

**PRESS RELEASE 02/10/09**

**New Focus Farm Initiative for Southland and Fiordland Farmers**

Deer Industry New Zealand, the NZ Deer Farmers' Association, Landcorp Farming Ltd, and Meat and Wool NZ have come together to support this partnership in technology transfer. The project, led by a Southland Branch steering committee, will develop, co fund and support a three year focus farm programme in the region, based on the *Making the DIFFerence* Deer Industry Focus Farm project aims and directions under the “more calves, heavier and earlier” themes.

Overriding that specific deer focus the properties feature the management and practical advantages and challenges of integrated livestock farming (ie: with sheep and cattle) within and outside the deer fence. The project aims to attract any livestock farmers, not just the deer industry

Steering committee chairman, Craig North explains that the key to this initiative is the mix of 9 public field days over three years balancing a commercial finishing property, an extensive commercial breeding property with finishing options (again across species but predominately deer) and integration and management practices of Landcorp Farming's finishing, extensive breeding, breeding & finishing combinations and elite breeding unit based in the Te Anau basin, again with the livestock integration theme dominant.

The group has secured the services of Riversdale farm consultant & facilitator, Alastair Gibson, and has the valuable veterinary input and guidance from Dr Dave Lawrence, Winton, as well as the key specialists within Landcorp farming's farm and corporate management team and supported by M&WNZ's regional monitor farm team and DINZ's *Making the DIFFerence* Focus Farm Project .

The first field day to explain the concept and visit and overview the commercial finishing property is planned for midday Thursday, October 22<sup>nd</sup> at the Pukerau property, *Strathmore* of George and Mary Scott (programme attached).

A specific feature of the Southland Initiative is to also form a specialist self funding or in depth discussion group, using Deer South methodology and analysis of the management behind defined Key Performance Indicators to really get inside the farm management systems and both productivity & profitability drivers on the properties. It is hoped to implement the Farmax™ pasture production utilization and efficiency programme within this smaller group and access the farms 2 or 3 times per year in addition to the open days with the best of advice, research and practical application behind the top management and performance possible across the enterprises.

The steering group believes this offers an exciting new development in the concept of monitoring and comparative performance base on KPI's and the bottom line of gross margin enterprise profitability as cents per Kg DM consumed.

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The Inaugural Southland Fiordland Focus Farm Initiative Public Field day  
Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> October at 12.00 noon  
Strathmore,  
George and Mary Scott

- **Draft Agenda; ( lunch on arrival BYO)**
  - **Welcome and Introduction, Craig North** Southland / Fiordland Focus Farm steering committee
  - **Southern FF Concept outline and link with industry productivity strategy and the focus farms, Tony Pearse** DINZ
  - **Introduction to facilitator and programme Alastair Gibson**
  - **Introduction to Strathmore, George and Mary Scott. Farm outline and programme**
  - **Farm tour 3-4 stops**
  - **Background to change to finishing policy from deer breeding. (Management, Jd impact and issues)**
  - **Integrated finishing, the key issues**
    - *Deer: Sourcing weaners specifications costs and risks*
    - *Growth targets and achievements*
    - *Pasture management*
    - *Overwintering systems*
    - *Key topic 1) Growing successful brassicas or alternatives (fodder beet etc) Including costs and relative costs and management*
    - *Key topic 2). Quality silage / baleage production. The practicalities Commentary on achieving quality. David Stevens, AgResearch.*
    - *Key topic 3) Market updates for venison , beef and lamb, plus, venison kill sheet analysis and profitability breakdown Alastair Gibson and George Scott*
- **Southland Focus Farm Development review.**
  - *Discussion and developing KPI's*
  - *Link with Deer South model and developing a discussion group*
  - *Introduction to Landcorp Farming & a link with the programme*
  - *Introduction to M&WNZ and a link with the programme*
  - *Conclusions and getting sign up and support*
- **Social hour (Sponsored by) the Southland Branch. NZDFA**

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