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To investigate utilisation of shade and shelter in farmed red deer, two groups of yearling stags were observed during eight weeks in summer (November to January) in Otago, New Zealand. Activities and use of shade provided by trees, and shelter from the south provided by a strip of windbreak material, were recorded each week over 4 hour periods starting at dawn, 2 hours before noon, and 4 hours before dusk. Behaviour was recorded at 5-minute intervals. Simultaneous records of climatic variables were made, and days were classified as being predominantly "dry" or "wet".

Mean frequencies of usage of the shade and shelter were 5.1% and 4.3% of observations. Usage of the shade and shelter, and activity patterns of the deer differed significantly ($P < 0.05$) between day types. Fenceline pacing was observed at dusk on wet days, possibly reflecting motivation to find cover. Because use of shade and shelter was related to weather conditions, these amenities probably assisted with thermoregulation and therefore enhanced welfare. Further research is investigating the use of artificial shelters designed to give protection from wind and rain.