

Environment Awards 2003:

Judging underway

Thanks to a good number of entries from deer farmers from all over New Zealand, this event is underway for its third successive year.

It's a significant undertaking, with a total budget of around \$20,000 being made possible again by a commitment from the New Zealand Deer Farmers' Association and 50:50 funding support from Summit-Quinphos and PPCS. The prize package is topped off by the Elworthys' Premier Award as well as numerous industry merit award sponsors.

This collaborative support will result in another proactive year of action to promote environmentally sustainable deer farming.


Environment specialists judge

This year we are repeating the successful and highly credible formula of having the deer farms judged by environment specialists from Regional Councils, Fish & Game, and the Department of Conservation.

There are two, four-person teams of judges, one for each island. The head judge, Gary Morgan from Environment Southland, is leading both teams.

We are particularly appreciative of the free provision of judges from the participating organisations: Environment Southland (Gary Morgan, head judge), Hawke's Bay Regional Council (Simon Stokes), Environment Canterbury (Phil McGuigan), Fish & Game (Mark Sutton) and Department of Conservation (Simon Smale).

Deer farmer representatives in the judging teams are former award winners Victor Clark (NI) and Sharon McIntyre (SI), and organising the detailed itineraries for the judging tours are Tim Aitken (NI) and Bill Taylor (SI).

The winners will be announced during a special event on the first night (27th May) of the Annual Deer Industry Conference at Timaru. See you there. 

John Paterson, Awards Convenor

Developing experimental model for Johne's disease

by Colin Mackintosh, AgResearch Invermay

We have recently conducted an experimental Johne's disease trial in young red deer on an isolated area of the Invermay Flat Deer Farm. The objective was to try to simulate the outbreak form of the disease that has been occurring in rising yearling red deer on a number of deer farms in New Zealand and overseas.

The reason why we need to conduct this trial is to develop an experimental model that can be used to study Johne's disease in deer and to be able to test vaccines efficiently. To be useful it has to mimic the natural disease in terms of the numbers of animals showing clinical disease and to produce similar lesions and immunological responses.

In mid March last year, 43 newly weaned red deer were challenged by mouth with doses of Mycobacterium paratuberculosis, the causative agent of Johne's disease. Over the next 12 months the animals were closely monitored and any animal developing signs of Johne's disease was euthanased. In order to prevent undue suffering, the animals were all detected in the early stages of the disease and only lost a small amount of weight and condition.

The first cases of Johne's disease occurred in August, just five months after challenge. Over the 12 months of the trial, 11 animals developed clinical signs of disease: 4 in August, 3 in September, 1 in October, 1 in November and 2 in December. This pattern of disease is typical of many of the outbreaks observed in weaners on farms. The post mortem signs and immunological responses were also typical of natural Johne's disease in weaner deer.

This experimental model is a very important first step and should be very useful in the ongoing research into this disease.

We are grateful to DEEResearch and FRST for supporting this work.

Heenan WEIGHBRIDGE

The Modern Weighing & Drafting System

- Inexpensive and labour saving
- Fast efficient one-man operation
- Remote controlled weighing & 3 way drafting
- Non-slip RubberDec flooring
- Can use existing weighing systems

NON-SLIP FLOORING MATERIAL - for existing sheds or new
It's super quiet and just hose to clean

Heenan Engineering Company Limited phone / fax: 64-3-442 2001 N.Z. Freephone : 0800 502 337

**FREE : DEER YARD DESIGNS
AND INNOVATIVE IDEAS**

VISIT OUR WEBSITE : www.animalhandler.com

Heenan WORKROOM

The Ultimate Deer Handler

- Works so quickly we recommend the operator controls it from the still platform
- The only deer handler to successfully hold comfortably and restrain securely both large and small deer
- Designed for easy cleaning
- Just Simply the Best
- Options include - Hydraulically controlled **Wedge Wall**
- Semen collection facility