the latest product information.



On the eve of her departure from DINZ, former Velvet Marketing Services Manager Vanessa Crowley told *Deer Industry News* that a comprehensive but simple and easy to navigate website for the industry is essential, "especially considering the international reach of our product".


The website caters for all people with an interest in New Zealand velvet, "whether that is people from Asia interested in traditional use, sporting athletes or interested pet owners," Vanessa said. "It is a one-stop shop with photo gallery, scientific papers and contact details for both marketers and processor/exporters."

Information tabs cover research, health supplements, pets and animals, the *Powered by velvet.org.nz* team and oriental medicine. There are also contact points for DINZ and suppliers and links to associated organisations.

The project was put together by Vanessa with the help of DINZ Marketing and Communications Assistant Natalie Fraser. While it took longer than planned, Vanessa said it was important to get the website right and make sure it included all aspects of velvet, right down to suggested dose rates and composition.

"It's hoped to add a few more features including links so people can watch the *Powered by velvet.org.nz* team in action here and overseas. Podcasts of interviews and athlete blogs are also in development."

Other velvet websites are:

- [www.dinz.co.kr](http://www.dinz.co.kr) This Korean language website looks at the 'velvet as a healthy food' concept
- [www.nzvelvet.co.kr](http://www.nzvelvet.co.kr) Currently under development and due to 'go live' in May, this website is designed for Korean oriental medicine doctors. 

## Emissions Trading Scheme: serious implications?

**Consumers and many scientists perceive that climate change is a reality and sectors working together on ways to mitigate it is essential, but the introduction of an Emissions Trading Bill requires careful consideration. Based on limited and preliminary figures, DINZ has serious concerns that the current approach will be sustainable for New Zealand's deer farmers.**

The Climate Change (Emissions Trading and Renewable Preference) Bill was introduced to Parliament in December 2007 and was referred to the Finance and Expenditure Select Committee. Public submissions on the Bill closed on 29 February 2008.

A combined submission was prepared and submitted to the Select Committee at the end of February by Meat & Wool New Zealand, the Meat Industry Association and DINZ, putting forward the coordinated and strong voice of the organisations looking after sheep, beef and deer species.

The submission notes that, together, the three livestock sectors – now facing tough economic conditions – contribute about \$6 billion of export earnings to the New Zealand economy (about 18 percent of New Zealand merchandise trade). Together they directly employ about 40,000 people and indirectly, through services, many more.

Key issues with the Bill for the three industries include:

- risk to the competitiveness of New Zealand lamb, beef and venison
- how the New Zealand Emissions Trading Scheme (NZETS) will actually work
- how effectively it will achieve its end result
- recovery of costs
- lack of detail.

Eighteen recommendations are presented for the Finance and Expenditure Committee's consideration. These include the suggestion that the Minister develop allocation plans for individual sub-sectors, such as the deer industry, instead of the high level sectors

### Statement from NZDFA on Climate Change Bill

The NZDFA fully endorses the Deer Industry New Zealand supplemental submission to the Finance and Expenditure committee on the Climate Change (Emissions Trading and Renewable Preference) Bill, and is strongly of the view that the industry, through the Board, NZDFA and individual deer farmers, must stay resolute and strong in its opposition to the progression and implementation of this Bill in its current form.

The NZDFA Executive Committee believes there are severe implications for the core sustainability, immediate viability and social welfare of the participants of deer farming and other productive livestock sectors should it proceed.

These concerns were again reinforced by information presented by MAF Climate Change officials at the recent Climate Change workshop attended by key deer farmers and an Executive Committee member.

The NZDFA is gravely concerned that the Government has adopted a single-minded determination to take an assumed leadership position in this area, based on principles and political capital when:

- New Zealand's global impact, especially when in relevance to the value of livestock farming to the nation, is inconsequential in international terms
- other and also competing nations in that market place will give not one iota of consequence and reward to New Zealand's efforts in this regard
- the individual impact on farmers in terms of viability and any competitive equality appears to be missing from the equation.

The NZDFA urges further strong and increasing opposition to this threat to the viability of deer farming.

'Agriculture', 'Forestry' and 'Industry' currently defined in the Bill. Also recommended is that farmers must be specified as legal participants in the NZETS to incentivise those who can mitigate greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions with the appropriate market rewards.

The submission notes that the combined industries already invest heavily in GHG mitigation research through the Pastoral Greenhouse Gas Research Consortium (PGgRC).

In a supporting letter to the Select Committee, DINZ Chief Executive Mark O'Connor reiterated broad support given in 2007 for the thrust of the Government's proposals for a plan of action for reduction in GHG emissions. However, he urged the Government to focus on measures that will provide the best emissions reduction outcome in the long term, taking into account New Zealand's agricultural economic base and its emissions profile.

As one tool to achieve this, the NZETS (see box right over page) "will need to balance 'cost-of-carbon' pressures to promote behaviour change against maintaining economic viability," he wrote.

"Based upon limited and preliminary figures to date, DINZ has serious concerns that this approach will be sustainable for farmed deer enterprises in the long term."

DINZ maintained its stance that the best way to achieve GHG emission reduction is through true partnership – working together to achieve an agreed aim. There is still a long way to go in this process before a workable trading scheme is produced and enabling technologies or management practices are developed for deer farmers.

### Emissions research for the deer industry

DINZ, through DEEResearch, contributes funds to PGgRC, which specifically looks at emissions from agriculture. PGgRC is a joint government and industry partnership, half funded by the Foundation for Science Research & Technology and half by industry groups (DEEResearch, Fonterra, Meat & Wool New Zealand, Dairy New Zealand, FertResearch, PGG Wrightson and AgResearch). Industry has already contributed \$15 million to the research with a further \$25 million committed over the next five years.

Results from the first five years of PGgRC research included the following studies directly relating to deer amongst the 39 research projects carried out with funding from the Consortium.

- *Lowering ruminant methane: deer, diet and protozoa*, SO Hoskin MJ Nicholson, NM Swainson and KN Joblin. Preliminary data from this study suggest that forage species could provide a means for selectively manipulating rumen ciliate populations with the potential for lowering ruminant methane emissions.
- *Methane emissions from Red deer stags post-weaning until one year of age grazed perennial-ryegrass-based pasture*, NM Swainson, SO Hoskin, H Clark and N Lopez Villabos (see below).
- *Comparative methane production and yields from adult cattle, Red deer and sheep*, NM Swainson, SO Hoskin, H Clark, CS Pinares-Patiño and IM Brookes. Preliminary results indicate that there are differences between ruminant species in methane emissions when measured at the same time on the same diet. Deer produce significantly less methane per day than cattle (31.5g CH<sub>4</sub>/d versus 140.4) and more than sheep (18.3). Methane yields for deer were 18.4g CH<sub>4</sub>/kg dry matter intake, against 20.6 for cattle and 16.5 for sheep.

For more information visit [www.pggrc.co.nz](http://www.pggrc.co.nz)

## Proof: younger deer emit less

In a study recently published by the *New Zealand Journal of Agricultural Research* (Vol 50, 2007), Massey University deer scientists Natasha Swainson and Simone Hoskin teamed up with colleagues at AgResearch to follow up work that showed sheep less than one year of age consistently yield about 20 percent less methane per unit of feed eaten than older adult sheep. They looked at a study group of 20 Red deer stags grazing permanent perennial

ryegrass-based pasture. They were measured at 4.5, 6.5, 9 and 11.5 months of age.

Swainson and Hoskin's research found that methane yield appeared to be 26 percent lower than previous measurements of adult deer grazing on similar pasture.

"This implies that the New Zealand Greenhouse Gas Inventory should use separate values for deer less than one year old to avoid over-estimation of methane emissions from deer," says Deer Industry New Zealand's Science Manager, Lindsay Fung. 📄

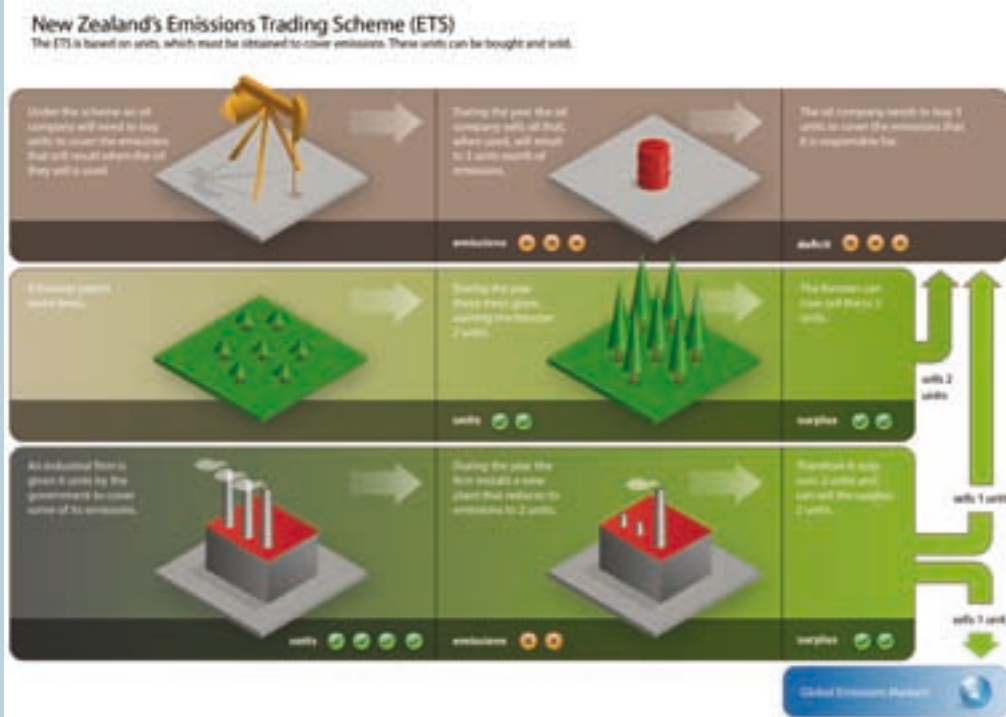
## Emissions Trading Scheme

Agriculture will join the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) in 2013. Initially, the agricultural sector will be treated similarly to an industrial firm (with an allocation of units). However, over time, the sector will become closer to an oil company (no allocation of units).

The diagram does **not** show some essential linkages:

- Oil companies can pass costs on to consumers, thereby driving behaviour change through change in demand.
- Pastoral industries do not have a range of mitigation tools compared with the industrial firm shown in the diagram.
- Pastoral industries:
  - By *passing on costs to consumers*, industries face competition from overseas suppliers who do not face these costs. The result may be a reduction in demand for New Zealand-grown produce and a switch to produce from other countries giving an overall result of no reduction in global GHG (maybe even an increase if production is less efficient) *and* reduced production from New Zealand pastoral industries.
  - By *not passing on costs to consumers*, industries will have to accept the ETS as a tax if there is no ability to mitigate, or, reduce livestock numbers.

The premise behind ETS is based on 'emission units', which must be obtained to cover emissions. These units can be bought and sold - billions of dollars' worth are already being traded around the world. For further information: [www.climatechange.govt.nz](http://www.climatechange.govt.nz). Illustration: Ministry for the Environment



## Industry takes positive action on leptospirosis

**Education and awareness initiatives throughout the production chain are a strong feature of draft recommendations from the deer industry leptospirosis working group. The DINZ Board has accepted these following the group's recommendations arising from its February meeting.**

Leptospirosis is New Zealand's most common occupationally acquired human disease, with 88 cases notified in 2006. These numbers are well down on the many hundreds of cases that were reported each year before vaccination of dairy cattle became compulsory, but numbers have not fallen in the past decade and the disease is thought to be under-reported. Most human cases are among people in high-risk occupations: farmers, meat processors and stock drivers.

In deer, young animals are most at risk, in autumn. A recent survey (Massey Ph.D. study) suggested overall herd prevalence is high (83 percent; based on sample serology).

The leptospirosis working group acknowledged that raising awareness and attention to cleanliness and hygiene (both personal and general work environment) were significant steps in themselves.

A number of awareness initiatives were suggested including education programmes (e.g., in driver training courses, focus farm field days) and publicity material such as the use of wallet-sized cards to show GPs, as promoted in deer slaughter premises.

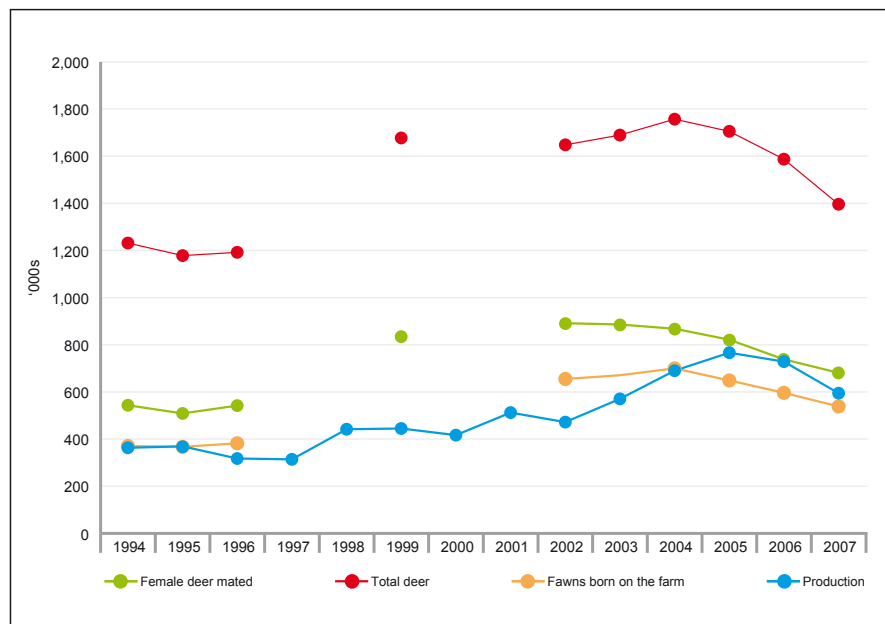
Over the next few months DINZ will prioritise the group's recommendations, and work on a communications plan for the industry.

DINZ also supported wider initiatives that would be led by other organisations or government agencies to look at leptospirosis across all sectors of society or improve reporting and diagnosis ability. 📄


# Deer industry statistics

In the February issue of Deer Industry News we published the preliminary deer figures from the 2007 Agricultural Production Census. These showed that numbers, as expected, were down. This graph shows the figures in a historical context, going back 13 years.

The gaps in the graph indicate years in which no data were gathered. See notes for some important qualifications about these figures.



## NOTES

- (1) No agriculture production survey was conducted in 1997, 1998 and 2001. In 2000, the survey related only to horticulture. In 1994, 2002 and 2007, an agricultural census was conducted.
- (2) Estimates have been rounded to the nearest 100.
- (3) Changes were made to the question design in the 2004 and 2005 Agriculture Production Survey. Figures from 2004 onwards may not be directly comparable with those from previous years.
- (4) 2007 figures are provisional.
- (5) Figures for female deer mated, total deer and fawns on farm are to 30 June and are provided by Statistics New Zealand.
- (6) Production figures (deer slaughtered) are for year to December and are provided by DINZ. 

## Deer code amendment: weaner transport

Following discussions with Deer Industry New Zealand, NAWAC (National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee) plans to amend Minimum Standard 15 (c) (Pre-transport Selection) in the Code for Welfare for Deer. This standard as written prohibits transport of unweaned deer (dams and fawns) and deer that have been weaned for less than 10 days.

The amendment will continue to restrict the prohibition to transport to auction or saleyards, and not to the transport between farms. Because the amendment process may take some time, NAWAC has agreed that the industry best practice of moving unweaned deer directly from one farm to another within the total time of six hours must be adhered to in the interim.

DINZ Quality Manager John Tacon says this will bring the Code of Welfare for Deer into line with the DeerQA Deer Transport Operating Standards.

The relevant section from the DeerQA standards is as follows:

### 4.7 WEANED DEER

#### Standard

Where deer are transported at weaning they must proceed directly from farm to farm immediately following weaning and the total duration of yarding and transport must not exceed six hours.

These deer, when weaned less than 10 days, must not be transported on the same unit as their mothers.

## CWD surveillance update

Farmers and deer vets are well on the way to meeting the annual surveillance target for chronic wasting disease (CWD) in deer of at least 300 brain samples. For the eight months of the current financial year (July 2007 – February 2008), a total of 247 brain samples had been tested.

The sampling is jointly paid for by DINZ and MAF, and the programme helps underpin New Zealand assurances to its trade partners that it is free of transmissible spongiform encephalopathies, the group of disease that includes CWD, mad cow disease and scrapie.

Both DINZ and MAF are urging farmers and vets from throughout New Zealand to continue supporting the surveillance programme.

Unweaned deer and deer weaned less than 10 days must not be transported to auction or sale yards.


Weaned deer sold at on-farm sales must also be weaned a minimum 10 days prior to transport.

#### Qualifier

In emergency situations (e.g. drought, snow) deer with young at foot may be transported, but only with prior veterinary or MAF certification.

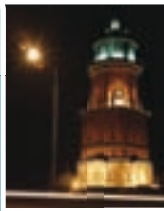
Individual hinds with fawn at foot can be transported in a single pen.

#### Recommendation

It is recommended that all deer be weaned at least 10 days prior to any transport. 



## Deer Industry Conference 13-15 May 2008



**POSITIVE ACTION** ..... Positive People, Positive Products, Positive Places

The conference returns to the deep South this year, deer heartland but also a battleground for land use where dairying competes with traditional top deer farming country. There will be an opportunity to see some of this change during the Southland Branch's field day on the final day.

The 2008 Industry Conference runs from 13 May at Invercargill's expansive Ascot Park Hotel on the northern outskirts of the city (cnr Racecourse Road and Tay Street) and is in easy reach of supporting motel accommodation.

### Industry partners

*Positive Action* reflects a more positive mood, and we are grateful for the strong support from industry partners Alliance Group, Rabobank, Telford Polytechnic, Goldpine and Ravensdown. There is also great trade support, covering animal health, tags and RFID, agronomy and seeds.

### Positive Action seminar: Tuesday 13 May

This year we are trying something a little different prior to the conference opening. The DINZ Board and DFA Branch Chairmen will meet as usual, but the conference will also host a seminar on emerging issues at 3.00 pm on Tuesday 13 May.

The *Positive Action* seminar will feature industry partner Rabobank's Hayley Moynihan with a view on global and European trends in red meat consumption. This will lead into one of the big topical issues: the Mega Meat Company concept. We have invited Alliance Group Chair Owen Poole and PPCS Ltd Chair Eoin Garden, to speak on where venison might fit in with a mega company structure. There will be a Q&A session to follow.

The seminar will then explore the implications for the industry of the Climate Change and Emissions Trading Scheme with a presentation from MAF's Julie Collins (Select Committee involvement permitting). Rounding out this busy afternoon, Velconz and PGG Wrightson will review the velvet season and discuss where next for Velconz. Again, there will be discussion and Q&A.

### Welcome evening: Tuesday 13 May, 7.00 pm

The Southlanders have a unique welcome event planned. In recognition of his tremendous 33-year contribution to the industry and commitment through *The Deer Farmer*, the NZDFA has formally invited **Trevor Walton** as its guest to open the conference.

Key Southern chefs will pick up on a "Positive food" theme through venison entrée dishes in a variety of styles. We will explore Heartbeat

Venison, New Horizon/new markets Venison, Youthful Venison, Southern Region Venison and Specialty *Surprise Me* Venison with matching beers, wines and refreshments. The chefs will introduce their creations, and guests will be able to comment and pick a favourite.

The opening night will feature presentation of the prestigious Matuschka Award recognising the quiet contributors within DFA Branches.

### Formal meetings: Wednesday 14 May

The business sessions lead off with the DINZ FGM from 8.30am-12.30pm and the NZDFA AGM from 2.00pm until close at 5.30pm. Prior to the AGM we will hear from AHB CEO on the review of the National Pest Management Strategy due in 2009 (see programme summary).

The FGM features reports from the Board Chairman and Chief Executive and from the venison and velvet markets. We again welcome the processor/exporters and their CEOs (PPCS Ltd, Alliance Group and Duncan and Company) and look forward to their commentary. Reports will lead into a producer-directed discussion and Q&A session with the Board and Executive.

The 33rd NZDFA AGM will lead off with the AHB overview.

Draft remits received to date feature some thought-provoking issues. These include the NVSB process, direct elections for producer members on the DINZ Board, hard antler scoring, tyne removal and climate change. Branch AGMs will doubtless bring more issues to the table. Following Branch AGM rounds beginning 3 April.

### Awards dinner: Wednesday 14 May

The previous night's fine dining and entertainment will continue at the traditional industry awards dinner. A formal haggis ceremony and whiskey shot will give the banquet a uniquely southern start – balanced by oyster enticements before the plated entrée and Alliance Group-sponsored venison mains followed by dessert. This year we feature more headline entertainment based on classic musicals, and have commissioned Southland's Lloyd Thayer to create a Southern Lights theme with ice décor. The award lineup features the Deer Industry Award and biennial Environmental Awards with the prestigious Elworthy Award.

### Field day: Thursday 15 May

Three top farming operations will be on show: John and Jackie McLean's Southland Focus Farm, Deer Improvement's research and breeding unit, and David and Lynley Stevens' Netherdale Red Deer

## Proud sponsors of 2008's Deer Industry Conference

Full time courses in Agriculture, Rural Business,  
Forestry, Equine and many correspondence course options.  
Deer specific courses available

For more information call 0800 835 367 or [www.telford.ac.nz](http://www.telford.ac.nz)



**Telford**  
Rural Polytechnic  
Te Whare Wānaka o Pūnaha





Stud. This one-off event costs just \$30 for lunch and transport and is an extension to the conference proper. Delegates and locals are welcome.

### Get registered!

Registration and hotel accommodation is being arranged through the DCMS Conference organising group. A registration form has been enclosed with this issue, an electronic user-friendly copy is available from the [www.deernz.org](http://www.deernz.org), or just contact Natalie Fraser at 04 471 6110, [natalie.fraser@deernz.org](mailto:natalie.fraser@deernz.org)

An early bird incentive closing on 1 May offers a top Otago Pinot

Noir wine prize for three delegates in an early bird draw. It's an age old request, often ignored, but an early registration really helps everybody!

For further information contact:

- Natalie Fraser as above
- Pat Johnston, DCMS at 03 477 1377, [pat@dcms.co.nz](mailto:pat@dcms.co.nz)
- Tony Pearce 021 719 038 or [tony.pearce@deernz.org](mailto:tony.pearce@deernz.org)

## CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

Tuesday 13 May 2008: Positive Action Seminar and Welcome Function	
12 – 2.00 pm	NZDFA Branch Chairs working lunch and meeting. Ascot Park, Takitimu Room
12- 7.00pm	Registration desk open in Foyer, Ascot Park Hotel
<b>Positive Action Seminar: Chairman John Scurr</b>	
3.00- 3.30pm	Rabobank session with Hayley Moynihan. "Global red meta consumer trends and market aspects"
3.30-4.30pm	Mega meat company developments "Where should the venison industry sit?" Invited speakers (TBC) 20 minute sessions Owen Poole, Chairman Alliance Group Eion Garden, Chairman PPCS Ltd Q&A session
4.30 - 5.00pm	Climate Change and Emission Permit Trading scheme: The basics, and implications for the deer industry. Julie Collins, MAF Climate Change Group leader.
5.00- 5.45 pm	Velconz and PGG Wrightson: Velconz and the 2007/08 Velvet season, perspectives and prospects.
6.00-7.00pm	Happy hour: in-house bar – own cost
<b>Welcome Function</b>	
7.00 – 11.30 pm	<i>Positive Product</i> Introduction and welcome: The Invercargill Town Crier. 33rd Conference opening and reminiscences – Trevor Walton, WHAM Group Invited Chefs: Themed Venison entrees and observations from the feature chefs. Alan Hawkins – Ascot Park Hotel Joanne Lowery – Garvan Homestead Glen Stridiron and students, Southern Institute of Technology Mark Buissink – Roving Chef <b>Venison Sponsored by Alliance Group</b> Sponsor Presentation – Alliance Group NZDFA - Matuschka award presented
Wednesday 14 May 2008: Formal meetings and Awards Dinner	
7.30 – 8.15am	Conference Registration: Foyer Ascot Park Hotel
8.20 – 8.30am	Conference Welcome: Southland Branch NZDFA, Brian Russell. John Scurr, Chairman, Deer Industry New Zealand.
8.30 – 12.45pm	Deer Industry New Zealand FGM. DRAFT Programme. John Scurr Chair
FGM DINZ Chairman's Report: John Scurr	
CEO's Report: Mark O'Connor	
Venison Report: Innes Moffat	
Venison Processor /Marketer Comments: Processor Exporters, PPCS Ltd, Alliance Group, Duncan and Company	
10.15 – 10.30am	Morning Tea Break: Trade Exhibition pre-function area
10.30 – 10.35am	Sponsor Presentation – Ravensdown
10.35 - 12.45pm	FGM Continues
Velvet Report: Rhys Griffiths	

Research Report: Lindsay Fung	
Welfare Report: John Tacon	
Productivity and Focus Farms Report: Tony Pearce	
12.45pm	Lunch: Trade Exhibition: pre-function area
1.30 – 2.00pm	Animal Health Board, National Pest Management Strategy review. AHB CEO William McCook
2.00	Sponsor Presentation – Telford
2.00 – 5.30 pm	NZDFA 33rd AGM Opens. Bill Taylor Chair
3.30 – 3.50 pm	Afternoon Tea: Trade Exhibition - pre-function area
3.50 – 3.55 pm	Sponsor Presentation – Goldpine Industries
3.55 – 4.00pm	Deer Industry New Zealand Board candidate's address to AGM
4.00 – 5.30 pm	NZDFA 33rd AGM Continues
7.00 for 7.30pm	<b>Annual Industry Awards Dinner – Ascot Park Conference Rooms</b> <b>Theme "Positive Food under Southern Lights"</b> 7pm pre dinner drinks and gathering in foyer area Venison Sponsored by: Alliance Group Welcome from MC Peter Allan. Haggis ceremony and whiskey, compliments of Silberhorn Plated entrée and table oysters Deer Industry Award presented Mains: "Alliance Venison Southern style by Ascot Park" 2008 Deer Industry – Environmental award presented Dessert and coffee Entertainment. "Positively Southern" Featuring a top line-up of singers with class musical accompanist, truly southern flavour, combined with the Southern lights show and Southern ice décor, the evening will be stunning and unique.
Thursday 15 May: Southland Branch Field Day – Positive Places	
8.30 am	Depart from Ascot Park Hotel. Travel to Northern Southland through dairy development, intensive sheep and deer farming country with local commentary
10.00am	Southland Focus Farms: John & Jackie McLean. Farm tour with local 4WD assistance.
Lunch	Deer Improvement's Balfour Research Farm Catered lunch McLean Focus farm review, DIL research Farm overview and Deer Industry Focus Farm Pictorial update
2.00pm	Buses return for late afternoon airport connection
Afternoon/ evening	Netherdale: David and Lynley Stevens Conference wind down social function for those not leaving straight away. Catering by the Elk House, NZDFA Southland Branch wind down



**Alliance Group - Producers of  
"Gold Class" New Zealand Venison.**  
*The mark of quality for the worldwide consumer*

Proud Sponsors of the 2008 Deer Industry Conference





# NZDFA AGM 2008: Constitutional matters

## 1. AGM: Notice of meeting

New Zealand Deer Farmers' Association, Annual General Meeting.

Notice is hereby given that the 33rd Annual General Meeting of the New Zealand Deer Farmers' Association (Inc) will be held in the conference rooms of the Ascot Park Hotel, Tay Street/Racecourse Road, Invercargill on Wednesday 14 May 2008, commencing at 2.00 pm.

The Chairman and Executive Committee of the NZDFA invite all levy payers and members to attend.

## 2. Executive Committee appointments

Members of the NZDFA Executive Committee (two members representing the North Island and two representing the South Island) are elected for a two year term. Members retire by rotation and are eligible for re-election. Annually according to the NZDFA constitution rules, the Executive Committee elects a Chairman from amongst the four members.

Nominations have been called for the two vacancies created by retirement by rotation.

### Executive Committee North Island

A single nomination has been received for the vacancy created by the retirement by rotation of Tim Aitken, who did not seek re-election after four years in the role. The Nominee, **Earle Wells**, Whakatane, Bay of Plenty, (nominated Brian Wellington, seconded, Sharon Love) is declared **appointed** unopposed.

### Executive Committee South Island

A single nomination has been received for the vacancy created by the retirement by rotation of Mark Hawkins who did not seek re-election. One nomination has been received, **Edmund Noonan**, Old West Coast Road, Canterbury (nominated Bob Kingscote, seconded Malcolm Gilbert), and is declared **appointed** unopposed.

**Earle Wells** and **Edmund Noonan** will join colleagues **Bill Taylor**, Lora Valley, Winton, Southland and **Sharon Love**, Mamaku, Rotorua, as the 2008/09 Executive Committee of the NZDFA.

For members' interest, nominees' profiles are as follows:

#### Edmund Noonan

*I have been working in the deer industry for the last 23 years in farm management roles, with over 30 years of*

*practical farming experience. I have been a member of the Canterbury Branch Committee for the last 14 years. I have held the position of Chairman for the last three years and am a member of the Johnes' Research Group.*

*One of my particular interests is sustainable farming, and quality assurance programmes.*

*The requirements for New Zealand agriculture to comply with environmental standards and market perceptions are becoming increasingly complex. I feel I can contribute to this and other issues facing the New Zealand deer industry.*

*I am committed to the deer industry and look forward to contributing to the positive future of the industry.*

#### Earle Wells

*Earle has been involved in the Deer industry for 15 years. He feels he has the ability to look at problems with a cool analytical approach. He is Chairman of the Coastal Bay of Plenty Branch of the NZDFA (6 Years) and prior to that was secretary under Sandra Wood's stewardship.*

*He is Chairman of the Regional Animal Health Committee for the Bay of Plenty area and is a trustee, assessor and member of the management group of Ballance Farm Environment Awards for the region.*

*While living in Auckland, Earle was the Chairman of the Auckland Yachting Association, and president of the Auckland Branch O2 of the NZ Association of Radio Transmitters for a number of years.*

*He owned and operated a furniture factory with his wife Jean for 21 years before moving to the Bay of Plenty.*

*Some issues that he believes are important, require a lot of consideration and will impact on deer farmers' income (and the agriculture sector as a whole) are: The high New Zealand dollar, ever-increasing compliance costs and the ever-changing law landscape driven by central and local government. Biosecurity enforcement also needs some serious improvement.*

## 3. Selection and Appointments Panel (SAP)

The SAP consists of the four-man Executive Committee and four non-Executive Committee elected members. Two of the non Executive Committee elected members of the Panel (one from each island) retire annually by rotation.

### SAP North Island

Two nominations are received for the single vacancy created by the retirement by rotation of Mike Holdaway,

**ROAR INTO GOLDPINE ...**

proud sponsors of the  
2008 Deer Industry Conference

**GOLDPINE**  
"your outdoor timber specialist"



who is seeking re-election. An election is required by postal ballot.

#### Candidates are:

**Campbell Clarke**, Waipa (nominated Brian Wellington, seconded Graham Lawson)

**Mike Holdaway**, Apiti, Feilding (nominated Errol Croad, seconded Vincent Connolly)

Candidate statements, voting papers, and return envelopes have been distributed under separate mail out cover, to all known eligible levy payers and NZDFA members on a mailout on 15 April 2008.

Voting opens on 16 April for 21 days and closes at 5.00pm on Tuesday 6 May 2008, as required 7 clear days before the AGM. The results will be announced at the conclusion of the 33rd AGM under general business.

#### SAP South Island

One nomination received for the retirement by rotation vacancy:

**Mark Hawkins**, Sutherlands, Pleasant Point, South Canterbury (nominated Jeffrey Pearse, seconded Kris Orange) and he is declared **appointed** unopposed.

He and the successful North Island candidate will join current members **Ponty von Dadelszen** Waipukurau, Hawke's Bay and **David Stevens**, Balfour, Southland, on the 2007–09 NZDFA Selection and Appointments Panel.

#### 4. NZDFA appointments to the Board of Deer Industry New Zealand

Producer-appointed Board members are appointed directly to the DINZ Board for a three-year term and that appointment is advised to the Minister of Agriculture as a formality. There is a single vacancy for the 2008–2011 Board term, that of sitting member Graham Carr.

A single nomination has been received for the vacancy that of the incumbent, **Graham Carr**, Peel Forest Estate, South Canterbury (Nominated Johnny Acland, Seconded Evan Thatcher).

Graham Carr is invited under the NZDFA constitution to present a short overview of his candidature at the 33<sup>rd</sup> AGM in Invercargill on 14 May prior to the meeting's general business session.

The 2008–09 SAP will meet with Graham Carr for a formal selection process at the conference.

#### Candidate statement

##### Graham Carr, Peel Forest Estate, South Canterbury

*I have sought re-election onto the DINZ Board as I see some very crucial issues facing the industry that need urgent attention. Having already had a term championing the cause of the producers to ensure a better return on their industry funding as my priority, I feel well equipped to serve the industry for a further three-year term.*

*The most pressing issue, I believe, is one of maintaining critical mass in the industry and halting and if possible, reversing the current trend of shrinkage. To do this we need to show an ability to compete for land use. We need to be recognised as another viable and sustainable alternative when farmers are looking for change.*

*Of equal importance to the viability of the industry is the need to make our voice heard during the Emission Trading Scheme debate. The current financial implications for the deer industry are draconian. The DINZ board has a huge challenge in addressing this issue with the Government.*

*The industry is facing many challenges including reducing volatility; therefore the industry is facing many challenges and dedication to the cause will be essential.*

#### 5. NZDFA Call for Expressions of Interest

**NVSB DFA appointment**, currently **David Stevens**, Balfour

**AHB Representatives Committee**, currently **Errol Croad**, Otaki

Two industry-appointed positions are due for review this year following retirement by rotation at the end of three-year terms.

Appointments are made by consideration of the Executive Committee at their June 2008 meeting. Existing appointees are eligible for reappointment.

Expressions of Interest are called for from interested individuals in either field, closing 12 May 2008. An interview process (either direct or by teleconference) may be required. Terms of reference are available on request.

Please advise in writing (post or email) with short CV and description of interest and background for consideration.

Please contact for further information or send EOI to:

**Tony Pearse, Producer Manager, Deer Industry New Zealand, PO Box 10702, Wellington,**  
[tony.pearse@deernz.org](mailto:tony.pearse@deernz.org)

## Grow your business with Ravensdown

Ravensdown provides a comprehensive range of products and services backed with technical advice and excellent service.

• Fertiliser

• Aglime

• Animal Health

• Agrochemicals

0800 100 123  
[www.ravensdown.co.nz](http://www.ravensdown.co.nz)





## Branch Chairman Profile: Udo Fuehrer – Otago

*It all began for Udo Fuehrer in 1973 with a sink-or-swim English lesson in the shape of a dairy farming job, when the then fifteen-year-old emigrated to New Zealand from Germany with his parents.*

“I went to about 14 different schools in 11 years in three different countries, and then we ended up in New Zealand when I was 15. My English wasn’t too flash so mum and dad stuck me onto a dairy farm. Basically I just learnt the language fairly quickly.”

Except for a period doing a joinery apprenticeship, Udo stuck with dairy farming until recently. Swimming against today’s tide of conversions to dairying, he has got out of that industry and moved into other enterprises including deer farming and horticulture.

Today, Udo farms “about half beef cattle, half deer, and just a smattering of sheep” on his 280-hectare block, Waiora, on the south-west side of Dunedin. The area has good annual rainfall of around 800 millimetres, on land that ranges from flats to steep hills.

Deer run on the block include 200 Eastern hinds, 150 weaners and about 70 mixed age velvet and trophy stags.

The deer farming operation is still in its early stages.

“We’ve only had the property just under three years, so we’re still developing at the moment. We’re breeding for venison – we haven’t actually started breeding for velvet. A lot of our stags are just purchased recently.”

Finishing of deer takes place on the main block, while some fattening of cattle is done nearby on his 40-hectare lifestyle block, where Udo lives with wife Leigh-Anne.

Udo also does some trading. “Depending on the season we’d probably trade between 200 to 400 deer – it all depends on what the grass does.”

“We’ve got a trophy block on the property as well, we just shot our first trophy this year. That’s an area of growth for us.”

The father of four and grandfather of one has recently handed the day-to-day running of the deer farm over to his second oldest son, Christoff.

The deer farming focus increased after Udo sold his 350-cow dairy farm last year. However, he then extended his farming horizons in an entirely different direction when he purchased a Central Otago orchard. “We sold the dairy farm in July and looked at other opportunities and return on investments. Orchardering was a standout at that stage.”

Now, he says, “I’ve got my finger in a few pies.”

Although a relative newcomer to deer farming, Udo worked with deer for a while before farming them, in his role as National Sales Manager at Deer Improvement. It was this job that led to his involvement with the Otago Branch of NZDFA, and he has now been on the committee about four years. The upcoming Branch AGM will mark Udo’s full transition into his new role as Chairman, when he takes over from predecessor Grant Cochrane.

Udo points to poor velvet prices as one of the biggest issues for Otago Branch members recently. “It’s obviously made people think about who’s doing what. I imagine it’s been on everyone’s minds.”

Velvet concerns aside, Udo says Otago membership is strong,



*Udo pictured with Gremlin, a 5-day-old fawn from his first AI programme. Gremlin, a son of Carl (one of Deer Improvement’s top growth rate stags), weighed 151kg at just 12 months*

and has increased in the last couple of years. “There have been a lot of deer farmers leaving the industry over the last few years; we’re probably one of the few groups that’s actually increased their numbers. It’s really a matter of trying to keep the ones that are there motivated and ticking along, but overall I think we’re as strong as ever.” 📺

### UNFEHLBAR ENGLISH RED DEER

#### 2008 ELITE HIND AND EMBRYO SALE

INSIGNIS PARK CHRISTCHURCH  
FRIDAY 27<sup>TH</sup> JUNE, 2008, 3.30pm

#### SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

PURE ENGLISH: WOBURN, WARNHAM AND ENGLISH TROPHY  
COMBINING NEW AND PROVEN GENETICS

#### IN-CALF HINDS AND EMBRYOS TO

- McCain (Kane x McLeod/Harvey)
- Aslan (Herbrand x Hastings/Berryend)
- Balanky (Herbrand x Bedford/Woburn)
- Hector (Harvey x Woburn)
- Guernsey (Banks X Hotspur/Duncan)
- Balmoral (Mountbattern x Austin/Woburn)
- Achilles (Major Peel x Sandy 11/Woburn)
- Aragorn (Hotspur x Charles Rupert/Terry)
- Mountbattern (Duncan x Hercules)
- Hotspur (Bedford x Andrew 11)

Phone 03 347 8158 Home • Guy Brady 021 664 805

PGG WRIGHTSON

- Graham Kinsman 027 422 3154 • Ron Schroeder 027 432 1299

*The sale site is two minutes from the airport, providing easy access for North Island buyers to return home immediately after.*



## Obituary: Graham Cribb

**Graham Cribb died suddenly while driving on Saturday 8 March, only about 3 km from his Southland home. Graham – “Cribby” to most who knew him – was a passionate, enthusiastic and committed deer farmer. He was positive about the industry and prepared to work for the industry’s benefit.**

An extremely hard worker, Graham had a small deer farm at Lochiel in Southland, but for the last 20 years he also owned a very successful cobble and curbing business. As well as owning that business, Graham was also there working 8 – 9 hour days, laying the pavers with his staff. But it was deer farming that he had a passion for.

Graham was foundation member of, before becoming Chairman of DeerSouth, a benchmarking project that did a lot to lift the performance of many Southland deer farmers. His specialty on his own farm was achieving maximum liveweight gains in young animals.

It was a desire to learn more about and become a velvet judge that led to his involvement in the Southland Branch DFA committee. During his time as a committee member he pitched in and was involved in a range of activities, but his passion was velvet judging. With the help of good friends Tom May and Tony Pearse, he developed into a successful Elk/Wapiti velvet judge. Graham gained plenty of enjoyment out of this role and was twice a judge at the national velvet competition.

Graham also belonged to the Elk and Wapiti Society, and served as a council member for the last four years. To be involved in three

industry bodies at the one time is an example of Graham’s passion and dedication. On his own farm he had a love of Fiordland Wapiti-type animals.

In recent times Graham had taken an interest in the trophy antler business, an interest fuelled by contact with Neville Cunningham. The last time he was in South Canterbury with Neville, they ended up doing some helicopter live recovery – something that gave him a real thrill.

Graham was a straight talker, and one who if he thought you were behaving like a tosser would tell you so, while also being quick to praise and support those that made good sense.

Graham was widely respected within the Southland region for his hard work and was a good friend to many, who realised his goal of owning a sustainable-sized deer farm, something achieved only within the last six months.

The NZDFA and Deer Industry New Zealand extend their deepest sympathy and condolences to Graham’s family and friends.

**Contributed by Bill Taylor, Southland**

## The velvet(t)ing gloves are off

Dear Editor

I was disappointed to see that *Deer Industry News* has compromised its journalistic integrity by deciding to accept a technical inaccuracy (a new euphemism for a spelling mistake) in the spelling of velveting. This is unfortunate, as English has adopted a set of rules and conventions to ensure that spelling is used accurately and consistently. For instance, do we now assume that other words of similar construction (in particular the spelling of targeted, which is commonly used in farming journals) is open to a similar cavalier change in spelling? Or is all the literary world out of step, and now will targeted, rabbitted and trumpeted etc be the order of the day for *Deer Industry News*? May we also assume that if technical inaccuracies are good enough for spelling in the deer industry that we can also accept technical inaccuracies in other industry areas such as velveting procedures and compliance requirements? Where does integrity begin and end?

One might ask: does it matter to make spelling mistakes? Apart from the confusion that would arise if every organization (sic) decided to recast English to suit itself, there is also an important issue of perception. It seems to me that if the deer industry is in correspondence on the sensitive issue of velveting with overseas agricultural officials and animal rights activists (particularly in England where velveting issues are of great concern and where attention to spelling accuracy is taken seriously) we should take care to be absolutely devoid of mistakes (“technical inaccuracies”) lest this be taken as an indication of similar flaws in the way we handle velveting.

While *Deer Industry News* may decide to breach the rules and conventions of English spelling I would have hardly thought that any of the rest of the deer industry was obliged to do likewise and it is reassuring that other farming journals wish to maintain standards.

Finally, the implication from *Deer Industry News* and the assertion from the NVSBS that the NVSBS has always spelled velveting with a double t is incorrect. My certificate of approval to velvet issued in 1999 does not use the double ‘t’; nor does my supervisory contract issued by the NVSBS.

**Peter Aitken**

## Deer Branch New Zealand Veterinary Association Conference, 2008

July 14–16, Clearwater Resort, Christchurch

**The Deer Branch NZVA invites veterinarians, researchers, industry personnel, consultants, farmers and anyone else with an interest in deer production and health or affiliated with the deer industry to attend its 25th Annual Conference.**

This conference is the only such event focusing entirely on technical and applied aspects of deer production in New Zealand. Contributions will be from a broad spectrum of expertise including deer industry, science, and veterinary leaders.

### Content

The deer industry productivity strategy

- Concepts, delivery and science

### Johne’s disease

- New information and research results on the epidemiology, diagnosis, economics and management of disease
- Practical problem solving workshop

### Slaughter, food safety and welfare

- Regulatory and welfare issues and initiatives surrounding slaughter, transport and compliance
- New information on velveting techniques and residues
- Compliance initiatives
- Leptospirosis

### Reproduction and genetics

- Latest technology for breeding and selection for productivity gains

### General technical

- Copper diagnostics, tuberculosis updates, marketing, disease case investigations and laboratory reports.

### Contact

Professor Peter Wilson

Institute of Veterinary, Animal and Biomedical Sciences

Massey University, PB 11222, Palmerston North

Ph. (06) 3569099 ext 7619, Fax: (06) 3505636

E-mail: [P.R.Wilson@massey.ac.nz](mailto:P.R.Wilson@massey.ac.nz)



## Solid lineup for 2008 environmental awards

**Entries for the 2008 round of the biennial competition have now closed, with entries received from eight farms:**

- Grant and Andrea Cochrane, Owaka, Otago
- Lyall and Marion Cullen, Timaru, South Canterbury
- Lyndon and Millie Matthews, Waikari, North Canterbury
- Hamish McKay, Geraldine, South Canterbury
- John and Jacky McLean, Lumsden, Southland
- Mike and Chris Stephens, Balclutha, Otago
- Ross and Sally Stevens, Rangitata Gorge, South Canterbury
- Ken and Kathy Swainson, Sanson, Manawatu

The number of entries this year is on a par with previous years, but the single North Island entry reflects the recent dry weather conditions and a reluctance to showcase, especially with other issues on these farmers' minds, says DINZ Producer Manager, Tony Pearse.

The underlying theme of sustainability has been evident in the entries, Tony says.

The judging panel consists of Tony Pearse and Tim Aitken, overall conveners; Nicola McGruther, Otago Regional Council; one to two representatives from Fish & Game and a representative from Landcare Trust in each area; and 2006 Premiere Award winner, Murray Neutze, South Canterbury.

Previous head judge of the awards, Simon Stokes, has moved to a new role at Environment Bay of Plenty and regrets that he can no longer judge the competition. However, Tony and Simon will come together to work on a judging template to be used for this and future years' judging.

Judging takes place in April and early May as an informal discussion session and tour of each farm, followed by the chance for farmers to present important farm aspects in a question and answer session.

The judging is based on four main categories: specific environmental practice, farm management, the 'Sir Peter Elworthy' element – involving social responsibility, innovation and promotion of deer, and finally an overall perspective of the farm.

The Premier award recognises leadership in environmental sustainability and land management. Winners will receive \$2,500 and a commemorative plaque and tree.

Several further merit award prizes backed by various committed sponsors give credit to those farms with unique environmental management programmes.



*The landscape of former Environment Merit Award winning property, Stanfield's Bushey Park.*

Award winners will be announced at the deer industry conference dinner on 14 May.

At the conference dinner, all entries will be profiled in a brief presentation, which will include a slideshow of photos from the farm. These will include a general photo of the farm, one top aspect of the farm, two things the farmer is most proud of and one deer photo.

DINZ wishes to pass its appreciation and best wishes for good luck to all entrants.

"We realise there can only be one premier winner, but the merit awards also acknowledge specific expertise and dedication to sustainable farming and are very important," says Tony. 📷

### Obituary

#### **Leslie Alister Loveridge: 1949–2008**

Les Loveridge, one of the pioneers of deer farming in the Central Districts, was farewelled by family and friends at his funeral service in Apiti in February.

Like many deer farmers, 59-year-old Les's interest in deer developed while he observed them down the barrel of a gun. He started work as a deer culler in the Ruahine Ranges and quickly became an expert at his job.

But it wasn't only his ability with a gun that stood him in such good stead. It was also his powers of observation and careful consideration that enabled him to instinctively know where deer were most likely to be at any given time.

These skills were to prove invaluable later when he became a contractor and farmer.

In the mid 1970s Les and his wife Mary bought some land in the Apiti area and started hay contracting.

Towards the end of that decade he saw an opportunity in the big money being paid for captured hinds. With his knowledge of deer behaviour in the wild he was able to catch them in the very same areas he had previously been shooting them and he soon became a very successful trapper.

Mike Holdaway, one of their many friends, recalled how Les's knowledge was of great benefit when he was still learning the ropes.

"I well remember our first fawning," Mike said. "I had an orphaned hind fawn and no idea how to raise it. No problem. Off around to Les and Mary's where they gave me a crash course in fawn rearing while the little thing wandered around their kitchen."

"I'm sure I was one of many for whom starting off deer farming was a lot easier because Les was always more than happy to help."

In the last few years, Les and Mary's farm had become one of the best in the area.

He died in Christchurch Hospital on February 19 and is survived by wife Mary and sons Craig and Shane.

NZDFA and DINZ extend their deepest sympathy to the Loveridge family. 📷



## Expansion on South Canterbury Focus Farm

*The key theme of expansion was evident as South Canterbury DINZ Focus Farm Whiterock Station held the first of its three annual local group field days in February.*

Following a good turnout at the introductory field day last November, 40 farmers were in attendance on 27 February at the 1,300-hectare Rangitata Gorge farm managed by Ross and Sally Stevens.

“We really welcome any deer farmers in the area who are keen to come along and be involved,” says Whiterock Focus Farm facilitator Nicky Hyslop.

“We had some good discussions, particularly giving feedback on comments or questions made at our previous field day.”

The group discussed the Stevenses’ plans to expand Whiterock’s deer-fenced area and increase deer numbers on the farm.

Initially, they plan to replace 400 of their ewes with 400 hinds. “Those breeding ewes have really struggled on that country, and we’re really confident that the breeding hind will be better suited, primarily because it is very steep country,” says Nicky.

Current weaning numbers also point to growth. “We have just confirmed weaning results at 91 percent from the mixed age hinds – 100 more weaners than budgeted. The fawning percentages have been very good, higher than previous years, so that’s excellent,” says Nicky. With the previous fawning percentage at 85 percent, Whiterock is well on track to reach its target of 95 percent.

The suitability of Whiterock’s high country for finishing weaners was addressed, having been initially raised at the introductory field day. “We looked at the profitability of finishing weaners versus selling them, and it certainly supported finishing. And more to the point, they [the Stevenses] are achieving it – they’re killing a significant percentage before Christmas. Therefore the feed demand curve of that stock policy fits very well with their inherent growth curve.”


A major objective is to achieve a stock policy with a better fit to Whiterock’s hard hill country, which is faced with climatic challenges that Nicky sums up as “summer dry, cold winters”. To combat these challenges, Nicky says, “We’re making sure that our timing in terms of getting [winter feed] crops established is right so we have some reliability of feed for winter. We’re certainly prepared to look at some summer



*Focus Farm facilitator Nicky Hyslop (centre) at the Whiterock Station field day in February with Focus Farm chairman Johnny Acland (left) and Focus Farmer Ross Stevens (right).*

feed crops also – how they can be incorporated on to the property.”

Addressing the difficulties of nutrition in high country farming was David Stevens from AgResearch. David led a discussion on the use of nitrogen fertiliser on hill country, looking at previous trials and the trial now beginning at Whiterock. “That’s going to involve a 10-hectare hill block where 100 units of nitrogen – or 200 kg of urea – have been applied,” Nicky explains.

“We are looking at alternatives to spraying out existing vegetation and establishing new pasture. On areas of high hill country we would like the option to preserve tussock while targeting increased pasture productivity. This trial looks at encouraging the growth of the grass and clover that is already established.” 

- **There will be another public field day at Whiterock Station on Wednesday 28 May 2008, with guest speakers Andy Macfarlane and Mark Acland. Contact for details: Nicky Hyslop, 027 477-4149, [nicky@mrbusiness.co.nz](mailto:nicky@mrbusiness.co.nz)**



**tradedeer.co.nz**  
TAKING DEER ONLINE

Contact Sharon or Rebecca Phone: (07) 332 5892 Mobiles: Sharon(027) 486 4341 Rebecca (021) 146 7383  
Email: [tradedeer@xtra.co.nz](mailto:tradedeer@xtra.co.nz)

Website: [www.tradedeer.co.nz](http://www.tradedeer.co.nz)

# Meat industry restructuring

**Massive change proposed for New Zealand's sheepmeat and beef industries could potentially impact on the venison industry. Deer Industry News looks at what is ahoof.**

It all began because New Zealand's sheep farmers, dissatisfied with three years of lacklustre returns (sounds familiar?) looked at the riches being divvied up amongst their dairy cousins from recent Fonterra payouts and decided that their industry needed to be re-structured. Grassroots action from the Meat Industry Action Group (MIAG) has resulted in the ousting of the chairmen of Alliance and PPCS – both South Island farmer co-operatives, both dealing in venison as well as other red meat species. Three major initiatives are under consideration:

- a proposed mega-merger to bring 80 percent of New Zealand's sheepmeat, beef and venison under one marketing umbrella
- a single red meat industry-good organisation
- the restructure of the sheep and beef industry in New Zealand.

## **"The Concept": a mega-merger**

"The Concept" from Alliance looks at a single new entity with a turnover of \$5 billion, managing 80 percent of New Zealand's supply of sheepmeat, beef and venison from farm to market. The cooperative says this will produce \$400 million a year of increased benefits – \$15 per lamb initially. Alliance says it will be necessary to retain 20 percent of the industry outside the entity to 'provide competitive tension'. Excess capacity would be rationalised, yields improved and the adoption of best practice encouraged. It would also allow a coordinated approach to research and development and technology opportunities. The vision is for a strong market presence with real investment in market research, brand development and consumer awareness – the infrastructure for that is already in place.

Although there is a lot of discussion to go, including raising the capital for any mega-merger, the Alliance initiative, led by new chairman and former chief executive Owen Poole, has met with initial approval from other meat companies, farmers and the research sector. An open letter to farmers from PGG Wrightson's chairman Craig Norgate has also urged fast-tracking of any consolidation. However, it is likely to be more than two years before an identity for any agreed mega-organisation can be launched and for the time being it is business as usual for the meat companies.



*From the middle of this year, PPCS will be known as Silver Fern Farms, the company announced recently. The name change is part of the firm's strategy to reposition the business as a fully integrated marketing company. Silver Fern is already one of PPCS's leading export brands and "a byword for consistency, quality and product innovation", the company says. Silver Fern Venison® will run alongside Silver Fern Lamb® and Silver Fern Beef®, and will consolidate around the single, strong Silver Fern brand along with a strap-line "natural and carbon-conscious".*

PPCS, which recently signalled a name change for the company to Silver Fern Farms in the middle of this year, has welcomed the concept of a mega meat industry business as an exciting opportunity for farmers to take control of their industry's future. Reese Hart, the former chair of PPCS, has urged the industry to consider a timeframe that leads to a clear direction for the industry within the next few months. PPCS Board member Eoin Garden has been appointed to the chairman's role to lead it forward during the forthcoming challenging time.

Prominent South Island farmer and former investment banker Forbes Elworthy – who was pushing, through MIAG, for a giant farmer co-operative company accounting for 60 percent of New Zealand's red meat production resulting from a proposed merger of Alliance/PPCS – also supports the Alliance concept and is urging farmers to accept it. However, this support is given under four conditions:

1. New Zealand farmers retain majority ownership.
2. A mechanism is put in place for share values to reflect the true worth of the new company once industry consolidation targets are achieved.
3. Negotiations focus on quality of the deal not expediency.
4. The highest calibre management and governance personnel are appointed.

AgResearch chief executive Dr Andrew West also lent his support to the merger concept, saying that farmers need to enter into contracts that mutually bind them. He agrees that a new, large meat company "not a monopoly" is needed that will produce lamb – and, presumably, other meats – "that wealthy consumers will pay considerable sums for".

"We now need to pull together, be bold and define a new, profitable and sophisticated future for the meat industry. It's not a time for faint hearts," Dr West said.

Both Alliance Group and PPCS chairmen will discuss aspects of the mega meat proposal at the conference.

## **Single industry representation**

Bringing Deer Industry New Zealand closer together with Meat & Wool New Zealand and the Meat Industry Association, a single red meat industry trade organisation has also been mooted as necessary to avoid duplication of effort and maximise the effectiveness of the 'red meat voice'. While the three organisations are positioned on the same floors of the same Wellington building and already



*New PPCS Chairman Eoin Garden runs deer amongst the 10,000 stock units at his mixed beef/sheep/venison operation at Millers Flat, Central Otago.*



*New Alliance chair Owen Poole is spearheading "The Concept" of the mega meat company that will handle 80 percent of sheepmeat, beef and venison.*

share resources, there is opportunity for further integration and there is benefit to having a single, united position on issues which face the industry.

## Taskforce appointed

Prominent and respected businessman Sir John Anderson is leading a super committee, a group of meat industry leaders convened by Meat & Wool New Zealand, to look at ways to develop a vision for red meat and a plan from farm to market that restores and generates sustainable long-term profitability by farmers and the wider meat industry. The Meat Industry Taskforce met for the first time in February. It includes the chairmen of Alliance, ANZCO, AFFCO, Davmet Ltd, Meat & Wool New Zealand, the Meat Industry Association and a director each from PPCS and Fonterra. The latest addition is the chief executive of Air New Zealand Rob Fyfe, who is expected to bring outside strategic experience that will benefit the process. The focus is on sheepmeat, with beef a close second.

The Taskforce's Terms of Reference zone in on five main areas: strategic direction of the meat industry, in particular sheepmeat; industry structure; supply of product; international markets; and the development of a sustainable industry strategy.

Anderson said the Meat Industry Taskforce, which is supported by a project secretariat, welcomed the proposal from Alliance Group to create a new entity to strengthen the industry as a positive step. Taskforce members have been engaging with shareholder and stakeholder groups around "The Concept".

Sir John Anderson is the government fixer and respected business visionary who is leading the nine-strong Meat Industry Taskforce forward. The former banker has a lot on his plate currently with meat industry restructuring and two tricky health board issues in Capital & Coast and Hawke's Bay to steer through. He is also chair of the New Zealand Venture Investment Fund, TVNZ and New Zealand Cricket and is a director of the Commonwealth Bank of Australia. 

### Meat Industry Taskforce

Sir John Anderson – Chair  
 AFFCO – chair Sam Lewis  
 Air New Zealand – chief executive Rob Fyfe  
 Alliance – chair Owen Poole  
 ANZCO – chair Graeme Harrison  
 Davmet – chair Colin Francis  
 Farmer and former chair of Richmond – Sam Robinson  
 Fonterra – director, Stewart Nattrass  
 Meat & Wool NZ – chair Mike Petersen  
 MIA – chair Bill Falconer  
 PPCS – former chair Reese Hart  
 Other members and advisers will be appointed as needed. There are no deer-specific members at this stage.

## Velvet takes top spot in New Zealand – Australia next

**Velvet-fuelled Powered by velvet.org.nz is on top of New Zealand's adventure racing world after the team won this year's ARC Adventure Race in Coromandel.**

"It was great to beat Team Orion, who had won ARC for the past three years straight and they came third in the Adventure Racing World Champs last year," says team leader Rhys Burns. He led the team – the "dark horses" for this year's event according to the Sportzhub web-site – through the challenging 24-hour event to beat favoured Team Orion by 46 minutes.

"It was the horsepower of Powered by velvet.org.nz that won the day," the report says. Rhys and his racing colleagues win the first prize of an entry into one of the world's most prestigious adventure racing meets, Australia's Geo Quest, a 48-hour event.

The team featured on TV3's *Sunrise* breakfast programme and team leader Rhys Burns was also interviewed on *RadioSport* in March. He was ensuring New Zealand velvet got plenty of mentions. "After all, we couldn't do it without you," he said.

Other *Powered by velvet.org.nz* athletes have been busy too:

- **Morgan Foster** (surf sports) – Has just won two golds and a silver in the New Zealand Surf Sports Championships, then he will go on to the Aussie titles 12–13 April. He was Beach Flags champion at the National Surf League final, beating rising star Ben Willis and national champion Paul Cracroft-Wilson.
- **Julia Grant** (triathlon) – Came third in the U23 National Triathlon Championships held in Wellington last month. She has been accepted for the New Zealand U23 triathlon team to head to Canada for the World Championships. (See feature on Julia in *Deer Industry News* February 2008, p10.)
- **Chris Morrissey** (adventure racing "AR") – Set a course record when he came first in the 28km "Kaiarahi" one day solo event – Kaweka Challenge on the 23–24 February.
- **Rhys Burns** (AR) – Won the 41km overall Kaweka Challenge – the highest endurance race in New Zealand.
- **Sonya Clark** (AR) – Second in the Kururau Crusher multisport race and third in the 150 km round-Taranaki road bike race.
- **George Christison** (AR) – Starred in a promotional video for the Genesis Energy Lake Lighthouse Challenge in his *Powered by velvet.org.nz* race gear.
- **Willy Benson** (swimmer) – Began Olympic trials in March. (See *Deer Industry News* December 2007, page 31.) 



George Christison (left) and Chris Morrissey figure out which way to go before setting out on the next leg in the ARC Adventure Race in Coromandel.



Velvet helped Morgan Foster to two golds and a silver in this year's New Zealand Surf Sports Championships.

## China Free Trade Agreement signed

**The anticipated comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between China and New Zealand was signed in Beijing on 7 April – a deal that analysts predict will add \$2.9 billion over 20 years to the New Zealand economy.**

A business delegation (comprising both New Zealand- and Chinese-based representatives), led by the Minister of Trade, Phil Goff, was in China to coincide with the signing of the FTA on 7 April.

CEO Mark O'Connor and Velvet Marketing Services Manager Rhys Griffiths were able to attend the signing as part of other travel in the region.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade's lead negotiator for the FTA, David Walker, indicated that after 15 rounds of talks – the most recent in Beijing in December – and bilateral meetings in Sydney during APEC, negotiations concluded on a comprehensive FTA with the People's Republic of China

(PRC). Once the team moved to legally verify and translate the text, the agreement was signed. Approval by the Chinese and New Zealand Governments pending, finally, the FTA will be ratified and will come into force.

The agreement is reported to be worth \$2.9 billion to New Zealand over the next 20 years.

“The key points for the New Zealand deer industry are tariff removal across nearly all products over five years and will be eliminated by 2013. Also, a comprehensive dispute resolution mechanism is in place, based on the existing World Trade




*The Minister of Trade, Phil Goff, led a business delegation to China for the signing of the FTA – the first for China with a Western country.*

Organisation framework which allows a means to resolve technical barriers to trade – a key issue for deer products,” says DINZ chief executive Mark O'Connor.

Securing preferential access to China's economy will potentially deliver significant gains for New Zealand's exporters, according to MFAT. It is the fastest-growing major economy – currently growing at 9.5 percent a year. China is New Zealand's fourth-largest trading partner, taking over \$1.6 billion of New Zealand's merchandise exports and over \$1 billion of services. Its middle class is now estimated to be more than 100 million people and growing – which will fuel the demand for New Zealand's agricultural products.

According to Statistics New Zealand, about \$4.5 million worth of deer products was exported to China in the year ending January 2008. The majority of this was velvet, with a significant quantity of leather and hides also being sent to that market.

A protocol for the export of deer products, covering venison and velvet has been signed already by the Chinese and New Zealand Governments. Currently, a tariff of 11.4 percent and a valued-added tax of 17 percent is levied on velvet imports to China and the FTA will reduce the tariffs over the five-to-six-year time period. The FTA should also make the very complex and expensive registration processes for traditional (pharmaceutical raw materials) and further processed velvet products easier. Currently, nine New Zealand velvet/co-product products are registered. 

## Gordon does venison at Hotelympia

**Deer Industry New Zealand was thrilled to learn that New Zealand's best known chef, Peter Gordon, prepared New Zealand venison for his 'Celebrity chef' demonstration in front of 100 foodservice professionals at the United Kingdom's largest culinary show, Hotelympia, in London.**


Peter has always been a passionate advocate of quality ingredients from New Zealand, and uses New Zealand venison on his menu at his acclaimed London restaurant Providores & Tapas Bar.

“What I love about New Zealand venison and what our customers love about New Zealand venison – because we sell an awful lot of it – is that it's really lean, really tasty, it's tender, it's consistent and it adapts to all sorts of flavours,” Peter said. “One time we might do something Italian the next Asian – it's a really versatile meat. You always know exactly what you're getting.”

Providores is serving rack of venison as a main course and using the trimmings, “which are incredibly tender – they just need a little bit more work”, as a stir-fry in the Tapas room. “Nothing's going to waste. Customers love the fact they can eat venison in summer. It's a lighter red meat than, say, beef. It's a healthy meat too.”

At Hotelympia, Peter demonstrated two venison dishes in The Skillery demonstration kitchen. One of the dishes was Roast New Zealand venison loin on a sweet potato miso rosemary mash, served with chard sautéed in butter, garlic and rosemary, with a sauté of pine nuts and wild mushrooms with soy and greek red wine vinegar.

“A combination of many different places – like meat and veg really,” he said.

The link with New Zealand venison is also strengthened as Peter encourages his chefs, Miles Kirby and, until his recent departure, Hamish Brown, to undertake assignments with DINZ to promote New Zealand venison through chef and consumer demonstrations in Europe. 



*Peter Gordon preparing the sweet potato miso mash that went under his main course of roast New Zealand venison loin, served with chard sautéed in butter, garlic and rosemary, with a sauté of pine nuts and wild mushrooms with soy and greek red wine vinegar.*

## MARKET TALK: Consumer trust takes a knock

**Korean importer Carrol (Kang-Joon) Song, talks to Market Talk about the currently difficult Korean market for New Zealand velvet.**

Carrol Song runs Siwon Pharmaceutical company, manufacturing dried sliced velvet out of green velvet and cattle gall bladder powder. The firm also supplies dried velvet to *Omniherb*, which has a sales network linking it to over 2,000 oriental medical clinics.

A combination of high prices affecting trade purchases and the lowering of consumer trust about the integrity of the oriental medicine products they are able to buy is undermining the market in the Republic of South Korea, Song believes.

Korean oriental medicine doctors are the largest buyers of deer velvet in the world and it is consumed in 12,000 clinics every day. "Ninety five percent of the velvet exported to China, from any farm in the world, finally comes to Korea to find consumers," he says. "This means Korea's consumption volume affects the frozen velvet price."

When the velvet price is too high – as it has been – oriental medical doctors (OMDs) find alternative ways to fill prescriptions. The velvet market shrank seriously in 2007 because OMDs bought less and most velvet distributors had a very hard year, because of several factors.

"It is really difficult to find a price that satisfies both producers and consumers. The market economy automatically decides the price."


According to Song, one of the new big changes in recent years is the huge volume of New Zealand velvet processed and sliced in China that is moving in to Korea at a very cheap price.

"The Korean market is trying to recover its normal consumption volume with good prices for consumers. It is getting better a little bit at a time, but it might take quite a long time to bring the consumers back."

Also affecting the market was the coverage by the press of 26 bad news stories about oriental medicinal herbs – usually about Chinese herbs – in 2007, which have knocked consumer confidence.

"Velvet is always mixed with herbs for final use and the general herb market condition affects velvet sales," Song says. "In July, there were stories about OMDs who sold 'no velvet included' velvet prescription remedies."

"One OMD charged the velvet prescription medicine price – which is usually two times higher than normal herb medicine – and he added no velvet when boiling the herb mixture prescription. The OMD said he could not add velvet as the price had risen too high. As a result, customers do not trust the general oriental medical industry."

"Now, good and big size clinics are getting better and better and small size clinics are getting worse and worse." 



Carrol Song pictured at a DINZ funded stand at the 2007 Oriental Medicine Expo in Korea.

## recipe

### Venison meatloaf with mashed potatoes

*With the onset of autumn, thoughts are turning to warming, simple food. Incorporating instant mashed potato keeps moisture in the meatloaf, without the need for adding any additional fat, meaning this dish is succulent and lean.*

Serves 4 – 5

#### Ingredients

500 g venison mince  
 ¼ cup of instant mashed potato flakes  
 100 g finely diced onion sweated in oil  
 2 cloves garlic, crushed  
 1 tsp smoked paprika powder  
 ¼ tspn chilli powder  
 ½ cup of cold beef stock  
 1 handful chopped parsley  
 1 tspn chopped thyme  
 ½ tspn ground white pepper  
 salt to taste

#### Method

1. Halve the mince.
2. Process one half into a smooth sausage meat in a mincer or food processor.
3. Put the finely minced venison in a large mixing bowl and add the cold stock, then stir in all the remaining ingredients and then the remaining mince.
4. Place in a greased meatloaf tin or terrine mould and bake in the oven at 160°C for approximately 40 minutes. (If you have a meat probe cook till internal temperature reaches 60°C.)
5. Remove and rest.

#### To serve

Serve with mashed potato and seasonal greens and your favourite thick sweet sauce.



## Venison

**Strong demand continues to underpin the seasonally high schedule. A ban on some South American beef is adding to purchasing pressure, as reports of resistance to high prices emerge.**

### Production

- For the 12 months ending December 2007, 594,000 deer had been processed.
- While this was 18% down from the year before, it was still the fourth highest kill in the industry's history.
- The post-Christmas production has been unexpectedly higher because of the effects of the drought affecting much of the country.

### Schedule

- At the time of writing (Week 14), the national average published schedule for 55-60kg AP stags sits at \$6.60 - 35% higher than the same time in 2007 and the 10- year average.
- Strong chilled sales post Christmas and continued high prices for frozen venison contribute to the continuity of venison returns.
- Marketers are indicating that because of the strong demand, and likely shortage of other protein options, the schedule for the remainder of this year will remain strong.

### Currency

- The NZ\$ touched record highs against the US\$ in the past month as continued concerns about the stability of the US economy meant investors sold US dollars in search of more secure investments.
- The US\$ has fallen 30% in value against the Euro in the last two years.

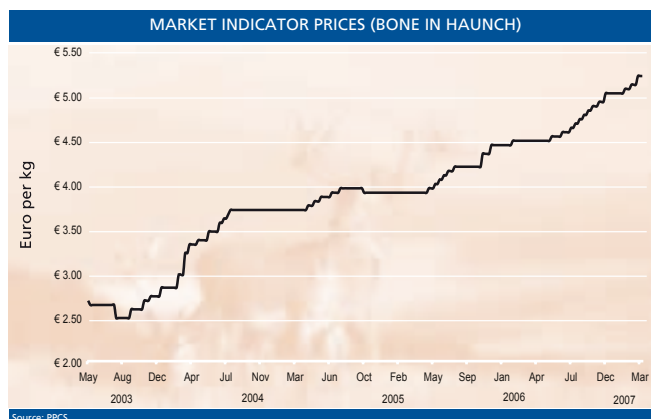
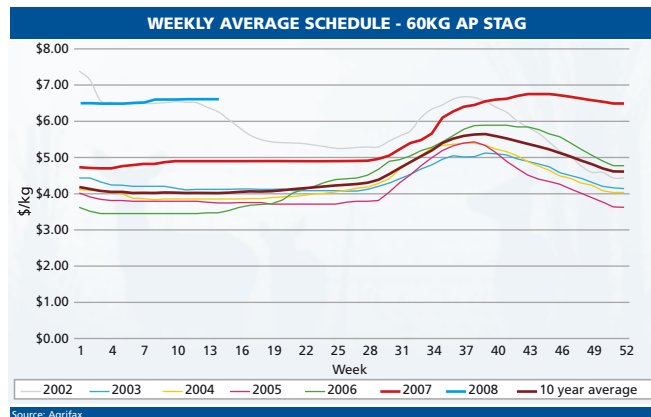
### Market Conditions

#### Europe

- Price increases are beginning to temper demand for New Zealand venison. Importers are now referencing individual customers who have declined to meet the increased prices.
- Demand for manufacturing product remains unsatisfied as companies producing frozen venison items for retail sale later in the year struggle to obtain sufficient supplies to fill their orders. Demand for middle cuts remains very strong as wholesaling companies build stocks for later in the year.
- Adding to this demand is the cessation of beef exports from Argentina, imposed to boost supplies of beef for domestic consumption in Argentina, exacerbating the beef shortage following the earlier ban on Brazilian exports to the EU because of failures in hygiene certification requirements. Beef tenderloins have reached unprecedented prices and, while venison is not a direct substitute for beef on most menus, it provides a benchmark for other quality proteins.

#### USA

- Importers are testing new price highs for venison with their customers as the weakness of the US dollar, and the strength of the European market, conspire to force the US\$ import prices higher. To date, importers have been able to pass on some of the price increases, in an environment of rising food prices in general, but recent observations about a weakening of the beef market may leave higher priced venison exposed.



### Promotion

#### Germany - Impress Your Guests

- The New Zealand Venison tasting wagons have been in action in recent weeks in Germany, with most importers/wholesalers promoting their products at chef fairs. One importer presented a range of leg cuts at a chef fair promoting them as an ideal grilling item to substitute expensive middle cuts.
- Over the past few months, DINZ has translated a series of information material into a variety of European languages to support venison sales in Europe. Chef's booklets in Dutch, consumer recipe leaflets in Italian, and Danish, and short, punchy websites in Swedish, French and Dutch have all been created and distributed to importers and their customers.
- The German language website [www.neuseelandhirsch.de](http://www.neuseelandhirsch.de) recently got a boost with New Zealand Venison recipes featuring on the website of the most widely read woman's magazine in Germany.

#### USA

- DINZ - alongside Meat and Wool New Zealand and Zespri - continues with the Pure New Zealand Cuisine culinary demonstration scheme. The three organisations are working together to showcase New Zealand fine food to culinary students across America. DINZ is coordinating the activity. In March and April, DINZ chef consultant Graham Brown conducted three hour teaching sessions at seven schools in the USA.
- Chef Brown has been working with some distributors in the USA to encourage chefs to use cheaper portions of Cervena on their menus to try and offset US prices.

# Velvet

The Korean market for velvet remains soft which continues to impact New Zealand velvet sales. A second PGG Wrightson (PGW) fixed priced contract has added some much needed stability. New Zealand velvet continues to gradually move toward a broader range of applications in Korea.

## New Zealand

- The 2008 New Zealand velvet season is finishing in a difficult environment as New Zealand's main market, South Korea, continues to be sluggish (see next section).
- There are reports of limited velvet remaining on farms in the North Island, but some quantities still on farm in South Island.
- Buying interest for Korean grades in the pool and generally remains soft due to fewer and smaller orders in Korea. However, buying interest in Chinese style velvet is robust as volumes tail off.
- A second fixed price contract for Korean and Chinese grades between PGW and a consortium of Chinese buyers covers a large quantity of New Zealand velvet and has greatly assisted moving volumes in a difficult season.

## Korean Market

The Korean market for velvet remains soft with importers generally making orders for velvet when they need them rather than building stocks. During recent DINZ Executive travel, importers raised the following factors:

- Patient visits to Oriental Medicine Doctors (OMDs) are lower due to a loss of confidence in OMDs following revelations of some quality issues with some Chinese oriental medicine herbs.
- OMDs holding off purchase of velvet as they expect velvet prices to fall.
- A significant strengthening of the New Zealand dollar against the Korean won (see graph). Since the start of the velvet season, the New Zealand dollar had appreciated by 18% against the Korean won by mid-March 2008. Since then, it has come off those highs and at the time of writing (7 April) is approximately 12% stronger than the start of the season.
- Stocks of velvet in Korea remain adequate and remain reportedly high in China.
- Importers are also wary of what they see as high prices for New Zealand velvet given the current environment. They are concerned that PGW did not accept lower prices during the season. They indicated that when prices did drop, the drops were large and caused a lack of confidence to purchase. Some larger importers have indicated interest in fixed-price contracts to give more stability to their businesses.

## Korea – other news

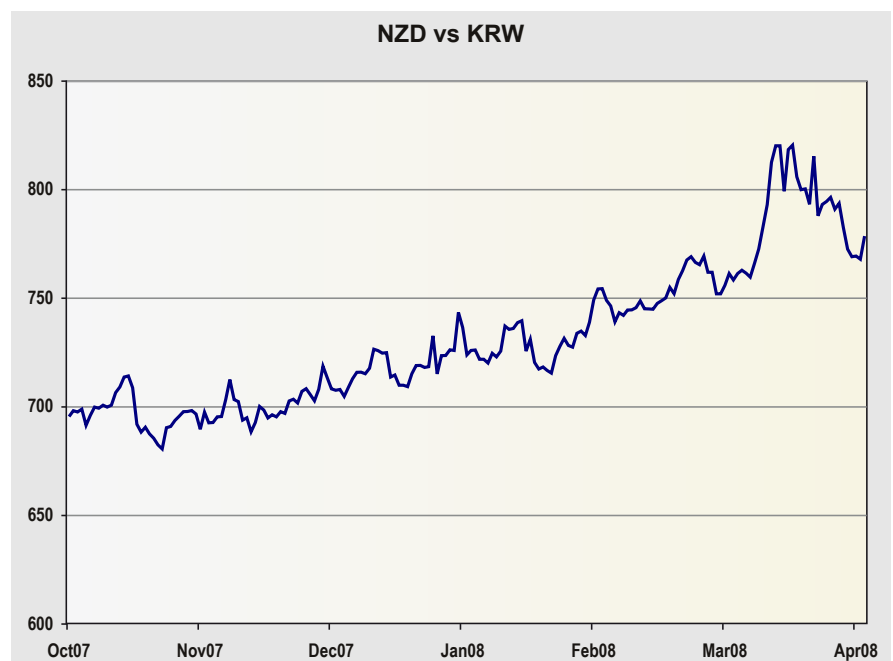
- Two Korean farmers have been prosecuted for allegedly selling imported deer velvet as locally produced. Korean officials have since audited several farms, finding another eight potentially in similar violation. The Korean Deer Breeders Association is extremely concerned about this and is threatening to ask the Korean Food and Drug Administration (KFDA) to increase import restrictions.
- The KFDA has allowed whole piece New Zealand velvet (both frozen and dried) to be imported to Korea as a food. This has allowed it to be used in areas outside the traditional OMD business and potentially opens a range of new applications for New Zealand velvet in Korea.
- The number of companies using New Zealand velvet in innovative new products continues to grow. For example, one has recently launched a series of "energy drinks" featuring New Zealand deer velvet for sale on home shopping channels. This strengthens the velvet as a healthy food strategy which carries significance in Korea.

## China

- The Free Trade Agreement between China and New Zealand is being signed by the respective governments. At the time of writing, its impact on the New Zealand deer industry is unknown. But indications are that tariffs on New Zealand deer products will be eliminated over a number of years. This is significant for the deer industry.

## Taiwan

The meeting between DINZ and the Taiwan Deer Farmers Association, during DINZ travel to Korea and China was postponed. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade in Taiwan is still actively trying to facilitate a meeting between the two industries and their relevant agricultural ministries.



# Meat focus at food technologists' conference

**Sustainability of food and challenges for international meat processors will be on the agenda in Rotorua in June, when the New Zealand Institute of Food Science & Technology (NZIFST) welcomes a host of meat speakers, including renowned venison chef Graham Brown, onto its 2008 'Food Sustainability' themed conference programme.**

With consumers around the world now demanding companies show their sustainability credentials, the New Zealand food industry has to adopt sustainability if it is to remain globally competitive, the organisers say. The conference programme focuses on assisting the food industry to better understand the key global drivers and practicalities of implementing sustainability policies. There has also been a bigger effort to incorporate meat onto the programme this year.

In addition to keynote speeches from Gillian Wratt, Chief Executive of the Cawthron Institute, Professor Caroline Saunders, co-author of the Lincoln University study about food miles and Nelson Gapare of the Ministry of the Environment will bring a policy perspective to the food miles discussion, along with Landcare Research and the Sustainable Business Network.


Three engaging and topical international speakers head the meat cast being enthusiastically organised by Rob Archibald of ANZCO Foods for the second day of the conference.

**Dr Randy Huffman**, Vice-President of the American Meat Institute will cover challenges facing the meat industry world wide, with particular reference to the United States. **Dr Mohammad Koohmaraie** of the United States Department of Agriculture will give papers on the sources of *E. coli* O157:H7

and interventions to reduce/eliminate pathogens on beef in the USA, and on the biological basis for the variation in meat tenderness and instrumentation to predict beef tenderness. Although hailing from a town called Antlers in the State of Oklahoma, **Professor Brad Morgan** will be drawing on his wide experience of meat research – most recently on beef – at the University of Oklahoma's Department of Animal Science.

Deer Industry New Zealand's consultant chef Graham Brown will be on the agenda to ensure delegates know about New Zealand venison. He joins other home-grown speakers including Trevor Johnston, chief executive of Riverlands Beef, who will provide more of a focus on the issues facing the New Zealand meat industry, along with Roger Cook, Geoff Bates and Carrick Devine on the meat programme which also covers sustainability from an energy and processing perspective.

Venison processors and others involved in the industry are invited to join the rest of the food industry at the conference to join the journey to sustainability.

The 2008 NZIFST Conference 'Food Sustainability' is to be held from 24-26 June at the Energy Events Centre in Rotorua. For further information: 

[www.nzifst.org.nz/events/annual-conf.asp](http://www.nzifst.org.nz/events/annual-conf.asp)



## Coming events

23 April 2008	Canterbury Branch AGM; Contact Ed Noonan (03 347 8155)
24 April 2008	Otago Branch AGM; Contact Grant Cochrane (03 415 8885)
29 April 2008	Central Regions Branch AGM; Contact Wilton Turner (06 328 4771)
1 May 2008	South Canterbury/North Otago Branch AGM; The Poplars, Pleasant Point; Contact John Acland (03 696 3707)
6 May 2008	Southland Branch AGM, Central Southland Lodge, Winton, 7.30 pm. Contact Janet Horrell (03 236 8720)
7 May 2008	Hawke's Bay Branch AGM (TBC); Contact Mike McCormick (06 858 9127)
7 May 2008	Waipa Branch AGM, contact Brian Wellington (07) 872 7702. Otorohanga Working Man's Club.
8 May 2008	Waikato Branch AGM; venue and details TBA; Contact Secretary Alby Cooper (07 825 2619)
13-15 May 2008	Deer Industry Conference: NZDFA Annual General Meeting and DINZ FGM. Ascot Park Hotel, Invercargill (see further details and registration form this issue).
28 May 2008	Whiterock Station Focus Farm public field day; guest speakers Andy Macfarlane, Marc Acland; contact Nicky Hyslop, 027 477-4149, nicky@mrbusiness.co.nz
24-26 June 2008	New Zealand Institute of Food Science & Technology conference, themed 'Food Sustainability'; <a href="http://www.nzifst.org.nz/events/annual-conf.asp">www.nzifst.org.nz/events/annual-conf.asp</a>
14-16 July 2008	Deer Branch NZ Veterinary Association Conference; Clearwater Resort, Christchurch. Contact Peter Wilson, Massey University 06 356 9099 Ext 7619, P.R.Wilson@massey.ac.nz, or Adrian Campbell, 03 308 5095 (A/H 03 684 9996), adrian@vetlife.co.nz
14-16 September	International Chefs Congress, New York. (See <i>Deer Industry News</i> February 2008 for article on selection of a farmer to represent Cervena™ at the congress.)
8-10 December 2008	National Velvet and Trophy Antler Competition, Ascot Park Hotel, Invercargill. Contact Janet Horrell, 03 236 8720.

## Dealing with drought

**Deer farmers around New Zealand have been affected by the drought that has hit much of the country – watching deer bodyweight drop and being forced to destock as they struggle to build winter feed supplies. Deer Industry News spoke to three farmers to see how they've been coping.**

Waikato deer farmer **Brian Marcroft** says the drought is having a substantial impact in the region, with drought being relatively unusual there.

"A lot of areas are used to having droughts – they know how to cope. Areas in the Waikato aren't used to the dry like this. The fact that there's no grass around, that's happened many times, but not like it is now. Trees are dying. It's the worst I've known in the Waikato."

Most of the deer on Brian's finishing unit were gone to processors by the end of January, but the 130-odd deer left have had to survive on alternative feed.

"I've been cutting down willow trees and they eat the leaves and the bark, and they've maintained their weight. Their coats are looking pretty dry, but they're surviving."

Usual winter feed is increasingly expensive and hard to come by,



Picture by Lyndon Matthews, Waikari, North Canterbury.

says Te Anau silage contractor and deer farmer **Chris Hughes**.

They say make hay while the sun shines, but too much sun and not enough rain has left very little for making silage. "We've probably done less than a third of what we would expect to," Chris says.

"On our farm, we have also bought in quite a considerable amount of grain. We fed grain until we got our first decent rain almost a month ago."

He has stocked up on baleage for his own animals, "But I'm still going to have to probably buy some late stuff and that will be extra expensive," he says. "We were dry fairly early; that's why I got out and bought as much baleage as I could early on."

"A considerable number of people haven't managed to source baleage at affordable prices. Overall, the Te Anau basin has probably got less than half of the winter feed that we'll need."

NZDFA Waipa branch chairman **Brian Wellington** says the drought-related feed worries have dominated on their farm. "Everything else has come to a standstill while we take care of the basics."

### Stock numbers shrinking

Many faced with a lack of winter feed are resorting to cutting back stock numbers.

"We haven't kept replacement hinds. We're cutting back numbers to see if we can fit the feed situation," says Chris Hughes. "It's not a good situation, but we're going to have to survive it."

*continued on next page...*

## Stanfield's Bushey Park sold

**The year 2008 marks a new chapter for Clive and Elsie Jermy with the sale of their Stanfield's Bushey Park property at Palmerston. Clive says the property sold for close to the asking price and he is very happy with the figure achieved.**

Bushey Park has been purchased by Ashburton sheep and cropping farmer Jim Ironside. After settlement in August there will be no more deer on the farm – the new owner intends to run sheep and cattle only.

When *Deer Industry News* spoke to Clive Jermy late last month he was very busy with the dispersal of the 750-head commercial venison herd along with the normal operations required at an already demanding time of year. Five hundred of the 750 hinds plus calves had been sold – most to South Island buyers with the possibility of a line going to Hawke's Bay.

Clive and Elsie are keeping the Stanfield's deer stud and Hereford stud, along with the 320 velvetting and trophy stags.

Finding a suitable new property in their preferred new location of South Canterbury was proving to be a challenge,

Clive said. "The dairy boom has fuelled values beyond comprehension. Anything with reliable rainfall is \$10,000 plus per acre, and irrigated land is going for more than \$15,000."

While they had their eyes on a property, nothing had been settled. Their preference is for a property that can accommodate the studs and velvetting herd, but "Plan B" might be for a separate property for the velvetters and cattle.

The Jermys moved to Bushey Park in 2000, and undertook an extensive development programme on the property. This included 120 kilometres of fencing and 18 kilometres of lanes, pasture development, environmental enhancement, farm buildings and renovating the houses on the farm.

Clive said he and Elsie will miss Bushey Park but are excited by the prospect of a new farm in Canterbury focusing on their core business of stud activity. 🏡

## Profile: Goodwin McNutt

### Part 2: Catching deer, flying tourists and battling bureaucrats

By Phil Stewart

**In Part 1 of our profile of industry pioneer Goodwin McNutt (see February Deer Industry News), we looked at his early days of hunting and aviation and the establishment of his base in the central North Island. In this second part, Goodwin turns to live deer capture and sets up a deer farm on his Hawke's Bay property before a move south and a major career shift.**

In 1968, Goodwin took the plunge and bought the far more powerful turbine-engined FH1100, a decision that stood him in good stead for years to come. It was only the third turbine-engined helicopter in New Zealand.

All the while he'd kept his 'day job' working for a wage on his father's Hawke's Bay farm, and in the early 1960s "I took over my bit of ground, which I didn't really want".

But Goodwin had seen the potential for deer as more than just sources of skins and wild venison, and he started to bring his hobby home with him. He gained permission to keep some deer on his farm in an experiment to see how they would fare behind fences, and by late 1964 he had three on the property. While the government dithered about allowing deer farming, he and wife Mary had built the on-farm herd up to 75 animals by 1969, learning plenty about deer husbandry along the way and proving that they could be successfully farmed and bred. (For more about the McNutts' early work with deer, see *Deer: The New Zealand Story*, David Yerex, 2001.)

At the end of 1966, Goodwin had started catching deer in earnest, starting with a net system weighted with a rigid pipe frame which he would drop onto the deer from the Hiller. Sambar deer were the easiest to catch – Reds, Sika and Fallow had a good sidestep that made solo pursuit in the helicopter very difficult, Goodwin says. "The year of 1967 was when I did most of my catching. I kept some at the farm, but also some at Taupo with Rex Giles [later the holder of New Zealand's first deer farming licence], who came in about then."

In the meantime, Goodwin's transition to helicopters from fixed wing was just about complete. This process was helped along in 1967, when he and a passenger survived a bad crash which wrote off his Taylorcraft. Taking off from the Rangitaiki strip with the passenger and a 12-gallon drum of helicopter fuel on the back seat and two full wing tanks, the plane suffered a loss of engine revs on takeoff – past the point of no return. (It was later found pumice had got into the air filter, partially blocking the flow into the carburettor.)

Struggling off the deck and unable to climb more than a few feet, Goodwin headed for another strip to land. Dodging between two power poles and under the power lines, he was undone by a set of telephone lines, catching the pole and

cartwheeling to a stop. Thankfully there was no fire, and Goodwin crawled out of the wreckage with no more than a small hole in his knee from the brake and a cut lip from the perspex. The passenger was also unscathed.

The deer capture and venison recovery continued with the new helicopter in 1968 and 1969, but by the late 1960s the venison business slowed down. Consolidated Traders stopped taking venison and an attempt to sell it through Skeggs in Tauranga didn't work out. It was time to move on.

In March 1970, Goodwin responded to the call from a young Tim Wallis to come down to the South Island and join in the fast-growing deer recovery business.

Moving initially to Makarora near Haast Pass, he spent a few months flying shooters (including some of those featured in the *Deer Wars* television documentary shown in January), but Goodwin soon realised he had the wrong machine for venison recovery. "It's a personnel carrier. It could lift the arse off a Hughes 500, but the Hughes is more manoeuvrable,



Goodwin McNutt with the FH1100. The helicopter is now listed as a historical aircraft (see inset).

*Dealing with drought continued from page 2*

Normally buying weaners at this time, Brian Marcroft is choosing to keep stock numbers low for now. "I have no intention of buying until I get some of my growth back. I'm in a pretty good position, really, but I hope the weaners are still available, that's all."

Chris believes many farmers are resorting to killing excess stock and more.

"That in itself is going to have an impact down the track on the deer industry. I think there are going to be some quite long-term effects from the drought. A lot of the market expansion that's gone on could be lost, basically, because we might not be able to supply some of the markets that we've expanded into.

"It concerns me that as an industry we've lost a lot of capital stock," Brian Wellington agrees. "We're not meeting the market with the supply of venison. A loss of more capital stock is only going to impinge on that and make it harder for us to supply."

All those spoken to by *Deer Industry News* agreed that the winter ahead is likely to be rough.

"A large percentage of the people think 'Well, maybe the winter will be kind to us'. Maybe it will too – but maybe it won't. It's a bit of a gamble," Chris reflects. "There's a lot of skepticism out there as to how the farming industry as a whole is going to get through this winter." 📺

fast and compact. They can get into the smaller spaces. My machine you had to put the shooter in the back, whereas the Hughes you could fly on the left and have the shooter on the right, beside the pilot.”

By this time, Goodwin was married and starting to raise his family of five. It was time to settle in one spot and have some stability in the family's life. That spot was Fox, on the West Coast. In June 1970 the family settled there and the FH1100's signage changed from “Winged Hunters” to “Glacier Helicopters”.

“Every valley had a meat helicopter flying in and out – I'd joined the tourist business so I couldn't have people thinking I was one of them.”

So began a 20-year career flying tourists. Once again, Goodwin was ahead of the game. While the FH1100 had been less than ideal for venison recovery in the South Island terrain, it was unrivalled as a tourism vehicle.

“All the piston engine helicopters could only get up to 5,000 or 6,000 feet. I could land mine on the top of Mount Cook.” And he did – dropping off two bottles of wine on the peak to welcome a famous climbing party including Sir Ed Hillary and legendary Mount Cook guide Harry Ayres. Goodwin also flew the party in and out for their ‘grand traverse’ of Mount Cook, filmed for a television documentary in 1971.

Despite the glamour of such assignments, Goodwin found the tourism flying “tame and monotonous”, but having the edge in the burgeoning aviation tourism industry, it also provided a good income.

By 1990, the children had left school and moved out and after 20 years, the business had been “like having a 7-day-a-week job running a corner dairy”. Once again, Goodwin and his wife moved on, this time to Canterbury.

One daughter now farms in England, another son and daughter have stayed on the West Coast, where they are raising their own families, and he has a son in Christchurch – owner of the block at West Melton where he now has his base. Another son, Major John McNutt, was tragically killed in Kuwait in 2001 while on active service with the SAS.

While Goodwin maintained his aviation industry interests, running several other helicopters over the years including one machine that had been “half of the Sierra Leone airforce”, he never lost his passion for hunting and animals.

His attention has turned from deer to tahr, which he has run in captivity for around 30 years. He has sourced animals from a number of places, including his own live capture operations. “They're quite easy to catch. They just go and hide from the chopper. I'd hover back with the headlight on them and my guys would just sneak up and grab them. They're a lot easier to catch than deer!”

He is now facing battles with the Department of Conservation for the right to run the animals outside their DOC-defined “feral range”, a battle that will be familiar to most deer farmers. In 1989, DOC had originally allowed him to farm the tahr at Kowhai Bush near Springfield, mid Canterbury, for research purposes. Since then, he has been forced to move them to a leased block at Arundel in South Canterbury.

He currently has 120 adults and 60 young. Tahr can be farmed for their meat, hide, down and manes, and are also in demand from New Zealand game estates as trophy



*Goodwin McNutt with the first deer he ever bred, a hind born at Wanstead, Central Hawke's Bay at 11.00 am on 12 January 1965. The hind had a very long and peripatetic life, being moved from Wanstead successively to Te Whaku (Taupo), Koromiko Park (Picton), Fox Glacier (Westland) and finally to Kowhai Bush, Canterbury, where she died at about 11 pm on 21 April 1992, aged 27 years and 3 months. As a mark of respect for his long-lived hind, Goodwin had her head mounted (inset). She now resides at West Melton alongside other mementos of Goodwin's early days in the industry.*

animals. Goodwin is grateful for the deer industry's support for his submission to the game animal panel of enquiry, that wild deer, chamois, tahr and pigs should be managed as a resource.

“Tahr are just another kind of goat, and they're not hard to farm. With some barbed wire top and bottom of the fence and a hot wire on an outrigger you can keep them in. As far as I'm concerned any animal that lives with humans is a domestic animal and these are. DOC seems to want to confine wild tahr to the mountains and national parks, which is completely the wrong place – that's where they can do damage! It would be far more sensible to let us farm them on the flats and protect the high country where they are a menace. Any domestic animal will damage the environment if you release it – not just the so-called wild animals.

“It's ridiculous that deer and tahr should be farmed under the Wild Animal Control Act. I have two ministerial letters agreeing with that point. Where has a wild tahr colony ever been established after a farm escape? Nowhere! The only way that can happen is when hunters do illegal liberations. I'm a farmer [of tahr], not a hunter.”

The passion that drove a young Goodwin McNutt into the hills with his rifle back in the 1940s – that inspired his risk-taking and vision through the early days of deer recovery and the glory days of tourism aviation – still drives him in his quest for a commonsense, fair solution to the tangle of red tape surrounding “wild” animals.

An old uncle once advised him: “When the crowd runs, you stand. And when the crowd stands, you run.”

That uncle knew a thing or two. 📺

# Tension over Deer Improvement move to antler genetics

**Reports earlier this year of deer studs issuing trespass notices against Deer Improvement (DI) appear to have been overstated, but tension remains – intensified by the move of DI into velvet and trophy genetics.**

Some studs now include clauses in their conditions of sale aimed at preventing any of the studs' genetic material from falling into the hands of entities like DI. How easy these terms are to police is unclear, but it's apparent that the stud industry is being more proactive about protecting the value of its investment from the perceived threat posed by commercial semen/germplasm activities.

*Deer Industry News* spoke to DI Director, Peter Gatley for his thoughts on the issue, and invited a response from the stud industry.

Peter Gatley said only one stud mentioned the Trespass Act, while others had asserted their right to deny DI access to what was being offered for sale.

"We found that an unfriendly gesture, and did not attend any of the sales in an official capacity. Some individual field staff attended sales in their local area, however.

"Having nearly half of the top 20 venison stags in the country and an average BV of 19.7 in our stag team, there's not much on offer at the sales that would appeal to us anyway."

One exception was Peel Forest's Atlas. "We'd love to buy some of Atlas's semen, but that offer has been declined."

He said DI surveys have shown most deer farmers supported choice and competition, with only a small minority opposed to DI's activities.

"We're a farmer-owned cooperative focused on new technology and delivering value. We empathise with those in the stud industry who have invested a lot in their business. Running a stud is tough, but so is an AI business. We are still budgeting a loss, but we do expect to be able to wean ourselves off the teat of the dairy industry!"

Peter said the deer industry should be pleased that a new organisation was prepared to invest so much in their sector. "Some of those who don't want us at their sales also have powerful financial backing. There's nothing wrong with that – it's the nature of business and risk."

Negative reaction to DI's entry into the velvet/trophy genetics markets is probably an over-reaction, Peter said. "Venison production remains our core business. We are supplying velvet and trophy genetics because that's what our customers wanted, but that is only likely to make up 10 percent of our business. It's a small and fragmented market, but the studs have left part of that market unsatisfied and people are turning to us for good genetics."

Should the deer stud industry protect its value using the same prohibitions on AI applied in the thoroughbred industry? That argument cuts no ice with the DI director. "It's anti competitive and it inhibits genetic improvement. Melbourne Cup times haven't improved for decades despite all the advances and training, track conditions and nutrition." 

## Deer studs respond

The following statement, signed by Clive Jermy and John Kempthorne, gives a stud industry perspective:

The issue of Deer Improvement (DI) vs. the stud sector has had far more publicity than it deserves.

Unfortunately the debate is in part fuelled by DI's continued use of the media and provocative advertising ridiculing some breeders. This appears to highlight their aggressive corporate behaviour.

Semen companies, like breeders (stud and commercial), finishers and velvet specialists, all have roles to play. However, the negative reaction by stud breeders to DI is understandable.

The stud sector's sires have been purchased and form the backbone of DI's semen sires – our investment and development of genetics, not theirs.

Advertising and promotion has been misleading as to what can be achieved by customers using their services.

Aggressive pricing might provide some short-term benefits, but as the breeders are undercut and fade away, genetic diversity starts to shrink. The wide genetic base enjoyed by the industry today, especially in antler, will narrow until the industry faces a major problem, not just in terms of genetic variation, but the breeding skills that cannot be replicated with antler BVs.

Breeding for antler is a far more complex science than weight alone that BVs help you with.

The use of semen for venison production cannot compete with natural mating, in terms of financial returns, simplicity or productivity. Semen's best use is to help develop elite female lines for future venison production or to inject elite new sire lines for antler – but it is strategic.

DI quotes its surveys about farmers' wishes for competition, but competitive choice is alive and well for the breeding industry. The stud sires on sale are high in quality and competitive in price. This is graphically demonstrated annually in the auction arena. There is also a significant trade in semen from the stud sector.

DI says some of us have powerful financial backers wanting to protect their investment – but surely none as powerful as the dairy industry! In every case, breeders put their own money and commitment into their business.

If DI is not worried about buying more stags or going to sales, why the continued running of provocative ads insulting breeders?

One has to marvel at the statement that the trophy/velvet market for genetics is small and fragmented when most of the stud sector is dedicated to antler and is producing a level of quality not seen in eight centuries of recorded history!

The protection of IP adopted by the studs is for long-term industry good so breeders can continue to invest in, prove and provide advanced genetic material. It is small beer compared to the IP protection policies adopted by major cattle semen companies, including DI's parent.

Farmers have freedom of choice for AI or natural mating, a wide genetic base to choose from, competitive pricing, be it live animals or semen, and they will choose regardless of this controversy. Our only advice is that farmers make careful choices, based on fact and proven performance.

Otherwise, let's move on and do whatever it is that suits us best.

**Clive Jermy and John Kempthorne**

# Obituary: David Yerex

**Deer Industry pioneer and prolific agricultural journalist and author David Yerex has passed away, aged 80.**

Born in Taupo in 1927 and raised in the Hutt Valley, David came into contact with deer farming at a young age. His father, George 'Skipper' Yerex was head of the Deer Control Section of the Department of Internal Affairs in the 1930s.

As a young man, David studied abroad at the prestigious Notre Dame University in Indiana, United States. The years of study there were a gift from his uncle Lowell Yerex, multi-millionaire and founder of three Central American airline companies.

David spent several years working in the print journalism industry in England before returning to New Zealand to work on the *Evening Post*, the *Listener* and *Dairy Exporter* magazine, among other publications.

Around this time, he helped to form the New Zealand Guild of Agricultural Journalists and Communicators, and was the Guild's first secretary.

Showing his agricultural roots and his entrepreneurial spirit, David started the Farm Holidays concept in the 1960s in response to demand from kiwis and tourists alike for holidays on New Zealand farms.

David also spent some time on screen as a TV presenter, notably on the iconic *Country Calendar*, among other rural programmes.

Present in the earliest days of the deer industry, David was the founding Executive Director of the New Zealand Deer Farmers' Association from 1975 to 1979. Prior to this role, he was on the Association's establishment committee.

He helped establish *The Deer Farmer* magazine in 1979 and was the founding editor of the publication.

A dedicated writer, David authored 22 books, most with an agricultural focus. Five of these books focused on deer. His most recent deer book, *Deer – The New Zealand Story* is a comprehensive history of deer and deer farming in New Zealand.

His last book reflected on his own life, autobiography *Word Imperfect*.

"David was a doer," friend and journalistic colleague Gordon McLauchlan said of his friend's full life.

David spent many of his later years in the Wairarapa on his small farm, where he was able to combine his passions for writing, farming and the outdoors.

David will be sorely missed by the deer industry, which appreciated his dedication and the knowledge he shared through his writing.

Following a private cremation, David's life was celebrated with a gathering of friends and family in Carterton on March 4.

David is survived by his wife Pauline ('Paul'), his children Sue and Steve, and his three grandsons, to whom DINZ and NZDFA extend their deepest sympathy. 🇳🇿



David and Pauline Yerex.

### Books on deer and deer farming by David Yerex:

*Deer Farming in New Zealand* (1979)

*The Farming of Deer* (1982)

*Modern Deer Farm Management* (1987; co-authored with Ian Spiers)

*Wapiti – Behind the Wire: The Role of the Wapiti in Deer Farming in New Zealand* (1991)

*Deer: The New Zealand Story* (2001)

## David Yerex: A personal tribute

David Yerex was a true pioneer of our industry, and his contribution was huge. He told the world that deer can be farmed, and we can thank him for the fact that the world sees us as the leaders in that field. Many who farm deer now learnt a lot from David's wisdom.

His father, "The Skipper", was "the man" of deer cullers in the 1950s. David followed him in this love of deer, and it is lovely to see that his son Steve inherited this passion for hunting and the outdoors.

David served as the first NZDFA executive director in about 1980 and I'm told he was a good one. He also served on many AGM committees, some with me. With David you always knew where you stood!

But the main thing David Yerex will be remembered for was his ability to write about deer. He would consult farmers, research groups, agents, businessmen – anyone with an opinion on the animal – and come up with a great publication. He was editor, writer and advertising salesman

for *The Deer Farmer* for many years. I did the cartoons and he printed them all – good and bad.

Many of us older ones remember David and his lovely wife, Pauline, along with Coxes, Swanns, Elworthys, Fords and so many others too numerous to name, at the final nights of all those wonderful AGMs, when the wine and company of good friends kicked in and we all thought we sounded like Frank Sinatra. If only we could relive those nights – perhaps just one more time...

But I guess all good things must come to an end. We the originals – who David gave hope that maybe one day we would have in our herds a stag of, say, 14 points – and the many who came later, will not forget him.

So, on behalf of all those, we send our sympathy to David's family. He was a one off! Barbara and I visited him and Pauline in Carterton two years ago and it was great to laugh over all those good times. He showed me all the treasures on his lovely farm and we promised we would keep in touch – we did by phone, but I wish now I had visited him more often. 🇳🇿

**Murray Matuschka, Kitenui Farm, Taupo**