

Welcome to the JULY 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>

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## 1. MARKETING THROUGH CLASSIFIED ADS – PART II

[In the February 2000 issue of the Digest, we made some suggestions about making effective use of classified ads. We are revisiting the topic in light of our new, enhanced Classified Ads section, and because we have added about 500 new readers since then.]

The Deerfarmer.com Classified Ads (now found at <http://ads.deerfarmer.com>) continue to be the busiest section of our website. Although we do not have any hard data on how successful advertisers are, the feedback we receive is that they work – extremely well in a few cases. One farmer sent us a note a day after advertising a piebald buck. He asked us to remove his ad as he sold the buck 15 MINUTES after he posted the ad on the Deerfarmer Classifieds. Another person mentioned that she had her first phone call 9 MINUTES after she posted her ad.

So why did we change our Classified Ads software? There were four reasons why we wanted to install a new program. The most important reason was to provide more features and control to you, the advertiser. Second, we wanted to expand the Classifieds to include other species of deer, elk and related products/services. Third, web visitors had mentioned it would be more convenient if the ads were grouped by categories. Finally, the FrontPage developed classifieds were a processing hog and did not have any easy management or administration features.

The new Classified Ads software has a number of attractive features:

- You can still post your own ad, and in up to 3 categories at once
- You can change, delete or renew the ad yourself on-line
- Ads can be posted from 1 to 3 months, at which time they are automatically deleted
- The program notifies you by e-mail when your ad is about to expire

- You can browse selected categories, all the ads or search for specific keywords
- You can request the program to notify you by e-mail when ads of interest to you are posted
- You can “upload” a photograph or graphic as part of your ad
- The Classified Ads are still FREE!

We have set up 14 categories in which you can post your ads:

- Antlers – sheds, mounts, velvet, etc.
- Auctions and sales – for deer and elk
- Axis, fallow and sika deer
- Elk and red deer
- Reindeer and moose
- White-tailed and mule deer
- Hunting – hunting ranches and preserves
- Deer and elk products – crafts, hides, urine, etc.
- Equipment and supplies – fencing, chutes, feeders, etc.
- Real estate – deer and elk farms and ranches
- Professional services – vets, A.I., DNA, insurance, etc.
- Venison and meat – fresh, frozen, jerky, processing, etc.
- Workshops, meetings and conferences
- Miscellaneous – other stuff of interest to the industry.

[TIP: Because most recent ads are posted first, click on “View All” to see all the latest ads.]

Here is some advice for using the Classified Ads most effectively:

1. Put your name in the ad (it’s required). Customers are not going to buy deer/elk or related products from anonymous or unknown persons.
2. 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 wrong, and then there is no way anyone can get a hold of you.
3. Put your state or province (and country for the geographically-challenged). This is necessary in deer and elk farming because of the regulations affecting cross-border movement.
4. Put your farm name or brand name. You want to increase brand awareness and impress on people’s unconscious minds your identity. Put this at the end of the body of every ad. Also include other contact information such as fax or cell phone numbers, and any deer/elk industry associations to which you may belong.
5. Provide adequate information – description of deer/elk, numbers, prices and any other information that will 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. (The ad description limit is 125 words).

6. Sneak in some competitive advantages if possible, e.g., guarantees, delivery services, installation, set-up, follow-up support, etc.
7. Advertise regularly (but not too often so that you are perceived to be spamming).
8. Offer something free or near-free – an article on bottle-feeding fawns, a research report, a newsletter, a video, etc.
9. Research shows that the ad headline can greatly affect response rates. Think about writing a catchy headline that will attract notice. (This is a separate field in the posting form – craft it carefully).
10. Don't be too quick to delete your ad after you've sold out. Take a tip from the real estate agents – they leave their SOLD sign on your property until you have to threaten them to take it off. If you sell out of your fawns, don't delete your ad; instead edit your ad to say something like – “Sorry, sold out! Now taking orders for next year's fawns! Don't be disappointed, book now!”

In addition to facilitating buying and selling, Classified Ads have other useful applications. For example, Classified Ads can provide you with market intelligence on such things as prices, competitors, supply and demand. They are also a good place to locate potential strategic partners, and to find contacts, suppliers and consultants.

For deer and elk Associations, the Deerfarmer.com Classifieds have a place to post information about your upcoming meetings, workshops and conferences. Take advantage of this free high-traffic service to promote your organizations and events.

Bet you didn't know that the lowly classified ad could do so much for you. USE, BENEFIT, and PROFIT from the Deerfarmer.com Classified Ads!

## 2. THE FOLLIES OF TRANQUILIZING DEER

[By Jim Severt, a deer farmer (The Buck Stop) and secretary for Whitetails of Wisconsin. Jim can be reached at [Buckstop7@aol.com](mailto:Buckstop7@aol.com)]

Many of us deer farmers have had some pretty wild experiences when it comes to tranquilizing deer. Although there have been some improvements in the drugs recently, it still can be nerve rattling to put down one of your best deer.

Back before Telezol, straight Rompin was the drug most widely used. It was my experience that by using just Rompin, you would get the occasional deer that would fight the drug pretty hard. He would barely keep walking, maybe laying down, but could get up and stay just ahead of you.

Such was the case a few years back when my son Jered and I went to put down one of our bigger bucks. I don't recall why, but we had decided to take the antlers off this big guy. So, on a nice fall day we went to dart him. He was in a 50+ acre pen, so it turned out to be a hunt.

At last we located him and Jered made a good shot. We gave the buck ample time to succumb to the drug. Then we approached him. He looked like he'd stay put. WRONG!

As Jered went up to him, he struggled to his feet, got his balance, and half ran, half staggered toward me with Jered in hot pursuit. I was a little angry at this point and decided I'd had enough chasing this buck. I made a quick leap and grabbed hold of the buck's hind leg. This is definitely a "don't try this at home" maneuver.

Jered saw what I was attempting to do and quickly sprang into action. He would try to bum rush the buck and between the two of us, maybe we could keep him down. Unfortunately every time he approached the deer from the side, the deer leapt in the other direction. All of this while I hung on to one of the buck's hind legs. (Believe me, I'm older and wiser now.)

I was being dragged around with the buck's every leap. The more he tried to get away, the more determined I was not to let go. This went on for far too long! Finally Jered got the buck down and threw a blanket over his head. That, and Jered sitting on him, pretty well took the wind out of his sails.

I got up to my knees and then stood up. Much to my surprise and embarrassment, my pants and underwear were at my ankles. I had grass stains in places one wouldn't expect. Jered and I had a good laugh and hope you do too!

### **3. SPECIFICATIONS, BUREAUCRACY AND HORSES' BACKSIDES**

[Reprinted with permission from the Deer Magazine, Te Puke NZ]

**T**he US standard railroad width is 4 feet, 8.5 inches. That is an exceedingly odd number. Why that width? Because that's the way they built them in England. The US railroads were built by the English expatriates.

So why did the English build them like that? Because the same people who built pre-rail road tramways used that gauge. Why? Because the people who built tramways used the same jigs and tools that they used for building wagons, which used that wheel spacing.

Okay! Why did the wagons use that odd wheel spacing? Well, if they tried to use any other spacing, the wagons would break on some of the old, long distance roads, because that was the spacing on the old wheel ruts.

So, who built these old rutted roads? Imperial Rome, over 2000 years ago, for the benefit of their legions. The roads have been used ever since.

And the ruts? The initial ruts (which everyone else had to match for the fear of destroying their wagons) were first made by Roman war chariots. Chariots made for Imperial Rome were all alike in wheel spacing. The answer to the original question. The USA standard railroad gauge of 4 feet 8.5 inches derives from the original specification for an Imperial Roman war chariot.

Specs and bureaucracies live forever. Next time you are handed a specification and wonder what horse's ass came up with it, you may be exactly right. Because the Imperial Roman chariots were made to be just wide enough to accommodate the back ends of two war horses.

A twist to the story...

When we see a Space Shuttle sitting on the launch pad, there are two big booster rockets attached to the sides of the main fuel tank. These are solid rocket boosters or SRBs. The SRBs are made in Utah. Designers of the SRBs might have preferred to make them a bit fatter, but the SRBs had to be shipped by train to the launch site. The railroad line runs through a tunnel in the mountains. The SRBs had to fit through the tunnel.

The tunnel is slightly wider than a railroad track and the rail track is about as wide as two horses' behinds. Now we see a major design feature of the world's most advanced transportation system was determined by the width of a horse's rear end.

#### **4. SENDING DEER TO SCHOOL**

The deer and elk industries still rely pretty heavily on tranquilizing the animals for testing, treatment and artificial insemination. This practice carries with it a number of risks:

1. You could lose your pants and get grass stains on your butt and privates (see article above).
2. Some deer never recover from tranquilization and die.
3. You are injecting powerful chemicals into the deer body; this may cause concerns if the meat or velvet of the animal is to be used for human consumption.
4. Animal rights groups and others have more arguments for opposing and/or banning deer and elk farming.

Progress is being made. Most modern deer and elk farms have handling facilities where the animals can be herded into and worked on. Most have drop chutes or squeezes to physically immobilize the deer in order to conduct TB tests, provide injections, remove antlers, etc.

But I wonder if still more can be done in working with these animals – like sending them to school. There are several reasons behind this thinking.

A long time ago, in a faraway place (the Kingdom of Saskatchewan) I took experimental psychology at university. As a student, I was a rat psychologist. It is amazing what you can train a lowly white lab rat to do. So if you can train lab rats, why not deer, whom we all know are pretty smart?

The training was based on the behaviour theories of Dr. B.F. Skinner, a psychologist at Harvard University. Dr. Skinner said that people and animals behave in such a manner as to receive positive reinforcements (rewards). Negative reinforcements or punishments quickly stop certain behaviours, but at a price. (Probably the rationale behind stopping the use of straps in schools). Behaviours could also be “extinguished” by removing positive reinforcement. In other words, if there is

nothing in it for me, why bother doing it? (Something associations should keep in mind when losing directors or members). Yes, I know, I know – this is all common sense. However, we always don't apply it to get the results we want.

The theories certainly work. We ran many experiments with lab rats. The most common was to put a rat in a "Skinner Box", which had a little lever connected to a switch which dispensed food pellets. The rat had to learn that by pressing the lever, he would be "rewarded" with food. The lever was connected to a counter that would measure activity. It usually didn't take long before Mr. or Ms. Rat was happily clicking away. The next experiments varied the delivery of the food pellets. Pellets could be delivered every 5<sup>th</sup> click or at random. This simply made the rat work harder, but they never gave up. (The best example of this behaviour is modern gambling, where we engage a activity for that possible random positive reinforcement, even though we know the odds are very small).

My favourite variation of this experiment had to do with, well I'm not sure. A white rat was put into a Skinner Box that had the lever on one side of the box and the food dispenser on the other side. As usual it did not take the rat long to figure out that you had to push the lever, and then run to the other side to get your reward. Then, a SECOND rat was put in. What happened is that when the first rat pushed the lever, the second rat ate the food before the first rat got there. Well, as time went on, the second rat was getting pretty fat and very content, while the first rat was nearing starvation. (Don't you love the symbolism in this – the first rat is the worker, the second rat is the boss getting fat on his subordinate's hard work; the second rat is the capitalist organization exploiting members of the unions; or add your own interpretation.) Well after a few days, things were getting pretty serious for the first rat who was nearing starvation.

The story does have a happy ending. Whether by accident or insight (some argue rats can reason and solve problems), the first rat discovered that if he pressed the lever three times in rapid succession, he could run over to the other side and still get his food. So both of them got fat! (A possible moral of the story – if you get your workers to work 3 times as hard as they do now, everyone will win. Or does it mean that if you starve your employees they will eventually work 3 times as hard?)

So how does apply to handling deer? Simple. Apply the same "behaviour modification" strategies to your deer to reduce the necessity of darting or use of force. Let me give you a couple of examples.

A rancher had great difficulty in getting his ponies into a trailer. He would have to drag, push and beat them to get into it. Someone suggested that he start putting oats in the trailer, i.e., positive reinforcement for a particular desired action. After a few times, all he had to do was open the trailer door. In the ensuing mad rush, the ponies often got stuck in the trailer door trying to be the first one in!

A friend of mine has a beagle with allergies. The dog needs to gets a needle to control these allergies. Well, that beagle just hates getting that needle. However, my friend knows that her beagle loves Kibbles. So all she has to do is shake the box of Kibbles and the beagle comes running. The look on his face says, "Well, I loathe getting that needle, but since I love those Kibbles more, the discomfort is worth the ultimate reward." She never has any problems giving her dog his shots.

The same is true for deer. Many deer farmers put their deer through their handling facility maybe once or twice a year. For many deer, this is something unknown, frightening and associated with negative reinforcement. The handling facility needs to be associated with positive reinforcement in the deer's mind – just like with the ponies. Run your deer through the facility more frequently and be sure to give them a special treat at the end of their journey. They will become much more cooperative and this will reduce stress on them and you.

“Shaping” is a technique that animal trainers often use. This simply means giving positive reinforcement or rewards when the animal takes the first step towards the desired behaviour. Then the animal is rewarded for the next right step, and so on until eventually the animal is doing the total desired behaviour.

By using shaping and behaviour modification techniques, you can get your deer or elk to do things that will make handling and looking after them much easier. While I'm not sure you can train you buck or bull to ejaculate into a bottle, I'm pretty sure that at the sound of a whistle, you can get your does or cows to line up and expose their rumps to you for A.I. Just be sure to give them their positive reinforcement when you are finished.

[I would be very interested in hearing from you of any successes you've have with behaviour modification and training with deer or elk.]

## **5. EVENTS CALENDAR**

Here is a list of upcoming events of interest to deer farmers.

NADeFA's Cervid Livestock Foundation will host its 4TH ANNUAL SUMMER DEER FARMING SEMINAR on August 5, 2000 in Indiana, Pennsylvania USA. The basic section will cover general start-up procedures such as handling facilities, animal health, fencing and marketing your end product. Preliminary plans for the advanced track include TB testing, record keeping and herd accreditation; the Foundation will post the program as it is confirmed.

The evening of August 5th will feature NADeFA's Cervid Livestock Foundation's 3rd Annual Panache d'Or Venison Cooking Competition and Banquet. The Competition is pursuing sanction by the American Culinary Federation to raise both its caliber and marketability.

For more information on attending the Summer Seminar or sending a chef to the Panache d' Or, please contact the NADeFA at 9301 Annapolis Rd. #206, Lanham, MD 20706, 301-459-7708, fax 301-459-7864, or email: [info@nadefa.org](mailto:info@nadefa.org)

THE TEXAS DEER ASSOCIATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE will be held on September 8 and 9, 2000 at the Sheraton Four Points Hotel at San Antonio, Texas USA. The theme of the conference is “TDA: Raising the Bar of Excellence.” For more information visit the TDA website at <http://www.texasdeerassociation.com>

WORKSHOPS AT MORGAN'S BIRCHWOOD DEER FARM in Pennsylvania. Artificial insemination of white-tailed deer on Oct. 19, 2000, Chemical immobilization of deer on Oct. 20, 2000 and Advanced Hoofstock Immobilization on Oct. 21, 2000. For more information contact [tjdoe@aol.com](mailto:tjdoe@aol.com) or [safecaptur@aol.com](mailto:safecaptur@aol.com) or phone 608-767-3071.

A TWO-DAY WHITETAIL WORKSHOP will be held on Nov. 11-12, 2000 at Gibbons, Alberta Canada. This workshop is sponsored by Extreme Whitetail Genetics and will be taught by Dr. Harry Jacobson. For more information see <http://deerfarmer.net/Extreme> or e-mail [bucks@telusplanet.net](mailto:bucks@telusplanet.net) or phone 780-942-4527.

## 6. SUBSCRIPTION SERVICES

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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>

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## 7. CONTACT INFORMATION

**W**e 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.

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