

President's Report

Welcome to the first electronic edition of "Australian Deer Farming". Are we moving with the times or saving money? Probably a bit of both, but principally the magazine is in this form due to the withdrawal of financial support by the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC) who see it as a misuse of deer levy funds. RIRDC currently believe that the funds should be preserved for pure research. Their interpretation of "development" is not the same as ours.

In June, to escape what turned out to be a very mild winter, I attended a Real-Time Foot and Mouth Disease training course in the Kathmandu Valley of Nepal, convened and funded by the Australian Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF). The course allowed veterinarians, stock handlers and industry representatives to examine actual cases of FMD. My full report is elsewhere in the magazine.

Be aware, the National Residue Survey (NRS) works. In early July, a fat tissue sample taken from a deer revealed 0.1mg/kg of Moxidectin in the tissue. The deer had been treated 9 weeks beforehand with Moxidectin (Cydectin®). The meat withholding period for deer after treatment with Cydectin® is 7 days which should enable compliance with the Australian minimum regulatory limit (MRL) of 1.0mg/kg at time of slaughter. The two countries to which the venison was exported have a MRL of 0.5mg/kg, again an acceptable level; however, both the United States and Japan have a zero MRL for this product. This illustrates the importance of declaring treatments on the vendor declaration. Knowing that a group of deer have been treated with Cydectin®, a processor can then decide not to send the venison to Japan and USA markets, where detection of any level of moxidectin can result in rejection of the shipment. The NRS limit of reporting (LOR) is 0.005mg/kg and analyses lower than this are not included in a report.

RIRDC are in the process of developing an Animal Industries Five Year Research and Development Plan. This plan includes deer farming but is being conducted without cost to our industry. Members are urged to participate in this process to have a say in the direction of future research. As part of the consultative process, those involved in the deer farming industry are asked to complete an on-line questionnaire that can be found at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/QM87KHF>.

The Rural Research and Development Legislation Amendment Bill 2013 is in the parliamentary process, obviously delayed by the Federal election, and this, plus another new minister, hopefully will allow more flexibility in the use of the deer reserve.

At the end of August, RIRDC will be advertising in the rural press calling for applications to fill three positions on a new RIRDC Reference Panel that will replace the old Deer Industry Advisory Committee. The panel will advise RIRDC on R&D requirements, the state of the industry, make recommendations on applications etc. Unless special circumstances are apparent, members of the executive of the DIAA are not eligible to sit on the panel.

Don't forget that marketing and development (M and D) of our industry are now up to us, and members are again encouraged to investigate ways our industry and products can be promoted e.g. participation in farmers markets, press articles, venison dinners for food writers and chefs. The DIAA has some funds invested so, if you have a proposal for M and D, and require some financial support, make an application via our secretary to the board, who have a "use it or lose it attitude", and it will be considered.

The DIAA is in continuing consultation with Food Standards Australia and New Zealand (FSANZ) who are developing standards for production and processing of meat and meat products. Originally two proposals were being developed, for major and minor species, now combined into one proposal known as P1014. The on-farm production component of this proposal relates to traceability of animals, control of inputs such as drenches and control of contaminants that may be consumed by the deer. Nothing onerous as this is already addressed on most deer farms. These requirements are not applicable to wild game animals. However, FSANZ are aware that our industry is of the strong opinion that wild shot venison should be identified as such at all stages of production to its retail sale.

Don't forget - Ust-Kamenogorsk, Kazakhstan, 2014 World Deer Congress - starts 30th August.



I wish you a happy and profitable velvet season.

Andrew Hansen.
President DIAA



Official Journal of the
Deer Industry Association
of Australia
A.C.N. 071 255 386
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