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Executive Committee Report – Richard Greer



Greetings from the deep south as we down here are still in the winter mode, we are still in ground hog day. It's been a winter that has not been too bad but was made easier by a very good autumn, which gave most farmers good covers and plenty of supplements. But now being mid-August stags are being looked at to be put on grass, as too are fawns and then it all starts over again.

The Southland branch and Southland Advance parties had an inside field day at the Croydon Lodge in early August which was well attended with around 60 people coming together to catch up and listen to David Stevens, Tony Roberts and Halter, then a meal. It was great to see a good turnout.

Congratulations to Southland Branch chair Tony Roberts and family for their prestigious win in the Ballance Farm Environment

Awards. It's awesome to see such great deer farmers being recognised on a national stage.

The Next Generation programme was held in last week and by all accounts was a success so a thanks to all those that were involved in setting this great industry led initiative that has been going near on fifteen years and is being copied by other agricultural industries. Also, a thanks to all attendees as these things only happen if people come and are engaged which makes for a great event.

Velvet guidelines will be out shortly and many thanks to the panel that helped set them. Just remember they are guidelines and it's at the buyer's discretion how they interpret them.

New Zealand secures Vietnam market access for farmed venison and velvet

New Zealand has secured export access to Vietnam for farmed venison and for deer velvet, the latter in both frozen and dried forms, opening a significant new market opportunity for the country's farmed deer industry.

The new access, negotiated by the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) with Vietnamese authorities, was formally announced in Auckland yesterday as part of a ceremony of bilateral deliverables during a State visit by Vietnamese President and Party General Secretary, His Excellency To Lam. The ceremony was witnessed by Prime Minister

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Christopher Luxon and Governor-General Dame Cindy Kiro.

The agreement provides access for New Zealand farmed venison and deer velvet into one of Southeast Asia's fastest-growing economies and adds an important new market for the deer industry as it seeks to diversify its export portfolio.

Vietnam is viewed as a particularly promising market for New Zealand velvet, with longstanding consumer familiarity with traditional health and wellness products and cultural influences shared over centuries with neighbouring China. The market complements New Zealand's established velvet trade into South Korea and China, creating a broader and more resilient platform for long-term growth.

Deer Industry New Zealand (DINZ) Chief Executive Rhys Griffiths said the outcome was an important achievement for the industry.

"This is a significant milestone for the deer industry. Vietnam is an exciting new market with strong economic growth, an increasing number of affluent consumers, and an established understanding of the health and wellness attributes associated with deer velvet."

"For velvet in particular, this gives New Zealand another important leg to its export mix alongside South Korea and China. Market diversification is critical to maintaining competitive tension across markets and

creating greater resilience for farmers and exporters."

"We also want to acknowledge and thank MPI for its focused work and strong engagement with their Vietnamese counterparts. Securing this access has been a priority for our industry, and we appreciate the pace at which MPI has progressed the negotiations."

From an exploratory visit to Vietnam by DINZ in October 2025 to the formal announcement of market access in August 2026, the process moved at remarkable speed by international market access standards. Following a Vietnamese inspection visit to New Zealand in March and subsequent technical negotiations between officials, approval was achieved in under 12 months.

The outcome highlights the strong commitment of both countries to advancing mutually beneficial trade opportunities and reflects the momentum generated by the New Zealand-Vietnam Comprehensive Strategic Partnership signed in 2025, which committed both nations to deepening trade and economic cooperation.

For venison exporters, access will require individual premises to be approved by Vietnam prior to export. MPI has coordinated listing applications from eight eligible New Zealand slaughter and processing facilities and has advised DINZ that Vietnamese authorities are actively reviewing those applications with a view to progressing approvals as quickly as possible.

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Reportedly, there is no equivalent premises listing requirement for companies exporting deer velvet.

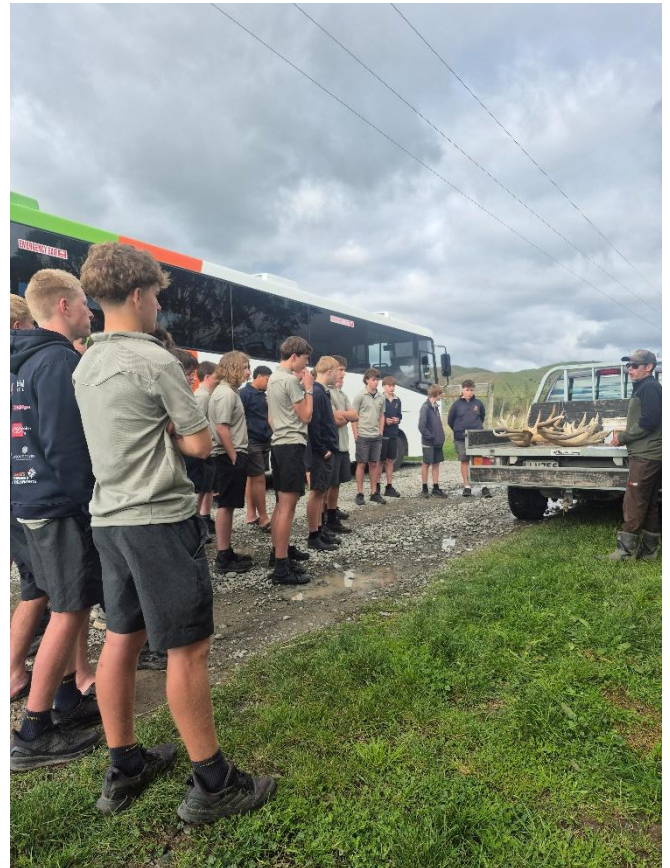
MPI has also advised that it intends to update the Vietnam Overseas Market Access Requirements (OMAR) and enable the use of the relevant export certificates for venison and velvet as soon as possible following the high-level visit.

DINZ Markets Manager Terry Meikle said securing access is an important step forward that broadens market options for the industry and positions the New Zealand farmed deer industry to capture future growth opportunities in Vietnam.

“Vietnam already understands velvet products and their health and wellness attributes. The opportunity now is for Vietnamese manufacturers and marketers to source New Zealand velvet as an ingredient for locally formulated products tailored to domestic consumer demand.”

“Vietnam’s growing middle and upper-income consumer base, combined with existing familiarity with velvet products, makes it a market with genuine long-term potential.”

The Next Next Generation – Marlborough DFA

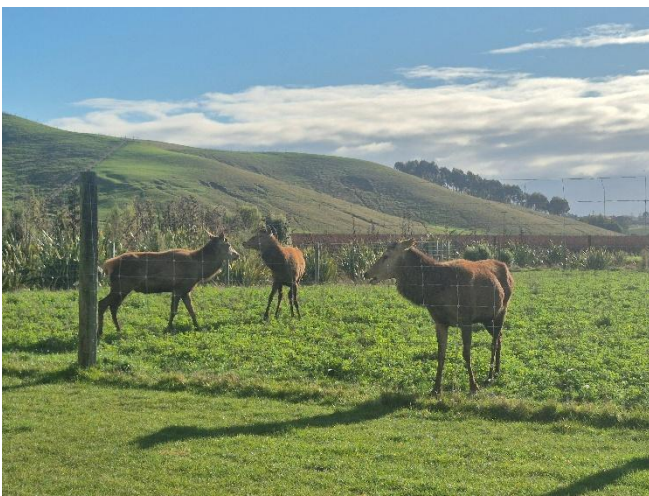


On 16 and 24 June, the Marlborough Branch of the New Zealand Deer Farmers’ Association hosted two groups of Year 11 students from Marlborough Boys’ College as part of the community engagement program.

The visits provided students with an opportunity to learn about deer farming in Marlborough and the many factors that contribute to the success of the industry in our region. Topics covered included why we farm deer and, in particular, why velvet production is an important part of many farming businesses. Discussions explored the people involved in the industry, its history,

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financial considerations, family and generational farming, environmental and social aspects, cultural influences, and public perceptions of deer farming. We also talked about career opportunities and the NZDFA Next Generation program.



Students also learned about the unique conditions that make Marlborough well suited to deer farming. This included the influence of topography, soil types and rainfall patterns. We discussed how seasonal changes affect deer, including the relationship between the annual roar, reduced feed demand, and the natural shrinking of the deer's stomach during winter.

The session highlighted the practical realities of farming deer in Marlborough, including transport links to processors and markets, the importance of export markets throughout Asia—particularly China and Korea—and the storage and shipping requirements associated with velvet. We also explored how deer farming fits within the wider Marlborough farming landscape, including how farmers can work around the busy seasonal demands

of the viticulture industry. Deer farming provides an effective way to spread risk and make productive use of hilly land that is less suited to grape production.



As in previous years, one of the highlights for the students was seeing and handling antlers, seeing stags up close and touring the deer shed. These hands-on experiences generated plenty of interest and questions and helped bring the classroom learning to life.

The Marlborough Branch greatly values the opportunity to engage with the local students.

Geoff Hayes

Marlborough Branch

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Meanwhile down at the farm – Waikato DFA



Waikato continues its reinvigoration efforts and held its first farm walk on 16 July at Raroa Red Deer. Steve Barrett and Nicola Toebeck have been managing the farm for four years and have made a number of big improvements on the farm. A few weeks later they hosted the Next Generation programme. Luka Jansen from DINZ also attended and updated the farmers on Plan Change 1.



Deer 2 \$ucceed –Hawke's Bay DFA



On 30 July and a gloriously sunny Hawkes Bay winter day, over 40 people gathered at the Ongaonga Golf Club for the second Hawkes Bay Deer 2 \$ucceed field day.

A more fulsome report will follow but suffice to say the day did not disappoint the attendees. First up was a visit to Richard and Emma Lawson's farm and viewing the deer shed and yards with a pour-on rubber safety matting surface (very nice!) and a discussion

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on lameness. Then down the road to see Tom and Becs Holden's farm which finishes the venison weaners from Richard and Emma. A great example of partnership and open communication between both parties. The afternoon session was a mix of presentations (on ticks) and identifying priorities and challenges for deer farmers and the wider industry.

Thanks to Camille Flack and Richard Hilson for running the day and to the Hawkes Bay branch for hosting the event.

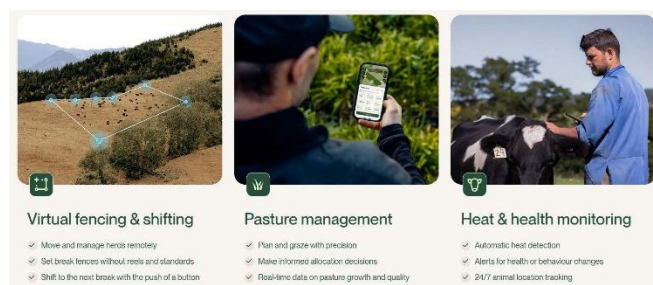


Party Time in Southland



It hasn't been all about the North Island. On 30 July all the Southland Advance Parties and the Southland DFA branch had a combined day with a wide range of guest speakers. Over 50 people attended and heard from David Stevens (AgResearch) on winter grazing and GPS for research; James Gardyne (Halter) on productivity benefits from virtual fencing; Tony Roberts on smart ear tags (recording heats in hinds).

By all accounts people enjoyed the session content and about half of the attendees stayed on for dinner and a get together socially afterwards. Good for farmer wellbeing and strengthening collaboration between the different groups.



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Innovation in action at Next Generation 2026 - Lynda Gray

Innovation and the role it plays in the farmed deer and wider agribusiness sector was a recurring theme at this year's Next Generation event, jointly hosted by the Waikato and Bay of Plenty branches of the NZDFA.

The group of over 40 young and enquiring minds had plenty to ponder on visits to businesses spanning the venison and velvet supply chain, all of which had used innovative thinking and applications for advancement.

The first stop was at the Gallagher Group's distinctive, orange-highlighted head office and manufacturing base on the southside of Hamilton. Attendees heard how the privately owned company, established in 1938, had applied practical innovations to grow and become a global leader in animal management solutions that include electronic identification and weighing systems, animal performance software, and electric fencing.

One of their latest developments, the eShepherd collar, was gaining a foothold in the wearables market, Gallagher's Darrell Jones said, adding that the technology had applications well beyond virtual fencing. Several Next Gen participants wanted to know when eShepherd would be available for deer use. Deer were on the Gallagher radar, Jones said, but the immediate priority was to finetune the collar technology for use in beef and dairy systems.

A walk through the electronics and plastic extrusion and moulding divisions gave a glimpse of the technologies used and applied for turning out circuit boards and electric fencing accessories.

Balancing out the business visits were stop-offs at two vastly different deer farming systems, where each farm was developing their business in line with changing markets and within the constraints and opportunities of their environment and land.



At Raroa Red Deer Farm in Karāpiro, farm managers Steve Barrett and Nicky Tobeck were consolidating and refocusing from a velvet-dominant system to a three-way velvet, venison and trophy mix to spread the risk, working on the principle that when one market is down the others are up. They were increasing the number of breeding hinds, and

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their goal was to finish all progeny on farm to a 60 kg carcass weight. They were in the process of replacing deer incompatible endophyte grasses and were also investigating the best summer and winter crops. While future-focused, their deer farming future was in limbo due to negotiations around the Waikato Expressway extension, which was set to carve through the middle of the farm.



After that, attendees visited Ian Scott's Oraka Wapiti farm, which is run in conjunction with a highly productive dairy farm and his vet business. He explained that the overarching goal was to produce more from the same land area in an environmentally stable way. He challenged the group to "think about the numbers all the time" and use them to guide asset development and growth. An example of Oraka's newest asset development was the conversion of a 1000 sqm goat milking shed for indoor weaner wintering last year.



On day two the group was then split in two and visited the Rotorua processing plant of either Silver Fern Farms or Duncan NZ (with this writer attending the Silver Fern Farms plant tour). At the Silver Fern Farms plant, attendees got a look-and-see appreciation of how technology was used from the moment of animal arrival to ensure strict health, welfare, hygiene, and food safety standards were monitored and maintained along the processing chain. Several attendees said they were unaware of the level of data captured and required to meet compliance and traceability requirements.

The final stop, to NZ Deer Supreme, was an introduction to deer co-product use within traditional Chinese medicine (TCM), a centuries-old health system for diagnosing, treating and preventing illness. Principal and founder Dr Kin explained that deer were a prized animal in TCM and a source of highly valued 'nose to tail' co-products, including

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tails, sinews and pizzles for use in various remedies and treatments.

Anecdotal feedback from the Next Gen group about this year's event was positive. The broad mix of topics and speakers provided lots to think about and gave a taste of career development and opportunities across the deer industry – proof of a job well done by the NZDFA and the Waikato and Bay of Plenty branches.



To the New Zealand Deer Farmers Association (NZDFA),

On behalf of Wintec and our students, I would like to extend our sincere thanks to the New Zealand Deer Farmers Association for welcoming and hosting us at the recent Next Generation Conference.

A special thank you must go to Lindsay Fung and Evan Potter for the time, effort, and organisation that went into making the event such a valuable experience. The conference provided our students with a fantastic opportunity to step outside the classroom, connect with people working across the deer

industry, and gain a greater understanding of the many different aspects that contribute to New Zealand's deer sector.

We are particularly grateful to the deer farmers who generously opened their farms to our students. Being able to visit working deer farms, see different farming systems in practice, ask questions, and learn directly from those within the industry was an invaluable experience. The willingness of farmers to share their knowledge, experiences, successes, and challenges made these visits especially meaningful for our students.

We would also like to acknowledge and thank the sponsors who helped make the event possible:

NZDFA Waikato, NZDFA Bay of Plenty, Deer Industry New Zealand, Datamars, and PGG Wrightson.

Your support of events such as the Next Generation Conference creates important opportunities for students and those entering the rural sector to build industry connections and develop their knowledge.

A big thank you also goes to the team at **Gallagher Animal Management** for providing such an interactive and engaging tour. The opportunity to see the technology, equipment, and innovation that support modern animal management gave our students another valuable perspective on the wider agricultural industry.

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Thank you to **NZ Deer Supreme** for sharing the history behind the business and providing an interesting product display. Experiences such as this help students understand the journey from farm production through to the development and marketing of deer products, and the importance of the wider value chain.

We would also like to extend a very special thank you to **Trent Cooper and the team at Silver Fern Farms** for the valuable site tour. Being able to see this part of the industry firsthand provided an important learning opportunity and helped our students connect what they learn in the classroom and on farm with the wider processing sector.

For our students, opportunities such as the Next Generation Conference are incredibly valuable. They provide not only practical learning but also the chance to meet people within the industry, ask questions, hear different perspectives, and begin building professional connections as they prepare for careers within New Zealand's rural animal and agricultural sectors.

Thank you once again to NZDFA, Lindsay, Evan, the farmers, sponsors, businesses, speakers, and everyone else who contributed their time and knowledge to making the conference such a welcoming and worthwhile experience.

Ngā mihi nui,

Raechel Robertson

On behalf of Wintec and our students

Program Coordinator Rural Animal
Healthcare Assistant

Rural Animal Healthcare Assistant
Kaiako/Tutor

Farming with ticks - Dave Chisholm

Growing up on a South Kaipara dairy farm during the 1960s and 1970s was where my first memory of ticks on animals comes from, in this case on the udders of dairy cows during milking. Little did I realise the damage they were inflicting at the time, or the enormous problem future deer farmers would face with regards to tick-borne animal welfare issues and associated costs.

Whilst the South Kaipara Heads did have a wild fallow herd, the fallow in their wild environment appeared to be unbothered and not affected by ticks. This all changed with the advent of farming them under sometimes stressful conditions, where suddenly the weak were attacked by ticks. At that point in time, we were unsure what was killing them.

When red deer came to the area, they proved to be the perfect host. It seemed as though all age groups were affected, with fawns dying covered with ticks, sucked dry in matter of days from birth, while stags were being velveted covered in ticks (and subsequent freezing did not kill them). Drastic action by many farms included nuking their farm with off-label pesticides, which killed everything but didn't stop the ticks from returning.

Bayticol and subsequent flumethrin pour-ons came along as a saviour, and we assumed the problem was solved. Unfortunately, the opposite happens. It quickly became apparent that the ticks adapted by adding more cycles, which led to what we face today, where ticks are a major problem, at the very least from August to April. While flumethrin pour on products still kills ticks, you need to use more of it. It should be seen as a part of your control program and not a solution to remove ticks from your farm.

Best flumethrin practice from the 1980s to today is pre fawning application of hinds, at least three applications from button drop on velvet stags, the use of tick tags on hinds pre fawning, the constant monitoring of the situation, all at a cost of money, time, and mental health.

We apply flumethrin on 3-5 animals at a time, depending on size, in our hydraulic crush, where we can stand over them and apply head, middle shoulder blades and middle hind quarters. Standing in the corner of your yards and firing liquid is nowhere near best practice. Not only are you not hitting where it works best, you are also wasting product and thus money.

At button drop, all our velvet stags are run through the crush over a period of time, which also allows for removal of any coronets still attached.

The breakthrough for me came with soil and herbage tests showing a lack of sulphur after winter. I usually applied urea to boost spring pasture growth from late August and into

early spring. The best option for me was applying sulphate of ammonia (22% sulphur 18% nitrogen) in two applications, one as soon as possible given temperature and paddock conditions:

- The first at 75 kg per hectare
- The second at 6 to 8 weeks later at 50 kg per hectare.

This is only what I used, but I suggest more per hectare could be used - this is where trials need to be undertaken.

Given that at this point it was not unusual to see ticks climbing fence posts waiting for a host, or when walking through long grass or rushes, becoming a host was also a worry. The following year, I wasn't sure but ticks seemed to be less of a problem, and the application of sulphate of ammonia continues each year as the pasture needs those inputs anyway. Although the tick population has decreased, there is still a residual population that could explode at any time if you drop your guard.

The result of this work has seen a reduction in the tick population across the farm. One area of the farm where we run hinds is 99% clean of ticks. We do not use flumethrin on those hinds, choosing instead to monitor closely. Cull hinds and stag fawns leaving area are treated with flumethrin as they move to where control is less effective.

We have pine grazing blocks that the other hind mob uses at times, though no stags go there as they will damage the pine crop. The pasture through and around the pines is ideal

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tick habitat. Essentially, each part of farm is treated differently. We use an integrated approach, and so far are achieving good results: fewer fawn deaths, clean velvet, clean animals to processors, and reduced use of Bayticol .

We are learning to live with them, but I am hoping for some action from DINZ on tick-centric trials that are needed to find out what we can apply to pasture that will break the ticks' life cycles.

Noticeboard

NZDFA Subscriptions for 2026/27



Thanks to all NZDFA members who have renewed their membership for 2026/27. Reminder notices will be sent out this month.

The NZDFA relies on this subscription to function effectively while continuing to deliver a strong, independent view for the producer at all levels of industry engagement. The NZDFA extends thanks to all those who have shown support through the past year.

Preparing for dry conditions as El Niño risk grows

With New Zealand Earth Sciences continuing to signal an increased likelihood of El Niño conditions developing over the coming season, farmers are being encouraged to keep planning ahead for the potential impacts of a drier summer and autumn, particularly in eastern regions of the country. Preparing early can help minimise pressure on feed supplies, water availability and stock performance if conditions become prolonged.

To support on-farm planning, MPI's On Farm Support team has now released its practical checklist for preparing for dry conditions. Following last month's focus on wet weather readiness, this latest resource provides farmers with a useful guide to reviewing feed budgets, water infrastructure, contingency plans and animal management decisions, helping build resilience and reduce risk as seasonal conditions evolve.

[Farm checklist – Preparing for dry weather >>](#)

If you missed it last month, the On Farm Support team has also released a checklist for prolonged wet weather, most likely to affect western and southern regions.

[Farm checklist – Preparing for prolonged wet weather >>](#)

You can also check out the relevant Deer Facts fact sheet below:

[Deer Facts – Drought feeding and management >>](#)

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DINZ Foot and Mouth Disease Podcast

Listen to the podcast here: [Deer Country podcasts - Deer NZ](#)

Foot and mouth disease (FMD) remains one of the most significant biosecurity threats facing New Zealand's livestock industries. In Episode 3 of the Deer Country Podcast, DINZ Chief Executive Rhys Griffiths and Policy and Research Manager Emil Murphy unpack what the deer industry and wider primary industries are doing to prepare, the role of the [Foot and Mouth Disease Operational Agreement \(OA\)](#) between industry and government, and why readiness matters for every farmer.

The discussion explores the planning, surveillance and response work already underway, as well as the lessons New Zealand can learn from FMD outbreaks overseas. From understanding how the FMD OA helps shape decision-making during a biosecurity response to the practical actions farmers can take to support preparedness, this episode provides a timely and informative look at one of the biggest threats facing the primary sector. Whether you're a deer farmer or simply interested in New Zealand's biosecurity future, this is an episode well worth listening to.

Listen to the podcast here: [Deer Country podcasts - Deer NZ](#)

Industry Advisory to Livestock Farmers, Meat Processors, Stock Agents and Livestock Transport Operators

Livestock Transit Insurance, Carrier Liability and Ownership During Transit

The continued rise in livestock values has significantly increased the financial exposure associated with the transportation of cattle, sheep, deer and other livestock throughout New Zealand.

Livestock owners, stock and station agencies, meat processors and transport customers are encouraged to review the level of protection available when engaging livestock transport operators. While many transport operators carry liability insurance, that insurance is subject to limited liability provisions and may not provide compensation equal to the full market value of the livestock.

A key feature of limited liability is that it is generally based on the value of each individual animal rather than the value of the entire consignment. For example, a carrier's maximum liability is \$2,000 per animal, the carrier's liability for a beast valued at \$3,800 will be limited to \$2,000, leaving the owner to absorb the remaining \$1,800 loss unless separate insurance arrangements are in place.

With breeding cattle, dairy cattle, stud livestock and other premium livestock frequently exceeding these values, the potential uninsured exposure can be significant.

Depending on the terms of sale or supply agreement, ownership may remain with the consignor (seller) until delivery, or it may pass to the consignee (purchaser or receiving processor) before or during transit. Unless ownership and the transfer of risk are clearly documented, uncertainty can arise following a transport incident, making it difficult to determine who bears the financial loss and who is entitled to make an insurance claim.

To minimise the risk of disputes and uninsured losses, all parties should ensure that:

- The legal owner of the livestock during transit is clearly identified.
- Consignment documentation accurately records both the consignor and the consignee.
- The point at which ownership and risk transfer occurs is clearly documented and understood by all parties.
- Any limitations on the carrier's liability are understood before transport is undertaken.
- Additional livestock transit insurance is arranged where the value of any animal or consignment exceeds the carrier's liability limits (\$2,000).
- Farmers, livestock agents, meat processors, transport operators and insurance advisers regularly review their insurance arrangements to ensure they reflect the current livestock values.

As livestock prices continue to increase, insurance arrangements that were adequate several years ago may no longer provide sufficient financial protection. Understanding who owns the livestock during transit, the extent of a carrier's limited liability, and whether additional insurance is required are essential steps in managing commercial risk.

Industry organisations are encouraged to distribute this advisory to their members to promote greater awareness of livestock transit risk, ownership responsibilities, and the importance of ensuring insurance arrangements adequately reflect today's livestock values.

Derek Foley

Chair – National Livestock Transport & Safety Council (NLT&SC)

Mobile: 027570 8470

Email: chair@nltsc.nz

Looking for work

I'm a passionate farmer (5+ years) and hunter (3 years). I'm currently looking for seasonal work in the deer industry between October and December/January.

I was wondering if you would be able to establish some contacts between me and farms that seek employees.

Thank you in advance.

Warmly, Lieselotte lotte.bv@outlook.de

DFA STAGLINE



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**RURAL
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Jokes

- Why can't dinosaurs clap their hands?
Because they're extinct.
- I gave my handyman a to-do list, but
he only did jobs 1, 3, and 5. Turns out
he only does odd jobs.
- My wife always complains that I have
no sense of direction. So I packed up
my stuff and right.

EVENTS>>

Elk Wapiti online auction

Young deer farmers competition

Raincliff station field day