

Welcome to the AUGUST 2002 edition of the *Deer Farmers' Digest*, a monthly electronic newsletter published for those interested in raising deer, elk and reindeer. This *Digest* (ISSN 1499-1357) is distributed via e-mail to over 3,000 readers in 28 countries.

A copy of ALL the issues of the *Deer Farmers' Digest* can be found at <http://www.deer-digest.com> and in the National Library of Canada at [http://collection.nlc-bnc.ca/100/201/300/deer\\_farmers\\_digest/](http://collection.nlc-bnc.ca/100/201/300/deer_farmers_digest/).

Please forward this copy of the *Deer Farmers' Digest* to your friends and any other people who may be interested in deer, elk or reindeer.

To ADD or REMOVE your name from our mailing list, please see Subscription Services below.

**IN THIS ISSUE**

- 1. Using media releases to get your message out .....2
- 2. Protest rally by Alberta deer and elk farmers .....5
- 3. The facts on CWD in Wisconsin ..... 8
- 4. CWD research grants available ..... 10
- 5. Summer tips for reindeer farmers ..... 13
- 6. Industry news ..... 14
- 7. Events calendar ..... 16
- 8. Deerfarmer.com news ..... 18
- 9. Subscription services ..... 18
- 10. Contact information ..... 19

**\*\* ADVERTISEMENT \*\***

Visit our brand-new Deer Farmers' Venison Culinary Centre located at <http://www.venison-meat.com> or <http://venison.deerfarmer.com> The VCC has information on preparing and cooking venison, recipes and links to resources. We are also compiling a directory of venison vendors and distributors. If you are a reputable seller of farm-raised venison products and want a free listing, please apply using the on-line form at <http://venison.deerfarmer.com/html/vendor.html>

\*\*\*\*\*

## 1. USING MEDIA RELEASES TO GET YOUR MESSAGE OUT

Imagine a reporter or editor of a newspaper, especially a smaller community weekly publication, constantly looking to find stories to fill space for the next edition. A well-written media release arrives in his e-mail box. He cuts and pastes the story into the next edition of the newspaper. You just made his job a lot easier.

The media need and want your stories! Press releases are a good way for deer and elk associations and the industry to get their messages to the public. In my opinion, we are being remiss in not taking full advantage of this very affordable medium.

Writing a media release may appear to be a daunting and challenging task for most people. However, it is not really that difficult if you keep several points in mind.

We have done the research on what the “experts” say makes for an effective news release. Here is a summary of what we found.

### **Must be newsworthy**

The major reason cited by news editors and reporters as to why they throw media releases in the garbage is that they are NOT considered newsworthy or of interest to their readers. Press releases must be news, not self-serving advertising. A news release should be used only when there is something concrete and of high news value to report.

An evaluation of successful media releases shows that the following approaches appear to work the best:

1. Human interest angles -- particularly heartwarming anecdotal stories.
2. Interpersonal relationships on difficult or controversial issues -- focus on love, sex, money, communications between men and women, parents and children, companies and employees, governments and individuals.
3. Tip articles -- advice and tactics excerpted from books, ten commandments, ten tips, etc.
4. Unusual events -- unique personal accomplishments, unusual creative ideas.
5. Humor and wisdom, fun and tragedy.
6. Really new and unique products and books -- Internet innovations and developments.
7. Politically and socially-important editorial tie-in articles.
8. Holiday and event tie-in articles.

If you are writing news releases and seeking publicity, your chances of success are increased if you follow one of these formats.

Localizing media releases maximizes the publication of your release in weekly and daily newspapers. The easiest publicity to get is the announcement of a local event with a distinct local human interest angle.

National publicity is harder to get. You are competing against everyone else in the nation. You really have to have a story that is of interest to a broad audience. One effective approach is to break your national media lists into geographically distinct areas and localizing the release.

### **Meet the editor's needs**

Because they need outside news sources, the media are already inclined to be interested in your press releases. However, your chances of publication are increased if you avoid these three common mistakes:

1. Received too late for the deadline -- releases usually have to go through several steps before they appear in print. Allow sufficient time and know the editor's deadlines.
2. Too long and rambling -- newspaper space is at a premium. Don't waste everyone's time -- get right to the point.
3. Requires too much rewriting -- editors are busy people and don't have time to have the news release rewritten. Follow acceptable newspaper style.

### **Follow these basic rules**

Here are the generally accepted standards for media releases.

1. Keep it short. Maximum length should be one to two pages and no more than 500 words.
2. Include city/town and date at the beginning of the release.
3. Use a headline that gets to the point. What you say here determines whether the reader will look at the rest of the release.
4. Avoid promotional sounding words.
5. Write a strong leading paragraph. Answer who, what, where, when, why and how. Use this paragraph as an abstract or summary for the release.
6. Make sure the most important details are at the top of your release; to make stories fit, editors cut from the bottom.
7. Use quotes to add colour to the story. Be sure to indicate the name, position, and organization of the person providing the quotes.
8. Write using short, familiar, specific words. Keep paragraphs short and avoid any technical or colloquial expressions.
9. Include a short corporate summary, if appropriate. Provide information about products and services that help establish your expertise. Mention location, years of business, etc. Keep it short; don't include the annual report.

10. Provide complete contact information -- contact name, company name, full address, phone number, fax number, e-mail address and web site. The contact should be someone who is available and capable of answering questions.

11. The release should be signed off with a -30- or #####.

12. If additional background information is required, use a “Backgrounder” to provide related facts and figures.

### **Internet considerations**

If you are using the Internet as your primary communications tool for your media releases, here are some other rules you should follow.

1. E-mail media releases work best when they have a sharply focused subject line, do NOT contain attachments or HTML formatting, and are brief and to the point, with clickable URLs for more detail.

2. Put contact information at the end, not the beginning. The first screen has to catch the editors’ or reporters’ attention with substantive news.

3. Put a link to your on-line press kit (see below) and to story photographs.

4. Don’t follow up. You will annoy most editors by making a second contact.

5. Update your web site with the “news” before sending your release.

6. Target your audience. Only contact editors who write about your topic or industry.

7. Provide a simple way for editors to get OFF your mailing list; honour their requests to be removed.

### **On-line press kits**

If your organization or company is planning to send out regular media releases, you should set up an on-line media information kit on your web site. This will provide background information for editors or reporters following up on your release. The on-line kit should include the following:

- Recent photographs and electronic picture files (300 dpi .jpg, .tiff or .eps formatting is good enough for newspaper printing)
- Corporate or association profile
- Biographies of key staff
- Product and service data sheets
- Industry facts and figures (if you are an industry association)
- Previous news releases and features
- Links to on-line news stores about the company.

## **You can do it**

Following the above guidelines, and with some practice, you too can write great media releases that will help get your message out to the public.

For more information, please visit our newest initiative – MediaDispatch News Service at <http://www.mediadispatch.com>

## **2. PROTEST RALLY BY ALBERTA DEER AND ELK FARMERS**

*On August 1, 2002, a group of Alberta deer and elk farmers held a rally at the Legislative Building in Edmonton. Here are some of the issues and concerns that triggered this protest. I'm sure that the game farming industries in many other provinces and states are facing the same challenges.*

**M**y name is Len Jubinville. I am the President of the committee titled Operation Survival. We, as deer and elk farmers, have no time to waste. We have to do something now or forever hold our peace! Our industry is doomed if we don't. Let's face it: the elk and deer farmers have kept their promise, but we are all caught in a political and bureaucratic pile of crap that will never untangle unless we roll up our sleeves and do something about it NOW!

This message needs to be delivered to the Premier by our representatives in a united voice on behalf of all of us. If you still love your animals, have faith in their potential, and believe, even just a little bit, that we can farm these wonderful animals and build an industry around them once we're successful in dismantling most of the barricades that bureaucrats and politicians have erected, then you and your friends need to take part in Operation Survival.

Many of us are in dire straits and cannot take any more of this crap. Public perception is so bad out there that many of our fellow Albertans and Saskatchewanites are looking and talking about us in a very negative way. There is nothing wrong with our animals or our industry. We need to fight for both. This fight is as important to Saskatchewan farmers as it is to Albertans.

There is talk that the Alberta government is considering allowing one or two licensed hunt farms as pilot projects. Who dreams up these stalling tactics? This will do zilch for our industry! We need a lot more than just hunt farms to move this industry forward. Why does our government even have to have pilot projects in Alberta when there's over 20 of these hunt farms a few hours away in Saskatchewan?

Deer and elk farmers are asking to be treated the same and have the same rights that all other Canadian farmers enjoy. That's all we're asking. After fifteen years of hard work, we do not believe that we are asking for too much.

### **What is Operation Survival?**

Operation Survival is a peaceful rally, the idea of which was born at an elk and deer farmers meeting held on July 27, 2002 in Edmonton, Alberta. Many farmers expressed their feelings, sufferings and stressful situations in which they presently find themselves.

Good honest families are seriously hurting. The time for writing letters and holding closed door meetings is over! The need to do something is now! The reason public perception is so much

against us is because we have always been told by the government to stay quiet. We have never been given the opportunity to tell our side of the story.

Our governments initiated diversification in agriculture and then left it up to us to fight with certain bureaucrats that were against elk and deer farming right from the beginning. It's time that certain individuals in Natural Resources, Research and Science and the Department of Agriculture get fired or transferred. For the industry to successfully move forward, it's imperative that all bureaucrats and government officials be supportive instead of always undermining our industry as we've seen in the past. We need to make noise now. A group voice is a lot louder than a single voice.

We need to make this happen before August 6 and 7, as that is when the provincial government is supposed to vote on whether or not to allow hunt farms (Cervid Harvesting Preserves) in Alberta.

Here are the reasons why it's important that we make our stand before the government votes on this issue.

1. Presently we have nothing more to lose. Our industry is doomed if changes don't happen immediately. It's not a few hunt farms that are going to make much of a difference. We need more than that.
2. If we win the vote on hunt farms and make our stand afterwards, we will be perceived as whining farmers that are never happy. You can be assured that the government's interpretation of a vote favoring the farmers will be very different than ours. To them, if they allow one Hunt Farm as a pilot project for now, that's a win for the farmer. We call that dangling another carrot, and just another one of their stalling tactics to keep us quiet.
3. If we lose the vote and don't get approval for hunt farms, and then go and ask for everything that we really need to survive, the public will sympathize with the government and believe that it's impossible to please deer and elk farmers.

Image is a very important part of our message so let's make sure that we pull into Edmonton with our trucks, stock trailers, cars, old pick ups, tractors and not in motor homes or holiday trailers. That will make us look like rich tourists instead of the struggling farmers we are.

We are farmers, so let's dress as farmers, as this will complement our message.

If you are approached by the media to tell your story, just be honest and clear. Make sure that you convey only two or three messages that are of importance to you and your industry. Begin now to think what you would say if asked. Don't try and memorize something to say. It will be much better to speak from the heart and from personal experience. You will find it easier this way.

### **What will Operation Survival accomplish?**

1. Public awareness and support for our industry and the situation that we are now facing after 15 years.
2. Give us the chance to tell our side of the story.

3. Force the government to take a stand on whether this industry should be allowed to move forward or should start negotiations to shut down. Either way, the elk and deer farmers have the right to know.

### **What are we asking for?**

It's very important that we deliver a short and clear message to our government. If you have any ideas, please help us here.

1. We ask to be treated the same as all other livestock farmers in Canada.
2. We are over-regulated, which makes it stressful for ourselves and our animals, so we ask for less regulation.
3. We are so regulated that it's impossible to attract new producers to our industry. Again, we ask for less regulation and government support to rebuild an environment conducive to growth in our industry.
4. We ask that certain bureaucrats be terminated or transferred.
5. We ask that wildlife officers and the Department of Natural Resources quit harassing us. We are farmers raising domestic animals, and we are under the jurisdiction of the Department of Agriculture, so please treat us accordingly.
6. We ask that hunt farms be approved at large in Alberta as per our CHP committee's presentation. After all, our government preaches about how important value-added products are to any industry. We believe that hunt farms will be our best value-added product.
7. We ask that our government come clean and be honest with us. Is our government still supporting elk and deer farming, or should we be starting to negotiate a termination settlement?
8. We ask for a chance to sit down with MLAs and department heads to devise a strategy to address these issues now.

[News articles by the local media about this event can be found at the Deerfarmer Discussion Forums at <http://www.deerforum.com>

*NOTE: Unfortunately, the rally did not have the desired effect. On August 7, 2002, the Alberta government decided NOT TO APPROVE hunting preserves in the province. See Industry News below for more information. Ed.]*

### 3. THE FACTS ON CWD IN WISCONSIN

Whitetails of Wisconsin is a statewide association of deer farmers and enthusiasts. We currently are 213 members strong and growing. We have a deep interest in CWD and all that is happening because of it.

A lot of information has been written about CWD since it was discovered in Wisconsin earlier this year. Unfortunately, much of it coming from the Wisconsin DNR, contains twisted facts, half truths and opinions which are passed off as facts. The rhetoric from the DNR is clearly targeting the deer and elk producers, citing them as the most likely cause of the CWD introduction. The intent here is to turn public opinion against the farm-raised cervid producers so that the public would put pressure on our legislators to work toward banning the industry altogether.

It has been no secret that the DNR has not looked favorably on the farmed deer and elk industry for some time, well before CWD came along. With CWD came the opportunity to blame the industry for its introduction, inflame public opinion and gain support toward banning the industry.

CWD was first discovered in 1967 in a state-owned research facility at Fort Collins, Colorado. After 35 years of research, no one can say for sure how it started and how it spreads. Even Beth Williams (who discovered CWD) states, "It's equally as plausible that CWD is a naturally occurring disease." Yet within days of detection in Wisconsin, DNR officials and a few legislators were already blaming the farm-raised deer industry for its introduction. This was done with no facts, no investigation and no justification. It was a knee-jerk reaction to a serious discovery. However, it was a very inappropriate allegation. Unfortunately, the DNR has seen fit to continue to make the same unfounded accusations and suggestions of blame on the industry that they know are false.

The industry has not responded to the DNR's relentless attacks. To do so without having the indisputable facts would have been inappropriate. However, make no mistake about it. The industry will no longer tolerate anything less than 100% truth from the DNR. We have the facts. We are gathering more information daily.

As late as July 18<sup>th</sup>, Tom Solin of the DNR said on a radio news show that the most likely cause of the CWD introduction into Wisconsin was the release of captive deer into the wild herd from a deer farm in the hopes of improving the genetics in his area.

Fact: Several years ago there were mule deer observed in the Mt. Horeb area. The DNR has confirmed this fact. The question is who put them there?

Last fall two red deer were loose in the Mt. Horeb area and were shot by the DNR. How did they get there?

Information was given to the DNR months ago that a group of people may have illegally transported deer from a western state and released them on their property in the Mt. Horeb area. These people are not deer farmers and their property is not fenced. People from the deer raising industry have tried to assist the DNR and provide information to help determine how CWD may have been introduced into Wisconsin. The DNR twisted the information into a half-truth and used it against the industry.



Fact: The CWD endemic area includes parts of Wyoming, Colorado, and western Nebraska along the Wyoming border. Wyoming allows NO game farms. Colorado only allows the raising of mule deer and elk, not whitetails. Nebraska does not allow interstate movement of whitetails. This means it would not be possible to get a whitetail deer from the CWD endemic area. There are NO known FARM-RAISED whitetail deer with CWD anywhere in the U.S.

The DNR on several occasions have stated that captive wildlife farms were responsible for the introduction of CWD west of the Rocky Mountains and also in Nebraska.

A rancher on the west slope of the Rockies fenced in a large tract of his ranch to raise elk. Inadvertently, he trapped 280 mule deer and 30 WILD elk inside his pen. After notifying the Fish and Game people, these animals were killed and several found to be CWD positive.

Wisconsin DNR folks referred to this incident as being caused by a CAPTIVE elk farm.

Fact: In Nebraska, a fenced enclosure was built in 1991, trapping wild deer inside. This was legal at that time. In December 2001, CWD was later found in these captured WILD deer. NO other whitetails had ever been added to that enclosure.

The DNR would like the public to believe that farm-raised deer are breeding grounds for all kinds of diseases.

Fact: There are NO cases of CWD or TB in any captive deer herd anywhere in Wisconsin. Researchers have determined that it takes 1.5 to 3 years for CWD from exposure to symptoms. If a captive herd brought CWD into the wild and the wild deer are showing symptoms, the captive herd would have to be in much worse shape. Again, there has been NO case of CWD found in a captive deer farm in Wisconsin. There are NO known cases of CWD positive FARM-RAISED whitetails that were ever moved interstate in this country. If anybody has proof of any CWD positive FARM RAISED whitetails anywhere in the U.S. please notify the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture so that your facts can be verified. We are tired of accusations that come with NO proof.

The DNR reports that hundreds of deer are moved in and out of the state illegally every year.

Fact: The Dept. of Agriculture has strict rules on importing deer and elk. If the DNR has any knowledge of violations, they have reported NONE to the Dept. of Agriculture.

The DNR reports “many of the known outbreaks of CWD involve captive herds.”

Fact: The majority of the captive herd outbreaks involve state-owned facilities and fenced-in WILD deer or animals that are traced back to the Fort Collins research facility.

Fact: As late as 1991, the Colorado Division of Wildlife confiscated elk from an individual that had stolen them from the wild. They were placed in pens at the Junction Butte facility near Kremmling, Colorado, which was known to be a CWD-positive facility. They later worked out a deal to trade these elk to game farms in exchange for the game farmers’ red deer. Mike Miller of the Colorado Fish and Game Department stated, “Then after we thought about it, it wasn’t such a good idea.” However, some of these exchanges had already gone through. Some ranchers believe to this day that this is how CWD got into their private herds. Could this have been intentional on the part of the Colorado Fish and Game Dept.? This was 14 years after CWD was recognized.

Researchers believe that CWD first infected deer in Colorado after jumping the species barrier from scrapie-infected sheep that shared the state-owned research facility with deer at the time.

Fact: Wyoming currently has the largest continuous square mile infected area of CWD of all the infected states. Coincidentally, Wyoming also has the largest population of sheep in the same area. What is missing here? Wyoming has NO deer or elk farms.

Something to think about: If bringing large numbers of animals together causes CWD or spreads it, explain this.

1. Jackson Hole, Wyoming: 10,000 – 15,000 elk are brought together and fed throughout the winter each year. There are NO cases of CWD in that area.
2. Yellowstone Park, Gardner, Montana: The Park Dept. has fed a large number of elk in a small area for years with no sign of CWD.

It is important that the public be told the truth about CWD. That is the absolute goal of the deer and elk producers.

It is time for the DNR to put aside their personal agendas and start being truthful with the people who pay their wages. We deserve it. We demand it!

Whitetails of Wisconsin contacts:

Gary Nelson – Fence, Wisconsin  
President 715-336-2949

Eugene Flees – Rosholt, Wisconsin  
Vice President 715-677-3177

Roger Pietrowski – Edgar, Wisconsin  
Public Relations 715-352-2793

Bill Vyvyan – Neillsville, Wisconsin  
Public Relations 715-743-6406

#### **4. CWD RESEARCH GRANTS AVAILABLE**

The Department of Defense FY02 National Prion Research Program (NPRP) Announcement was released on August 2, 2002 with receipt of PROPOSALS DUE ON OCTOBER 30, 2002.

A summary of the program is provided below. Detailed descriptions of the mechanism, evaluation criteria, and submission requirements can be found in the FY02 NPRP Program Announcement, which can be downloaded from the CDMRP web site <http://cdmrp.army.mil/funding/02cmlrp1.htm>

The Fiscal Year 2002 (FY02) U.S. Defense Appropriations Act provides \$42.5 million to the Department of Defense for Prion Research. Therefore, the U.S. Army Medical Research and

Material Command through the Office of the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs (CDMRP) has established the National Prion Research Program (NPRP).

The goal of the NPRP is to increase scientific knowledge regarding prion related diseases leading to the development of rapid, sensitive, and reproducible tests for the detection of prions suitable for use as an antemortem diagnostic test as well as a screening assay. In support of this goal, additional topics of interest include a better understanding of chronic wasting disease (CWD) and the prevention, transmission, and pathogenesis of transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSE).

## **Congressional Appropriation For Peer-Reviewed Research \$42.5 Million In Fy02**

### **Funding Summary**

Anticipate 30-35 awards in FY02

### **Snapshot of the FY02 National Prion Research Program**

The FY02 National Prion Research Program requests proposals the following award mechanisms:

#### **Idea Award**

Purpose: To encourage innovative approaches to transmissible spongiform encephalopathy (TSE) research from both established TSE investigators and established investigators in other fields who want to move into TSE-related research. Preliminary data is not required.

Applicant: Independent investigators at the level of Assistant Professor (or equivalent) or above.

Dollar Value of Awards: \$125K per year in direct costs for a maximum of \$375K over 3 years, plus indirect costs as appropriate.

#### **Investigator-Initiated Research Award**

Purpose: To sponsor basic and clinically-oriented TSE research. Emphasis is placed on the development of partnerships between academic and industry researchers or between an established TSE researcher and a researcher from another discipline that might bring new technologies and expertise to the TSE field. Preliminary data is required.

Nested Postdoctoral Traineeships are being offered as an optional part of IIRA proposals. The intent of the Nested Postdoctoral Traineeship is to enable doctoral degree graduates to either extend ongoing research related to TSE or broaden the scope of their research to include work relevant to TSE under the guidance of a designated mentor who is participating in the proposal.

Applicant: Independent investigators at any level. Nested Postdoctoral Trainees: Postdoctoral fellows with 3 years or less of postdoctoral experience at the time of proposal submission.

Dollar Value of Awards: Up to \$2.5M, inclusive of direct and indirect costs, for a performance period of up to 5 years. Nested Postdoctoral Traineeships: Up to \$60K per year inclusive of direct and indirect costs for a maximum of \$180,000 per trainee over 3 years.

## **Career Transition Award**

Purpose: To encourage scientists or clinicians who are currently in postdoctoral and/or fellowship training positions to pursue a TSE-related research career once their fellowship has ended. These awards are intended to facilitate career advancements by accommodating the relatively long time that it takes to generate data in TSE experimental models.

Applicant: Postdoctoral fellows with at least 2 years experience in the laboratory in which the research is to be performed and less than 4 years total postdoctoral research experience at the time of submission.

Dollar Value of Awards: Postdoctoral fellow (years 1-2): Average of \$50K per year, inclusive of direct and indirect costs, for a maximum of \$100K. Junior faculty (years 3-5): Average of \$100K per year in direct costs, for a maximum of \$300K, plus indirect costs as appropriate.

## **Sabbatical Travel Award**

Purpose: To offer investigators the opportunity to work in the laboratory of established TSE researchers in order to acquire critical skills or learn new methods relevant to TSE research.

Applicant: Postdoctoral trainees, medical residents, or clinical fellows; or researchers with an independent program of prion research; or researchers with established independent program of research with limited or no experience in the TSE field.

Dollar Value of Awards: Up to \$125K for up to 1 year, inclusive of direct and indirect costs.

In addition, Resource Development Contracts will provide support for developing experimental materials from relevant animal models of TSE disease. These awards will be open to independent investigators at any level.

Terry H. Conger, D.V.M.  
State Epidemiologist  
TAHC, Austin Office  
2105 Kramer Lane Austin, TX 78758  
(512) 719-0717 FAX (512) 719-0721  
<http://www.tahc.state.tx.us>

*[Please make your favorite researcher, university and vet college aware of these grants. National and state cervid associations should offer support to researchers in terms of animals, facilities and anything else they need. CWD research won't happen unless we encourage, support and push for it! Ed.]*

## 5. SUMMER TIPS FOR REINDEER FARMERS

*[By Dave Aldrich, Rooftop Landing Reindeer Farm, Michigan, mailto:dclald@power-net.net  
Reprinted from The ROBA Review, Summer 2002]*

We've had more than our share of 90 degree days here in Michigan this year. Our reindeer are doing fine with the fans we provide and having access to plenty of water.

We've noticed in past years that the reindeer, especially the younger ones, tend to get diarrhea if even a small amount of algae is allowed to form in the water. So we spend a lot of time keeping our tanks clean. *[With the drought here in Alberta, algae grow more quickly. Certain types are poisonous to livestock. There have been reports of deaths in cattle due to drinking water with algae. Ed.]*

Keep a close eye on those growing antlers, especially on the base. Those moist antler bases in velvet are a favorite place for flies to deposit their eggs. Soon you have a head full of maggots. Every year we hear of deer that have died from this problem. It happens fairly fast.

If your deer are calm and you can catch them or run them through a chute, you can treat this problem easily. If not, I have used a product that works very well. It shoots a stream of fly killer 10 to 15 feet quite accurately. It is called Catron IV. I purchase it from my vet to keep on hand in case we need it. It works instantly, killing all flies and maggots and forces them to fall off the head.

Catron is used in the cattle business so I'm sure most large animal vets carry it or a similar product. If those fly eggs hatch around the antlers, you can get hundreds of maggots in just 3 or 4 days. They eat away the flesh until they invade the brain cavity and kill the animal. The few times I have seen this problem, it always seems to be with a bull, but could happen with any animal growing antlers. (Unlike deer and elk, reindeer cows also grow antlers).

Another thing to remember with the breeding season approaching is to loosen those halters. Better still, remove them from the bulls before their necks begin to swell. Otherwise they get so ornery that you can't deal with them. A loose-fitting halter in the summer can be too restrictive and damaging when a bull begins growing his winter coat and goes into rut.

We're getting a number of calls for school visits already for this winter. They have proven to be very popular in the past. We have done quite a number of schools for several years now. It's both rewarding for the schools, as they cut back on field trips, and financially rewarding for us in helping with the feed bills. Don't let schools fool you – they have plenty of money for things that are unique and educational. *[School visits would also increase awareness and support for the industry as well as bring financial benefits. More deer and elk farmers should consider agri-tourism activities. Ed.]*

[For more information on the Reindeer Owners and Breeders Association – ROBA – contact Kyle Wilson at 1416 Currier Lane, Knoxville, TN 37919, phone 865-691-8589 or via e-mail to <mailto:reindeerman@lock-net.com> ]

## **6. INDUSTRY NEWS**

### **Alberta government rejects hunting preserves**

**O**n August 7, 2002, Premier Ralph Klein and his cabinet voted against changing regulations to permit fenced hunting of deer and elk in Alberta. The politicians took the safe route by siding with the general public. Polls showed that 84% of Albertans were opposed to allowing hunt farms. (Fenced hunting of buffalo, wild boar and pheasants is still permitted).

The decision is a big disappointment to the Alberta Elk Association and the Alberta White-tail and Mule Deer Association. The associations had been lobbying the government for about two years, had done considerable research and documentation as to the benefits of hunt preserves and had held public hearings. Unfortunately, it was not enough to successfully influence the outcome.

Rejection of hunting preserves will impact the province's white-tail and mule deer producers the hardest. Their major source of income has been the breeding market and hunting preserves – thousands of Alberta bucks were shipped to the United States as trophy animals. With the borders now closed due to CWD, these markets will not be available for a few years. The only other markets are venison and urine, but neither one of these has been developed.

I believe that the Alberta elk industry is much better shape (once we get past the drought conditions). They have established a meat products co-op to market venison and have made international sales. The demand and price for velvet antler seems to be improving. (I am aware of large quantities being sold to China. We have had at least half a dozen calls to Deerfarmer.com alone asking if we had, or if we knew who had, velvet antler for sale).

A number of recent research studies have demonstrated the health benefits of velvet antler both in humans and pets. At our Arthritis-in-dogs website, we are now getting about 50 requests PER DAY for free samples of Qeva Joint Mobility. Word is getting out, and the pet market is slowly developing. Just meeting the needs of the U.S. dog market (35 million American households own about 55 million dogs) could easily consume all velvet antler in the world. Now might be a good time to pick up some additional elk bulls at very reasonable prices.

Alberta producers who are interested in hunting preserves should consider setting up operations in our neighbouring province of Saskatchewan. Ironically, Saskatchewan just removed land ownership restrictions for residents of other Canadian provinces. Previously, you had to live in Saskatchewan if you wanted to own more than 160 acres. Now Canadians can own as much land as they want without having to take up residence in the province. And with the current drought in some parts of the province, and the low commodity prices, land in Saskatchewan is very reasonably priced. Deer and elk prices are also low, so establishing a hunt preserve has never been more affordable! Something to think about.

### **CWD affected by antibiotics**

A report in the online Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences suggests that tetracyclines, a class of commonly-used antibiotics, may affect the ability of prions to cause disease.

Dr. Fabrizio Tagliavini of the Istituto Nazionale Neurologico Carlo Besta in Milan, Italy and colleagues treated tissue samples taken from patients with vCJD and cows with BSE with the drug tetracycline. When the prions were exposed to the antibiotic, they became less resistant to digestion

by enzymes. The greater the dose, the less resistant the prions became to enzymatic digestion and, therefore, removal.

After these promising results, the researchers tested tetracycline in hamsters with scrapie. When the prions were exposed to tetracycline before injection, the hamsters did not become sick until significantly later and lived longer. This delay was accompanied by a lag in brain abnormalities that normally develop in brain-wasting diseases.

The findings suggest that tetracyclines, which are already approved for human use, could be helpful for people with brain-wasting diseases. "Tetracyclines should be reconsidered for pharmacological effects independently from the antibiotic activity," the authors state.

Antibiotics could also have a role in preventing infections, the investigators suggest. When Tagliavini's team mixed tetracycline into a highly diluted solution containing scrapie, one third of the hamsters exposed to the solution did not develop the disease.

The results suggest that it may be possible to use antibiotics to inactivate prions in potentially contaminated products, the authors conclude.

SOURCE: Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences Early Edition 2002; 10.1073/pnas.162195499

*[These findings may suggest that CWD is caused by germs or bacteria. Many years ago I had surgery to get rid of a chronic stomach ulcer condition. Now we know that these ulcers are caused by bacteria – a few weeks on antibiotics usually cures the problem. However, look how long it took to discover this cause considering that ulcers are a common medical problem. The same may be true with CWD. Ed.]*

### **That's a lot of bulls**

*[By Marc Cousin, Crooked Lake Elk Farm in Saskatchewan]*

Some 400,000 elk velveting bulls will be needed if Dr. Susan Hemming's preliminary research on rats turns out to also be applicable to humans. (See "Velvet protects the liver" in the May 2002 issue of the *Deer Farmers' Digest*).

Dr. Hemming, a physiology and liver specialist at the University of Saskatchewan, fed elk velvet to rats. She discovered that these rats suffered up to 300% less damage to their liver when their liver was chemically challenged. Dr. Hemming also found that markers showed that cancer development was decreased.

According to the Liver Foundation of Canada, one person in twelve will develop problems with their liver. This means that over four million Canadians could improve their health by consuming velvet antler. This would be over and above the ones who take velvet antler to alleviate symptoms of osteoporosis, arthritis, high blood pressure, diabetes and depression.

We presently have about 10,000 velveting bulls in Canada, enough to supply less than 2% of the 4 million people with liver problems. This would also leave no velvet for export. Velvet antler could be the next "Cinderella" crop, injecting millions of dollars in agriculture and providing consumers

with a safe, natural, effective and economical product that may dramatically reduce our health care costs.

*[The other potentially huge market is the pet industry. We now have credible research that shows EVA works on arthritic dogs, and are making good progress in penetrating that market. Given current prices for animals, now is a good time to buy additional bulls. Ed.]*

### **Buchta leaving AEA**

Dr. Bill Buchta, Executive Director of the Alberta Elk Association, is moving on after he finishes his work in establishing an Elk Commission. Bill was a joy to work with, and Deerfarmer.com wishes him the best of success with his future ventures. The AEA is now recruiting to fill the position.

### **Deer nutrition symposium**

The New Zealand Grassland Association in conjunction with the Canterbury Deer Farmers Association is holding a symposium on nutrition and management of deer on grazing systems.

The Deer Nutrition symposium will be held at Lincoln University on November 8 (technical sessions) and November 9, 2002 (field day and practical workshops).

The papers presented during the formal sessions will include an update on the industry today; presentation of in-depth studies of nutrition of growing and the adult animals; importance of nutrition for reproduction and lactation; animal behaviour, and concepts of sustainable deer farming and environmental care.

There will be guest speakers from China on velvet nutrition and from Australia on drought feeding. Other speakers will be scientists and industry leaders and will include MJ Loza, Graeme Brown, Clive Jermy, Dr. Geoff Asher, Dr. Jimmy Suttie, Dr. David Stevens, vet Ian Scott and more.

To register your interest in attending and to receive a registration pack, please contact Suzanne at 0800 376 8448 or Marie Casey at *mailto:mariecasey@wrightson.co.nz* or Mick Calder at *mailto:mcalder@iconz.co.nz*

## **7. EVENTS CALENDAR**

Here is a list of upcoming events of interest to deer, elk and reindeer farmers.

FIFTH INTERNATIONAL DEER BIOLOGY CONGRESS will be held August 25-30, 2002 in Quebec City, Canada. For more information contact Michel Crete at 418-521-3955

WHITETAIL DEER FARMERS OF OHIO will hold their fall meeting on September 7, 2002 at Apple Creek Park. Speakers will include Dr. George Bubenik on antler growth and Dr. Brad Thurston who will provide an update on CWD. Contact Steve Laughlin at 330-866-5421 or *mailto:sklisret@earthlink.net*

TEXAS DEER ASSOCIATION 4<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL CONVENTION AND AUCTION will be held September 13-14, 2002 at San Antonio, Texas USA. For more information call 210-767-8300 or visit <http://www.texasdeerassociation.com>





## 8. DEERFARMER.COM NEWS

Our parent consulting company – Steppingstones Partnership, Inc. – has established a new division called MediaDispatch News Service. This service distributes media releases via e-mail to daily and weekly newspapers in Canada, United States, Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom. We also have access to magazines and on-line publications to whom we can send releases.

We intend to use this service mainly to support our own initiatives and projects and that of our clients (mostly agricultural associations). However, other external clients are welcome.

For more information about MediaDispatch News Service, please visit our web site at <http://www.mediadispatch.com>

\* \* \* \* \*

Our major new addition is our Venison Culinary Centre (VCC). The purpose of the VCC is to help develop and promote the venison part of our industry, especially here in North America. The site is designed both for venison producers and consumers.

The VCC contains information on cooking and nutrition, more than 60 recipes and links to other sources of information about venison. In addition, we have started to compile a directory of venison sellers. Customers can't buy if they don't know where to buy. If you are a reputable, established venison vendor and want to have a free listing on our site, please complete the on-line form.

The Venison Culinary Centre can be reached either through <http://www.venison-meat.com> or <http://venison.deerfarmer.com>

As always, I appreciate feedback, comments and suggestions regarding our Deerfarmer.com website. Please send your comments to me at <mailto:webmaster@deerfarmer.com>

## 9. SUBSCRIPTION SERVICES

We respect your right to privacy. If you wish to be removed from our mailing list at any time, simply send an e-mail to <mailto:editor@deerfarmer.com> with REMOVE in the Subject line.

If you want your name ADDED to our mailing list, please sign our Guest Book form at <http://www.deerfarmer.com/forms/guest.htm>

The *Digest* is also available in a print format (ISSN 1499-1349). A \$3 per issue (\$36 per year) fee applies to cover postage, paper and handling costs. Subscriptions and back issues can be ordered from our Store located at <http://store.deerfarmer.com>

As per our Privacy Policy, your name, e-mail address and any other information you provide us will only be used by Deerfarmer.com. This information will not be shared with any third party unless we get your permission first!

## 10. CONTACT INFORMATION

We are always looking for articles and news about deer and elk farming that we can print in this newsletter. E-mail, fax or mail your ideas and articles to the Editor as per below.

For more general information, comments and suggestions, please contact:

Russell Sawchuk  
Editor and Webmaster  
The *Deer Farmers' Digest* and [Deerfarmer.com](http://Deerfarmer.com)  
Box 8220, Edmonton, Alberta Canada T6H 4P1

E-mail: <mailto:editor@deerfarmer.com>  
Phone: 1-780-430-8245 or 1-800-267-9997 (Toll-free in USA & Canada)  
Fax: 1-780-434-0412 or 1-800-267-9993 (Toll-free in USA & Canada)  
Webs: <http://www.deerfarmer.com> <http://www.deerfarmer.net>  
<http://www.deerforum.com> and <http://www.globaldeer.com>

**DISCLAIMER:** This newsletter is for general information only. It should not be relied upon to make business or farming decisions without first obtaining professional advice. Accordingly, we cannot accept liability for loss or damage arising directly or indirectly from any advice, opinion, representation or omission, whether negligent or otherwise, contained in this newsletter.

©2002 [Deerfarmer.com](http://Deerfarmer.com). The *Deer Farmers' Digest* may only be redistributed in its unedited form. Permission from the editor must be obtained to reprint or cite the information contained within this newsletter. All articles are written by Russell Sawchuk (Editor) unless otherwise noted. [Deerfarmer.com](http://Deerfarmer.com) is a division of Steppingstones Partnership, Inc. (<http://www.steppingstones.ca>).

ISSN 1499-1349 *Deer Farmers' Digest* (Print). All issues of the *Deer Farmers' Digest* (print and electronic) are archived and catalogued at the National Library of Canada. On-line copies can be found at [http://collection.nlc-bnc.ca/100/201/300/deer\\_farmers\\_digest/](http://collection.nlc-bnc.ca/100/201/300/deer_farmers_digest/).