

Welcome to the DECEMBER 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 32 countries.

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*** DEER * BYTES ***

We wish all of our readers a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! May 2003 be the year when our deer and elk farming industry rebounds and sees expanded markets, renewed confidence, joy in raising our animals and prosperity.

Deer Farmers' Digest and *Deerfarmer.com*

1. FROM THE EDITOR

As I glance at my bookcase, it dawns upon me that I soon must get ready a binder for Volume **IV** of the *Deer Farmers' Digest*. It is hard to believe that this is already issue 36 and that we will soon begin our fourth year. Our subscriber list has remained stable at about 2,500 readers in 30 countries. Thousands of others read the *Digest* on the *Deerfarmer.com* web site and through the National Library of Canada. Many of our articles are reprinted in other deer and elk publications and newsletters.

The year 2002 has continued to be difficult for our industry. With more CWD outbreaks and accompanying depopulations, the Korea ban on imports from North America still in effect, and low prices for breeding stock, it is understandable that many producers are discouraged and frustrated. Some farmers have gotten out of the deer/elk business, and many newcomers have hesitated to enter it.

I expect 2003 to be a better year. We will take a big step towards finding a live-animal CWD test so that we can put this disease issue behind us. Both the elk and deer industries have undertaken major initiatives to develop meat markets. I believe we will reap the benefits this year. Even though I don't expect Korea to reopen its borders soon, the markets for velvet will rebound. We sold out this year and the demand in 2003 will even be greater. We are making progress in getting velvet antler products into the pet markets. Early in the new year, we will be beginning a major study to see if deer and elk meat by-products can be used for premium dog food. Finally, we are making progress in convincing the legislators that ours is a legitimate and viable agriculture livestock industry.

My sincere thanks and appreciation to the people who have (directly or indirectly) provided articles and information for the *Digest*. My thanks to the various deer, elk and reindeer associations that have put me on their mailing lists, and thus have helped me keep informed about what is going on around the world. I thank the other newsletter editors who have shared information with me, and given me permission to reprint their articles. Finally, I would like to thank our readers. I wish all of you Happy Holidays and a healthy and prosperous 2003!

Russell Sawchuk, Editor

2. HOW DIRTY DICK, THE EVIL-EYED REINDEER NEARLY RUINED CHRISTMAS

[By Cindy Ewashkiw and Dr. Terry Church]

The spirit of Christmas was in the air. Excitement was everywhere over the expected visit from Santa Claus and his reindeer.

This year, however, the visit from Santa almost did not happen! And it was all because of an evil-eyed reindeer named Dirty Dick.

Our story begins at a ranch in southern Alberta, near Calgary, where Dirty Dick lived. As most people know, when breeding season comes around, male deer lose their common sense and good judgment. And so it was with Dirty Dick. When he went into the rut at the end of each August, he become one of the orneriest and cantankerous reindeer imaginable. He would challenge anyone who came near his harem of reindeer ladies.

Every day Dirty Dick would herd and boss his harem relentlessly, sometimes not even allowing them to eat. The reindeer especially liked the pellets provided to them by the nice farm manager, Dr. Chapel. (Dr. Chapel is a veterinarian known to be handy with a scalpel.)

Dirty Dick challenged Dr. Chapel every single day during the rutting season. Whenever anyone would come to the gate, Dirty Dick would come right over, circle around with his head tipped to one side so that he could display his big antlers and show the whites of his eye. This ritual earned him the title of “Dirty Dick the evil-eyed reindeer.”

Another display for which Dirty Dick became infamous was his habit of tramping with his back feet and peeing on them. Though possibly considered attractive to some creatures, neither Dr. Chapel nor the women in Dirty Dick’s harem were impressed with these ritualistic exhibitions. It just made him dirty and stinky!

The reindeer females soon became less and less interested in him. They were more fond of Dr. Chapel and ran to him when he brought them the reindeer pellets. This enraged Dirty Dick. He continued to charge forward and give Dr. Chapel the evil eye. Dirty Dick’s brewing resentment continued well past breeding season, leaving Dr. Chapel at his wit’s end.

One day, Dr. Chapel said, “Dirty Dick, I’ve had enough. Either you lose that ornery, horny attitude, or you have two choices – reindeer steaks or a hunting ranch in Saskatchewan.”

“Big talk,” thought Dirty Dick, glaring at Dr. Chapel. “I dare you to step into my pen and say that!”

As Dr. Chapel headed back across the yard, Dirty Dick trotted away. If the female reindeer were no longer interested, then it was time to pass on his premium genetics elsewhere.

His first stop was the elk paddock. As Dirty Dick approached the somewhat disinterested elk cows, a big bull elk came charging towards him. It didn’t take long for Dirty Dick to realize that he was no match for the bull!

Disgruntled, Dick took his big black foul mood and stormed back to the handling facility. Before he knew what was happening, Dr. Chapel had slammed the gate closed and locked Dirty Dick into the catch pen.

“Hey, you big goof,” grunted Dirty Dick, “let me outta here!” Charging the gate, Dirty Dick challenged Dr. Chapel.

“Old Santa has a nice one-way present for you this year,” sang Dr. Chapel. “Merry Christmas.”

“Bah, humbug!” snorted Dirty Dick as he paced the fence. Suddenly, Dirty Dick stopped in his tracks. It occurred to him that, since mature male reindeer drop their antlers well before Christmas, the reindeer pulling Santa’s sleigh must be females. Everyone knows that Santa’s reindeer have antlers.

“My work here is done,” thought Dirty Dick. “Time to head to the North Pole. There must be some willing females there!”

Dirty Dick knew that getting to the North Pole would not be easy. He would need a Transportation Authorization Permit from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), an export permit from Alberta Fish and Wildlife, proof of enrollment in a CWD Surveillance program from Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development(AAFRD), proof of freedom from spiny-tailed larvae, a health certificate from the herd veterinarian and an import permit from the North West Territories or Nunavut (depending on which one claimed jurisdiction over the North Pole).

It was a good thing that Dr. Chapel maintained a negative herd status and the ranch was free of spiny-tailed larvae. After many calls to various government offices, Dirty Dick's permits to travel were in place. (Dirty Dick may have been ornery, but he was as law abiding and compliant with regulations as most Canadians).

So early in December, Dirty Dick opened the gate to his paddock, and began his long journey to the North Pole. (After all, he was a reindeer whose relatives make long migrations in Canada's north every year.) After many days, taking time to eat and rest, he finally made it to Santa's village on Christmas Eve.

Even though it was dark during the day, Dirty Dick soon located Santa's reindeer simply by hearing the tell-tale clicking of hooves. Through the moonlight, Dick could see the antlers on Santa's fine female reindeer.

Dirty Dick wasted no time in doing his reindeer dance and rounding up the herd. Even though he had lost his own antlers, Dick was bigger than the other reindeer. Soon he had Dasher and Dancer, Prancer and Vixen, Comet and Cupid, and Donner and Blitzen running away from Santa's village out on to the tundra.

Once they were safely away from the village, Dirty Dick began to approach his new harem with a "come on" line which consisted of two or three low grunts. For some unknown reason, all the reindeer refused his invitations to make baby reindeer. Getting concerned that he was losing his touch, Dirty Dick looked at the reindeer more closely. Much to his surprise, he discovered that they were all MALE reindeer.

"How can this be?" he thought. "I've been deceived!"

Just then, Santa came along, looking for his reindeer to hitch up to his sleigh for the Christmas run.

"Well, if it isn't Dirty Dick. I suppose you were thinking my reindeer were all females, were you?" announced Santa. "Didn't Dr. Chapel ever tell you that castrated male reindeer lose their antlers AFTER Christmas!"

Dazed and confused, Dirty Dick just stared at Santa.

"Ho ho ho!" cheered Santa as he guided his reindeer into the night.

"Good grief!" thought Dirty Dick, still feeling somewhat bewildered. Oh well – since I'm up north anyway, I might as well find myself a nice reindeer herd with lots of females. And off he trotted to do just that!

3. IMPROVING ELK ANTLER PRODUCTION

[By Bruce Friedel of Iron River Wapiti in Alberta and Ian Thorleifson of Viking Livestock in Manitoba. Reprinted with permission from the Canadian Elk & Deer Farmer, Fall 2002]

Profit in the elk business depends on improving the volume and efficiency of antler production. When grain and other feed is expensive, it is difficult to spend the money to try to increase returns from antlers, but the investment may be worth it. Elk that have good genetics for antler growth will return your investment.

Producers must concentrate on developing their young bull calves every day of their early lives. Here's how:

1. *Get cows bred early* – Calves born in May make much better use of summer pastures than calves born in July. Early born calves wean much more easily than do their later born siblings. Feed your cows free choice elk mineral all winter, along with grass/alfalfa hay testing 12 to 14% Crude Protein on a Dry Matter basis (CP DM).
2. *Sort bred cows* – Cows should be grouped into calving cohorts based on their age in April. The groups should be 15 to 25 cows per pasture if possible. Apply fly tags and pour-on Cydectin; vaccinate with EcoStar RC for scours prevention and with eight-way for clostridial diseases. Calve in clean pastures with shelter available.
3. *Reduce stress* – Allow pregnant cows about two acres each in their calving groups. Rotate grazing pastures in summer at one acre per cow, depending on pasture production. Rotate pastures when grass is down to three inches into pastures that are 10 to 12 inches tall about every 14 to 30 days.
4. *Produce high performance pastures* – plant three lbs. Fleet meadow brome, three lbs. Arctic orchard grass, two lbs. Adanac slender wheatgrass, three lbs. deep-rooted alfalfa, three lbs. creeping-rooted alfalfa and two lbs. alsike clover per acre. On lower-lying ground, substitute Rival reed canary grass for meadow broom, and birdsfoot trefoil for alfalfa. Fertilize at 40 lbs. N, 20 lbs. P, 5 lbs. K and 5 lbs. copper sulfate per acre. Keep grass growing and vegetative by grazing, clipping or mowing. No seed heads!
5. *Flush elk cows before breeding* – Begin in mid-August with about one pound per head of rolled oats (40%), rolled barley (40%) and rolled peas (20%) with a high-phosphorus mineral pack (20 kg per tonne) added. Slowly increase to about four lbs. per head by the peak of breeding season in late September, then slowly decrease to zero by the end of October. Calves learn to eat supplement along with their mothers. Give plenty of feed bunk space – at least two feet per elk.
6. *Pre-rut wean* – This should be done between September 7th and 14th. August is too early. Separate bull calves from heifer calves at weaning and pasture apart. Try to leave social groups stable. Put a babysitter (old quiet or bottle-fed cow) in with them for the first month and to provide some brain power.
7. *Feed calves* – Calves should be given four lbs. per day of 16% CP DM rolled oats (70%) and peas (30%) with elk mineral along with 14 to 16% grass alfalfa or lush pasture. Grow calves – don't

fatten them! Feed grain in bunks, off the ground to avoid parasite infections. Deworm with pour-on Eprinex and inject with eight-way in mid-October.

8. Weigh your calves every time you handle them. Weigh and treat with pour-on Dectomax in late December. Calves should weigh 300 to 400 pounds now, averaging one lb. per day ADG. Reduce supplement to one to two lbs. per day and reduce CP levels to 11 to 12%.

9. *Put a grumpy old herd bull in with your bull calves* – He will boss them around and virtually eliminate pecking order arguments. This seems to suppress early pedicle development and antler growth. You don't want that wintertime growth of spikes – the best antler is always grown on green grass.

10. *Pasture spiker bulls separately* – If pastures lack quality or quantity, feed adequate supplement (as in winter) to ensure continued growth and healthy pedicle and antler development. Fly tag in early May. Remove hard spikes in late August. Separate from any and all breeding activity, unless you want to risk using an exceptionally well-developed spiker on a few females.

Manage your rising two-year-olds as if they were pure gold. Follow these suggestions:

1. Boost supplement beginning in March and continue right through summer and fall. Feed spikers five lbs. of 14 to 16% calf ration in bunks with four feet of space per bull.

2. Ensure that spikers recover body condition post-rut by feeding seven lbs. of 14% ration (oats / peas / mineral pellets) with six feet of bunk space each and free choice of green and leafy alfalfa or grass hay.

3. Give your bulls a Christmas vacation. Managing as described above will put your rising spikers in fat and healthy condition by late December. Work with their seasonal cycle that slows their intake and rapid growth in winter. Provide excellent quality hay, and reduce supplement to a couple of pounds per day until March.

4. Boost feed again in March. Slowly increase the ration (now oats/ peas/barley/corn @ 14%) to a maximum of 10 lbs./head/day by March 21. Split the 10 lbs. and feed several times a day if you have time.

5. Monitor high-energy ration feeding by observing manure consistency and hoof growth. Manure should remain lumpy, not loose. If bulls become lame or hooves appear to be growing too long, or if manure is loose and sloppy, back off on the energy. High-energy rations are not dangerous or damaging if they are introduced slowly and carefully managed.

6. Record, record, record. Note button drop dates. Calculate approximate cutting dates. Carry those with you as you observe antler growth. After harvest, record weight and CWI from competitions, and dry down from the processor, plus any comments from your velvet buyer. Use these records to modify your breeding and production decisions. Cull, cull, and cull! Get rid of your poor producers by selling them for meat. If you have developed your young bulls properly, relative individual performance will rarely change as bulls get older.

As bulls continue aging, the secret to success stays the same – excellent management! As an excellent manager, you must learn to balance your goals between costs, profits and health and

longevity of your elk. Maximizing profit means maximizing antler production means maximizing genetic potential and voluntary feed intake.

4. UNRAVELING THE MYSTERIES OF CWD

[By Wayne Lees, DVM, Epidemiologist, Animal Disease Surveillance Unit, Canadian Food Inspection Agency, Oak Lake, Manitoba]

During 2001 and 2002, the Animal Disease Surveillance Unit (ADSU) participated in a number of on-farm investigations for Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) in farmed elk. Our Unit's involvement has been triggered by two circumstances, namely:

1. where it is suspected that a premise will be designated as highly contaminated, or
2. where the apparent source of the disease remains unexplained.

In both instances, a team comprising the CFIA district and regional veterinarian, a provincial wildlife or veterinary official, and an epidemiologist from the ADSU conducts an on-site visit to review the relevant history and tour the farm.

When a premise is rated as highly contaminated, particular emphasis is placed on

1. assessing the disease transmission risk posed by each site or object that came into contact with the animals. High risk sites or objects include watering and feeding troughs, mineral feeding sites, and heavily used winter bedding or calving areas. Contaminated ground is excavated and buried, porous feeders and tubs are buried or burned, and
2. large metal objects (squeeze chutes) are disinfected with a 2% chlorine solution for a minimum of one hour. Certain small objects that come into intimate contact with animals, such as velveting equipment, balling guns, and tagging equipment are disposed of by deep burial. A detailed farm decontamination plan outlines all of the measures to be completed.

Of the 41 farms that have been depopulated to date, four have been designated as highly contaminated. Three of the four have already completed the decontamination and the remaining one is in the process of doing so.

The second reason for ADSU involvement is to review cases where the source of the disease is unexplained. There have been four instances of this sort. These investigations focus on reviewing the history of animal movement, the acquisitions and sales, how animals were grouped and managed on the farm, cow-calf relationships, and spatio-temporal relationships between positive animals. Unexplained or suspicious deaths in preceding years are closely reexamined. Much of this work is like searching for the proverbial needle in a haystack, and therefore all possible methods of introducing disease, no matter how extraordinary they might appear, are considered. These include the risk:

- of introduction by wildlife, or risk of spread to wildlife
- posed by animals that temporarily escape
- posed by nearby infected farms

- posed by sharing equipment
- posed by boarding or commingling animals from other farms
- posed by unrecorded animal movements, and
- posed by previously unrecognized cases that contaminated the environment.

These investigations are time consuming, often occupying 1-2 days of site visits and interviews with the owner, followed by 4-5 days of record analysis. Nevertheless, they offer golden opportunities to learn more about CWD transmission.

The single most helpful advance in this process over the last year has been the assessment of brain lesions to determine the stage of disease at depopulation (courtesy Dr Aru Balachandran, Nepean). Using this information, we can determine approximately how long an animal was infected before it was killed, and then construct a time line of disease infection, incubation, and expression for each positive case. In many instances, these time lines have illustrated that the period of infection coincides with another event, such as the death of an animal ascribed to other, but suspicious, circumstances.

Any unusual deaths in animals more than 18 months of age should be investigated. CWD causes central nervous system damage and elk will often shun or drive out animals that are not exhibiting normal behaviour. Our investigations particularly investigate deaths due to unusual circumstances, such as:

- a fractured neck from running into a fence
- fractured ribs from fighting
- pneumonia from aspiration and inability to swallow
- grain overload in a single animal, or
- a single animal that is thin, when the rest are in good body condition.

In many of these cases, we do not have the benefit of a necropsy examination for CWD. Until testing programs are universally applied, it will be difficult to rule out CWD as a differential diagnosis.

Although we cannot conclusively prove the source of the infection on each and every farm, CFIA's investigation success rate has been quite good. In all but two of the 41 depopulated farms, the source of infection has been linked, more or less, to animals from other infected premises. In the two remaining situations, wildlife vectors and recrudescant environmental contamination have been proposed as possible sources. In one case, the producer postulated that his animals became infected when ravens fed on infective material from nearby farms and then defecated in his grain feeders. In the other, an animal that died suspiciously a decade earlier could have contaminated a small water hole. While perhaps unlikely, these suggestions cannot be discounted out of hand and must remain on the list of possible explanations.

The principles of investigating a chronic, slowly progressive disease such as CWD are the same as those involving other infectious agents. Similar to diseases that cause acute epidemics, transmissible spongiform encephalopathies exhibit a disease outbreak pattern and an epidemic curve, but these are measured in months and years, rather than in days or weeks. And because clinical signs are often seen in only a handful of animals (often expressed in the single digit percentages), following up on each and every suspicious case is necessary.

Much remains to be learned about CWD. However, thorough investigation of field outbreaks has given us additional insight into the dynamics of disease transmission and has launched a formal survey of affected farms.

5. A CHEF'S PERSPECTIVE ON PROMOTING ELK MEAT

[John Berry is a food writer for the Edmonton Sun and owner of John Berry's Celebrity Kitchen. Here are some of John's views as expressed in a recent article in the Canadian Elk and Deer Farmer, Fall 2002]

I helped out at the Alberta Elk Commission and Alberta Wapiti Products Co-op booth at the Rocky Mountain Food and Wine Show held recently in Edmonton (Canada). I did two cooking demonstrations on the main cooking stage featuring Alberta Rancher Elk.

Once people taste rancher elk meat, they love it! Many are pleasantly surprised by its tenderness and wonderfully mild flavour.

The biggest concern is how to get people to try it in the wake of the Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) outbreak in the province. One animal out of 40,000 is hardly an outbreak. All of the meat is tested, so in a way it's a non-issue to some. But to some of the great unwashed public, it's still an issue. I had only three people out of several hundred turn up their noses at our offering, but I suppose that is to be expected. How can an uninformed public be expected to make an educated decision unless they know the facts?

I guess this is the next major hurdle that elk ranchers and the industry have to overcome. And fast! Turn the negative into a positive and market elk as a healthy, delicious and affordable alternative to beef and bison. Have you heard the bison commercials on Cool 880 (a local radio station) yet? Come on, guys – you're getting left in the dust.

You need to start building a good foundation for your meat industry. It's been a year since I got involved helping to promote elk meat. A year later you are no further ahead marketing the product or positioning yourself in the market place in the minds of the consumer. Elk what? I even had people at the show ask me where we shot it!

But I guess the bottom line to the show is that you (elk industry) were there. You had hundreds and hundreds of people trying a new product. Their reaction was, "Where can we buy it?"

So you're on the right track. But we have to pick and choose carefully where we go, and how we get our message out. Somebody please formulate that message and let's get going! "Elk meat – a delicious, nutritious health alternative to beef." Or to bison. Or whomever is your biggest competitor. But you need a slogan or phrase that can be splashed across the ads or on radio or TV. You don't even have to mention CWD, but you've got to get it going.

There's no reason why you can't be kicking the stuffing out of your competition right now. But you've got to get aggressive and be in people's faces (in a nice way). A year later is far too long to be spinning your tires.

6. INDUSTRY NEWS

Canadian delegation to Korea

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) went to Korea from November 25th to the 28th, 2002 (with the majority of the delegation leaving on the 27th). Serge Buy, Executive Director of the Canadian Cervid Council, was also in Korea from the 24th to the 28th as part of this delegation.

The CFIA met with the Korean Chief Veterinary Officer (Dr. Lee) on Monday the 25th and made an extensive presentation on the Canadian situation. Dr. Lee however replied that this was too early to start negotiations on the reopening of borders.

As CCC's Executive Director, and with embassy presence (Mr. Kim Jong-Hoon) and our own interpreter, we also met with Dr. Lee on Thursday the 28th to discuss the same issue with a similar result.

Further discussions with other Korean officials and industry groups lead to the following conclusions:

1. Korean officials are worried about negative publicity created as a result of the reopening of the border, and
2. Koreans in general mix BSE (mad-cow disease) and chronic wasting disease and believe that elk in Canada have "mad-cow disease."

Korean officials and industry groups understand Canada's position and respect the work by both the Canadian government and Canadian industry. They are worried, however, about a backlash from the public should the ban be lifted because the public does not understand the difference between CWD and BSE.

The Canadian Cervid Council is somewhat disappointed but realizes that this was going to be a difficult issue. But we now have a better understanding of the issues and are beginning to draft a strategy to address these issues and work strongly on the reopening of the borders.

Korea is an important market for our industry and will remain one for the foreseeable future. We will bring resources and work as hard as we can, as well as continue to make this a priority for the organization.

Our aim is to reintroduce Canadian elk and deer velvet antler to Koreans, with its natural appeal, quality and food safety component. Not only will we reopen the market at some point, but we will also promote our velvet as Canadian, develop a brand name and make our surveillance efforts and the programs in place part of the benefit of buying Canadian products.

EVA rheumatoid arthritis study

The University of Alberta (Canada) launched an in-depth study in January 2001 on the use of velvet antler in controlling symptoms in persons with rheumatoid arthritis.

This study was a follow-up to a pilot project completed in 1999. The pilot study found that velvet antler can be safely taken along with current rheumatoid arthritis medications. This pilot also found that the optimum dosage level was one gram (1,000 mg) per day.

Researchers applied the information from the pilot study to design a more comprehensive study involving 220 subjects. Half the patients will be taking one gram of velvet antler per day for six months and the other 110 patients will be taking one gram of placebo. Patients will be assessed throughout the study, using specific measurements outlined and accepted by the American College of Rheumatology.

The research team, led by Dr. Marion Allen, has recruited 110 people for the study. They are launching a publicity campaign to obtain the rest of the subjects they need.

Contributing to the economy

Statistics Canada completed the Canadian Farm Census as a special project in year 2000. From that Census, they have generated some statistics on the contribution of elk and deer farming to the economy in the Province of Alberta (Canada):

1. The average cervid farm in Alberta has invested over \$400,000 in capital expenditures.
2. The average farm size was 250 acres.
3. Total operating expenses (contributing to the economy) was \$42 million for these farms!

NADeFA Cervid Livestock Foundation Report

The entire farmed cervid industry is facing challenges which rival the “old days” – where you would have to walk four miles uphill to school - both ways.

There are plenty of topics to choose from – CWD, TB, meat inspection discrepancies, onerous interstate regulations, an uninformed public, and on and on. The interesting thing is that these, or similar conditions, have been with us for years in various forms. There is nothing new about young, new, innovative industries having to fight for the right to exist. Yet the ever-expanding role of government in our society, does add another layer of complexity and frustration to the cause.

The Cervid Livestock Foundation is experiencing difficult times as well. The investment community is nervous and our endowments reflect this. Our investments are down 20%. On the upside, we are continuing to fund programs for NADeFA. We now have an application for grants program up and running with committees which will respond to requests. We have received numerous requests and are working through the application process. As mentioned earlier this year in our Foundation report, patience is needed while we work through the process of educating and directing potential grant recipients. It is great to see the branches starting this process. We hope to see the trend continue.

NADeFA's web site is going through many exciting changes. We are continually adding national and state news to the web site in an attempt to keep you up to date on what is happening around the country.

Suzanne Folts is the Administrative Officer for the Foundation in the Appleton office. She has been a huge help in organizing and maintaining our program services and office business during a difficult location change and year in general.

The economy will improve, our endowment will increase, and our ability to fund cervid industry programs will enlarge. We will work through our budget constraints and continue to follow our charter in helping to improve the general condition of our industry.

The Foundation is organized exclusively for the educational, charitable and scientific purposes related to deer farming and its supporting industry. These include the following:

1. Educate the public regarding the nutritional and dietary benefits of venison and the environmental advantages of deer farming.
2. Collect, publish and disseminate scientific and technical information to the public relating to the farming and breeding of the cervidae species.
3. Conduct research and studies and disseminate data relating to the farming of cervidae, including animal health issues.
4. Conduct programs that may be suitable or necessary concerning public education in the area of deer farming and venison.

Peace,

Dr. Raleigh Buckmaster
Cervid Livestock Foundation, Chairperson
Phone: 920-734-0934

7. EVENTS CALENDAR

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

MINNESOTA ELK BREEDERS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL CONVENTION will be held on January 11, 2003 at the Holiday Inn at Mankato, MN. For more information, contact the MNEBA office at *mailto:info@mneba.org* or phone 320-543-3664.

ALBERTA ELK ASSOCIATION ANNUAL CONVENTION will be held Jan. 16-18, 2003 at Grande Prairie, Alberta Canada. Contact the AEA office for more information at *mailto:info@albertaelk.com* or visit their website at *http://www.albertaelk.com*

NORTH AMERICAN DEER FARMERS' ASSOCIATION (NADeFA) Annual Convention will be held on March 19-23, 2003 at Jefferson City, Missouri USA. For more information, contact NADeFA at *mailto:info@nadefa.org* or visit their web site at *http://www.nadefa.org*

SASKATCHEWAN WHITETAIL AND MULE DEER PRODUCERS ASSOCIATION will hold their annual convention on March 28 to 30, 2003 at the Travelodge in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada. For more information, contact *mailto:info@saskdeer.com* or visit their website at *http://www.saskdeer.com*

REINDEER OWNER'S & BREEDER'S ASSOCIATION 2003 ANNUAL MEETING will be held in Pendleton Oregon USA on June 20-22, 2003. For more information contact Carol at *mailto:roba_association@hotmail.com* or visit their web site at *http://www.reindeer.ws*

NORTH AMERICAN ELK BREEDERS ASSOCIATION (NAEBA) Convention and International Antler Competition will be held July 30 – August 3, 2003 at Kansas City, Missouri USA. Contact the NAEBA office at *mailto:info@naelk.org* or visit *http://www.naelk.org* for more information.

SECOND ANTLER SCIENCE AND PRODUCT TECHNOLOGY SYMPOSIUM will be held in February 25 to 27, 2004 in Queenstown, New Zealand. For more information contact Mark O'Connor at *mailto:mark.oconnor@nzgib.org.nz* or phone +64 4 473 4500.

***** A D *****

If you are thinking of starting a deer or elk farm, please visit the Deerfarmer Store located at *http://store.deerfarmer.com* There you will find model business plans that you can use to plan and finance your dream farm.

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9. 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:

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