


Workshop - IMPROVING VETERINARIAN: DEER FARMER RELATIONSHIPS

Chairman: J.W. Hunter



The preliminary discussion to the workshop agreed the basis of the relationship centred around communication, both at the executive and farmer level. As such a number of issues were discussed with input from veterinarians as well as the NZDFA representatives (President and Executive Director) present.

1. Velvet antler removal, drug supply

The NZDFA President restated concerns as to the current NZVA policy and their hopes as to the issue. The opinion of veterinarians of the Deer Branch had been expressed in the unanimous support of a motion presented to the inaugural AMM. With both points of view clearly stated the President of NZVA, Bob Gumbrell, had a clear picture of the points of view to carry back to Council and use in their review of the policy concerning velvet removal.

Members of the Deer Branch are in agreement that the profile and service of veterinarians involved in the industry will assist in dealing with the problems in this particular area. It was suggested that both parties (DFA and NZVA) make efforts to identify individuals that do not comply with the codes of behaviour that pertain to velvet antler removal.

2. The voluntary Tb scheme for deer

The identification of problem areas was made and in particular were noted:

- a) Refusal to slaughter reactors
- b) Variations in test application
- c) Information availability
- d) Test training

It was noted efforts were in hand by Committee of Deer Branch to communicate with MAF through Council of NZVA apropos these concerns.

The invitation by the NZDFA Tb subcommittee to the Veterinary Association for a veterinarian to sit on that subcommittee along with a representative of MAF was noted and agreed to be of value to both parties, both technically and in terms of working relationships.

### 3. Continuing education

The President of NZDFA advised the intention by their body to set up a 'travelling roadshow' to advise DFA members and interested parties on various topics of interest, with keynote speakers on particular topics. It was suggested topics with a veterinary basis be handled by veterinarians with special interest or ability in such topics. The two of current interest probably are velvet removal and Tb testing. This approach, it was noted, was an improvement on the situation where matters of veterinary concern such as velvetting had been openly discussed at the DFA conference without any veterinary input. In this context the proposal that the DFA when organising their annual conference, advise the Deer Branch as to topics of veterinary interest for technical discussion so an appropriate speaker be recommended, was welcomed.

It was also felt that there was room for DFA input to the Deer Branch NZVA conference, with a speaker on a subject of mutual interest.

The appointment of a publicity officer for the Deer Branch was regarded as important and necessary.

Encouragement to veterinarians to join local DFA branches was felt to be important, again to raise the profile of veterinarians within the industry and provide a better line of communication between the two bodies. It is suggested veterinarians of the Deer Branch make efforts to join their local DFA Branch. It is not necessary to actually own deer, to become an associate member of such branches.