

Welcome to the OCTOBER 2002 edition of the *Deer Farmers' Digest*, a monthly electronic newsletter published for those interested in raising deer, elk and reindeer. This *Digest* is distributed via e-mail to over 3,000 readers in 32 countries.

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**\*\*\*\*\* ELK \* BYTES \*\*\*\*\***

Here is how Enron would run an elk farm. They borrow two elk bulls. They then sell three of them to their publicly-listed company, using letters of credit opened by their brother-in-law at the bank. Then they execute a debt/equity swap with an associated offer so that they get all four bulls back, with a tax exemption for five bulls. The semen rights for the six bulls are transferred via an intermediary to a Cayman Island company secretly owned by the majority shareholder who sells the rights to all seven bulls back to the listed company. The annual report says the company owns eight bulls, with an option on one more! The public thinks you are the best elk farmer ever and is clamoring to invest in your business.

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## 1. UPDATE ON TESTS FOR CWD

GeneThera, Inc., announced that it is making available to state animal health agencies, a field blood collection kit to test for Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) in both live and deceased animals. Working in conjunction with the blood collection kit, the actual testing for the presence of CWD will be done at the GeneThera labs.

Dr. Glen Zebarth, an industry expert, stated that he would oversee a blind study with the state animal health agencies to ensure validation of tests in field applications.

GeneThera built the CWD test – to be known as CWDSignal™ – on its proprietary molecular diagnosis platform to allow high sensitivity results and volume testing. To date, the Company has received and successfully tested a limited number of normal and contaminated CWD blood samples from Colorado, Minnesota and Wyoming.

The “blind study” of GeneThera’s test will begin with various state and federal agencies’ labs that will test both CWD-infected and non-infected samples. The tested samples will then be compared to the agencies’ biology reports.

Dr. Glen Zebarth will publish a final report. “I invite any agency concerned with the CWD crisis to my lab. Bring your blood for testing and verification and take the CWDSignal™ kits home. Let’s eliminate the mass-slaughter programs of these animals,” stated Dr. Tony Milici, GeneThera’s Chief Executive Officer.

The GeneThera processing lab is highly automated and uses Fluorogenic Real Time PCR (F-PCR) testing. The Company has integrated robotics and data collection and analysis databases with the F-PCR platform. This platform, combined with GeneThera-developed proprietary diagnostic software for genetic expression, allows high through-put testing.

At the press conference, Dr. Milici stated that his processing capacity would allow for 40,000 tests per month by December 2002 and would increase to 160,000 tests per month by 2003. The CWDSignal™ test will average \$65.00 and the results will be available within 24 hours.

“We need a fast-track validation and acceptance for CWDSignal™ from the state and federal agencies to begin mass volume. Large scale sequencing of the DNA field tests will allow us to study the genomic make-up of CWD and lead us to a therapy or a vaccine,” stated Dr. Milici.

According to Dr. Zebarth, the test is in the developmental stage. It is a blood test that measures an indirect marker within the red blood cell; the test does not detect the prion itself since the prion is not found directly in the blood or meat. The test is based on confirmed, published and peer-reviewed data out of Scotland.

Several steps still remain before the test can be put into use. The test needs to be validated on a larger number of positive animals. A blind study is currently being done with animals that are being depopulated out of South Dakota, Minnesota and Nebraska. The next step will be to conduct a pathogenesis study in which animals are intentionally infected. The animals would then be continually monitored and tested to detect the presence of the disease and to confirm how early the illness can be detected using this test. The final step will be to apply for government licensing, and the establishment of approved protocols for its use.

According to Dr. Zebarth, two other related CWD studies are currently in progress. Colorado State University is doing evaluation studies to develop a more rapid screening test on the brains of dead animals. This test, commonly known as the Elisa test, would greatly benefit the meat industry.

Another on-going research project being conducted is the “Varying Genetic Susceptibility of Genetic Strains of Elk” study. It is designed to find out if certain genetic strains of elk are possibly immune to CWD. Research is 15 months along on this 5 year study.

[GeneThera is certainly open to including deer and elk farms in Canada and the United States in their validation trials. The ideal situation is one where your farm is slaughtering significant numbers of animals and sending the brains in for CWD testing. The GeneThera test requires drawing blood before or immediately after slaughter, and then sending the samples to Denver for analysis. The results of the two tests for CWD can then be compared.

There are NO costs to participate in the validation trials – GeneThera will provide you with the collection kits, and will pay the FedEx charges to send the samples to their lab. You, of course, are responsible for the labour and time to collect the blood samples. If you are interested in participating in these trials, please contact Dr. Tony Milici at GeneThera at 303-463-6371. Ed]

## **2. POSSIBLE CAUSE OF CWD DISCOVERED**

*[Adapted from an article by Bill Graham in the Kansas City Star, Sept. 9, 2002]*

According to this story, Dr. Janne Drisko, a physician, treated a patient with a fatal human brain degeneration that’s closely related to the mysterious mad-cow and chronic wasting diseases.

Her patient died in 2000. But the woman’s life had been prolonged by heavy doses of antioxidants - vitamins that reduce inflammation. Drisko didn’t know why, and she worried about the unknowns.

“Until these diseases are fully understood, there’s no telling what is going to happen,” Drisko said. “If you’re not looking for the true causative agent, then it’s a missed opportunity to stop and eradicate the disease.”

Her search for clues led to the Spiroplasma bacterium. Spiroplasma is a corkscrewing filament with no cell wall. But it has a tough cholesterol coating and the ability to survive extreme conditions that kill other bacteria.

Her patient died from Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, and she found the characteristics of Spiroplasma parallel the characteristics of that disease.

The bacterium’s toughness and tendencies, she said, also make it a candidate for causing other transmissible spongiform encephalopathies such as mad cow in cattle, scrapie in sheep, and chronic wasting disease (CWD) in deer and elk.

So Drisko joined forces with Frank O. Bastian, a Tulane University neuropathologist who has repeatedly linked the bacterium to the diseases. Over the last year, Drisko arranged for brain samples from elk and deer with chronic wasting disease to be sent to Tulane.

In July, Drisko veered from a family vacation to visit a Colorado elk ranch infected with chronic wasting. She's collecting feed samples and planning to collect insects for Bastian to test for Spiroplasma.

Chronic wasting is not thought to afflict humans. But science once thought the same about the mad-cow disease outbreak in Britain, which killed more than 100 people in 2001 and hammered the nation's beef industry.

Confusion about the disease causes Spiroplasma to be overlooked as a possible cause, Drisko said. The bacterium, which causes corn stunt and other plant diseases, wasn't identified by science until the early 1970s.

In the late 70s, Bastian used an electron microscope and found Spiroplasma in brain tissue from a Creutzfeldt-Jakob patient. Later he injected the bacterium into mice and produced a spongiform disease. Research involving proteins and antibodies showed other links.

In recent years, Bastian found Spiroplasma DNA in diseased brain tissue. But he did not find any in disease-free controls. Last year he published the work in a peer-reviewed medical journal.

"If I'm able to show Spiroplasma consistently in these diseases and not in the controls," Bastian said, "its presence would be a useful marker for the disease."

But his work remains unknown outside microbiology circles.

Another theory has landed all the publicity and most of the research dollars since the mid-1980s. That theory is that cellular proteins called prions mutate into abnormal forms, killing tissues. This is thought to occur without the direction of a genetic code. Prion theory replaced an earlier leading theory that viruses slow to emerge caused the spongiform diseases. But prion research has not found cures or definitive proof that they cause the diseases.

Drisko and Bastian believe that abnormal prions exist with the diseases. But they think Spiroplasma is triggering the abnormal prion changes as a way to hide in cells from the body's immune system.

The bacterium's toughness might allow it to survive in cattle or wildlife feeds that include high-protein supplements made from rendered animals, Drisko said. That is how many experts think the diseases have spread.

Prion research can provide some tests and treatments, Drisko said, because some infective agent is present in prions. But, if the agent is present but has not yet produced prions or other signs, the diseases can avoid detection. Spongiform diseases can take years to develop after exposure, experts say.

Bastian has a \$125,000 grant from the National Institutes of Health for his DNA work, and he's planning to expand. The Department of Agriculture is giving him scrapie samples for research.

Experts say what Bastian needs to prove is that Spiroplasma is present as a cause and not as a result of the infection.

"It's up to them to produce the data that are strong enough so others follow their lead," said Janice

Miller, a chronic wasting research director at the agency's veterinary laboratory in Ames, Iowa.

Drisko said Bastian was close. "I can't tell you how many things in science that were originally met with scorn and derision later turned out to be right," she said.

[Rich Forrest of the CWD Foundation has been working with Dr. Bastian by providing him with positive CWD samples and helping raise additional research funds. If prion type diseases are caused by this bacterium, this would also explain why Italian scientists, as reported in our August 2002 issue, found antibiotics significantly slowed progress of the disease. Ed]

### **3. DEER FARMING IN NORWAY**

*[By Ingrid G. Haarstad. Reprinted from the British Deer Farmers Association "Deer Farming" magazine, Summer 2002]*

Since the early 1980's, forty-two deer farms have been established in Norway. The farms are small and only a few have reached the target number of animals. The number of breeding females is 500 red deer and 150 fallow deer. In the future, these farmers hope to have 2,100 breeding hinds, of which 600 would be fallow. Norwegian agriculture is in a time of change, so it is reasonable to suppose that there will be more new deer farms created as well.

The Norwegian Deer Breeders Association was founded in 1988. Today the Association has about 80 members. An informative magazine is sent out two to three times a year. The Association joined the Federation of European Deer Farmers Association in 1997.

All Norwegian farmed red deer originated from the wild Norwegian population. These animals represent the northernmost distribution of red deer in the world. There is only one documented importation of red deer to Norway. One hundred years ago, one stag and four hinds were imported from Germany. The animals were put into the wild red deer population on the island of Otteroya, north of Trondheim. We are now waiting for the results of research to see if there still is a genetic difference between the Otteroya population and the rest of the wild red deer in Norway.

The wild population of red deer is defined as a separate sub-species – "cervus elaphus atlanticus." Genetically it is more closely related to the Scottish than the Swedish populations. The west coast south of Trondheim is their main habitat, and in the last 30 years the number of animals has increased rapidly. In 2001, 23,500 deer were shot by hunters, compared to 2,500 in 1971.

At the moment, the demand for red deer livestock is high. Only a few deer farmers are able to sell livestock, and the waiting list is long. Use of red deer sub-species other than atlanticus is not allowed. In other words, no importation is permitted! This is to avoid the spread of diseases and hybridization with the wild population.

Despite the increasing numbers of wild deer, the authorities have been strict about capturing wild fawns to add to domestic herds. An agreement has been reached to allow capture of 400 wild animals between 2002 and 2006.

The livestock situation for fallow deer is better, but fallow deer farming is restricted to the counties by the Oslofjord.

No tuberculosis or other diseases have been detected on Norwegian deer farms. To solve the copper problem, traditional methods are mainly used. Also, a special concentrate mixture with extra high copper levels has recently been developed by one of the farmers.

Visits from lynx and the protected wolverine inside the fences has become a problem for some farmers. Farmed deer are defined as game and do not have the same rights as domestic livestock. This means there is no financial compensation for farmed deer killed by predators. Some farmers have given up deer farming because of this problem.

The most northern deer farms have special winter enclosures with 12 foot fences because of the snow levels. Other parts of the country can also get a lot of snow in extreme winters. One farmer lost nearly all his animals. A high snow level and the formation of an ice-crust that allowed the animals to walk over the fence.

Hunting on farms and velvetting is illegal. Venison is therefore the main source of income. In 2001, Norwegian deer farmers produced about 6.5 tons of venison. Most of this meat was either consumed by the owner or sold privately. In addition, 23,500 wild deer were culled. The trading statistics showed that 32.5 tons of venison were imported. The total importation of meat from deer, moose and reindeer in 2001 was 668 tons.

It is hard to compete on price, so Norwegian farmers are looking to the market for specialty foods to make production economical. Some farmers believe that the mixing of deer farming with tourism is a way to make operations profitable.

Most of the farmers do the slaughtering on their farms. The legal regulations are quite strict. Only a few farmers have approved slaughter facilities needed to sell venison commercially. The Norwegian Red Deer Centre is working to have the regulations changed to make them more realistic.

The Norwegian deer farmers have many difficult challenges to tackle to grow their industry. The lack of livestock, the punitive slaughtering regulations, and the damage caused by predators are just some examples. Other things that need to be worked on are a national registration for farmed deer; an organized breeding program; and the need to improve the knowledge of effective and economical venison production among the farmers.

[This article shows that deer farmers, no matter which part of the globe they live on, face many similar challenges – in good part caused by unfriendly regulatory environments. Ed]

#### **4. MISSOURI'S OUTLOOK ON CWD**

*[By Dawn Berhorst, Missouri Elk Farmers Association]*

**C**hronic wasting disease (CWD), part of the family of diseases referred to as transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSEs), is a disease of the brain and central nervous system found in cervids such as mule deer, white-tailed deer and elk. Clinical symptoms of CWD include listlessness, lack of coordination, significant weight loss, unusual behavior, paralyzation, increased thirst and urination, and eventually death. A poorly understood agent called a proteinaceous infection particle, or prion, causes CWD. Prions are destructive brain proteins that can damage healthy brain proteins.

There is no evidence that CWD can cross species to humans or to livestock; in fact, scientific studies have shown that a species barrier exists that limits the susceptibility of species other than cervids to CWD. It does have the same symptoms as some of the other prion diseases such as “mad cow” (BSE) and human forms Creutzfeldt-Jakob (K-J and Kuru).

CWD is a rare disease that was first found and observed in the Colorado State Research Pens in 1967. The animals were brought in from the wild for scientific research. Little action was taken for some time. Animals were allowed to leave the area during this time and were released back into the wild and sold to zoos. When the disease was discovered again in 1997, fewer than 300 elk out of an estimated 160,000 domestic animals tested showed positive for the disease, a prevalence of less than 0.2%.

Wild elk, wild mule deer and wild white-tail deer in different states and Canada have also been found to be infected. In some areas in the wild, 15% of the total deer population is infected. Missouri’s Conservation Department tested some of last fall’s harvested white-tails and found none with the disease. Tests have also been done on farm-raised elk and white-tail deer in Missouri and no CWD has been found.

It is not known what causes this disease or how it is spread. The only way to test animals is to kill them and test the brain stem. Scientists are working to find out what causes this terrible disease and how it is transferred. Live tests are also being researched, but nothing has been approved at this time.

Out of compassion for our elk and deer and in response to consumers’ health concerns, we, the Missouri Elk Farmers Association (MEFA), have taken a leading role in developing comprehensive and aggressive CWD monitoring and testing programs. Working with the Missouri Department of Agriculture, we have developed comprehensive programs for the control and eventual eradication of CWD. We have started a CWD Surveillance and Monitoring Program in which you enroll with the Missouri Dept. of Agriculture. They take a personal inventory of your herd and you must test any of your animals that die for any reason (hunted, butchered, sick, etc.).

Also, we have helped in putting restrictions in our state on what animals we will allow across our borders. Any cervid coming into Missouri can not come from an endemic area (area with CWD). It must be put on a surveillance program and tagged properly according to the Missouri Dept. of Agriculture. We feel these steps will help in keeping our state CWD-free.

A battle has been raging around the country for some time now concerning intensive management of white-tail deer and elk on private ranches and farms. Many in the wildlife management profession (Department of Conservation) view the increased interest in managing deer and elk on private lands as a threat to the old order and to their power, not to mention all the money brought in by hunting tags. Activities such as supplemental feeding, food plots and protecting young bucks have come increasingly under fire from irate biologists. These are the same government employees who first found CWD back in 1967, then released these animals into the wild and sold them to zoos. Now when the disease starts showing up, our Conservation Department tries to cover up their guilt and the facts by pointing the finger at the high fence operations, hunting ranches and deer and elk farms.

These farmers manage their animals responsibly and follow all the rules put before them by Missouri’s Department of Conservation and Missouri’s Department of Agriculture. They test and

vaccinate their animals, apply for needed permits, and put up the recommended height fencing required by their department. Yet they still get accused of spreading this disastrous disease!

Now, the Missouri Dept. of Conservation wants to CWD test this fall's harvested white-tails ONLY around the hunting ranches and elk farms! They have sent out a notice to all their agents telling them to find out exact locations of all these farms and notify everyone in a three-mile radius that those animals harvested will be tested. Scientists are supposed to be unbiased and ethical people. Testing should take place according to a random sampling of the state – something any scientist worth his salt knows and would do. How you sample for a disease can impact your conclusions about its origin. This just shows us that our Dept. of Conservation cares more about their pockets than their responsibility to Missouri's animals.

Wyoming put a stop to high fence ranches back in 1975. Yet they have the highest percent of CWD in their wild deer herds, up to 15%. What is this telling us?

Other states are also having the same problems with their government wildlife agencies trying to pass the 'buck.' Across the country the different state DNRs, Conservation Depts., or Agriculture Depts. are trying to blame the high fence operations for something the government caused. Look at the numbers of cases around the country? Why has this become such a huge issue to begin with? Other diseases in the wild have done much more damage and no one hears anything about them! Media releases from our government agencies have created chaos and public concern! This is to follow their plan of eliminating all high fence operations in Missouri.

Not too long ago the Missouri Dept. of Conservation tried to release wild elk into Missouri. Thanks to the Missouri Elk Farmers Association, Cattlemen's Association and Missouri's Farm Bureau fighting this battle with lobbyists and members calling their Senators and Representatives, it never happened. Where would our state be now with this CWD problem if they had succeeded? The state's crop farmers would have been devastated by crop damage, fences damaged by elk would let loose cattle and horses on the roadways for our motorists to pick out of their grilles. Then, of course, the elk themselves would cause motor vehicle accidents and fatalities. Missouri drivers hit enough deer causing expensive repairs and casualties. What do you think a bull elk, weighing around 1,000 lbs. would do? It was suggested the Conservation Dept. be responsible for crop damage, fence damage, car damage, fatalities and injuries, but they didn't like that idea.

They are responsible for the wildlife in Missouri and right now there are more deer here than when Columbus arrived! Over-population leads to disease; this is why they need to stop managing their deer on a restoration basis (kill one replace one) and use a management basis (animals for health and size). This is what the ranchers of these animals are doing and this can only be a positive push in the right direction.

Farm-raised elk and white-tail deer, and hunting ranches are a very large industry in this country. There are over 100 elk farms, approximately 300 white-tail deer farms, and around 30 hunting farms in Missouri alone. This adds up to a billion dollar industry – an industry that helps our country create more jobs and build a better economy! Let's help keep our industries strong.



## 5. INDUSTRY NEWS

### Association updates

Ian Thorleifson has resurfaced as Executive Manager of the Manitoba Elk Growers Association (MEGA). His new address is Box 1997, Minnedosa, Manitoba, CANADA R0J 1E0. Contact information is: phone 204-867-3527, e-mail *mailto:vike@mts.net* and new website is at *http://www.manitobaelk.com*

Speaking of new websites, the Reindeer Owner's and Breeder's Association (ROBA) has a new website located at *http://www.reindeer.ws*

The Illinois Deer Farmers Association also has a new website located at *http://www.ildfa.com*

### Legal funds established

Several American cervid industry associations, along with other alternative livestock groups, have created the Cervid and Alternative Livestock Alliance (CALA). CALA has created a legal fund to challenge those that attack the industry. NAEBA, NADeFA and the EWA are the primary association members. They are getting ready to hire legal representation to challenge laws and individuals that attempt to harm the game farming industry.

Send contributions to: CALA Legal Fund, PO Box 1482, Platte City, MO 64079

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The Canadian Cervid Council has also established a legal fund to combat false and damaging statements made about the industry.

The CCC is asking all producers, processors, industry media and distributors to contribute to this fund to ensure that damaging attacks against the industry are challenged.

Donations can be made by cheque to: Canadian Cervid Council Legal Fund, 22190 Ste. Anne Rd., Glen Robertson, ON K0B 1H0.

### Grant applications

The main reason this edition of the *Digest* is later than usual is that I have been very busy preparing grant applications for various deer/elk clients. We will be submitting funding requests, totaling over \$1 million (CDN), for the following:

1. Two projects to establish meat processing infrastructures (slaughter facilities, grading, etc.) and expand markets for ranched elk meat in restaurants, meat shops and retail stores.
2. A project to establish whitetail deer venison markets.
3. An initiative to expand markets and distribution channels for velvet antler products for dogs with arthritis.
4. A small project to make pharmacists in Canada and the United States more aware and knowledgeable about velvet antler nutraceutical products.

5. A proposal to run three food festivals each summer to market and sell deer, elk and bison products.

6. A request for funding to support the velvet antler liver research project at the University of Saskatchewan (see below).

We have also received a letter from the Alberta Minister of Agriculture. They have agreed to fund and undertake a market research and feasibility study on “Opportunities for the Alternative Livestock Industries in Processing and Marketing Value-added Meat-based Pet Food Products.” The essence of this project is that it will help us determine whether deer/elk bones, organs and trim meat can be profitably made and sold as “natural” dog food products. (A copy of this proposal was sent to your deer and elk associations).

Even if only a few of the applications are approved, this will go a long way to helping our deer/elk farming industries. I hope that you are taking FULL advantage of all funding opportunities in your state or province.

Sometimes all you have to do is ask! The dog food project above was submitted directly to the Minister of Agriculture as an “unsolicited proposal.” Yes, we did work with the Department staff to make sure they would support and do the project prior to making the request. We also had a detailed proposal of what we wanted them to do, and had letters of requests from all the associations/companies involved.

If you have questions on any of these projects, or would like some help with your grant applications, please contact me – Russell Sawchuk – at <mailto:info@deerfarmer.com> or at 800-267-9997.

### **Health and Welfare of Farmed Deer**

The December 2002 issue of the “*New Zealand Veterinary Journal*” is dedicated to a Feature Review Series on the “*Health and Welfare of Farmed Deer*.” This may be of considerable interest to scientists and practitioners in this field internationally. They are extending the print run of this issue to make it available for sale as a single issue to people who don’t usually subscribe to the journal, in single or multiple copies, if orders are received by <mailto:Jacqui@vets.org.nz> before November 19, 2002.

All articles are peer-reviewed and provide a landmark series of state-of-the-art review articles in this field.

Titles include:

- Welfare of farmed deer in New Zealand 1: Management practices, by JC Pollard and PR Wilson
- Welfare of farmed deer in New Zealand 2: Velvet antler removal, by PR Wilson and KJ Stafford
- Chemical analgesia and analgesics for velvet antlers, by VP Walsh and PR Wilson

- Sedation and chemical restraint of deer for velvet antler removal, by VP Walsh and PR Wilson
- Trace element metabolism, dietary requirements, diagnosis and prevention of deficiencies in deer, by ND Grace and PR Wilson
- Novel forages for growth and health in farmed deer, by TN Barry, SO Hoskin and PR Wilson

Single copies of this issue are available for US\$20, deliverable by airmail. Multiple copies sent to the same address are available for US\$15 per copy.

This issue of the NZVJ will also be available online in 2003, and included on the December release of the "Complete Archive of the NZVJ on CD-ROM" - 50 years of quality veterinary science in full text, fully indexed and searchable. This three-CD set incorporates custom search software written specifically for the NZVJ that is very powerful and VERY FAST. This sophisticated engine allows users to search the titles and/or full text of all articles for any word or combination of words, as well as to search indexes by author, volume, year, article type, animal type and subject, and to retrieve the full text of any article immediately.

Single and multi user licenses are available. The CD archive is available for PC and Mac computers and can be loaded on to computer hard drives and intranets. Annual releases will allow the resource to be added to and updated each year. A demonstration version available on the website <http://www.vetjournal.org.nz/news.html> showcases the search tool and data from the last five years of NZVJ publication, but without full text.

Please send orders for this special Feature Review Series and/or the Complete Archive of the NZVJ on CD-ROM, with details of delivery address and payment (credit card or cheque payable to the New Zealand Veterinary Association Inc.) to:

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## **CANADIAN CERVID COUNCIL NEWS**

[By Serge Buy, Executive Director]

### **Velvet antler / Liver Disease Research**

After the rejection by the Saskatchewan Agriculture Development Fund (ADF) of the Liver Disease Research Proposal, we then tried to find sources of funding for the research project. This project will be an important step to obtain scientific validation regarding the benefits of velvet antler.

We were able to find funding through the National Research Centre, which will invest \$50,000 in this research project. Dr. Hemmings (the researcher) informs us that another organization (NSERC)

may be able to contribute \$25,000 (although it is not yet confirmed). The Elk Research Council (\$15,000), SEBA (\$10,000), the AEA (\$10,000) and from the private sector VIP (with in-kind donations) have also confirmed their financial participation. The Ontario Elk Breeders Association has also been asked to contribute to this project (meeting to be held in October). The Manitoba and Québec elk associations will also be contacted. Should more industry funding than necessary be obtained it will be sent back to the participating Canadian associations in proportion of their initial contribution.

While there were further difficulties (working with an university can be as fun as dealing with the federal government), I believe we are on the right track to get this project on its way by mid-October.

A good reporting and monitoring process will be established in order for the industry to have a good and productive relationship with Dr. Hemmings and her research team.

### **CWD National Herd Certification Standards**

The latest version of the CFIA National Herd Certification Standards was distributed to the Board last week. It included changes discussed at a previous conference call with CFIA and the provinces as well as further discussions with Dr. Peart.

Board members know that this will be an issue discussed at the CCC's Special Meeting on this program, which will be held Tuesday, November 5th in the morning in Ottawa. We should have the US program at that time and things will be much clearer then.

### **CFIA and Korea**

The Korean government has decided to receive a delegation from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency to discuss the reopening of trade in early November. While we don't expect the door to be wide open immediately, this is a step in the right direction that will lead to the reopening of these borders.

### **Ontario**

Discussions with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food (OMAF) are ensuring that some money from the initial (approximately \$120,000) grant would also go to the promotion of the safety standards being introduced. As this money is provided to the Canadian Cervid Council, discussions with provincial member associations are taking place to fund initiatives in meat and velvet promotion.

The contract with OMAF will also be extended by another year although no new money will be provided.

### **Québec**

Québec announced that it has finalized and put in place its voluntary herd certification program (based on and meeting the national standard). We congratulate both Dr. Isabelle McKenzie and Claude Fournier for their work on this crucial issue. Recent positive and factual articles in Québec farm newspapers have been published on elk and deer farming as well as CWD. These articles were well-written and truthful.

## **Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC)**

We requested funding for a national communication strategy/livestock identification program/CWD public information campaign. Another funding proposal document (50 pages) was written and presented to AAFC early September. There have been strong discussions regarding the Council's wishes not to waste money on things already established (i.e., a database for inventory and product traceability).

We are trying to further our project through intelligent discussions with AAFC. The Minister's office has, however, also been indirectly approached.

## **Alberta (AEA and AWMDA)**

I participated in the Alberta Elk Association Press Conference (held September 6th) and the Alberta Whitetail and Mule Deer Association Special General Meeting (September 7th).

The press conference was a success. Although more media should have been present, the publicity generated was positive. We will build on this and can provide advice to other member associations on how to conduct this type of event.

The AWMDA meeting was interesting and provided me with good information on the whitetail industry. Direct communication with producers is essential in order to ensure that we are on the right track. I also heard the message loud and clear: the CCC needs to be more involved with whitetail organizations. As Mr. John Boyko put it eloquently, "We've got to get our money's worth!" While I believe that the numerous activities and projects undertaken by the CCC are a proof of this organization's usefulness, more visibility, both with producers and the public, is necessary. We will act on this.

## **Saskatchewan**

I've had discussions with the Solicitor General's office to try to get the Prince Albert Penitentiary opened for slaughter of elk. This federal facility would not be able to take many animals but it would be a start. Denise Smith visited the premise lately and a plan will soon be presented to Corrections Canada.

Other discussions with SEBA are taking place in respect to support for their planning of promotional activities (both velvet antler and hunt farms).

SWAMDPA is involved heavily (thanks to both Al Morhart as chair, and Harvey Granatier) on the CCC's Cervid Harvest Preserve Committee. We need to promote hunt farms and are developing a plan to try to attract more clients. The development of a national code of ethics is also being considered.

## 6. EVENTS CALENDAR

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

NEW ZEALAND GRASSLAND ASSOCIATION will hold a symposium on deer nutrition at Lincoln University on November 8-9, 2002. This is being presented in conjunction with the Canterbury Deer Farmers Association and will cover various topics on nutrition. For more information, contact Suzanne at 0800-376-8448 or Marie Casey at <mailto:mariecasey@wrightson.co.nz>

MINNESOTA ELK BREEDERS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL CONVENTION will be held on January 11, 2003 at the Holiday Inn at Mankato, MN. For more information, contact the MNEBA office at <mailto:info@mneba.org> or phone 320-543-3664.

ALBERTA ELK ASSOCIATION ANNUAL CONVENTION will be held Jan. 16-18, 2003 at Grande Prairie, Alberta Canada. Contact the AEA office for more information at <mailto:info@albertaelk.com> or visit their <http://www.albertaelk.com>

NORTH AMERICAN ELK BREEDERS ASSOCIATION (NAEBA) Convention will be held Feb. 5-8, 2003 at St. Louis Missouri USA. Contact the NAEBA office at <mailto:info@naelk.org> or visit <http://www.naelk.org> for more information.

NORTH AMERICAN DEER FARMERS' ASSOCIATION (NADeFA) Annual Convention will be held on March 19-23, 2003 at Jefferson City, Missouri USA. For more information, contact NADeFA at <mailto:info@nadefa.org> or visit their web site at <http://www.nadefa.org>

SASKATCHEWAN WHITETAIL AND MULE DEER PRODUCERS ASSOCIATION will hold their annual convention on March 28 to 30, 2003 at the Travelodge in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada. For more information, contact <mailto:info@saskdeer.com> or visit their website at <http://www.saskdeer.com>

REINDEER OWNER'S & BREEDER'S ASSOCIATION 2003 ANNUAL MEETING will be held in Pendleton Oregon USA on June 20-22, 2003. For more information contact Carol at [mailto:roba\\_association@hotmail.com](mailto:roba_association@hotmail.com) or visit their web site at <http://www.reindeer.ws>

SECOND ANTLER SCIENCE AND PRODUCT TECHNOLOGY SYMPOSIUM will be held in February 25 to 27, 2004 in Queenstown, New Zealand. For more information contact Mark O'Connor at <mailto:mark.oconnor@nzgib.org.nz> or phone +64 4 473 4500.

\*\*\*\*\* A D \*\*\*\*\*

If you are thinking of starting a deer or elk farm, please visit the Deerfarmer Store located at <http://store.deerfarmer.com> There you will find model business plans that you can use to plan and finance your dream farm.

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## 7. SUBSCRIPTION SERVICES

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## 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.

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

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