

Some form of yards, no matter how simple, is essential on every deer farm right from the time it is first stocked. There is no such thing as a 'standard' deer yard. Every farm has its own design, although many are variations of basic themes.

It is not necessary to lavish money on building elaborate yards, especially if the herd is small. Many large yards are totally impractical; smaller, well designed yards are often much easier to work. As long as there are a sufficient number of holding pens or paddocks, the actual yards for close handling of stock can be kept to a minimum. Good design makes provision for future extensions.

The advice presented here should be considered in conjunction with the requirements for farm location and design (AgLink FPP 246).

Most successful yards have some or all of the following points in common:

- A long lead-in race, close boarded for about 9 m out from the yards. Ideally, it should not be straight, but should offer an indirect approach so that the yards are hidden from the animals' view until the last minute.
- The whole working area, or at least some of the pens or main handling area, completely roofed-in and darkened. Whether roofed or not, all walls should be close-boarded and at least 2.1 m high for red deer (2.6 m for fallow).
- Sheet or corrugated iron is avoided because it is noisy.
- Plywood is well supported on framing to avoid 'drumming' on impact.
- A central, circular crush pen with two centrally swung gates is common in many designs. Farmers often use them more for directing stock into lateral pens rather than as a 'crush'. Five metres is a suggested maximum diameter.

Deer Yard Design Requirements and Plans

Part C: Plans 9 and 10

- Small pens (the actual number depending on the size of herd) for working with small numbers of animals at close quarters. Larger uncovered areas can be used for holding large numbers of deer.
- A floor covering of sand, wood chips or coarse saw dust.
- Storage facilities for equipment.
- Usually, sheep-type drafting gates do not work very well. Hand drafting is easiest.
- Long, narrow race-ways should be avoided.
- Corners should be avoided, especially in areas used for close handling.

The accompanying plans are all based on existing yards and exhibit the great variation possible, but they do not claim to be exact representations of those yards. Some of the drawings have been modified to eliminate obvious design faults and some may not show recent additions or alterations to the actual yards. In drawing metric plans of yards originally constructed to Imperial specifications, some measurements have been rounded off.

At this scale it has not been possible to show structural details or precise dimensions. The drawings are intended merely as a guide to layout design. Unless otherwise stated, they are intended for handling red deer.

There are a number of AgLinks in this series:

Part A: Plans 1 to 4	FPP 251
Part B: Plans 5 to 8	FPP 252
Part C: Plans 9 and 10	FPP 253

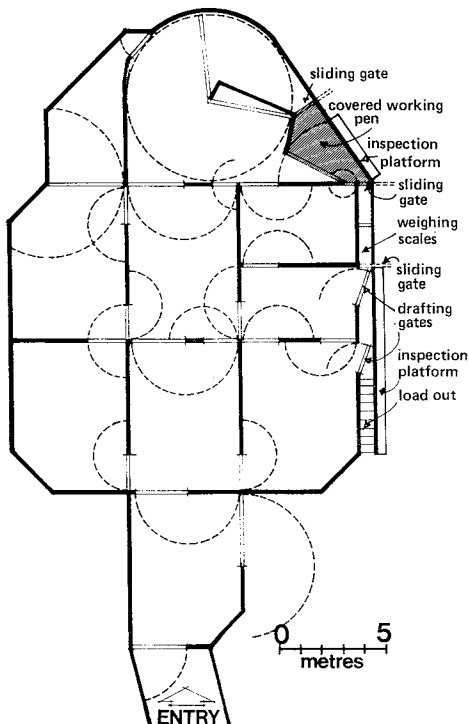
PLAN 9

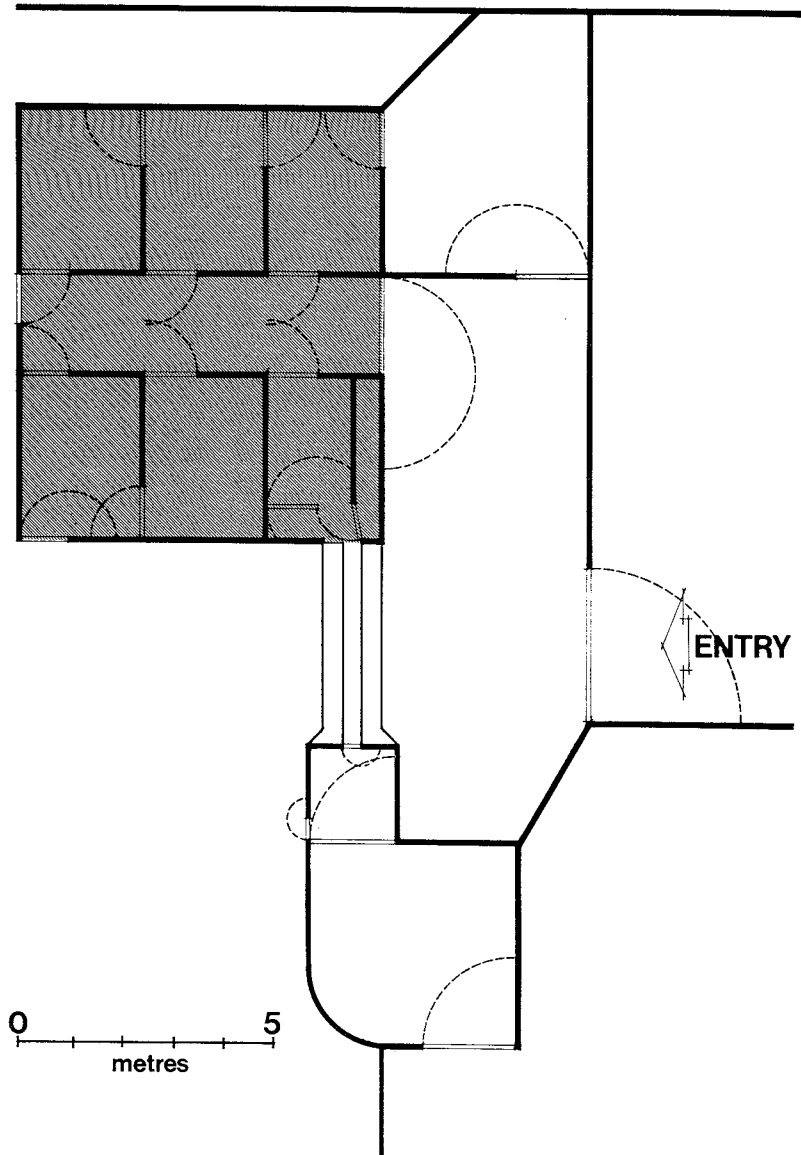
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These yards are used as a research facility and some components, e.g., the crush, are larger than necessary for red deer because wapiti are also handled here. A separate working pen or crush was included because the V-formation of gates in the circular pen was too narrow and deer tended to climb on each other. Animals can be worked outwards from the circular pen.

The system is very flexible and provides for multi-way drafting (particularly important for research purposes). The working pen is covered and one side can be used as a crush. The covered area is to be extended to include the whole circular pen and working area at the top end of the plan. The race incorporates fixed weighing scales. The working area has a raked concrete floor. Catwalks are provided along the top of internal partitions and inspection platforms are attached to the external wall of the working race.

The entry race, which approaches the yards obliquely, downhill through a pine plantation, is fenced with 150mm stay netting and has a breast railing.





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A good, basic, covered handling shed which allows progressive drafting into lateral pens from a central race as well as movement between pens. Additional pens can be easily added if required.

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