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## 1. HANDLING WHITETAILS – PART III

[By Len Jubinville of Delclayna Whitetail & Bison Co. Ltd. and [deerstore.com](http://deerstore.com)]

Hello, again! I apologize for the delay of this article. You're probably wondering how much longer the deer that we rounded up in the Part II article will have to remain in the gathering pen before they can go back to pasture!!! Actually 3 hours or 40 days is no big deal, as long as your animals are fed, and comfortable. You'll find they adapt very quickly to solid fence holding pens.

In the case of these articles, it happens to be 3 hours before we handle the first deer and 5 hours by the time we handle the last one. The group that we had gathered from pen 5 in Article II consisted of 20 does and 30 fawns.

Before any handling of animals begins, I would like to share the checklist of items most often required and things to do that we use at Delclayna:

1. Collect all paperwork and appoint someone to look after this task.
2. Figure out which pen different groups or individual animals will end up after handling and post list by junction box.

3. Have tags ready and sorted.
4. Tagging pliers (2 preferably).
5. Medicine chest filled with emergency products and spare needles.
6. Pail of warm soapy water to wash tags.
7. Is the Ivomec bottle & gun hanging on the squeeze with adequate amount of product and how about other medicines?
8. Is the tool kit with a handsaw, hammer, screwdrivers, wire, nails, screws and duct tape etc. at the handling facilities? You never know when you will have to do minor repairs in a hurry.
9. Are the “dogs” in good shape and are they at the facilities? A piece of wood dowelling with a piece of crispy plastic attached to the end that we shake behind the deer to make them move is what we call “dogs”.
10. Hoof and antler cutters.
11. Eye covers – Something out of fabric or cloth to blindfold the deer if they’re going to be in the squeeze for a while, e.g., a neck warmer works well.
12. Make sure all gates operate smoothly.
13. Check your deer squeeze or cradle (in our case the Deerhandler™) to make sure all is functioning, as it should.
14. Are all the holding pens that you will be using ready to accept deer? Example:
  - gates are open or closed as required
  - fresh water (this is important as deer dehydrate rather quickly under stress)
  - feed (only if the deer will be held for more than 6 hours).
15. Hang your sign, “Handling Deer in Progress” with instructions to visitors where people dropping by will easily see it.
16. Delegate specific jobs to each person that will be helping.

[The handling system that we’re using for this article is the “Homesteader” by Delclayna at <http://www.deerstore.com>. For our readers with Internet access it’s also possible for you to view this system in motion with animation by clicking where it says animations on our <http://www.deerstore.com> home page. Printing yourself a copy of the above plan would assist you in following this article.]

Every little thing that you can do to help reduce the stress on your deer when being handled is very important. One example of that is to make sure that the guillotine gates between the gathering pen, the crowding alley, and the crowding pen are opened prior to rounding up the deer in the gathering

pen. This allows the deer time to familiarize themselves with all the pens and to go through the different openings at their leisure.

Another important factor to keep in mind is that stress on deer increases when they get separated from their group. For that reason we like to keep all the deer of one group together as long as possible. We never do any sorting prior to handling. All of our sorting of animals happens at the junction box after they have gone through the Deerhandler™. We have found that a junction box is a very important asset in a deer handling system.

Things happen fairly quickly when handling whitetails and sometimes you need to be able to make decisions just as fast. A good junction box with five or six different options to let animals out will give you the flexibility you need. Not only that it makes sorting easy it also gives you and your customers a chance to inspect an individual animal before making the final decision of where to send it.

Physically going in amongst the deer to handle them also adds to their stress. That is why we prefer systems that allow you to handle your animals from outside the pens and away from the gate that your deer have to go through. Deer have a very keen smell and when they can smell someone by the gate that they're supposed to go through, it just makes it another way to add stress. Guillotine gates that are operated from outside the pens and from behind the animals are a good efficient way to solve this problem.

Our GG46 (46" wide and 46" high) guillotine gate is what we recommend for locations where groups will be moving through. Example: between the gathering pen, the crowding alley and all crowding pens. The GG30 (30" wide by 46" high) guillotine gate would be used where single animals would mostly be passing through. Example: The junction box would have a series of GG30. All guillotine gates are preferably operated from behind the animals by means of a cable and pulley system. Confirming that everything is functioning properly, and that our people are ready I would say it's time to handle deer.

Flushing the deer into the crowding alley is done from outside the pen. With two or three sliding viewing panels on the 40' fence wall opposite the guillotine gate to the crowding alley you have a few workers looking at the deer. Beside one of these viewing panels would be the pull handle to drop the guillotine gate. By now all the deer should be in the crowding alley and if not, just shake a dog and in no time they will move in and you can drop the gate. With all the deer now in the crowding alley, you repeat the same procedure to flush them into the outside crowding pen.

Now would be the time to put feed and water in your gathering pen and crowding alley if you are planning to keep animals in them for a while. One of the features of this design is when you need to hold animals in the gathering pen for a long period of time, they can go and hide in the crowding alley while you put out feed for them.

Moving the deer to the inside crowding pen would be done the same way as before except we will slowly drop the guillotine gate so as to divide our group into two or three. Holding the guillotine gates and the one sliding gate open in our tunnel system, we push deer in using our push wall. Our push wall is also equipped with viewing ports to help with stocking our tunnels with five or six deer. Again, this is achieved by slowly dropping the guillotine gate to cut out the desired number of

animals. Once the tunnels are stocked up, take time to roll the rolling wall back to give your deer more room.

Lights installed in your tunnel system will help for moving animals and reading tags. Using the guillotine and sliding gates in the tunnel system, you separate your deer so as to end up with only one in the scale tunnel before your squeeze.

At Delclayna we prefer having the scale before the squeeze. There are three reasons for this. First, it allows us to adjust the width setting on the Deerhandler™ according to the weight of the animal. Second it gives us the information we need to calculate the proper dosage for the medicine we're giving that particular deer and thirdly it gives us more time to fill out records and decide which pen this deer will be sent to.

Continue handling your animals one by one and as efficiently as possible. Process all the deer in the tunnels and then take time to restock them with a new group. Repeat this process and you will find that with the right equipment and a well designed handling system sorting, treating and tagging of this particular group of deer can easily be achieved in less than two hours.

For the purpose of this article, the does are sent back to the gathering pen, the buck fawns to the crowding alley and the female fawns to two different 8' by 12' holding pens as they are sold to two different customers. If at all possible after handling, we like to hold our deer in a pen at the facilities and release them in groups to their designated pastures. We find this to be safer for the deer and it gives us one last chance to inspect a group of animals before releasing them. Once inspected, we open the appropriate gates and let them find their way out to their pastures.

In this case, our customers are not able to pick up their female fawns for a week so we release one group in the crowding alley and crowding pen and the other group into the gathering pen. With the job done, we go in for a wholesome venison stew and retire for the evening counting our buck\$.

P.S. I would like to mention an important point missed in part II. When it comes time to flush your deer out of their pastures, remember to try and get them all down the alley on the first try. You will come to learn that each pasture is different and will require its own unique way of entering it with the right moves and noise level to be successful the first time. It's so much easier if it can all happen in one group and on the first try.

In the next and final article of this series on Handling Whitetails, I will talk about the evolution of the Deerhandler™ and the Deerhandler System. We will cover what to expect from the different types of crushes, cradles, squeezes or whatever you want to call it equipment that's out there on the market today.

In the meantime, I say goodbye for now and may your "doe" make you more buck\$.

Len

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## **2. DIRECTORS' RESPONSIBILITIES AND LIABILITIES**

*[This article is based on information provided by Kirk Sisson, Q.C., of the law firm of Sisson Warren Sinclair of Red Deer, Alberta Canada. Because of the differences in jurisdictions, this article is for general information only, and should NOT be construed as providing legal advice. Please contact a local legal professional if you have any specific questions or concerns.]*

**I**f you are active in deer and elk industry associations, you may serve one or more terms on the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors govern most non-profit organizations. If you are asked to serve (or are currently a director) on any non-profit board, you should be aware of your legal responsibilities and liabilities. Here are some of the things you should know.

### **Directors' Rule**

Directors do not have to be perfect. Directors only have to demonstrate honesty, good faith, loyalty and reasonableness of conduct, given the circumstances.

### **DIRECTORS' DUTIES**

Directors manage the business and affairs of an association. A director's duty can be formally stated in two parts: a) a director must act honestly and in good faith and in the best interests of the association; and b) a director must exercise the care, diligence and skill that a normally prudent person would exercise in comparable circumstances.

The officers of the association (secretary, treasurer, president, etc.) have the same duties and liabilities as directors. This applies whether or not the officer is also a director.

### **Fiduciary Duty**

A director owes the association the duties of loyalty, honesty and good faith. These are fiduciary duties. The personal interests of any director must not conflict with the association. If this happens, the director is liable to pay for any loss the association suffers and has to pay to the association any benefits the director wrongfully received.

In short, directors:

1. Must not take opportunities for themselves that are available to the association.
2. Should not allow their personal interests to conflict with the association's.
3. Should declare their interests in contracts with the association.
4. Should refrain from voting (and probably even taking part in the discussion) on resolutions where they have a personal interest.
5. Have an obligation to keep association information confidential.
6. Must keep in mind that their decisions must be in the best interests of the members of the association.

[In my opinion, this is where the greatest risks lie with deer and elk associations. The association is often the point of contact for requests by buyers for animals and products. The board and/or executive MUST make ALL association members aware of these opportunities].

### **Standards of Performance**

Directors must exercise the “care, diligence and skill that a reasonably prudent person would exercise in comparable circumstances.” This standard of conduct requires directors to take all reasonable care applicable to the circumstances, examples being:

1. Directors should regularly attend committee and board meetings.
2. A duty to become informed before acting.
3. Insisting on receipt of enough information on the operations and issues affecting the association to be able to make informed decisions.
4. Making such inquiries as necessary, including obtaining advice from outside experts, to ensure decisions are informed.

The result does not have to be perfect because directors are often required to take risks in advancing the association’s interest, but the risks have to be calculated and the decision supportable.

### **Duty to Manage**

Directors, as a Board of Directors, manage the business and affairs of the association. Practically speaking, it is impossible for the board to attend to every detail of the organization’s operation. Generally, the role of the board is more one of supervision than of hands-on management.

The board may delegate duties to officers but the board can not give up its general duty to manage. In other words, directors should not abdicate their duty through excess or irresponsible delegation.

### **Reliance on Professional Advice**

Sometimes, a director’s standard of performance on technical or complicated matters will be good enough if the director relies on others, e.g., accountant, lawyer, engineer, etc.

However, a director must still make sure advice is obtained from professionals who are independent and have appropriate experience and expertise. Directors can not ignore their own knowledge of the facts or fail to exercise responsible judgment. In the end, directors’ decisions can be supported by professional advice; but the decision can not be delegated to such professionals.

### **DIRECTORS’ LIABILITY**

General tort principles can make directors personally liable if they have intentionally or negligently caused harm to third parties. Examples of where directors can be held personally liable for damages include:

1. fraudulently inducing the association to breach a contract;
2. improper or unjust dismissal of employees; and

3. libel and slander, and so on.

Please note that directors, who act in good faith and within the scope of their authority, will not be held liable for the tortuous acts of the association. It is only when directors act in bad faith or outside the scope of their authority, will they have a problem. For example, an employee may be fired without just cause, but the dismissal may be in the best interests of the association.

### **Statutory Liability**

There are numerous federal and provincial laws under which directors and officers can incur personal liability. Most of the statutes make directors civilly liable for failing to ensure the association does what the law says it should. Some legislation provides quasi-criminal liability if the director authorizes, directs, participates or acquiesces in the offence.

## **LIABILITY AVOIDANCE**

There are three ways directors can reduce the risk of liability – due diligence, disclosure of personal interests and self defense.

### **Due Diligence**

Mistakes happen. Directors will not be liable for errors made in circumstances where they acted honestly, in good faith and made reasonable efforts to make an informed decision that was in the association's interests. Simply put, assume some directors face personal lawsuits because they made a bad decision. If the bad decision was made after due diligence, the directors should be all right.

Due diligence can be established if the record or evidence shows the directors made an informed decision. This is demonstrated by:

1. obtaining necessary information relating to the issues involved;
2. examining the information;
3. making inquiries;
4. where appropriate, seeking outside professional advice; and
5. taking the time necessary to ensure that the decisions are informed decisions.

It helps if directors put in place systems to address compliance and that the systems are periodically reviewed for adequacy. That is why a Director's Handbook, including various check sheets, are commonly developed by societies and associations. Of course, if check sheets are available and not followed, then the directors will likely pay.

### **Disclosure of Personal Interests**

Directors must disclose any personal interest they may have in association dealings at the first opportunity in writing. Alternatively, the director can disclose the interest orally and request the nature and extent of the interest to be entered in the minutes of a meeting.

A director with a material interest must not vote on any resolution to approve the contract. If a director or officer does not disclose his interest and the contract is approved then:

1. the contract could be voided because the conflicted director is present or even just counted in determining the quorum at the meeting authorizing the agreement; and
2. the director could have to pay the association any profit he made from the contract.

It is a good idea for the association to maintain a register of disclosures. The register should be open to examination by members as well as directors.

### **Self defense**

A director who is present at a directors' meeting is deemed to have consented to resolutions passed or actions taken unless:

1. the director requests that an abstention or dissent be entered in the minutes;
2. the director sends written dissent to the secretary of the meeting before the meeting is adjourned;
3. the director sends a dissent by registered mail or delivers it to the registered office of the association immediately after the meeting is adjourned, or
4. the director otherwise proves that he or she did not consent to the resolution or action.

A director who votes for or consents to a resolution or action is not entitled to dissent. So, if you think the Board is wrong, it is not enough to abstain – vote against the motion and make sure the vote is recorded.

## **INDEMNITY AND INSURANCE**

There are steps that can be taken to shield a director from paying for mistakes. Unfortunately, the protection only helps the wallet. The hassle, inconvenience and waste of time incurred dealing with the problem still remains.

### **Indemnity**

An association may indemnify a current or former director or officer against all costs, charges and expenses, including an amount paid to settle an action or satisfy a judgment, reasonably incurred by the director in respect to any civil, criminal or administrative action if:

1. the director acted honestly and in good faith with a view to the best interests of the association; and
2. in the case of a criminal or administrative action that is enforced by a fine, the director had reasonable grounds for believing his or her conduct was lawful.

A couple of things can be done to ensure that a director does not face personal loss. First the association's by-laws should state that if a director's actions meet the statutory fiduciary requirements, the director would be indemnified. Second, protection for a director may be improved by an agreement for indemnification between the director and the association.



Now the only problem is whether or not the association has the money to pay the director back. This leads to the topic of directors' insurance.

### **Insurance**

An association may purchase and maintain insurance for the benefit of current and former directors against liability incurred in the capacity as a director or officer of the association. Of course, the general exception still applies. The director must act honestly and in good faith and in the best interests of the association, otherwise the insurance will not cover the problem.

Contact your insurance agent for more information and options available.

### **Risk Management**

Risk management is not buying insurance or winning lawsuits. It is protecting and conserving the association's resources and providing membership services sensibly. The purpose of risk management is to improve your operations by having risks acknowledged and controlled. Remember, insurance should be the last decision – not the first – otherwise it is substituting action for thought.

### **Acting as a Director**

If you are to act in a responsible manner as a director of an incorporated non-profit organization, follow these steps:

1. Attend all board meetings.
2. Ensure that you receive and read, prior to meetings, all documents and reports on which voting will take place.
3. Review with care all minutes of the meetings.
4. Keep notes of your impressions of the meetings.
5. Keep a notebook of all minutes and other important documents.
6. Insist on written professional opinions from specialists on whose advice the Board is expected to act on.
7. Insist the minutes record any disclosure, dissent, or refrain from voting by you or any other member of the Board.
8. Vote against any disbursement if there is a question of the insolvency of the corporation.
9. Send a letter by registered mail to the non-profit corporation if the Secretary or Chairperson refuses to record your disclosure, dissent or refrain from voting.
10. Know the nature and extent of the association by-laws and policies.
11. Install internal controls to oversee cheques and execution of contracts.

12. Maintain a director's manual containing all corporate documents and relevant information, and ensure that is kept up to date.
13. Comply with the duty of confidentiality for all corporate information.

### 3. PLANNING YOUR A.I. PROGRAM

*[Prepared from notes taken at a presentation by Kevin Moore at the Alberta Elk Association convention in January 2001 in Edmonton Alberta].*

Even though you may have calving and velveting on your mind, it is not too early to begin planning your artificial insemination program for this upcoming fall.

Let's review why you may want to consider A.I. for your deer does and elk cows.

1. *Access to superior genetics* – the market pays a premium for superior animals. Thus you can increase the profitability of your operations. As the numbers of deer and elk continue to grow, the market will become even more competitive. Ordinary or inferior stock will not be as profitable.
2. *Greater convenience* – with A.I. you can breed your does and cows to the best without having to worry about logistical problems of moving live animals.

According to Kevin Moore, there are four factors involved in the management of an effective A.I. program.

1. *Semen quality* – there is not much you can do about this except have faith that the collection was done right. However, do stick to buying from known and reputable breeders that use experienced and qualified technicians.
2. *Technical ability* – you do not need a veterinarian to do the artificial insemination, but you do need to have someone who knows what he/she is doing.
3. *Female selection* – you need to select your best female as per tips given below.
4. *Female preparation* – you should prepare your selected does or cows prior to artificial insemination.

In terms of selecting breeding stock for your A.I. program, reject females that fit the following criteria:

- a. Have experienced birthing problems
- b. Are difficult to handle
- c. Have been poor mothers in the past
- d. Have health problems
- e. Are in poor condition
- f. Are nursing their first calf or fawn
- g. If you are at all unsure whether they should be included.

A good reason to select a female is that they have the desired genetic background and do not have any of the problems identified above.

Once the females have been selected for your A.I. program, they need to be prepared. This involves the following:

- a. *Nutrition* – wean fawns or calves, increase rations to females and deworm.
- b. *Social structure* – put into breeding groups as soon as possible so that the social structure gets established; once done, do not mix the animals.
- c. *Familiarity* – get the females familiar with the facility; run them through several times and give them a treat. This will reduce their stress which negatively affects fertility.

The conception success rate should be 65% to 70%. You may want to have a back-up buck or bull in place to ensure that the females produce young.

Also remember that the pass down of desired traits is never 100%. In fact with deer and elk it is quite low. Therefore if you are breeding to a 230 B&C buck, don't expect that all his offspring will have a similar rack – a few may and most won't. However, an effective A.I. program is still the best way to improve the quality of your herd.

#### **4. RESEARCH REPORT ON LIGNOCAINE USE FOR ANTLER REMOVAL**

[*Evaluation of techniques for lignocaine hydrochloride analgesia of velvet antler of adult stags* by P. R. Wilson, K J Stafford, et.al., Massey University, Inst Vet Anim & Biomed Sci, Palmerston North, NEW ZEALAND, New Zealand Veterinary Journal, 2000, Vol. 48, Issue 6, pp 182-187]

##### **Purpose**

To evaluate the effectiveness of various routes of administration and doses of local anesthetic (LA) to provide analgesia of the velvet antler of adult stags.

##### **Methods**

In Experiment 1, antlers from 50 red deer stags, greater than or equal to 2-years-old were allocated to 1 of 4 treatment groups (n = 25 antlers/group) to receive injections with 2% lignocaine hydrochloride as follows: High-dose (1 ml/cm pedicle circumference) or Low-dose ring-block (0.4 ml/cm pedicle circumference) or, High-site or Low-site regional nerve block (5 ml per site, both of which included the auriculopalpebral nerve). An electrical stimulus was applied before application of LA and then each minute for up to 4 minutes after LA injection. If no response was observed, analgesia was tested with a saw cut. If no response occurred, the antler was cut at that time. If the animal responded, a further wait time was applied until 4 minutes had elapsed, at which time observations ceased.

In Experiment 2, 10 primary and 50 re-growth antlers were given a High-dose ring-block and tested with a saw cut after 1 minute (n = 30) or 2 minute (n = 30). If no response occurred, the antler was removed. If a response occurred, further 1-minute wait periods were applied.

## Results

In the High-dose ring-block and High-site nerve-block groups, 24/25 and 21/25 antlers were removed without response by 2 minutes, compared with 20/25 and 15/25 antlers in the Low-dose ring-block and Low-site nerve-block groups, respectively. The High-dose ring-block provided more effective analgesia after 3 minutes than the Low-dose ring-block, as assessed by the number of stags that did not respond to the electrical stimulus ( $p = 0.008$ ), or subsequent antler removal ( $p = 0.050$ ). The numbers of antlers removed without response after 1 or 2 minutes were greater using the High-site nerve-block than the Low-site nerve-block ( $p = 0.002$  and  $p = 0.037$ , respectively). In all but the High-dose ring-block group, at least 1 stag required further LA after 4 minutes, before antler could be humanely removed.

In Experiment 2, stags reacted to a saw-cut test on 6/30 antlers, 1 minute after a High-dose ring-block, compared with 1/30 antlers after 2 minutes ( $p = 0.051$ ).

## Conclusion

The High-dose ring-block produced the most effective and rapid analgesia.

## Clinical relevance

A High-dose ring-block with a 2-minute wait period should be the preferred method for achieving local analgesia for velvet antler removal.

## 5. EVENTS CALENDAR

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

NEW ZEALAND DEER BRANCH VETERINARY ASSOCIATION 18<sup>th</sup> annual conference will be held May 28 to May 30, 2001 at the Coachman Hotel, Palmerston North, New Zealand. Contact Professor Peter R. Wilson, Massey University at <mailto:P.R.Wilson@massey.ac.nz>

SAFARI CLUB INTERNATIONAL – NORTHERN ALBERTA CHAPTER will hold its first annual fundraiser banquet at the St. Albert Inn on June 16, 2001. For more information call James Sheret at 780-675-7120 or <mailto:albertawhitetals@telusplanet.net>

ALBERTA REINDEER ASSOCIATION will hold their summer field day on July 7<sup>th</sup> near Calgary. For more details, contact Sharon at <mailto:maxsharon@hotmail.com> or phone 780-939-3645.

TEXAS DEER ASSOCIATION 2001 Convention will be held Sept. 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup>, 2001 at the Omni San Antonio Hotel, San Antonio, Texas USA. For more information or to register, contact TDA at 877-912-3337 or <mailto:info@texasdeerassociation.com> or visit their website at <http://www.texasdeerassociation.com>

WORLD DEER CONGRESS III and NADEFA 2002 Annual conference will be held on Feb. 20 to 23, 2002 in Austin Texas USA. For more information, call 301-459-7708 or <mailto:info@nadefa.org> or visit their website at <http://www.nadefa.org>

Many more events, including deer/elk sales, tradeshows and workshops are listed in the Calendar section of [Deerfarmer.com](http://www.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](http://www.deerfarmer.com):

1. Global Deer & Elk Farm Directory – we have now completed the transfer of the listings from our old Farm Directory to the new Global Deer & Elk Farm Directory. As well we have added hundreds of other farm listings we obtained from public sources (over 1,000 farms now listed). So 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 – <mailto:webmaster@deerfamer.com> to get your password that will allow you to edit and update your listing. If you are not yet listed, and want to be, just add yourself in using the live on-line form.

The Global Deer & Elk Farm Directory is located at <http://www.globaldeer.com>. It also can be reached using <http://www.dfuid.com> and <http://www.elkdirectory.com>

## 7. SUBSCRIPTION SERVICES

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## 8. 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.

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

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