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## FROM THE EDITOR

**By Andy Cowan**

In my part of the world at least, we have had a life saving season. Back to a “normal” year I would think. The only draw-back we suffered from was that it was too wet to make hay last summer/autumn. Got to have something to complain about!!

About 20 members turned up for the AGM in Melbourne on May 14th. After the meeting, most of us headed off to a nearby restaurant for a bite to eat. It was a lovely surprise to see Julie and Guy Dockrill who were visiting Australia for a couple of weeks and catching up with some “old” friends.

I threatened, in the last issue, to write an article on the deer industry in the United States. What a minefield this is. What with the commercial farmers v the hunters (and the myriad of permutations of them) v pest management groups v wildlife conservation groups v departments of government (national and state) - multiply this by 50 being the number of states - there's a PhD in there for someone!! Suffice to say, the wildlife/conservation industry in the States is absolutely enormous. I have been told it is the fifth largest industry in America. A surprising statistic to me was the size of the industry catering for those who simply want to observe wildlife.

Having read Andrew's President's Report, I will be keeping my eyes open for early velvetting stags. Usually here, it is not until mid August that the first stag drops a button. An encouraging sign for me is that I have now rebuilt 90% of my fences that were destroyed by the fires in 2009. The yarding of my stags will no longer be the issue that it has been for the last two years.

It will be really interesting to see what happens to velvet prices this year. There is just so much uncertainty in the world's financial system that the slightest perceived problem may have fairly severe repercussions. We live in interesting times. I do not think that the A\$ will drop much when compared to the US\$, so it will continue to be tough for exporters.