

# “Making the Difference”

DEER INDUSTRY FOCUS FARMS PROJECT

Issue 10  
December 2009

**Canterbury/North Canterbury – MENDIP HILLS**

**NEXT FIELD DAY – MENDIP HILLS  
THURSDAY 18<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY  
11.00am sharp start  
BYO lunch for lunch on the hill**

**Theme:**

**Farming under new regulations – will it go away or do we need to start planning now.**

**A full agenda will be sent in the New Year.**

As the year draws to a close, I look back on a very successful year for the DINZ Focus Farm project at Mendip Hills.

The theme “Making the Difference” really captures the overall project.

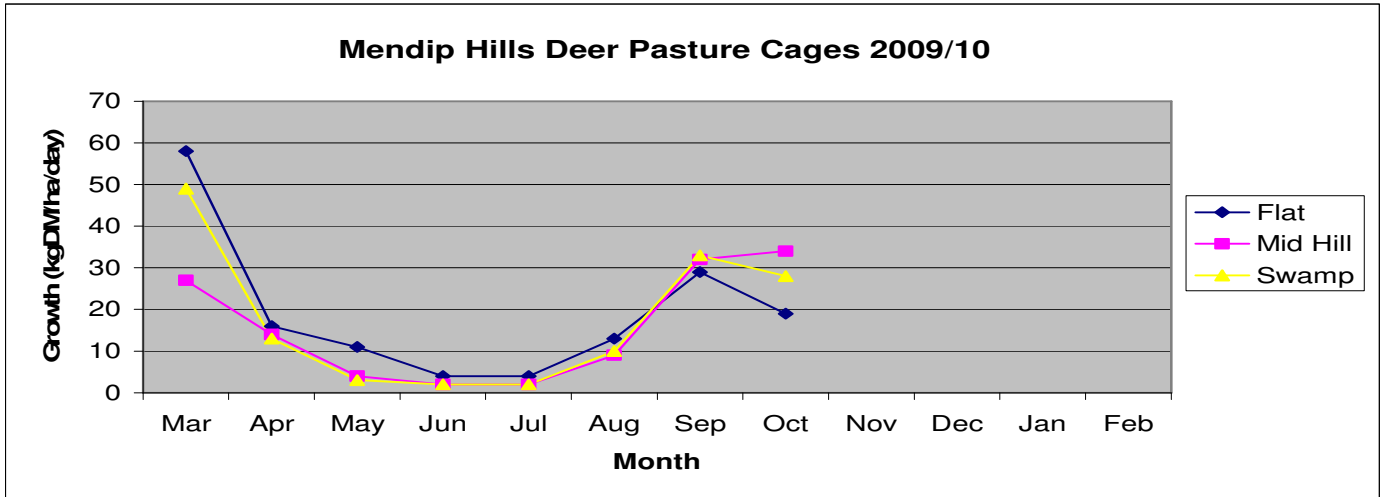
We have had two great community days at Mendip and a joint community day with South Canterbury/North Otago at North Bank. Our final public field day at Mendip in October was a real cracker. The turn out of deer farmers on the day was very disappointing but thoroughly enjoyable for the few that made the effort.

As always, the success of field days and similar projects, such as the “Deer Focus Farm” is not down to one individual. The list would probably cover three newsletters: For example the committee; DINZ; AgResearch; North Canterbury Vets; Canterbury Deer Farmers Association; Mountain River and the general public. There are still plenty I could go on with but there are two that require a special thanks. The first is our committee chairman, Mark Shadbolt. His blood, sweat and tears have been the corner stone in making the project work at Mendip and continue to evolve. The second really big thanks needs to go to the Mendip team. Without them we would not have a Focus Farm. To Brydon we thank you for opening your property to the general public, Simon and Meshia whose contagious enthusiasm and willingness to try anything and make it happen and finally the rest of the team at Mendip. Their commitment and willingness to go the extra mile and make the days and project a success this year has been fantastic. It’s not only what you see on the day but it is all the effort they put in preceding and following our community days. Thanks everyone.



So what's been happening at Mendip since our last Open Field Day in October.

- **Rainfall:** October 42mm, November 87mm and December 22mm to date.
- **Grass Growth:** On the front early country there was good grass growth in October. The middle country out to the back hind block, the ewe twining country and breeding cow calving area was slow in October and continued to be slow until half way into November but then took off, resulting in the current situation of an abundance of feed.



- **Development:** The new stock water scheme is progressing at full speed. The first set of pumps are in and storage tanks on site with the pipes being laid late November. The Mendip team also took on a mammoth task of fencing another block to fawn the R2 hinds into the hill deer block. But the rain won the battle and the R2 hinds started fawning. A decision was then made to leave the R2 hinds on the bottom deer block and an alternative to send the yearling hinds up to the new fenced deer block. 114 in total after 60 of the poorer type were culled and sold.
- **Deer:** All hinds are set stocked on the hill in their mating mobs. Copper bullets and Sel pour was administered to all hinds, plus Pournon to the 2<sup>nd</sup> calvers. The 1<sup>st</sup> calvers down on the bottom deer farm also got Copper and Sel pour. Overall set stocking on the hill was a half stock unit back per hectare on previous years.
- **Sheep:** Lambing was slightly back on last year but lambs have done really well. Early lambers and single bearing ewes were weaned last week. With 1,700 lambs killed off their mother at just over 17kgCW and 3,600 lambs sent to the finishing farm at just under 30kgLW, which Simon was very pleased with.
- **Cattle:** Calving has gone well and calves are doing well. Bulls have gone out for mating. A decision has also been made to shift the stud cows into the commercial herd, which should free up the house flats for young stock finishing etc.
- **Winterfeed:** First lot of silage is made and baleage paddocks are not far off cutting. Some spring grass was sown this spring and is looking okay. The rest is summer following and will be sown in the autumn. Kale crops were in by the 20<sup>th</sup> November. 4.5ha of fodder beet sown late in November has just had its second weed spray. Plant population is pleasing. Turnips are going in this week and also in the new year.
- All in all a busy finish to a fruitful year.

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