

Welcome to the FEBRUARY 2000 edition of the Deer Farmers' Digest, a monthly electronic newsletter published by Deerfarmer.com - The Deer Farmers' Information Network. A copy of ALL the issues of this Digest can be found at <http://digest.deerfarmer.com>

Please feel free to forward the Deer Farmers' Digest to other interested people. To ADD or REMOVE your name from our mailing list, please see Subscription Services below.

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### 1. STATISTICS ABOUT YOU

Ever since my graduate studies at Boston University (a long time ago) my first love has been statistics and market research. Like the "Count" in the children's program "Sesame Street," I like to count things. So I took some time to do a little counting of the Deerfarmer.com database.

Our database consists of just over 600 names (and other information) on people in our confidential opt-in mailing list. The data was compiled from our Guest Book, Farm Directory and other public sources.

My counting showed that 69% of the people on our list are from the United States, 27% from Canada and 4% from other countries. Some 43% of our list said they were deer farmers. (This number may be low because we have only recently updated our Guest Book to ask this question.) The proportion of deer farmers is slightly higher in Canada, with 45% compared to 43% in the USA.

The largest proportion of people on our list were from the Canadian province of Alberta (17%) followed by 11% from the US State of Pennsylvania. Next came Texas (6%), Wisconsin (6%), Saskatchewan (5%), Michigan and Missouri (4% each), Illinois, Minnesota, New York and Ohio (3% each), and Arkansas, Florida, Indiana and Louisiana (2% each). The list contained registrants from many other provinces and states as well.

I believe the above list shows the "hot beds" of interest and greatest potentials for growth in white-tailed deer farming. These provinces and states already have established a "critical mass" of interest and farmers, and are poised for future growth. When planning your promotion and marketing activities, these are the provinces and states that I would target.

## 2. EFFECTIVE MARKETING THROUGH CLASSIFIEDS

On-line classified ads can be a very cost-effective way to market your deer products and services. Deerfarmer.com (and others) has a free classifieds section on their website (*ads.deerfarmer.com*). Our site statistics show that this is one of the most popular pages on Deerfarmer.com. Comments from people who have used our Classifieds also suggest that they are very effective.

However, most people are not using the Classifieds to full advantage. Here are some suggestions:

1. Include a phone number as well as an e-mail contact. Many people will want to call to ask questions or get more information. Also, a few people who see the ad may not have their own Internet accounts. In some cases, the e-mail address is typed wrong, and then there is no way anyone can get a hold of you.
2. Put your name in the ad. People like to deal with other people and putting a name to contact will encourage responses.
3. Put your farm name or brand name. You want to increase brand awareness and impress on people's unconscious minds your identity.
4. Put your state or province (and country for the geographically-challenged). This is necessary in deer farming because of the regulations affecting cross-border movement.
5. Provide adequate information – description of deer, numbers, prices and any other information to make the choice easier for the buyer. Some people want to provide as little information as possible in their ad. They want potential buyers to call them so they can give them the sales pitch. I do not agree with this approach because you are thinking of yourself rather making things easier for the buyer. You want your ad to screen out the “tire-kickers” and make it easy for serious buyers to do business with you.
6. Sneak in some competitive advantages if possible. Advertise regularly (but not too often so that you are perceived to be spamming).
7. Offer something free or near-free – an article on bottle-feeding fawns, a research report, a newsletter, a video, etc.
8. Research shows that the ad headline can greatly affect response rates. Think about writing a catchy headline that will attract notice.

Here are some other websites that have classified ad sections appropriate to selling or buying deer and related products:

Cybercervus – <http://www.cybercervus.com/classifieds/index.htm>

Deerstore – <http://www.deerstore.com>

RancherNet - [http://www.ranchernet.com/\\_Scripts/classifieds.asp](http://www.ranchernet.com/_Scripts/classifieds.asp)

Western Producer – <http://www.producer.com/classifieds/section/5757.html>

Aginonet – [http://www.aginonet.com/buy\\_sell/view.cgi](http://www.aginonet.com/buy_sell/view.cgi)

Farm Directory – <http://www.farmdirectory.com/classifieds.asp>  
Ropin' the Web – <http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/store/cattle.html>  
AgriAds – <http://www.agriads.com>  
Breeders Online – <http://www.breedersonline.com/classifieds/exotics.html>  
Exotic Classifieds – <http://exoticclassifieds.com>  
Alberta Deer – <http://albertadeer.com>  
Saskatchewan Deer – <http://saskdeer.com>  
Deer Actions On-line – <http://www.deerauction.com>

Some of the above may charge a fee to advertise. Before you pay, be sure to get data on traffic and target audience to ensure you are getting your money's worth. Always evaluate results (by asking people where they saw your ad) and stick with those sites that are most effective.

### **3. OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNING AND FUN**

Over the next few months, there will be several conferences, workshops and meetings held that will be of interest to experienced as well as to aspiring deer farmers. If possible, make a point of attending. You will not only learn a lot, but will make important contacts, and will have a lot of fun as well.

Here is our calendar:

TEXAS DEER ASSOCIATION REGION 8 MEETING. Saturday, Feb. 12, Covenant Ranch, Freerf, TX - 10:00 am. Contact Joe Lee at 956-763-4191.

TEXAS DEER ASSOCIATION REGION 5 MEETING. Monday, Feb. 21 at the Malouf Ranch in Wills Point, TX - 11:00 am. Contact Tom Malouf at 903-560-0066.

SASK. DIVERSIFICATION SEMINAR. Thursday, Feb. 24 at the SIAST Palliser Campus, 600 Sask. Drive W. Moose Jaw Sask. Stan Hall will be discussing "Whitetail Deer - The Saskatchewan Potential." For more information contact Dale Risula at (306) 694-3867.

SASK. DEER FARMING SEMINARS. Sponsored by Saskatchewan Ag & Food; to be held in North Battleford (Feb. 25) and Melfort (Feb. 26). For more information contact Rodney Boutin at (306) 825-0220 or Brent Mitchell at (306) 445-4147 or visit <http://www.saskdeer.com>

ONTARIO WHITE-TAILED DEER FARMING WORKSHOP. Saturday Feb. 26 in London Ontario (Ramada Inn 817 Exeter Rd). For more information contact Wayne Vanderwoude at (905) 692-4626 or e-mail [wvdwoude@icom.ca](mailto:wvdwoude@icom.ca)

NORTH AMERICAN DEER FARMERS ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE. March 1-4 in Oklahoma City OK. Contact NADeFA at [info@nadefa.org](mailto:info@nadefa.org) or phone (301) 459-7708.

SASK. WHITE-TAIL AND MULE DEER PRODUCERS ASSOCIATION CONVENTION. March 17-18 at the Delta Hotel in Regina Sask. Contact Lisa Schill at (306) 334-2202 or visit <http://www.saskdeer.com>

ALBERTA WHITE-TAIL AND MULE DEER ASSOCIATION CONVENTION. April 1-2 at the Capri Centre in Red Deer Alberta. For more information, visit <http://www.albertadeer.com> or phone (780) 672-5978.

EAST CENTRAL BRANCH OF NADeFA (WV, OH, PA, MD, DE) will hold its Spring Meeting on April 15 at Dream Mountain, Bruceton Mills, WV. All deer farmers and prospective deer farmers are invited to attend. You do not have to be a NADeFA member to join us. Contact Thelma Morgan at [tjdoe@aol.com](mailto:tjdoe@aol.com) for more information.

NADeFA SUMMER SEMINAR will be held on August 5, 2000 at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Indiana PA. Mark it on your calendar. For more information, contact Barbara Fox at [info@nadefa.org](mailto:info@nadefa.org)

For tips on how to survive deer conventions, see the following article.

#### **4. A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO DEER CONVENTIONS**

If you have never attended a deer conference or convention before, here are some tips from the more experienced and seasoned of us.

1. Check your tickets and destinations twice. Remember Regina is the capital city of Saskatchewan Canada, and is not in Nebraska.
2. Wear comfortable shoes and suitable clothing. We can have some pretty mean snowstorms here in Alberta and Saskatchewan in March and April. A tip for NADeFA Conference attendees: never, never leave your cowboy boots unattended!
3. Don't ask what is on the buffet unless you are prepared for the answer. Pack lots of antacid products for those surprises.
4. If a guy with the name of Len asks whether you need a squeeze, he's not getting fresh. He is just probably trying to sell you his very fine Deerhandler unit.
5. If you like to drink, leave your checkbook and credit cards in the hotel's safe. Otherwise you may wake up in the morning to discover that you have just bought half a dozen reindeer from some fellow from the Yukon. Bad enough you have to pick them up next week, and still worse, you live in Florida.
6. Trim all nose and ear hairs before you go. An itchy nose or ear could result in you bidding up or buying some expensive animals at the deer auction.
7. Study the content on [Deerfarmer.com](http://Deerfarmer.com), and learn some of the lingo. However, be sure you know what it means, e.g., CWD is Chronic Wasting Disease, not Constantly Whining Deerfarmers, B&C means Boone and Crockett, not Big and Curvy.
8. If you are looking for international recognition, sit at the banquet table with the greatest number of empty beverage containers. People will know you instantly at the next convention.

If you have any other tips, or good deer convention/conference stories, please let me know and I will publish them in future issues of this Digest.

## 5. NEW AT DEERFARMER.COM

If you haven't visited Deerfarmer.com for some time, check out our Photo Gallery (we've added some new pictures). The Classifieds Ads page is still the busiest - if you want to buy, sell or just see what the competition is doing, check it out. Our Discussion Forum has also been a great success - lots of questions and many answers. Thanks to all the deer farmers who have been willing to share their knowledge and experiences with the rest of us.

We continue to add several new deer farms to our Farm Directory almost every day. Along with the membership directories at <http://Saskdeer.com> and <http://Albertadeer.com> we must have most of the white-tailed deer farmers in North America. This is a very useful resource - please take advantage of it.

I have set up a new website - Deerfarmer.net - The Deer Farmers' Network - to complement Deerfarmer.com. Deerfarmer.net will host websites for individual deer farms that we have set up. Deerfarmer.com was getting too crowded and difficult to manage with all these individual farm webs.

Visit the two newest members of Deerfarmer.net - Rocking C Ranch in Saskatchewan ( <http://deerfarmer.net/RockingCRanch> ) and DSK Ranch in Oklahoma ( <http://deerfarmer.net/DSKRanch> ). In my opinion, the DSK Ranch site is an excellent example of how a deer farm website should be set up. This site has ALL the information you need to buy deer or get the services you need.

Our Chat session has been going on pretty regularly every Wednesday night at 7:30 MDT. If you want a chance to talk about deer farming, ask some questions, or get some free advice, please join us. (Set your alarm if you keep forgetting).

I will be doing a session at the NADeFA Conference in Oklahoma City on March 3. I'll be there for the entire conference, so I am looking forward to meeting many of you. In the March edition of the Digest, I will report on some of the things I learned (or least what I can remember) at the NADeFA Conference.

## 6. 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 [editor@deerfarmer.com](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 that can be found at <http://www.deerfarmer.com/forms/guest.htm>

As per 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!

## 7. CONTACT INFORMATION

**W**e are always looking for articles and news about deer farming that we can print in this newsletter. To suggest or submit articles, contact the editor as per below.

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

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