Deer & Elk Farmers'
Digest Newsletter

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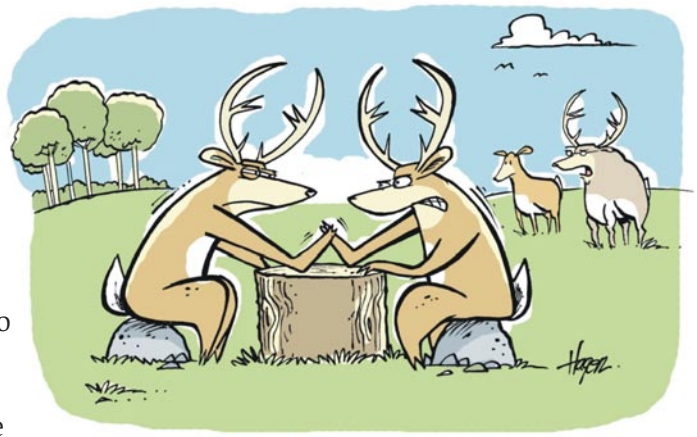
IN THIS ISSUE

LINE BREEDING VERSUS IN-BREEDING

Father to daughter is called "up-breeding" and son to mother is "back-breeding". This is true "in-breeding" with an understanding of heritable genetic traits. A person can do either up or back breeding to have the offspring show more dominant traits of the sire or dam depending on which heritable trait you want to breed for.



WIMPS! IN MY DAY, WE WOULD SETTLE THIS WITH A GOOD OLD-FASHIONED *HEAD BUTTING!*.

For example, say you have a buck sire that has a strong pedigree and you want to try to bring some of the grand and great grand dominant traits to the surface. You would up breed the sire to his daughter to have the offspring two-thirds dominant on the sire side. Just the same on the dam side, only breeding the son back to the mother.

The breeding together of brother and sister is in-breeding which preserves the bloodline from both sire and dam in equal proportions.

Lets slow down here a bit! Don't rush out and start in-breeding without an understanding of what you are trying to accomplish.

Although the doubling up and intensifying of characteristics by this method of breeding ensures results that are more probable then possible, and if continued long enough, is a certainty. However, it works the same for one trait as another, both good and bad. It affects all characteristics of the animals involved. That is why, unless a breeder knows a good individual when he sees one, or possesses the right stock to start with, in-breeding can bring disaster.

Selection of pedigree alone, without consideration being given to the physical traits of the mating pair, is the chief danger associated with in-breeding.

For example, say you have a buck that has some sort of inner organ or skeletal defect that doesn't really affect its life. By trying to intensify his antler characteristics, you are also intensifying the inner organ or skeletal defect as well (like hip dysphasia in dogs).

So this is one of the many reasons why you must use extreme caution in physical selection of the mating pair.

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ABOUT THE DIGEST

The *Deer & Elk Farmers' Digest* is a bi-monthly newsletter published for those interested in breeding and raising deer, elk and reindeer.

A copy of all past issues of the *Digest* can be found at *deer-digest.com* or *elk-digest.com*. Most of the articles are also posted in our Library at *deer-library.com* or *elk-library.com*.

Copies of the *Digest* are also available electronically and in print from the Library of Canada.

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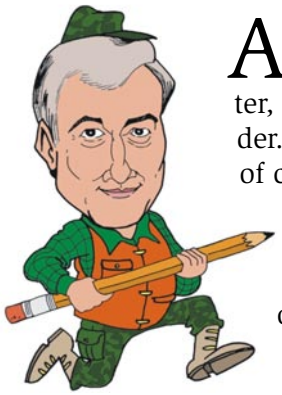
The *Digest* is published by:

Russell Sawchuk
Editor and Webmaster
Deer & Elk Farmers' Digest
Box 8220
Edmonton, Alberta
CANADA T6H 4P1

E-mail: *Editor@deerfarmer.com*
Phone: 800-267-9997 or 1-780-430-8245
Fax: 800-267-9993 or 1-780-434-0412
(Toll-free in USA and Canada)

EDITOR'S DESK



As we begin our sixth year of publishing the *Deer & Elk Farmers' Digest* newsletter, I decided that a visual upgrade was in order. The *Digest* has always been strong in terms of content, but the format, well, it was rather plain. Hopefully, readers will find this new look more attractive and inviting.

This issue contains our usual diversity of topics. We start by taking an in-depth look at line breeding and in-breeding, and the advantages and risks of using these approaches to producing that monster whitetail buck or bull elk.

Next, we discuss ways to protect your livestock from health threats. This article examines seven different ways to reduce risks to the health of your deer, elk and reindeer.

Deb Meyers gives us a short introductory lesson on how to go about starting a deer farm. As we are constantly getting inquiries on this topic, this is a timely article.

Making money from deer and elk farming is difficult at the best of times. Dan Marsh tells us how to at least save taxes from our farming ventures.

Finally, we have our usual Events Calendar and Industry News. We have also included other useful articles, cartoons and tips in this newly designed format.

I hope you continue to enjoy our *Digest* newletter. I would like to hear your comments or suggestions.

Russell Sawchuk, Editor

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If you wish to be removed from our mailing list at any time, send an e-mail to *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 *www.deerfarmer.com/html/guest.html*.

The *Digest* is also available in print format (ISSN 1499-1349). A $6 per issue ($36 per year) fee is applied to cover postage, paper, and handling costs. Subscriptions and back issues of the *Digest* can be ordered from the Editor.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN IN-BREEDING AND LINE BREEDING

Line breeding is the mating of animals that are closely related to the same ancestors, preferably one whose type it is desired to obtain in the resulting progeny. In other words, it is accomplished by using parents who are closely related to that ancestor, but are little, if at all, related to each other through any other ancestors. They are, in effect, bred in line to that common ancestor.

In-breeding implies a much closer relationship between the mating pair than does line breeding. Instead of involving second, third or more distant generations, it is generally understood that to have to do with only four relationships – son to mother, father to daughter, brother to sister, half brother to half sister (both having the same sire and different dams, or the same dam and different sires).

The DNA chain that determines what your newborn deer will develop into is built from a part of the mother's DNA chain and part of the father's DNA chain. When the egg develops within the mother, it contains 50% of the mother's DNA. Her DNA chain splits in half, and only half of it is deposited into the egg. Likewise, the father only donates 50% of his DNA into the sperm cell. When these two cells get together to form a fertilized egg or embryo, the two half chains of DNA are connected together to form a new whole DNA chain. This new chain contains the blueprint that will determine what this new baby will develop into given a proper nutrition and environment.

Now, here's the fun part. When the DNA chains split into either the egg or the sperm, they do not split in the same manner each time. In other words, the different sperm cells contain different bits of the DNA of the father. Likewise the mother's DNA does not split in the same manner with each individual egg. If the DNA chains split in the same exact manner each time, then all the offspring of a particular buck and doe would be exact copies of each other like identical twins. This explains why several children from the same parents who are similar in many ways, are still different in many others and each having it's own personality and physical characteristics. The individual DNA chains, split in different places for each child, although the DNA chains all came from the same parents.

If you desire to capture all of the available DNA of a particular animal into your breeding program, then you may need six or more offspring from this animal, to have a near complete DNA representation in your herd. In other words, if you AI a doe to "Bucky" and you have one fawn from this breeding. Then you have 50% of Bucky's DNA in your possession. But which 50%? It may well be the luck of the draw if you've gotten the DNA that will produce those wonderful antlers.

Couple this thought with the fact that the mother's DNA will represent 50% of the fawns antler development as well. It may just be the magic combination, or it may just be another deer. Who's to say that you didn't capture the DNA to produce "Bucky" type antlers, but perhaps the mother's DNA is dominant and doesn't allow the father's DNA to represent itself in the development of the offspring. It is a complex problem to understand.

Line breeding, or at least my thought of what line breeding is, is to breed a particular animal to it's own offspring to increase the amount of DNA that the animal will represent in the offspring. Pending how the DNA chains split on the breeding animals, line breeding increases the chances that you are going to get a copy of the animal that you breed back to in each phase of the line breeding process. Also pending how the DNA chains split you may get an increase in the desirable traits or an increase in the undesirable traits. So, even in line breeding, not all offspring will be another "Bucky". Some will be just deer

It's nearly impossible to get world class antlers from average deer.

Line Breeding verus In-Breeding (continued)

and others will even be culls. But, some of them will be the "Buckys" of the future.

The point is that line breeding certainly increases your odds of getting the animals that you're looking for. But, it's not a 100% guarantee. Still, it beats random breeding and hoping for the magic combination of DNA to produce the next monster deer. It also goes to show that the does used for breeding are just as important as the bucks. Keep records and cull the does that have poorly performing offspring, just as you would your bucks.

It's near impossible to get world class antlers from average deer. It is possible but not probable. It's hard to get chicken salad from chicken shit. Working a little line breeding into the best genetics will surely pay off in the desired goal.

Deer breeding might be good therapy for compulsive gamblers. But, it sure is nice when you're rolling all sevens.

WHY IN-BREED OR LINE BREED?

While it is important to understand that there are some differences in the selection of the mating pair when using the system of in-breeding and line breeding, it is of far greater value to know why these types of breeding are so often employed; why they are used by almost all successful breeders of any variety of livestock and what the results are likely to be, both good and bad. We shall pursue that subject now.

The purpose of both line breeding and in-breeding is to bring about breed improvement to get the best that is possible out of one's matings and to upgrade his stock. Experience has shown that if more than mere multiplication is to be had, and any real and lasting results toward breed improvement are to be obtained, a breeder must use a system of line-breeding, which not only combines animals very similar in their characteristics but narrows the pedigree to a few closely related lines of descent. This purifies the pedigree rapidly and enables a breeder to control, to some degree, all characteristics. It discourages variability and reduces it to a minimum.

ADVANTAGES

The results obtained by this system of breeding can more certainly be predicted than the average breeder realizes. Few indeed are the breeders who do more than mate a dam to a sire HOPING for results that there is no scientific reason to expect. When by good fortune one or two above average offspring do appear, they have nothing behind them upon which to base an expectation that they will pass on their desirable traits.

On the other hand, when such superior offspring are produced by line breeding, and improvement is shown, it is backed up by the most powerful hereditary influence obtainable because of the simplicity and strength of the ancestry. If the SELECTION of this ancestry has been good, the "pulls" are all in the same direction. The records of all breeds show the pronounced salutary results that have come from judicious line breeding.

DISADVANTAGES

Selection by pedigree alone, without consideration being given to the physical traits of the mating pair, is the chief danger in this system of breeding. The writer can state in the following few words the most important counsel to those who would attempt linebreeding. "Physical compensation is the foundation rock upon which all enduring worth must be built".

A line bred pedigree is valuable or dangerous in the exact proportions as the individuals that have been selected. Line breeding does not replace selection but, on the contrary, demands the most discriminating choosing within the line. If a breeder selects by pedigree, and without consideration to physical compensation, undoubtedly offspring with notable faults will result, and thus line breeding will

ensure quicker failure more certainly than will any other known system of breeding. No other breeding plan has ever brought about the good results of line breeding, and no other system will ever be so powerful in the production of consistently good animals, and this with the greatest certainty year after year.

The principal requirement is not to abandon individual selection. A pedigree is a guarantee of bloodlines, a record of the blood of ancestors within which breeding operations and selection may, with confidence, be confined.

In the breeding game, those who criticize the system of line breeding far outnumber its proponents. This is true for several reasons. There is a continual influx of beginners in breeding animals, people who have never before mated one animal to another, or made any study of the subject. They believe that mating two animals with "pedigrees", especially if both are winners or better yet, champions, is all there is to it. Then, there are a multitude of breeders who refuse to take the time to make any study of genetics, who want only to breed animals to sell and make money, and they have no interest in improvement through years of planned effort. Again, we have the many hit-or-miss breeders who hope for good luck which sometimes strike novices, who by sheer accident come up with a real "topper" or two. In listing the opponents of close-up breeding, one should not fail to mention owners of studs, hungry for stud fees.

A line bred pedigree is valuable or dangerous in the exact proportions as the individuals that have been selected.

IN-BREEDING

Because line breeding is more generally practiced then is in-breeding, we have dwelt more on the former so far. The difference in the degree of relationship of the mating pairs as generally accepted by the breeders was explained; however, it might be well now to go more fully into the subject of in-breeding.

This is 'breeding' in and in and is line breeding carried to it limits. It possesses all the advantages and disadvantages of line breeding to their utmost attainable degree. Breeding a daughter to her sire gives rise to

CHEAP MARKETING TRICKS

Here are ten things you can do to increase your sales of deer, elk and reindeer products and services. Most won't cost you anything, except a little time and effort.

1. Regularly advertise in *www.deer-ads.com*; provide complete information and post every month.

2. Be sure your deer, elk or reindeer farm is listed on *www.deer-farms.com*; provide adequate information about your farm or ranch, and keep your listing updated.

3. Network at our *www.deer-forums.com*; use your real name and impress our 5,000 monthly visitors with your intelligence and integrity.

4. Take pictures of your best whitetail bucks and bull elk; send your pictures along with relevant information to be posted on *www.deer-photos.com / www.elk-photos.com*. The photo gallery remains the most popular part of our websites at Deerfarmer.com.

5. If you have a website for a deer/elk farm or a hunting preserve, make sure that you are included in the Links section of *Deerfarmer.com*.

6. Joint your local or national deer/elk/reindeer association; take an active part in committees, executive and the board.

7. Write articles for the *Deer & Elk Farmers' Digest*; over 4,000 readers in some 30 countries will soon get to know you.

8. Do presentations and/or workshops at your local or national deer/elk conventions; it is a great way to make friends and meet potential new customers.

Line Breeding verus In-Breeding (continued)

offspring three-fourths of whose bloodlines are those of the sire, a practice which, if continued, would soon result in progeny with but one line of ancestry, practically eliminating the blood of the original dam. This form of breeding is practiced when it is desirable to secure all that is possible of the blood of the sire.

On the other hand, when a dam is bred to her son or sons successively, it increases the blood of the dam. This form is practiced when it is the dam's bloodline one wants to preserve and intensify. Either system can, of course, be approximated by the use of granddaughter or grandson.

The breeding together of brother and sister is in-breeding which preserves the bloodlines from both sire and dam in equal proportions. It is inferior to either of the others as a means of strengthening previously existing bloodlines, but it is freely employed when the combination of the sire and dam (of the brother and sister) has proven exceptionally successful.

It has all the dangers of the other two types of in-breeding, and in a greater degree because we have no knowledge of what the combination will produce, whereas in strengthening the proportion of one line of ancestry over another, whether it be that of the sire or dam, we are dealing with previously existing bloodlines KNOWN to be harmonious.

ADVANTAGES OF IN-BREEDING

As previously stated, it is line breeding earned to its highest degree. When superior animals are used, it is the most powerful and sure way known of making the most of their excellence and perpetuating it. It is the method by which the highest possible percentage of the blood of an exceptional animal, or of a particularly fortunate "nick", can be kept, fused into, and finally made to influence an entire line of descent.

If continued, the outside blood disappears and the pedigree is quickly loaded to an almost unlimited extent by blood of a single animal, or two at the most. In practice it is usually that of the sire. In-breeding is not so much a matter of originating excellence as of holding and making the greatest use of it when it appears.

A large proportion of prepotent sires have been in-bred or at least closely linebred. An in-bred animal is, of course, enormously more prepotent then one who has outcross breeding. Its half of the ancestry having a great deal of identical blood is almost certain to dominate the offspring when mated to one of the opposite sex having an "open" pedigree. (An "open" pedigree is one which there does not appear the name of any one animal more then once in perhaps several generations.)

In-breeding is therefore recognized as the most influential of all breeding plans or systems, supplying the simplest of all pedigree's – an advantage when we recognize the laws of inheritance. It is all that line breeding is and more. When using either system it must again be cautioned that careful SELECTION must continually be made, both as to physical compensation and vigor and fertility. In conclusion on the matter of the advantages of in-breeding, I will repeat – no other method of breeding equals this for intensifying bloodlines, making the best use of exceptional individuals.

DISADVANTAGES OF IN-BREEDING

Although the doubling up and intensifying of characteristics by this method of breeding insures results that are more probable the possible and, if continued long enough, is a certainty. It works the same for one trait as another, both good and bad. It affects all characteristics of the animals involved. That is why, unless a breeder knows a good individual when he sees one, or possesses the right stock to start with, in-breeding can bring disaster. On the other hand, when opposite is true, the most strikingly successful results can be obtained. Examples of success are

many, but so can one name many failures amongst those who have dropped out of the game.

IN-BREEDING NOT NECESSARILY DISASTROUS

Undeniably, no form of breeding has so many who decry it, most of them entirely ignorant on the subject. They claim it causes lack of vigor, size and fertility, and a multitude of such instances could certainly be listed. However, if what has been written here, and been proven by innumerable tests and examples, has any meaning at all, it is that ANY characteristic can be bred up or down, strengthened or weakened, by this method of breeding. Some of what we know about the results of in-breeding in animals comes from the scattered and irregularly reported experiences of breeders.

There is also the question of whether one hears of the usual effects of such breeding or only of the exceptionally bad ones. Anything undesirable, which does not appear, is apt to be blamed on in-breeding, in spite of the fact that equally bad results often occur when no in-breeding has been done. There is usually no way of making comparisons, that is, with non-inbred animals kept under the same conditions, fed and reared in the same way.

Since it is universally agreed by all breeders and geneticists that ANY characteristic can be bred up or down, strengthened or weakened, by in-breeding (providing rigid selection is followed), why then this claim that it will bring about a loss of size, vigor and fertility? Are there some inherent traits, which come from close breeding, or is it merely that lack of vigor and fertility are commonly possessed characteristics and frequently show up?

Many think it is the latter. There are so many examples of great vigor and fertility in in-bred individuals, and of family lines, and even in whole species of plants and animals, as to obviate all fear of inevitable weaknesses from close breeding, but it doesn't take much investigation to indicate to us that there is lurking weakness and infertility everywhere.

It is particularly evident in humans and in domesticated animals. A large number of animals, and an apparently larger number of plants, are relatively weak and easily succumb to disease. In nature the strongest live and beget offspring, whereas the weaklings die. In breeding animals we are liable to select largely for show or utility type, yes, even for color, ignoring, or trusting to luck, as to vigor and fertility. Is it any wonder then that these traits have crept upon us until they often present a strong argument against in-breeding, although they also appear amongst entirely outcross-bred animals?

When we SELECT for vigor and fertility, as well as for other attributes, there will be less talk about the evils of in-breeding. In the meantime we shall hear about it mostly where vitality and fertility were low in the stock in-bred upon. Because both of these are requisites – one to ensure life and the other for reproduction – they should be possessed in a high degree by the animals one intends to inbreed upon.

Selection, selection, selection is the #1 rule to follow when in-breeding.

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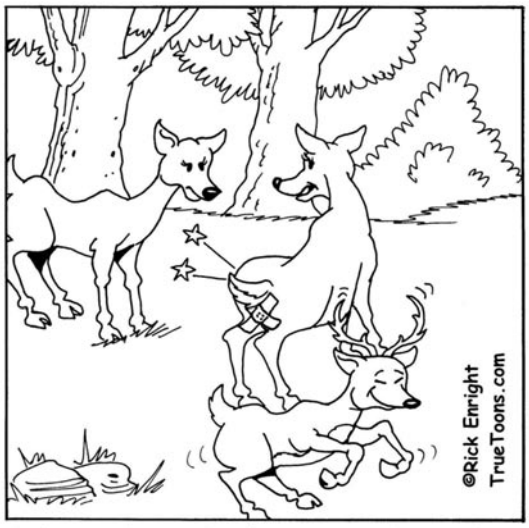


"If you ask me, they're carrying this early-antler development thing way too far!"

Line Breeding verus In-Breeding (continued)

I'm not saying in-breeding is the answer, or a practice that everyone must do to grow a monster buck. I'm trying to learn myself as to the pros and cons of in-breeding. What I have found in my endeavor is that there is some in-breeding going on and some impressive deer that are, in fact, the result of it.

I'm happy you are looking into this method of breeding; it gives a second view to the subject. I too, am limited in my comprehension of scientific writings and find myself struggling to make sense of the whole system of in-breeding. I hope we all can work together and work out the pro's and con's to determine and understand if in-breeding is a worthwhile tool to use with breeding deer.

Like I said in the beginning, I stumbled across what I think is in-breeding to increase milk production in dairy cattle. I have no clue as to what the effects of in-breeding will have on deer, although, I have found quite a few pedigrees of deer that indicate "good results" are obtainable with in-breeding deer.

My opinion thus far is, in-breeding can be the most powerful breeding tool a breeder can possess and the most destructive in the same degree if not carefully planned and physical compensation considered.

Here is an example of what I think can be obtained through in-breeding. Say you have a doe that took you 2 years to complete her pedigree and verify her background. Upon your piecing together her pedigree, you find that this doe is a 3rd generation sister to the BIGGEST and baddest SIRE on the planet. Now knowing you have a genetic piece of the pie that has made this MONSTER buck, one could, theoretically speaking, in-breed upon this doe to make her offspring more likely to pass on the desirable traits of her brother, MR. MONSTER BUCK.

Now here's the ethical question, with consideration being given to physical compensation and the fertility and vigor verified of the doe and it is safe to assume that the in-breeding on this doe will have minimal undesirable traits being brought to the surface, what would you do? In-breed to possibly unlock a "nick" with outstanding results or play it safe and elect not to in-breed, even though all the pulls are in the direction of NOT jeopardizing physical compensation and NO likely fertility and vigor problems are noted in the ancestors. Which way would you elect to go?

We know (common sense) that all breed of dogs originated from one type of dog, right? Even the poodle or the lab you call your family pet/member. In/line breeding has been done for thousands of years on dogs and cattle; the proof is all the different strains or breeds we now have. So one can assume that with all the different types of dogs and cattle that the ill-effects of in-breeding has become a reaper to in-breeding and has most of the BAD traits brought to the surface.

Deer have been privately held for such a short time that it would take hundreds of years for any ill effects of CLOSE breeding to be noticeable. On the other hand, if we take what was learned by the breeds of animals that are in fact a product of in/line breeding and learn what to avoid in in/line breeding deer, I think the BAD traits can and will be controlled to a much better degree then our forebreeders were able to do.

When talking about strains and controllable traits, one would have to better define what they could be in deer. Lets start with the obvious, TYPICAL and NON-TYPICAL. In a sense these could be defined as two (2) strains within the deer breed. Let's not forget to mention the pied and albino strains as well. Now how about controllable traits? Well, I suppose a typical 5x5 main frame could be a controllable trait in all the strains mentioned above.

From everything I have been reading, it has stressed the need for accurate record keeping and planning as far out as 4 -8 years when using this type of breed-

ing. This type of breeding is NOT for the folks that are looking for a quick dollar. It is for the HARDCORE BREEDER that has committed his/her life to breeding animals. More damage is done to a breed by the breeders that jump on the wagon and ride for a few years and then just jump off with NO regards to the program they started. This is the number one reason why BAD traits, fertility and vigor are affected in breeding with this system.

HYBRIDS

After talking about hybrids, I feel I need to explain hybrids a bit more so there is NO confusion between in/line breeding and hybrids.

Hybrids are the offspring resulting of breeding two different species, e.g., donkey and a horse where the offspring is a hybrid known as a mule. When breeding whitetails to mule deer, the offspring will be hybrids. Breeding a whitetail to a whitetail will not produce a hybrid from what I understand.

The inter-breeding of related animals, generation after generation, increases the probability that the offspring inherits identical genes, over and over again. This may result in an individual with a smaller variety of different genes in it's makeup. This in turn leads to the immune system becoming less effective. Animals can only produce antibodies with the genes they have, the smaller the number of different genes, the smaller the number of different antibodies produced.

The ability of an animal to generate antibodies is drastically reduced if it loses its genetic diversity, in other words, comes from a small gene pool. There may be greater proneness to illness, with longer recovery times. Offspring may be smaller, lethargic, with poor growth, or stillborn. Reproductive performance may be compromised.

So, if my understanding is correct, it's that in-breeding (father-to-daughter, mother-to-son, brother-to sister) year after year without supplying fresh "blood" is usually the cause of loss of vigor and fertility. Keep in mind that in-breeding is defined as close relationships, father-to daughter, son-to-mother, brother-to-sister and line breeding is defined as breeding of relation two or more generations apart, uncle-to-niece, aunt-to-nephew, grandparent-to-grandchild on either the dam or sire side.

In-breeding year after year without supplying fresh "blood" is usually the cause of loss of vigor and fertility.

By John Swank with assistance from Lloyd Brackett and others. This article was compiled from postings on the Deer & Elk Farmers' Discussion Forums.

LYNN'S DEER MEAT LOAF

- 2 pounds ground deer meat with added fat
- 1 large onion diced
- 2 green onions diced
- 1 large carrot peeled and shredded
- 1 large potato peeled and grated
- 1 cup hard or day old bread cubes
- fresh ground pepper 1/2 teaspoon
- 1 teaspoon seasoned salt
- 1 finger of diced celery
- 3 cloves fresh garlic diced fine
- a few shakes of Worchestershire sauce
- 1/4 cup Ketchup or chilli sauce
- 1 egg
- 1/4 cup water

In a large bowl pour in the ketchup or chilli sauce with the Worchestershire sauce, all the spices, egg , green and white onion and celery, bread, and water.

Mix together well with a fork. Add the ground deer meat to the bowl and mix well.

Add the grated carrot and potato and get the hands in and mix well.

Spray a large loaf pan with non stick spray.

Add the meat loaf to the pan and cover. Bake at 350 F in the oven for 45 minutes. Uncover and continue to cook until meat thermometer reads beef medium done (about another 20 minutes) or until a fork inserted in the meat loaf leaves no red liquid or clear liquid.

Remove from oven and let sit covered for 10 minutes. Remove from the baking pan. Slice and serve.

This makes a very hearty meat loaf and any leftovers make excellent sandwiches the next day.

Lynn Bihun
Wembley, Alberta Canada

PROTECTING THE HEALTH OF YOUR LIVESTOCK

Texas state veterinarian Bob Hillman offers a list of health resolutions for livestock and poultry producers that can be adopted anytime:

1. Fence out disease
2. Never settle for "almost" in disease eradication
3. Volunteer your herd for a cattle tuberculosis (TB) test
4. Control flies and ticks
5. Maintain a good relationship with your private veterinary practitioner
6. Don't stall; call to report unusual signs of disease or pests in livestock
7. Register for a new "address."

"Herd and flock health can be enhanced, usually easier – and more successfully – than trying to lose a few pounds," said Dr. Hillman, head of the Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC), the state's livestock and poultry health regulatory agency. "Disease prevention is cheaper and more beneficial than disease eradication, and even though exotic and foreign animal diseases get the biggest headlines, domestic disease outbreaks also can wreak havoc for producers. Outbreaks result in quarantines, widespread testing requirements and loss of credibility and marketing opportunities for our livestock and livestock products. One way to protect your herd or flock: fence out disease."

"Now, more than ever, it's important to maintain barriers to keep feral – or wild – swine out of domestic swine pens. From experience, we know many feral hogs carry and can transmit pseudorabies, a flu-like viral swine disease that can kill piglets and make older swine sick," said Dr. Hillman. "In late 2004, after years of eradication efforts, the country's commercial swine herds were declared free of pseudorabies. If feral swine spread disease to commercial swine, it would jeopardize our free status and our ability to ship swine without tests or restrictions."

Dr. Hillman said the 12 governor-appointed TAHC commissioners have proposed changes to Texas swine regulations to comply with updated U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) rules. The proposals include redefining swine as being in one of three types of herds: "feral," or wild swine; "transitional herds" at risk of being exposed to feral or captured feral swine; and "commercial herds," that are continuously managed and in facilities that protect against commingling with wild swine.

In 2004, for instance, eight transitional swine herds in the U.S. contracted the disease from wild swine. The proposals also would require breeding swine sold or sent to slaughter to be identified to the farm or origin, and sexually intact swine six months or older would have blood samples collected for pseudorabies and swine brucellosis testing whenever they pass through a livestock market.

"Swine brucellosis is another disease present in feral swine that can be spread to commercial swine herds," remarked Dr. Hillman. "Although we have no current infection, Texas is the only state that does not have the swine brucellosis-free designation. It is extremely important that we also finish this swine disease eradication program to maintain our credibility with our trading partners."

"One infected herd or flock makes all the difference between 'close' and finished, and disease can be reintroduced, or spread silently," said Dr. Hillman. "All states are free of cattle brucellosis, except Texas and Wyoming. While we have never been gained 'free' status for cattle brucellosis eradication, Wyoming held this coveted ranking for nearly 20 years before two infected cattle herds were detected adjacent to a feeding ground for free-ranging elk. Many elk on the feeding ground also were

infected, leading epidemiologists to believe the elk spread the disease; another reason to keep wildlife apart from livestock."

"In the 1950s, cattle brucellosis affected more than 20,000 Texas herds, causing cows to abort, deliver weak calves and produce less milk. In recent years, we see few signs of the disease, and oftentimes, only one or two infected animals are detected within a herd. However, the disease is still present in Texas. In early January 2005, a cattle herd north of Jacksboro, in Clay County, was found to be infected with brucellosis. This was only four months after an infected herd was found in Leon County. So, what can you do to protect your cattle?"

"Consider having your heifers vaccinated with the RB-51 vaccine, which provides cows with lifelong protection against brucellosis but doesn't create confusion on blood tests," he suggested. "At the livestock market, breeding cattle 18 months or older are routinely tested for brucellosis; remember that this requirement also extends to private treaty sales, unless cattle originate from a certified, brucellosis-free herd that's tested yearly. Hauling new cattle home? Isolate them or 30 days and consider having them retested for brucellosis prior to joining the herd."

"Herd tests assure owners – and our trading partners – that disease hasn't been introduced or hasn't spread among herds," he said. "Right now, 2,000 beef herd owners need to volunteer their animals for a cattle tuberculosis (TB) test, to help the state regain its TB-free status, lost in 2002. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has granted an extension for paying private veterinary practitioners to conduct the testing," said Dr. Hillman.

"The beef and dairy industry partnered on a plan for regaining the USDA's TB-free status recognition and freedom to move breeding cattle without TB tests," he said. "A major aspect of the plan involved TB testing all Texas dairies and approximately 2,400 purebred or beef breeding herds."

"In 2004, the dairy industry fulfilled its testing obligation. One infected dairy, in Mills County, was found and depopulated. Texas still needs about 2,000 beef herd tests, as only 458 herds have been tested so far. Of these herds, all were negative for cattle TB. Every herd test counts, as this obligation is fulfilled to assure the USDA and our trading partners of adequate disease surveillance," he said.

"Texas and the U.S., on the other hand, are on schedule to meet the objective for testing cattle for bovine spongiform encephalopathy, or BSE," commented Dr. Hillman. "Since June 2004, more than 180,000 cattle in the U.S. have been tested, with more than 17,000 tested in Texas. All test results have been negative. Nationally, the objective is to test as many as 268,500 cattle by December 2005, with as many as 23,000 of those in Texas. Statistically, this intensive testing will allow us to determine if BSE exists in the U.S., and if it does, at what level. After December 2005, the testing will continue, but at a lower level."

Dr. Hillman explained that cattle targeted for BSE testing include those that fail the pre-slaughter inspection at the processing plant; cattle that can not rise or walk normally; animals that exhibit signs of a central nervous system disorder, such as stumbling; or cattle that are emaciated or injured. Cattle of any age that die of unknown causes also are being tested. "If producers have cattle on their farm or ranch that meet these criteria, they should call the USDA's toll-free at 1-866–536–7593. Arrangements will be made to properly sample and dispose of the animal, without cost to the producer," he noted.

"A good relationship with your private veterinary practitioner also is crucial to maintaining healthy livestock," said Dr. Hillman. "Consult your private veterinary practitioner about having equine animals vaccinated against West Nile Virus (WNV), a "sleeping sickness" carried by birds and transmitted by infected mosquitoes." WNV disease was first detected in the U.S.

Disease prevention is cheaper and more beneficial than disease eradication.

Protecting the Health of Your Livestock (continued)

on the East Coast in 1999, and by 2002, the disease spread to Texas. Two WNV vaccines are available, and he credited vaccination and mosquito control for the decrease in Texas equine cases from nearly 1,700 in 2002, to 123 cases in 2004.

Dr. Hillman also urged owners to have equine animals vaccinated against other "sleeping sicknesses," including Eastern and Western Equine Encephalitis (EEE and WEE). Besides controlling mosquitoes, flies and other insects, he advised owners also to maintain fresh water supplies and to clean stalls regularly to reduce breeding grounds for mosquitoes and flies.

"If you're selling your horse, or hauling it to shows, rodeos, trail rides or other assemblies, including breeding farms or stables, remember to have the animal tested for Equine Infectious Anemia (EIA) every 12 months."

Dr. Hillman explained that there is no vaccine, treatment or cure for EIA, which is transmitted by blood-to-blood contact from infected to 'clean' equine animals. Biting flies are most often the culprits in the disease cycle, because horse flies and deer flies have large mouthparts and carry and transmit small amounts of blood from one animal to another. EIA prevention includes isolating or euthanizing infected horses, and controlling flies.

"While some infected horses will become very sick, others may exhibit no signs of disease, yet carry the virus and pose a danger to 'clean' horses," said Dr. Hillman. To protect horses, TAHC regulations require a negative EIA test within the previous 12 months before horse are sold or hauled to events. An accredited private veterinary practitioner must draw a small blood sample from the animal. The test is then run at one of the more than 60 USDA approved laboratories in Texas.

"TAHC regulations require the EIA-infected animals to be euthanized, shipped to slaughter or a research facility, or be maintained in isolation, away from other horses," he said. "Increased testing and strict requirements for the disposition of infected animals have paid off in reducing the number of EIA cases." More than 259,000 equine animals in Texas were tested in 2004, and 82 infected animals were detected. This is a dramatic decrease from 1997, when 750 infected animals were found."

"Texas experienced an outbreak of vesicular stomatitis or VS in 2004. This blistering disease, on first glance, looks like foot-and-mouth disease (FMD), a highly contagious and dangerous foreign animal disease," commented Dr. Hillman. "Both VS and FMD cause excessive slobbering, and blisters and sores in and around an animal's mouth, above the hooves and on teats. That's why it is so important to have laboratory tests run to determine the cause of illness if cattle, pigs, sheep, or goats exhibit blistering. VS, unlike FMD, also will affect horses."

"Texas' VS outbreak was limited to 15 premises in eight counties and ended in mid-October. In Colorado, however, the outbreak has continued into the winter, with livestock quarantined on more than 100 premises in Colorado," commented Dr. Hillman. He explained that livestock are quarantined to their premises until 30 days after all lesions on affected livestock heal, a process that takes a minimum of two or three weeks. During that time, he said affected animals should receive supportive care, to prevent infection in open sores.

"Resolve to stay alert and report unusual signs of disease or pests. This protects not only your own herd or flock, but all Texas livestock," he said. Signs to be concerned about include widespread illness or unexpected death losses in herds or flocks. Make reports if animals develop blistering, staggering, or have unusual maggots or ticks.

"Along the Rio Grande, fever ticks have infested livestock on nearly a dozen premises outside the permanent "fever tick quarantine zone," worrying the livestock and regulatory community. Fever ticks

have the capability of carrying and transmitting the deadly blood parasite Babesia begemina that destroys the red blood cells of cattle. Known as 'Texas Fever,' this tick-borne illness of cattle was the prime impetus for the TAHC to be created in 1893 as the Livestock Sanitary Commission."

Dr. Hillman explained that fever ticks were eradicated from the U.S. in 1943, but still are present in areas of Mexico. The narrow "permanent quarantine zone" along the Rio Grande in Texas is patrolled by about 60 USDA "tick riders" on horseback, who apprehend stray livestock crossing the Rio Grande, and inspect, dip or spray them to kill ticks.

Owners can reclaim their stock for the cost of the feed bill. USDA tick riders also inspect, treat and issue permits for livestock to be moved from ranches that lie within the permanent quarantine zone, and also ensure that ticks are eradicated on infested premises.

"TAHC field personnel also are trained to collect and identify ticks, as there is always a chance that fever ticks could be carried northward, or other dangerous foreign ticks could be introduced from other parts of the world," he said. "Tick and maggot collection kits also are available at no charge to producers, so these pests can be sent to the State-Federal Laboratory for identification."

Dr. Hillman stressed that successful disease or pest eradication is a 'two-step' effort. The first step: detect and clean up an infected or infested herd or flock. The second step: track animals that have been moved from the herd or flock, to determine if they spread the disease or pest to new sites.

"Tracking livestock movement always has been the most frustrating aspect of disease eradication. In late 2004, premises identification was offered to Texas herd and flock owners, and it is the groundwork for implementing the National Animal Identification System (NAIS) in Texas," said Dr. Hillman. The premises identification is a numerical version of an address, and so far, nearly 300 have been issued to producers and are being maintained on a confidential database. Producers are encouraged to register online at the TAHC website at *www.tahc.state.tx.us*. Persons without computer access should call the TAHC at 1-800-550-8242, ext. 733, for a registration form that can be completed and mailed.

Eventually, as NAIS is fully implemented, animals being moved from their farm or ranch of birth will receive an individually numbered radio frequency ear tag, implantable ID device or a group number, depending on their species, explained Dr. Hillman. When animals are moved from their herd of origin, or "home place," their personal number will be linked to the sites where they live or are commingled with other animals, including ranches, livestock markets, other facilities, and finally, the slaughter plant.

Computerized "footprints" will give animal health regulatory personnel a "head start" in tracking diseased animals and which herds or flocks may have been exposed. "Ideally, it could take minutes, instead of months, to determine where animals have been moved. And, the sooner a disease outbreak is eradicated, the sooner producers can return to normal business," he said.

"It doesn't matter which species or how many head of livestock or poultry you own," said Dr. Hillman. "Resolve to keep disease out, control pests, stay alert and report unusual signs of disease. Stay in touch with your private veterinary practitioner and you'll have met important resolutions this year, and every year. These could be your most cost-effective and beneficial livestock and flock management decisions."

From a Texas Animal Health Commission news release.

Successful disease or pest eradication is a 'two-step' effort. The first step: detect and clean up an infected or infested herd or flock. The second step: track animals that have been moved from the herd or flock, to determine if they spread the disease or pest to new sites.

STARTING A DEER FARM

Deer farming in Wisconsin is a growing industry. The first deer farm license was issued in 1940. At the end of 2003, Wisconsin had 487 whitetail deer farms.

Raising whitetail deer is a passion to most of us and to some of us it's a job. This is an industry to consider. Whether you raise these wonderful animals for the pure pleasure of having them around to enjoy as a hobby or raising them for the challenge of producing that first 200 inch buck on your farm, it's an adventure. Never think that you know all you need to know. You will learn something new about these magnificent animals on a daily basis. They are full of surprises!

Not just for men! You would be surprised how many women take an active role in deer farming. They are involved in every aspect and take it seriously. You think the men can talk up a storm about deer, just get one of these gals going and you're in for a treat! And let's not forget the kids! They come in real handy when it's time to feed the fawns. Deer farming can be a bonding experience for the whole family.

If you ask deer farmers what their favorite time of the year would be, you would get mixed answers. For some of them, it would be the anticipation of the birth of the fawns. No one can resist a newborn fawn with it's spotted coat and big eyes. Another favorite time of the year would no doubt be watching the bucks' antlers grow, trying to figure out which one will be the "monster" of the year!

YOUR ANIMALS ARE WHAT YOU MAKE THEM

Some farmers prefer to bottle feed their fawns rather than leave them with their mothers. Why? You need to think of a deer as a high strung race horse at some point. They are always on alert and ready to run at the drop of a hat. A tame deer may jump a little and run a few yards, but 9 times out of 10 will turn around to try to figure out what just went on. Tame deer are easier to work with and more enjoyable. Most farmers have names for their deer. They can look at them and tell you in a heartbeat who they are.

Whitetail deer each have their own personalities. You will especially notice this in the tame deer. Some farmers prefer not to bottle feed. This may be a time issue or just a preference that they have. It's your choice. Deer that are not bottle fed are usually not as easy to control. Some farmers will bottle feed buck fawns, but most will not. Once a buck is bottle fed, it is said that the fear of humans, that is built into any wild animal, is gone. Once rut arrives, special precautions need to be taken with these animals.

What type of market is there in this industry?

- Breeders
- Hunting ranches
- Selling deer to others farms to enhance their genetics
- Semen
- Meat and food
- Antlers
- Urine.

As you can see there are various ways to market your animals. It's up to you!

WHO REGULATES DEER FARMERS?

Currently, all whitetail farms in Wisconsin are regulated by the Dept. of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP). The Dept. of Natural Resources (DNR) regulates the fencing.

WHAT ABOUT CWD?

Most deer farms are on a monitoring program through DATCP. When an animal that is 16 months or older dies, it is tested for CWD. There have been 8600 CWD samples taken from farm raised cervids since 1997 in the State of Wisconsin. Of these 8600 samples, 19 have tested positive as of October 15, 2004.

Some of the positives have been linked back to the wild herd. Our industry continues to rack up numbers proving that we are not the problem. Some 550 herds are enrolled in the monitoring program. To date, it has not been determined how this disease is passed from animal to animal, if this is in fact how it is transmitted. It has also not been proven where CWD came from and very well may never be. Remember, facts are what you need to listen for, not hearsay and speculation.

WHAT DO I FEED THEM?

Some farms have their own "recipes" and some feed corn. Straight corn is not recommended however, as it may cause health problems. Deer need fiber, which they get from browsing, so they need hay if browse is unavailable. There are numerous feed distributors out there that sell feed that is pre-mixed and bagged. It's all up to you and it's part of the trial and error process. What ever works for you! Oh, deer love treats! On a side note, deer are unlike cattle and horses that eat constantly. A whitetail deer's metabolism changes as winter comes and they slow their eating patterns down quite a bit for the winter. This is nice break for the pocketbook if you have a big herd!

HOW MUCH LAND DO I NEED TO START AND HOW HIGH MUST THE FENCE BE?

Currently, a half an acre is the minimum allowed and the fence needs to be 8 ft high. If starting out small and your deer are tame, this will work just fine. If you choose not to have tamer deer, you should be thinking about a larger pen. Deer that are not tame need their "space". They don't like to be crowded.

HOW MUCH DOES THE FENCE COST?

This is where you need to do your homework! Again, it's all up to you! As far as fence, there are distributors out there who will sell at a discounted price if you purchase a certain number of rolls. The more rolls you buy, the less you pay. The total cost to install the fence will run around $3.50(e) per foot. (Materials run about $2.00(e) per foot and the labor is about $1.50(e) per foot.)

This is only an estimate and will vary between fence companies, so it's only meant to be a rough estimate. Wood posts or T- Posts? Ask around at your farm supply store where to find these or talk to other farmers. Sometimes, you may run across a farmer who is selling used fence and this should be at a much reduced price. Now the best part of all, the DEER!

WHAT WILL MY DEER COST?

The sky's the limit! Your herd will be what you make it! Price will be determined on what you want your herd to be. Maybe you just can't wait to grow your own first 200 class buck and want to start out with top end genetics to try to accomplish this. This is fine, but be prepared, top end deer demand top price. Maybe you want to do it the old fashioned way and "grow" your own. This option is more affordable to most, but again, it's all about what you want to do. Not all farmers can afford the

A whitetail deer's metabolism changes as winter comes and they slow their eating patterns down quite a bit for the winter. This is nice break for the pocketbook if you have a big herd!

Starting a Deer Farm
(continued)

top end deer and buy what they can afford. You will then need to "build" your herd's genetics up to where you want to be (another whole subject). Perhaps you just want a couple of deer on your property to enjoy! (Definitely nothing wrong with this). They can be very relaxing to be around.

HOW DO I FIND THE DEER I WANT TO BUY?

By looking on the Whitetails of Wisconsin (WOW) website – *www.wisconsinwhitetails.org* – under members. This area of the website offers a listing of deer farmers who are members of WOW and have deer for sale. Many of them have email addresses and most have a phone numbers.

If you have more questions, contact the author.

By Deb Myers, a Wisconsin whitetail deer farmer and a member of the Whitetails of Wisconsin Association (WOW). Email your questions to Deb at dusty@maqs.net

STERLIZING NEEDLES AND SYRINGES

Avoiding infection is critical to any vaccination program. Infections causing lesions can result in poor gains, increased likelihood of secondary infections and animals loses. Taking precautions will ensure that your vaccination program will be effective.

You should change vaccine needles every 10 to 15 animals, or if a needle becomes damaged or badly soiled. Never place a non-sterile needle into a bottle of vaccine. You can contaminate the bottle, modify or injure a vaccine and negatively affect a whole group of animals.

There are two ways to sterilize your *metal* vaccine needles in the microwave:
1. *Water* – rinse needles with hot water and place them in a clean glass or plastic container. Don't use soap and disinfectants because they can kill modified live vaccines. Cover the needle with at least 250 milliliters of distilled water and microwave on the oven's highest setting until the water boils. Continue heating for one more minute. The needle must remain submerged to protect the oven and ensure sterilization.
2. *Steam* – rinse needles in hot water and wrap in layers of wet paper towels. Place the bundle in a zip-lock freezer bag that is left partially open. Microwave on the highest setting for two minutes, watching to ensure the towels remain moist. The bag should swell with steam, which will escape through the unsealed zipper.

Plastic, automatic syringes can also be sterilized in the microwave oven.

Wash external parts with soap and water and rise internal parts with clean, hot water without soap several times by drawing in water using the plunger. Fill the syringe with distilled water, including the draw-off tube, wrap in at least six layers of wet paper towels and place in an unsealed zip-lock bag.

Heat in the microwave for five minutes, ensuring the paper towels remain damp. Syringes should be sterilized separately. If water remains in the syringe, squirt it out and cool for 10 minutes before use.

Syringes can be stored in a freezer in a sterile, dry container or fresh zip-lock bag.

TAX AVERAGING FOR FARMERS

Farmers' taxable income varies greatly from year to year. As a result of this income variation, applicable tax rate may vary from 0% to 35%. It is important for you to be aware that income averaging is available to farmers. The purpose of the farm income averaging rules is to alleviate the problem of your paying more tax overall if a substantial portion of your income happens to be bunched in one year.

As a farmer, you can elect to average all or part of your taxable "farm income" over three years. If you make the election, your farm income subject to the election (elected farm income) is treated as if earned in the three previous years. Thus, the elected farm income is allocated to the three previous years (base years) in equal amounts.

For this purpose, farm income is income from the trade or business of farming; but, farm income does not include income, gain, or loss from the sale of development rights, grazing rights, and other similar rights. Although farm income does not generally include compensation received as an employee, a shareholder of an S corporation (or a partner in a partnership) engaged in a farming business may generally treat compensation from the S corporation (or partnership) as farm income. It also includes income from certain crop-share arrangements, the sale or disposition of property (other than land), regularly used for a substantial period in a farming business.

Thus, investment income is not eligible for income averaging. A farming business includes operating a nursery or sod farm and raising or harvesting ornamental trees or trees bearing fruit, nuts, or other crops. The IRS has recognized a hunting operation as a farm eligible for expenses concerning farming. This is a single private letter ruling that only applies to that particular hunting operation. Consult an attorney before treating your hunting operation as a farm for tax purposes.

Here's a simple example of how averaging works. Assume that F, a single farmer, sold some of his farm machinery and more corn than usual, and all of this happened in 2003. F's 2003 taxable income is $50,000, of which $30,000 is from his farming business. F had no taxable income in 2002, $5,000 of taxable income in 2001, and $10,000 of taxable income in 2000. Since F's income is higher than in previous years, F elects to average $30,000 of his 2003 income over the three base years (2002, 2001, and 2000). F figures his 2003 tax in this manner:

(1) He subtracts the elected portion of his current year's taxable farm income ("elected farm income") from his total taxable income. Thus, in 2003, F subtracts the elected farm income ($30,000) from his taxable income of $50,000. His remaining 2003 taxable income is $20,000.

(2) He figures the tax on the amount in (1) using the tax tables or tax rate schedules for the current year (in this case, 2003). Under the 2003 tax tables, the tax on $20,000 is $2,646.

(3) For each of the three base years (2002, 2001, and 2000), F adds one-third of the current year's (2003) elected farm income ($10,000 each year) to his taxable income for that year and figures the tax on that amount. Then, in each of the three base years (2002, 2001, and 2000), F subtracts his actual tax from the tax computed for the base year.

For 2002, F adds $10,000 to his 2002 taxable income ($0) for a taxable income of $10,000. The tax (computed using the 2002 tax tables) was $1,196. Since F didn't pay any tax in 2002, there is no reduction for his actual tax paid in 2002.

For 2001, F adds $10,000 to his 2001 taxable income of $5,000 for a taxable income of $15,000. The tax (computed

The purpose of the farm income averaging rules is to alleviate the problem of your paying more tax overall if a substantial portion of your income happens to be bunched in one year.

Tax Averaging for Farmers
(continued)

using the 2001 tax tables) on this amount is $2,246. F reduces this amount ($2,246) by the actual tax he paid in 2001 ($746) to $1,500.
For 2000, F adds $10,000 to his 2000 taxable income for a taxable income of $20,000. The tax (computed using the 2000 tax tables) on this amount is $2,996. F reduces this amount ($2,996) by the actual tax he paid in 2000 ($1,496) to $1,500.
(4) Then, F adds the amounts computed for the three base years (2002, 2001, and 2000) to the amount of tax computed for the current year (2003) ($1,196 + $1,500 + $1,500 + $2,646) for a total tax of $6,842. If F had not elected to average his farm income, his 2002 tax would have been $9,304. Thus, by making the election, F saved $2,462.

Although your tax situation is considerably more complicated than F's situation (in the example described above), you may wish to consider whether you will benefit from making an income averaging election this year. Generally, you will benefit from the election if the income allocated to the three previous years will be subject to a lower tax rate than it would be in the current year.

With careful year-end tax planning, you may be able to maximize the benefits of averaging for you. For example, it could be beneficial to accelerate income this year (e.g., sell appreciated farm equipment this year). This acceleration would increase this year's farm income (the income that is potentially subject to averaging) and the increase would receive the benefits of averaging. The reduction in your taxable income in the next year as a result of the acceleration of income might result in overall tax savings.

However, you also need to keep in mind that any amounts allocated to the three previous years as additional income will continue to be allocated to those years should you elect to average your farm income in future years. Thus, the allocated amounts will increase your taxable income in those years and may reduce any benefits that you might get from an election in later years.

Before making an election, you will need to consider all of the tax implications of the election. For example, you need to determine the appropriate portion of your farm income that should be subject to the election, and whether making the election would subject you this year (or one of the previous years) to the alternative minimum tax.

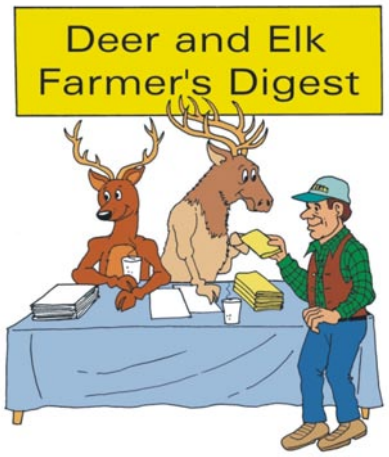
Please consult your tax advisor or an attorney if you have any questions concerning farm income averaging.

By Daniel Marsh, a lawyer and Executive Director of the Michigan Deer and Elk Farmers' Association.

Daniel P. Marsh PLC
Attorney at Law
3181 Aberdeen Court
Port Huron, MI 48060

Office phone 810-984-5114
Office fax 810-984-5119
E-mail: *danmarsh@voyager.net*

EVENTS CALENDAR



Here is a list of upcoming events of interest to deer, elk, and reindeer farmers. We have expanded these listings to include events that offer marketing opportunities for the industry.

Alberta Elk Commission annual convention will be held **April 8 to 9, 2005** in Leduc, AB Canada. For more information, visit *http://www.albertaelk.com*

Petfood Forum 2005 will take place **April 11 to 13, 2005** at the Hyatt Regency O'Hare Hotel in Chicago, IL, USA. There will be 26 in-depth sessions covering production, nutrition, marketing, regulatory affairs, quality assurance and more. For more information, contact Marcia Riddle at *riddle@wattnet.com* or go to *http://www.wattnet.com*

SIAL Montreal 2005 will be held in Montreal Canada on **April 13 to 15, 2005**. This is an international food exhibition that attracts some 800 exhibitors from 40 countries, and over 13,000 visitors from 77 countries. For more information, see *http://www.sialmontreal.com*

Northeast Deer and Elk Farmers Association will hold its annual meeting on **April 15-17, 2005** at Jay Peak Resort in Jay, VT. Plans for seminars include CWD, electronic tagging, fencing and a round table discussion with CWD experts, state regulators and industry representatives. For more information, contact Diane Rowlee, Hollandeer Farm at *hollandeerfarm@vtlink.net*

American Board of Veterinary Practitioner's Symposium will be held on **April 29 to May 1, 2005** at the Marriott Washington, Washington DC. For details, call 615-254-3687.

San Diego Spring Veterinary Conference will be held on **May 21 to 22, 2005** at the Red Lion Hanalai Hotel, San Diego, CA. For more information, call 619-640-9583.

Quality Deer Management Association will hold its 5th Annual National Convention on **June 2-5, 2005** at the Embassy Suites Hotel Airport/Convention Center in Charleston, South Carolina. Learn the latest about whitetail deer from the best biologists, researchers and hunters. In addition to the Whitetail Expo, you can check out the latest whitetail management gear and sporting equipment. For tickets and more information, call 800-209-3337.

California Veterinary Medical Association annual conference will be held on **June 24-26, 2005** at the Anaheim Marriott Hotel. For information, visit *http://www.cvma.net.*

Summer International Fancy Food & Confection Show will be held in New York on **July 10-12, 2005**. This is one of the most important annual expositions for gourmet and specialty foods. The show draws representatives from every segment of the retail and food services industries – retailers, restauranteurs, brokers, wholesalers, importers and other distributors of gourmet, specialty and ethnic foods.

Events Calendar (continued)

Canadian Veterinary Medical Association will hold their annual convention in Victoria, BC on **July 13 to 16, 2005**. For more information, visit *http://canadianveterinarians.net*

American Veterinary Medical Association is holding its 142 annual convention on **July 16 to 20, 2005** in Minneapolis, MN. It is being held in conjunction with the 28th World Veterinary Congress. For more information, please visit *http://avmaconvention.org*

North American Elk Breeders Association (NAEBA) will hold their annual convention and international antler competition on **July 22-23, 2005** at Jackpot Junction Casino Hotel, Morton, Minnesota. For more information, visit *http://www.naelk.org* or e-mail *info@naelk.org*

Whitetail Deer Farmers of Ohio will have their fall meeting and picnic on **August 27, 2005**. For more information and location, contact Steve Laughlin at *sklisret@earthlink.net*.

Florida Veterinary Medical Association will hold their annual conference on **September 8 to 11, 2005** at the Wyndham Palace Resort in Orlando, FL. For more information, visit *http://www.fvma.com*

American Holistic Veterinary Medical Association 20th Annual Conference will be held on **September 17-20, 2005** at the Ogden Eccles Conference Center, Ogden, Utah. Phone 410-569-0795 or visit *http://www.ahvama.org*

Anuga will be held in Cologne, Germany on **October 8 to 12, 2005**. This is the most important trade fair for the food and drink industry worldwide. For more, see *http://www.anuga.com*

CanWest Veterinary Conference will be held at the Fairmont Banff Springs Hotel, Banff, Alberta, Canada on **October 15-18, 2005**. Visit *http://www.avma.ab.ca* or *http://www.bcvma.org*.

Illinois State Veterinary Medical Association 123 Annual Convention will be held **November 4-6, 2005** at the Crowne Plaza in Springfield, Illinois, USA. For more information, contact Ann at 800-942-4246 or e-mail *ann@ISVMA.org*

Iowa Elk Breeder's Association Annual Conference will be held on Saturday, **January 16, 2006** at Jester Park Lodge, Granger, Iowa. For more information, contact Peni Tussey at *tusseyelk@yahoo.com*.

The **Wisconsin Commercial Deer & Elk Farmers Association** will hold their 14th Annual Convention on **February 24-25, 2006**, at the Hotel Meda in WI Rapids, Wisconsin. For more information, contact WCDEFA at *http://www.wcdefa.org* or 608-583-7219.

American Veterinary Medical Association is holding its 143 annual convention on **July 15 to 19, 2006** in Honolulu, Hawaii. For more information, please visit *http://avmaconvention.org*

NEW WEBSITE FOR WOW

The Whitetails of Wisconsin Association has a new website at *wisconsinwhitetails.org.* The old site was getting dated and needed to be upgraded. The WOW site has information on upcoming events, a directory of its members, a photo gallery, listing of hunting preserves in Wisconsin, information on the Association, and a Library with information of interest to deer farmers.

This site is the first one we (at Deerfarmer.com) have done using Mambo, an increasingly popular open source (free) software package. The advantage of Mambo is that anyone that has permission can update the information on the site easily and quickly without having to know html code or any other programming. Since the site also accesses the "content" from a database, it loads much more quickly and uses computer resources more efficiently.

The disadvantage is that such sites tend to be more structured and do not allow as much creativity and flexibility as do the traditional sites.

Please visit the site and let WOW know what you think about it.

NORTH AMERICAN NATURAL HEALTH PRODUCTS CO-OPERATIVE NEWS (NORELKCO)

The following is a summary of what is happening with Norelkco.

1. The North American Natural Health Products Co-operative Ltd. (Norelkco) was incorporated as a New Gen Co-op in the province of Saskatchewan (Canada) on December 23, 2004. (The name was changed to appeal to broader natural health markets rather than just elk products).

2. The Co-op has an interim Board of Directors composed of seven elk producers from Saskatchewan, and one each from Alberta and Manitoba (Canada).

3. A website – *norelkco.com* – was established to provide information and promote the co-op concept.

4. Presentations were made to elk producers in Melfort, Saskatchewan (SEBA velvet antler competitions), Millet, Alberta (Alberta Elk Association velvet antler competitions), North American Elk Breeders Association (NAEBA) in Morton, Minnesota, Michigan Deer and Elk Producers, and the Peace Country Elk Chapter in northern Alberta.

5. Regular updates on Norelkco's progress were provided through websites (*norelkco.com, elkfarmer.com and wapiti.net*) and various elk producer publications such as the *Deer & Elk Farmers' Diges*t, SEBA newsletter, AEC newsletter, NAEBA newsletter and magazine, Minnesota Elk Breeders Association newsletter, and others.

6. In addition to the $4,000 funding obtained from the Prairie Hub, grants were also successfully obtained from the Saskatchewan ANGen program ($2,000 for legal fees), and from the federal Co-operative Development Initiative ($40,000).

Please send your deer, elk and reindeer association news to the Editor at russ@deerfarmer.com

Industry News

Norelkco update (continued)

7. Funding has been received from the Saskatchewan Co-operative Development Assistance Fund (CDAP) for the amount of $10,000 for use in market research.

8. The first Norelkco Board meeting was held on February 11, 2005. Additional Board meetings were held in Saskatoon on March 7, and again on March 18 at the SEBA Convention in Saskatoon.

9. The Board has a contract with Russell Sawchuk, of Steppingstones Partnership, Inc. to prepare a Five-Year Norelkco Business Plan. The Plan will be completed by the end of April 2005.

10. Norelkco has contacted an advertising agency to develop a corporate identity and brand names (for veterinarians and retail stores) for their dog health products.

11. Norelkco has identified sources of quality elk velvet antler already bottled, both in Canada and the USA. With new Norelkco labels, the Co-op has product ready for use as samples, and for shipping to distributors and consumers.

12. Norelkco did presentations and had booths at the two major elk producer conventions – SEBA in Saskatoon on March 18-19 and AEC in Leduc on April 7-8, 2005.

13. The Co-op plans to attend several trade shows this summer and fall in both Canada and the USA, and also plans to begin advertising to vets.

14. The Board has determined that the first share offering will be limited to 50 members only. To become a Norelkco member, producers have to buy a $50 membership fee and a $5,000 ($4,200 USD) delivery share.

Shares will be available once the Business Plan and legal documentations have been completed. Norelkco expects this to be completed by May 2005.

For more information, please contact Ralph Venaas, President at *ralph@norelkco.com* or visit *www.norelkco.com*

COMPRESSION SYSTEM FOR NATURAL VELVET ANTLER REMOVAL

This new method of high compression involves rubber tubing tightened around the pedical. This quickly blocks off the nerves that supply the antler and desensitizes the antler without the use of drugs or needles.

Contributes to animal welfare, food safety and operator convenience.

Provides a safe, humane and chemical-free method of removal of velvet antler from elk and other deer species, eliminating the potential for drug residue in the antlers.

Provides effective control of bleeding during the antler removal process.

Provides analgesia equal to injected Lidocaine; plus, it is more consistent, safer and easier to administer.

Results in fewer adverse behavioral reactions during antler removal.

What veterinarians say:

Excellent!

Great, seemed very reliable on the stags done.

Better than Local, more consistent.

What farmers say:

Impressed, worked well...

When can I get one?

Great device ...

Easy on animals ...

I was very impressed and am sure that the technique holds great promise for drug-free velvet harvesting.

Antler bands
available in bags of 20

Antler Bander Kit includes:

- Bander
- Safety glasses
- Utility knife
- Callicrate cutter
- Timer
- Instructions

No-Bull Enterprises LLC
PO Box 748, St. Francis, KS 67766
Phone: 800-858-5974 or 785-332-3344
Fax: 785-332-3250
E-mail: *rachel@nobull.net* Web: *www.nobull.net*

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