

Hi John

Regarding your letter – my thoughts are as follows:

We have confidence in the future for New Zealand farmed venison. The evidence over the years is that our product works in the specialty meat category. We have been developing niche markets for Mountain River Venison for many years. We have shared some of our programmes with the industry and with our community. Our programmes are showing overwhelmingly positive results.

Speaking to the overall price situation, the market for a large proportion of NZs venison production is seasonal - October to December. The market has had a few bad seasons. We entered the 2018 season with prices too high induced by the pet food bubble and made worse by warm weather in the autumn. That was followed in 2019 by low premium protein prices (apparently linked to demand from China for lower value cuts). Then came Covid in 2020.

A bad sales season, whether by misjudgement or bad luck, can't be recovered until the following one in an annual cycle. That is why venison prices have not bounced back quickly like other proteins. The venison market does not have the same dynamics as lamb or beef. Most deer farmers are aware of this. Sometimes we are happy about it, and sometimes not.

Currently prices are also impacted by weaknesses in transport infrastructure and high rates, particularly for airfreight.

I repeat, we believe the future is bright for NZ Venison to be positioned at the top end of the protein market. More focus in this direction is the strategy the industry needs to pursue. Courage and patience is required to see the vision realised.

Regards

John Sadler