



Welcome to the MARCH 2001 edition of the *Deer Farmers' Digest*, a monthly electronic newsletter published by Deerfarmer.com - the Deer Farmers' Information Network. This *Digest* is distributed via e-mail to over 2,100 readers in twenty countries. A copy of ALL the issues of the *Digest* can be found at <http://digest.deerfarmer.com>.

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### 1. SOME THOUGHTS ON SETTING UP A HUNTING PRESERVE

As the deer and elk farming industry grows, more operators are considering setting up hunting preserves to complement the production side of their business. If you are thinking of establishing a “high wire” hunting operation, this article looks at some of the factors that you should consider.

The popularity and use of hunting preserves is growing. There are many reasons for this.

- 1. *Fewer places to hunt* – public lands are being gobbled up by development and private hunting leases. More land is being posted, and many farmers and ranchers don't permit hunting on their lands (can't blame them). Hunting preserves are an alternative.
- 2. *Overcrowding* – with less land and more people interested in hunting, public lands near large population areas get pretty crowded during the hunting season, especially on opening day. This has negative implications for hunter safety, quality of the hunting experience and availability of quality trophy animals. Hunting preserves strictly limited the number of hunters at any one time.
- 3. *Short seasons* – in many areas, hunting seasons are short – from a few days to a few weeks, usually in the late fall. Unless you can get time off work, this usually means only a few weekends are available to you to go hunting. Hunting on preserves can be done from August to December, and even longer.

4. *Lack of quality animals* – it is getting increasingly difficult to bag a trophy buck in the wild. There are many reasons for this. One is that selective hunting – shooting the biggest bucks – results in a drain on the genetic pool by removing the best breeders. Bad winters and poaching also take their toll of animals. Preserves offer quality trophy animals that are raised on deer and elk farms.

5. *Time constraints* – everyone these days seems to have to work harder and longer. It is not possible for many people to spend the time scouting before hunting season, and spending days locating, and tracking down that trophy animal. Many people have several weeks vacation time, that most of that better be spent with the family! Busy people who like to hunt are looking at options. Preserves offer longer seasons, and one to three days is all you usually need to harvest a trophy.

6. *Expectation of success* – people with money are usually successful in their fields of endeavor. Therefore, they expect (and require) success in their pursuit of a trophy. They are not too excited to spend two weeks with an outfitter and not even see a world-class trophy. These type of people expect results! Clients of hunting preserves usually experience 100% success rate due to the availability of large number of quality animals.

7. *More disposable income* – with the US and Canadian economies having done so well in the last decade, there is much more disposable income available. This includes people who like to hunt, and they are willing to spend some of their cash on a quality hunting experience. Many more people can now afford to hunt in a preserve.

8. *Expense* – cost of public hunting seems to be going up – everything from the cost of fees to transportation to accommodation. The cost gap between public hunting and hunting on a preserves is getting narrower.

9. *Skills* – the skills required for getting a trophy animal in the wild are considerable – you have to be in excellent physical shape and be a good shot. As with all things, this requires lots of practice, which in turn takes time and facilities - all which most of us don't have! Preserve hunting does not require the same level of skill, and is ideal for persons with physical limitations or disabilities.

10. *Safety* – as already mentioned, hunting in a crowd of people with high-powered rifles is anything but safe. Preserves limit the number of hunters at any one time.

11. *Health concerns* – trophies harvested in the wild run the risk of having disease such as CWD or TB. Preserve animals have been tested and are known to be disease-free.

12. *Availability* – if you want to hunt a wild trophy elk, you probably have to put your name into a draw. Many people won't be drawn in their lifetime. However, many preserves can offer you a hunt for a trophy elk any time you want.

13. *Out-of-state fees and requirements* – if you want to hunt wild deer and elk in another state or province, you get dinged with hefty license fees. Also, you usually are required to use the services of an outfitter and guide. Heck, for the same money, you can experience a quality trophy hunt on a preserve with all the advantages mentioned above.

14. *Many rules and regulations* – have you looked at the rules and regulations recently associated with public hunting? It is nearly impossible to remember them all and you constantly run the risk of inadvertently violating one of them. Yes, preserves have rules too, but things are a lot simpler.

15. *Zealous conservation officers* – most fish and game officers are a decent lot. However, there are others who take their roles too seriously and harass hunters. I really don't like to be stopped, searched and questioned when I haven't done anything wrong. This is not an issue with preserve hunting.

16. *First Nations* – in Canada, Natives have the right to hunt big game all year round. In certain regions, this has an impact on the numbers and quality of game animals available, and on the limits and length of seasons for other hunters.

17. *Gun laws* – in Canada, with the new firearm regulations, buying and owning a gun is becoming a real hassle. Many people who previously used to hunt have gotten rid of their firearms to avoid registration. However, these people can still hunt on a preserve if the operators provide the rifles or bows.

Hunting on a preserve offers a quality hunting experience devoid of all the hassles and problems described above. It is no wonder that people that love to hunt are turning to hunting preserves!

In addition to the above, hunting preserves offer a number of other broader benefits. These include such things as:

1. *Support to elk and deer industries* – as these continue to grow, markets are needed for the older, mature bucks and elk bulls. Hunting preserves provide greater per animal revenues for trophy animals than would any other markets such as venison.

2. *Value-added revenues stay at home* – hunting preserves usually pay producers 50% of the final value of the trophy animal. By having your own preserve, or by selling to a local preserve, this money stays in your pocket and in your community.

3. *Increased tourism and spin-off revenues* – hunting preserves can attract clients from other regions of the country, and from other countries. This brings in significant tourism revenues, and provides opportunities for other local businesses as well, e.g., motels, taxidermists, meat processors, etc.

4. *Support rural communities* – because of their very nature, most hunting preserves are best located in remote, rural areas. A hunting preserve, thus can contribute significantly to the sustainability and economy of rural communities.

5. *Increased tourism in off-seasons* – fall is the slow period with tourism in North America, but is the peak hunting season. Thus, hunting preserves can extend the tourism season in regions where they exist.

6. *Relieving pressure on wild game hunting* – by attracting more hunters, preserves can reduce the numbers of people who hunt on public lands and areas.

7. *Improved health of animals* – most of the research and health advancements related to deer and elk have been the result of work initiated, funded and supported by the deer and elk farming industry. This knowledge and strategies can also be used to diagnose and improve the health of wild herds.

8. *Opportunities for handicapped hunters* – many preserves offer special hunts for people with disabilities. Many of these people would not otherwise be able to enjoy this experience of a lifetime.

9. *Diversion of pressure* from non-resident hunters will shorten list for some draws.

Hunting preserves, like other tourism businesses, offer many environmental, ecological and economical benefits.

However, as most deer and elk farmers are aware, hunting preserves also face a number of challenges and issues.

1. *Opposition* – there are individuals and groups strongly opposed to hunting preserves. These include:

- a) Members of the general public who have strong beliefs that hunting in general is wrong, and especially killing animals for sport within a confined area.
- b) Some hunters feel that hunting in a preserves degrades the sport; that real hunters don't participate in "canned hunts."
- c) Many hunter associations are also opposed, believing that the growth of hunting preserves will negatively impact public hunting opportunities.
- d) Wildlife management agencies and government departments don't always fully support game farms or hunting preserves. It may have something to do with reduced revenues from public hunting licenses and risks to their jobs.

2. *Regulatory environment* – because hunting preserves are a contentious issue in many jurisdictions, keeping their operations legal is a challenge. Take a look at what happened in Montana where the public voted to close game farms and preserves down. This is a risk you have to seriously assess if you are planning to start up a hunting preserve.

3. *Safety* – neighbours of hunting preserves may raise some objections to their existence and operation. This is mainly due to safety considerations. A buffer zone and consultation with your neighbours is probably a good idea.

4. *Fair chase* – one of the concerns about hunting preserves is "fair chase", that the animal has an opportunity to evade the hunter. Also, it is not clear whether trophy animals shot on a preserve qualify for the record books under the guidelines of Boone & Crockett, Safari Club, BuckMasters, etc.

So if you are planning to set up a hunting preserve, here are a dozen factors you should evaluate:

1. *Legality* – you can't set up a hunting preserve in your state or province if they are not legally permitted. Even if they are legal, you may want to assess any movement by opponents to get them banned.

2. *Organizational structure* – the prevalent thinking these days seems to be to keep your game farm and hunting preserves as separate entities. Game farms are agricultural businesses, and hunting preserves are eco-tourism operations. If hunting preserves are banned, then at least the game farms can continue to operate.

3. *Location* – hunting preserves are best located within reasonable driving distance from large population centers. This makes it more convenient for the clients and reduces their costs. If you want to locate in North Dakota or Saskatchewan, then you better offer something extra for the addition costs, time and effort required to hunt on your preserve.

4. *Positioning* – up to now, most hunting preserves have catered to the wealthier clientele with fees ranging up to \$25,000 for a trophy animal. Due to the factors listed above, some hunting preserves are now offering more affordable hunts in the \$750 to \$1,500 range. You need to decide where to “position” your hunting preserve – high, middle or low end. All marketing then must be consistent with your positioning.

5. *Competition* – you need to analyze and know your competition. What hunting preserves are your direct competitors? What are they offering, and what are your competitive advantages? You will need to distinguish yourself from your competition.

6. *Supply of animals* – where are you going to get your hunting animals? Are you going to raise them yourself, buy them or a combination? Right now, there is a shortage of quality trophy animals, especially white-tailed bucks in the 200+ category. Increased demand will drive up prices, which in turn will require you to increase your fees. As part of your planning, it is important that you source a reliable supply of trophy animals.

7. *Facilities* – these include the amount of land for the preserve, accommodation, lodge and other facilities needed to cater to your clients. The size of the operation should be sufficient to address the fair chase issue, e.g., 500 acres or more. You may want to have several locations to enable you have serve several hunters at the same time, while keeping overhead down. Options also include having hunters stay at local motels. It is important to remember that for the fees clients are paying to hunt, they expect to be pampered.

8. *Features, services and options* – the more of these you offer, the more competitive your hunting preserve will be. Is there something for families to do? Do you offer a wide range of hunts to meet everyone's needs and price range? Do you look after mounting the trophy and packaging the meat?

9. *Dealing with the opposition* – as indicated above, hunting preserves do have their opponents. You will need to have a plan to deal with any opposition. Some suggestions are to adopt and follow a code of ethics (see next article), to join and participate in your local and national industry associations, to offer free hunts to a handicapped person, and to constantly communicate with the local community about the benefits your operation brings.

10. *Marketing* – as the number of preserves grows, and the competition increases, you must have a marketing plan. This plan will likely include activities such as having a website, being listed in appropriate directories, attending hunter trade shows, ads in hunter magazines and being included in local tourism promotions.

11. *Staff* – any successful operation requires good management and employees. Hunting preserves are in the service business and excellent customer service is required for long-term success. Will you have the management and staff knowledge and expertise that is required to run a successful hunting preserve? If not, do you have a plan to acquire or develop these skills and competencies?

12. *Financial* – to set up a hunting preserve to meet the criteria discussed above will require a considerable amount of financial investment. Do you have that type of investment, or will you require some debt or equity financing? What are the implications of this financing on your profitability and control of the operation? You should do 5 to 10 year financial projections to reassure yourself that your hunting preserve will be profitable.

As with any other business venture, you should develop and prepare a comprehensive business plan for your hunting preserve. You will need one anyway if any type of financing is required. Your business plan should address all of the above factors and serve as your to-do list to get started.

Hunting preserves offer an exciting business opportunity for deer and elk farmers. Hopefully, the identification and discussion of the critical factors and issues in this article will help you decide if and how you want to proceed with setting up your own preserve.

## **2. CODE OF ETHICS FOR HUNTING PRESERVES**

Many organizations and associations have a code of ethics or code of conduct. These are a set of rules by which members of those associations agree to abide.

Because of the diversity of opinions regarding hunting preserves, operators would be wise to adopt and follow a code of ethics. This code assures clients, and the general public, that the operation of the hunting preserve follows certain, acceptable standards.

You can make up your own code of ethics, but it is probably easier to use ones that have already been established. We particularly like the code of ethics created by the North American Elk Breeders Association because it addresses the major concerns regarding hunting behind high wire.

The NAEBA Code of Ethics for hunting preserves says:

1. The operations should assure harvesting in any area by any method which, through a combination of size, terrain, and vegetative cover, provides an animal with a reasonable opportunity to avoid being found or, having been found, to evade the hunter.
2. Harvesting operations should offer hunting opportunities for physically challenged hunters.
3. Trophy operations should be enclosed in game fence that excludes wild animals from the enclosure and retains commercially raised animals within the enclosure. Within the trophy operation, only commercially raised animals will be harvested.

4. Trophy animals placed in a harvest operation should exhibit their natural flight instinct.
5. The animals should be self-sufficient for forage, water, and shelter. Supplemental feeding is permitted.
6. Each hunt should include a guide to ensure humane harvesting.
7. Harvest area should be a size to include recovery of trophy animals.
8. Hunters should possess familiarity with weapon of choice.
9. If the hunter does not want the meat from the harvested animal, it should be used by the harvest operation or donated to a charitable organization that will distribute it to families in need.
10. Proper postmortem testing must be done to monitor herd health.

This Code of Ethics was developed to outline the elk industry's definition of an acceptable private hunting operation. North American Elk Breeders Association is an agricultural breed association; members sell their commodity of trophy elk to hunting preserves. NAEBA strongly recommends that members of their association sell elk only to operations that meet the above guidelines.

We would encourage that all deer and elk hunting preserves adopt this Code (or a similar one). Once you do, post it in your lodge, and let clients and the public know that you subscribe and follow a code of ethics. If all preserves would do so, it would go a long way towards addressing concerns people may have about hunt farms and ranches.

### **3. HOW TO GET MAXIMUM BENEFITS FROM YOUR DFUID**

The concept of a DFUID came to me as I was completing a two year project to design an information system to keep track of all health workers in Alberta. The need for a unique identifier was essential to count, record and track the people working in the health care industry.

At the same time, CWD and other health issues were dominating the deer and elk farming industry. Trace-back systems were being suggested as one way to improve food safety and restore consumer confidence. This would require some way to trace back products to their farms of origin. Trace-back requires a unique and universal farm identification as well as a system to allow the public to easily find out information about the farm.

Since we were already developing the most comprehensive on-line deer and elk farm directory in the world, the idea of adding a unique identifier (in the same manner as for health workers) for deer/elk farms was a no-brainer. Adding the DFUID to the Directory also creates a whole range of additional benefits.

The Deer Farm Universal Identifier (DFUID) is a unique ID assigned to each farm/ranch in our Global Deer & Elk Farm Directory database. DFUID an "intelligent" ID in the format of "CCSS####" where CC = country code (same as used by Internet domain names); SS = state or province code (based on postal codes) where applicable, and a four-digit sequentially assigned numeric code. Therefore, USWI0010 would indicate that this is deer farm #10 located in Wisconsin USA. CASK2005 would be a deer or elk farm in Saskatchewan, Canada. The domain name

<http://www.dfuid.com> points to the database so that anyone can quickly search for the farm information using the DFUID.

The reason for using an intelligent ID is that enables consumers to quickly identify the country/state of origin of a product right from the label. By going to the Internet website <http://www.dfuid.com>, and typing in the DFUID in the Search box, the actual farm and information on it, will be brought up on the screen.

The success of the DFUID depends on a number of factors:

1. Deer and elk farms have to register in the Global Deer & Elk Farm Directory database. We at Deerfarmer.com already have a large number of deer farms in our old Directory that we are transferring to the database. In addition, we have gathered lists of other deer and elk farmers from public sources that will be entered. We continue to work with the various associations asking them to encourage their members to register in the database. Finally, we will be promoting the Directory at conventions and through association newsletters.
2. Farms registered in the Directory have to provide useful, accurate and complete data and keep it up to date. Both our on-line and print forms are comprehensive and detailed enough to try and elicit the required information.
3. Deer and elk farms will need to make use of their DFUID for trace-back and marketing as described below. If consumers do not see the DFUID on deer or elk products, then its value is reduced.
4. Consumers, buyers and the marketplace must be aware of the existence of the DFUID and use it. Consumer demand will be the largest factor in the success of the DFUID. We plan to do some press releases to make the public aware of the DFUID and how to use it.

DFUID is not intended to replace association or government trace-back or inventory programs. However, we do see some challenges facing these “official” programs:

1. *Jurisdiction* – animal health usually falls under state or provincial jurisdiction. Thus in Canada and the United States, there are a range of rules and systems. Just getting these jurisdictions together to agree on a format and common identifier will take a long time. The same is true with industry associations that represent either a particular species, or a geographical location. So unless the United Nations takes on the task, getting agreement on a universal, common identifier will be very difficult.
2. *Privacy* – governments are constrained by privacy and confidentiality rules; they usually cannot make information about a particular farm or business public without addressing a whole host of issues.
3. *Public access* – will there be ONE government or association site that the public can go to get the information on a particular deer or elk farm anywhere in the world? Not likely, because of jurisdictional and privacy issues mentioned above.



Despite these limitations, we do encourage deer and elk farmers to support and participate in other inventory and trace-back systems offered by governments and industry associations.

We are not saying our system is perfect either. Here are some weaknesses that people will point out.

1. *No authority* – the DFUID and Global Deer & Elk Directory rely on strictly voluntary registration and participation. Deerfarmer.com, as a private company, has no authority or power to compel farms to list or provide the desired data. However, we do feel that as the Directory develops, and consumers/buyers become aware of it, farms listed will have a significant competitive advantage.

2. *Verification and accuracy of data* – we are not in a position to verify or audit the accuracy of information provided in our Directory. Although we do require people to certify their data is correct, there is no independent verification. We will delete any registration we discover has false information, but there is still a small element of risk involved.

3. *Stability* – as a private company, there is always the risk that Deerfarmer.com may go out of business. We have been in business since 1989, and expect to be around for a while yet. Even if we did go out of business, the database could easily be taken over by another company or association and continue operations.

We believe that the DFUID and the Global Deer & Elk Farm Directory is the quickest, easiest and most cost-effective way to address some of the important issues affecting our industry. It also demonstrates that the industry itself can provide solutions rather than relying on governments.

There are three major applications of the DFUID and the Global Deer & Elk Farm Directory. These are:

1. *Trace-back* – once deer and elk farmers start using their DFUID on their velvet, venison and other products, consumers can use the product labels and the Internet to identify what specific farm the products came from. This will greatly contribute to increased consumer confidence and comfort in using deer and elk products.

2. *Buyer protection* – buyers wanting to purchase breeding/trophy animals and other deer products can easily look up the seller's deer farm based on the name or DFUID. They can verify that such a farm exists, obtain some background information on the operations, and buy with greater confidence.

3. *Marketing* – one of the most popular applications of the Directory is by new entrants into the industry. People interested in starting a deer farm use the Directory to identify existing operations in their state or province, and then contact these people for more information on getting started and for breeding stock. The expanded directory will also be used by existing deer/elk farmers to find specific related products (e.g., semen, feed, handling equipment) and services (e.g., A.I. services). Companies world-wide will use the Directory to identify potential suppliers for velvet, venison and other products.

After you are listed in the Global Deer & Elk Farm Directory, here are some ways you should use your DFUID:

1. On the tags of all your deer and elk. That way, if they get lost, stolen or run away, the animal can easily be traced back to your farm.
2. On labels for your products such as velvet capsules, venison products, semen containers or any other deer/elk product that comes from your farm. Consumers can see the country/state of origin and can look up the specific farm if there is a problem with the product.
3. On your brochures, catalogues, flyers, yellow pages and other promotional information about your farm, products and services.
4. In your classified ads, whether on Deerfarmer.com, some other website, or in print classifieds.
5. Along with your images in the Deerfarmer.com Photo Gallery. (We will be adding the DFUIDs to the photos as soon as we get everyone registered).
6. On your business cards, stationery, invoices, checks and so on.
7. On your website, and in your e-mail signatures.
8. On your signs – farm sign, truck signs, etc.
9. On banners and displays for trade shows and conventions.
10. On “giveaways” such as pens, caps, key chains, and other promotional items.

Listing on the Global Deer & Elk Farm Directory is still free. For more information on some of the features of the new Directory, see Section 6: Deerfarmer.com News below.

#### **4. FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE**

*[Since deer and elk are at risk to foot-and-mouth disease, we thought it was important to include the latest news and information about this disease. The article is based on news releases from the Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) and Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA)].*

Animal health officials in the United States and Canada are watching with concern the relentless westward march of foot-and-mouth disease (FMD), the most recent outbreak of which was confirmed in late February at several sites in England, where livestock operations already have been financially ravaged by the brain-wasting disease, BSE (bovine spongiform encephalopathy) and outbreaks of the viral infection, hog cholera.

Additional cases of FMD have been detected among cattle, sheep and swine in Great Britain (encompassing England, Wales and Scotland). In addition to the loss of thousands of animals, British farmers may lose as much as \$73 million just from the week-long ban (which could be extended) on the transport and marketing of livestock susceptible to the disease.

FMD, which has not been seen in the U.S. since 1929, (or in Canada since 1952) is caused by a highly infectious virus that can cause death or disabling blisters and sores in and around the mouth, muzzle, teats and feet of livestock with cloven or “split” hooves. Cattle, pigs, sheep, goats and deer are highly susceptible, and can exhibit clinical disease signs after an incubation period of only three to eight days. To stop the spread of infection, affected or exposed animals must be slaughtered, then burned or buried. Premises and equipment must be disinfected to prevent disease spread.

“Foot and mouth virus poses special challenges, requiring proper disinfection and biosecurity protocols. People who have worked around or been near infected animals can inadvertently carry and spread the virus via their equipment, cars, clothing, shoes, or even for a short time in their lungs or pharynx (throat),” said Linda Logan, Texas’ state veterinarian and head of the Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC), the state’s livestock health regulatory agency. She pointed out that studies indicate the virus can drift up to 40 miles on the wind, another hurdle to confining an FMD outbreak to a defined geographic area.

“FMD is probably the most economically damaging livestock disease, said Dr. Logan.” The disease is currently affecting four of the world’s seven continents: Asia, Africa, South America and Europe, leaving only North America, Australia and Antarctica free of the disease.

“An outbreak costs a country millions of dollars to fight, and thousands of animals can be lost. Additionally, livestock markets must be closed to prevent spread of infection, dairies may not be able to operate, and transportation of livestock must cease. Furthermore, there’s the cost of depopulating and disposing of affected or exposed animals and vaccinating *clean animals* to create a disease-free *buffer zone*,” said Dr. Logan, a specialist in tick-borne and foreign animal diseases. She also serves on a national team reviewing how best to safeguard U.S. livestock from foreign diseases and pests.

Dr. Logan urged livestock producers to step up their surveillance and to take precautions to protect herds from possible contamination. “If you’ve traveled internationally, don’t risk carrying disease home to your herd. Disinfect your boots before working with your livestock. Producers who feed waste food to swine should be particularly careful to ensure that all scraps are well cooked,” she said. She also suggested that producers limit vehicle traffic and visitors onto their premise, and keep new animals isolated for several days prior to adding them to the existing herd. If your livestock become lame or develop blisters or sores, call your local or state vet immediately!

While FMD vaccine is available, Dr. Logan said it is used only in emergencies, to create a “disease-free” buffer zone around an infected area. Because vaccinated animals will test positive, they cannot be shipped internationally and protocols require the animals to be destroyed as soon as the disease is eradicated.

“Most importantly, FMD outbreaks result in trade embargoes imposed by other countries,” said Dr. Logan.

“South Korea, for instance, had been free of FMD since 1934, but was struck by the virus in late March 2000,” she reported. “Producers in that country intended to export \$400 million worth of pork in 2000, but Japan and its other trading partners immediately shut their doors to South Korean exported animals and products. It can take years to be declared disease-free and reestablish international marketing opportunities.”

“Consider the damage to our economy, if we were to have the disease introduced into the U.S. and exports of live animals and meat were prohibited. Last year, the U.S. shipped out more than \$4.2 billion worth of these commodities. Texas ranked third among all states, shipping out more than \$736 million in animals and meat products,” she said.

“For years, we worried about domestic regulatory diseases that are 'tame' compared to the devastation of foreign animal diseases,” said Dr. Logan. “A global economy brings with it global risks, and we must be prepared for the inevitable threats posed by international trade and travel.”

“I am particularly concerned when cases of FMD occur close to a highly populated area – or near a major international airport,” said Dr. Max Coats, who heads up the TAHC’s animal health programs and field operations. “Because of the virus’ ability to ride the wind, it’s possible that ranching or farming equipment being exported from affected countries could be contaminated. It may sound far-fetched, but with a disease of this impact, we’re always concerned about potential scenarios. Within 24 hours, an animal, animal product, person or piece of equipment can be transported nearly anywhere in the world. There’s always a chance that a virus, pest or dangerous bacteria will be hitching the ride, too.”

“Then there are the items travelers like to tote on long flights, such as sandwiches, delicacies or other food items that could be contaminated by the virus,” he said. Although direct flights from countries affected by FMD are checked carefully, Dr. Coats said there’s always a risk that contaminated items could be smuggled or inadvertently brought into the country by the millions of visitors and returning U.S. citizens who travel internationally. Around 4.5 million British residents, for example, came to the U.S. on direct flights in 1999.

During the past year, more than two dozen countries have been plagued by outbreaks of FMD, and the virus continues to migrate westward, noted Dr. Logan. In early March 2000, Japan reported its first cases since 1908, and Japanese authorities laid blame on imported straw contaminated with the virus.

“Within two weeks of the initial case, Japanese livestock authorities checked more than 25,000 dairies, nearly 27,000 beef cattle farms and almost 3,700 pig farms to determine if there was additional infection,” said Dr. Logan. “If this scenario occurred in Texas, the TAHC field staff would be unable to handle this enormous task alone, and we would have to summon help from private veterinary practitioners, our partners within the state’s emergency management system, and our federal counterparts in the USDA.” (Of the 215 TAHC’ers about 100 are livestock inspectors and around 20 are veterinarians.)

“Swine are highly efficient and effective hosts for FMD,” said Dr. Coats. “And, with more than two million wild or feral swine in Texas, our challenge would be nearly insurmountable if the disease became established in this free-ranging population.”

By Valentine’s Day 2000, reports indicated that more than 500 animals had died from the disease in eastern Mongolia, a large country bordered on the south and east by China (also affected) and by Russia to the north. A year later, FMD outbreaks continue in Mongolia, where winter blizzards also wiped out more than 1.5 million animals.

By Easter last year, Russia reported cases among swine herds in its eastern regions, and in late spring, infection was detected at a pig farm in Kazakhstan, which shares borders with China and

Russia. In August, infection drifted southward into the small country of Tajikistan where cases among cattle and sheep herds were reported.

Two free-grazing cattle herds in northeastern Greece, near the Turkish border, were struck by the disease in July 2000, and surrounding cattle, goat and swine herds were destroyed. In the fall, Turkish governmental authorities requested more than \$43 million in international aid to curtail livestock smuggling in its eastern and southeastern regions and stop the introduction of FMD and its potential spread into Europe.

South American countries were hit by infection in late summer 2000, said Dr. Coats. Paraguay was struck first in early August, followed by outbreaks in Uruguay and Colombia. Argentinean officials blamed their country's outbreak on cattle smuggled from Paraguay. An Argentinean newspaper reported that as many as 20,000 head were illegally smuggled in from Paraguay.

When a Brazilian dairy was hit by the disease, the Brazil's minister of agriculture reported that he suspected bioterrorism, as the virus was of a different strain than the one detected in Paraguay and Argentina. (FMD virus has as many as seven types and 70 differing strains.)

“Argentina is the world's fourth-largest cattle-production country, and producers had planned to expand their exports by \$5 billion in 2000. Brazil is the world's largest exporter of beef. Both countries lost their marketing opportunities when FMD hit the countries,” said Dr. Coats.

“When infection spread to Uruguay, the military shut down all human and animal movement and dropped food into the restricted area from helicopters,” said Dr. Logan, who visited the country last fall. “Animals in the affected area were euthanized and buried within 24 hours, which stopped the spread of disease. Uruguayan officials and producers had prepared for such an outbreak ahead of time by setting up funds to pay producers for their livestock losses.”

FMD also wreaked havoc in South Africa in summer 2000, when viral-contaminated waste food was off-loaded from a foreign vessel and fed to swine. “This situation mirrored the scenario for the tabletop emergency disease exercise in November, conducted cooperatively by the U.S., Canada and Mexico,” said Dr. Coats. “In the simulated outbreak, a South Texas producer collected contaminated waste food from a foreign ship and fed it to his pigs. Within two weeks, routine livestock marketing and movement could have spread the disease across Texas and into several states and Canada. We estimated it would have cost \$50 million to eradicate the disease just in Hidalgo County.”

“We're monitoring the movement of FMD closely. Buffer zones and existing prevention efforts seem to have failed, as one after another, countries are hit by the disease,” said Dr. Coats. “Foreign animal diseases, like FMD, are the ‘gift that keeps on giving,’ as demonstrated by the 2001 resurgence of infection in Taiwan, after the country lost nearly all of its swine herds in 1997 outbreaks.”

“This most recent FMD outbreak affecting England was initially detected by a veterinarian inspecting pigs at a slaughter plant in a town northeast of London. Since then, cases have been disclosed throughout Great Britain, which has about 157,000 livestock farms,” commented Dr. Coats. He said British authorities believe the virus may have been introduced through the feeding of contaminated waste food to swine. Sheep on a nearby farm were exposed and may have spread infection to as many as 25,000 animals when they were hauled to three markets.

“Livestock shows in Great Britain have been cancelled, and animal parks and zoos have been closed. Horse events also have been postponed, even though equine are not susceptible to the disease. Fears are that the virus could be carried and spread either by the horses’ hooves or by the vehicles used to transport the animals,” commented Dr. Coats.

He said French authorities are destroying more than 47,000 British sheep that were recently imported. He pointed out that, in Germany, authorities are taking precautions, destroying susceptible animals that were recently shipped in from Great Britain. In the Netherlands, more than 4,300 susceptible livestock and deer have been killed on farms that have links to Great Britain. Livestock markets in the Netherlands also are being closed for a week, he said.

“Worldwide, nearly two-thirds of the FMD outbreaks are attributed to the introduction and feeding of contaminated meat, meat products or garbage to animals,” said Dr. Logan. She said about a quarter of infection is spread by airborne transmission, and about 10 percent is comprised of infected livestock importations or contaminated objects and people.

Canadian authorities are taking the following actions to address the threat of FMD.

Due to the change in the United Kingdom’s health status, current import conditions for all susceptible commodities eligible for import to Canada have been suspended (swine, cervine embryos, porcine embryos, caprine semen, cervine semen, bovine semen, ovine semen, porcine semen, products and by-products such as milk and certain dairy products and hides and skins). No import permits will be issued until further notice.

Canada has not imported any susceptible live animals, semen or embryos recently from the UK, and has suspended the issuance of import permits for these commodities including animal products considered to be a risk for transmission of the disease from the UK. To date, verification of imports as far back as December 22, 2000 indicate that no animal products at risk have been imported. The suspension of import permits and tracking of product that have entered the country remains in effect until further notice. A suspension is already in effect on imported ruminant meat and meat products from any country, including the UK, that is not certified as BSE-free.

On February 22 and 23, 2001 all Customs Offices were put on alert and provided “Customs Actions” to increase surveillance of passengers and baggage arriving on international flights and were requested to ask all relevant questions of travelers arriving from affected area. This action will also increase secondary inspections by CFIA staff and customs staff are focusing their detector dog activity on UK flights (direct and indirect).

CFIA has committed to send technical assistance to the U.K. for the management of the outbreak which will provide both first hand intelligence on the situation and enhance Canada’s preparedness expertise.

## 5. EVENTS CALENDAR

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

ALBERTA ELK ASSOCIATION will hold two Velvet Removal Certification courses – March 18 in Airdrie and March 24 in Grande Prairie, Alberta. For more information contact AEA office at [altaelk@telusplanet.net](mailto:altaelk@telusplanet.net) or phone 780-980-7582.

ONTARIO DEER AND ELK FARMERS ASSOCIATION CONVENTION will be held on March 23 and 24, 2001 in Mississauga (Toronto) Ontario. For more information phone 519-443-7540, e-mail [odefa@mail2.glen.net.ca](mailto:odefa@mail2.glen.net.ca) or visit <http://www.ontariodeerelkfarmers.com>

SASKATCHEWAN WHITETAIL AND MULE DEER CONVENTION will hold their 2001 Convention on March 23 and 24, 2001 at the Saskatoon Inn, in Saskatoon Saskatchewan Canada. For more information, e-mail Lisa at [info@saskdeer.com](mailto:info@saskdeer.com) or phone 306-783-5257 or visit <http://www.saskdeer.com>.

SASKATCHEWAN ELK BREEDERS ASSOC. CONVENTION will be held in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada on March 29 to 31, 2001. Please call 306-924-9790, fax 306-924-9792 or visit our website at <http://www.elkbreeders.sk.ca> for more information.

AWMDA ANNUAL CONVENTION & TRADESHOW. The Alberta Whitetail and Mule Deer Association Annual Convention and Tradeshow will be held April 6 to 8, 2001 at the Ramada Inn, Edmonton Alberta Canada. Contact: Alberta Whitetail and Mule Deer Association 5102 - 54 Avenue, Camrose Alberta T4V 3C9 Phone: 780-672-5988; Fax: 780-672-5978 [info@albertadeer.com](mailto:info@albertadeer.com) web: <http://www.albertadeer.com>

WISCONSIN DEER AND ELK FARMERS CONVENTION will be held on April 20-21, 2001. Call 888-233-1667 for details or e-mail to [info@wcdefa.org](mailto:info@wcdefa.org) or visit <http://www.wcdefa.org>

NORTHEAST DEER AND ELK FARMERS CONVENTION will be held in West Lebanon, New Hampshire on the weekend of April 20-22 at the Ramada Inn in White Rive Jct. For more information contact Missy Blackwell at [blackwel@zwi.net](mailto:blackwel@zwi.net) or Hank Dimuzio at 802-388-8979.

EAST CENTRAL BRANCH OF NADEFA spring meeting will be held in Morgantown, West Virginia, USA on April 28, 2001. For more information contact Thelma Morgan at 814-694-2298 ([tjdoe@aol.com](mailto:tjdoe@aol.com)) or Tammi Grandia at 304-768-0344.

Many more events, including deer/elk sales, tradeshow and workshops are listed in the Calendar section of [Deerfarmer.com](http://events.deerfarmer.com) that can be found at <http://events.deerfarmer.com>. Take advantage of this free service to list your upcoming events.

## 6. DEERFARMER.COM NEWS

Here are some of the recent developments at Deerfarmer.com:

1. Global Deer & Elk Farm Directory now operational - the site is located at <http://www.globaldeer.com>. It also can be reached using <http://www.dfuid.com> and <http://www.elkdirectory.com>.

The new Directory has a number of enhanced features not found on the previous version. These include:

- The Directory is self-managed – you add in your listing and you make the changes when you want to. Each listing is protected by a password, so that only you (or the webmaster) can change the information on your farm.
- The new directory has the capability to include all deer and elk species, and farms in the U.K., Europe, Australia and New Zealand (and many others).
- You get your own web page for your deer/elk farm listing. No more competition with dozens of other farms on the same page! You have a whole page all to yourself to promote your deer/elk and related products and services!
- You have your own private bulletin board! We created a field called “Farm News” that allows you to post information on animals for sale, upcoming events or any other news about your farm. And because you have access to your listing, this can be updated as frequently as you want!
- The database behind the Directory is “live”. When you add a farm listing or make a change, the updates take effect immediately. No e-mailing your requests and waiting for the webmaster to make the changes. You do it when you want!
- This Directory accepts and reports much more information than the previous one. This gives you an opportunity to promote ALL your products and services, and tell potential customers/buyers much more about your farm and deer business. One photograph can also be included with your listing.
- This Directory has a very powerful, but simple and easy to use search capability. Visitors and buyers can easily find the farms that meet their criteria.
- The Farm Directory introduces the use of the “DFUID” (Deer Farm Universal Identifier). As discussed above, this unique ID (which you can select) for each deer/elk farm is a powerful marketing and trace-back tool.

We are transferring the listings in our old Farm Directory to Global Deer & Elk Farm Directory now. However, we encourage you to go ahead and add your listing here immediately. But first check to see if you are already listed (by using the Search function). If your farm is in the Directory, call or e-mail the webmaster – [webmaster@deerfamer.com](mailto:webmaster@deerfamer.com) to get your password that will allow you to edit and update your listing.



2. Discussion Forums active - if you have not recently visited our Discussion Forums at <http://www.deerforum.com>, then you should check it out. There are numerous postings every day with plenty of very good information and advice. We also get many news releases and media articles here at Deerfarmer.com. These are posted in the Industry and Association News forum as soon as they are received. So it is a good place to check to keep informed about what is happening in our industry.

3. Public information website - so far the following associations have expressed interest in participating in a public information website on deer and elk farming ([deerfarming.org](http://deerfarming.org) and [elkfarming.org](http://elkfarming.org)): Saskatchewan Elk Breeders Association, North American Deer Farmers Association, Utah Elk Breeders Association, and the Iowa Elk Breeders Association. We would like to see a few more associations agree to participate before we go ahead.

## **7. SUBSCRIPTION SERVICES**

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

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

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

## 8. CONTACT INFORMATION

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

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