

**Deer Industry NZ
FAQs for website**

Question	Answer
What and why?	
What is VelTrak?	VelTrak is a fully electronic, web-based system that enables velvet to be tracked and traced each step of the way from the farm to the market (and vice-versa).
Why has VelTrak been developed?	<p>Overseas market regulators require accurate, time-sensitive traceability for all animal products intended for human consumption. The new UHF RFID technology we have chosen for VelTrak offers the best solution for our markets.</p> <p>VelTrak builds on the great work done by farmers to upgrade their sheds and freezers to comply with the MPI Regulated Control Scheme (RCS).</p> <p>VelTrak will also strengthen the premium position that NZ velvet now enjoys in South Korea over velvet from competing countries. It is expected to be a major selling point when marketing our velvet to health food companies in China, Taiwan and elsewhere.</p> <p>It proves to customers that the world's best deer velvet is produced on quality assured NZ farms and meets our stringent food quality standards.</p>
Isn't our velvet already traceable?	<p>Yes. But the current paper-based system is slow, inefficient and potentially subject to human error.</p> <p>VelTrak will allow velvet to be tracked or traced much more rapidly and accurately in response to a food safety or biosecurity crisis.</p> <p>This will enable the affected supplier or consignment to be quickly isolated, enabling trade to resume in unaffected velvet.</p>
Can VelTrak be copied by competitors?	Other producers do not have the technology we have developed for VelTrak. Dishonest traders will find it extremely difficult to counterfeit the tags and pass off other velvet as being from New Zealand.
The market benefits	
What do our overseas customers think of it?	The major health food companies in South Korea welcome VelTrak. It increases their food safety confidence using NZ velvet. It provides them with the proof of integrity and traceability they need to protect the reputation of their brands and corporate identity.
What information will overseas customers get when they scan a VelTrak tag?	<p>When a customer scans the barcode on a VelTrak tag they will be able to confirm that the stick comes from New Zealand and meets all our animal welfare and food safety requirements.</p> <p>At this stage, customers will not be able to see the name of the farm the velvet came from. Down the track, some customers will doubtless want to scan a stick and see a photo and a bit of a story about where the velvet comes from – the farm, the farmers and the deer. Once VelTrak is up and running this is something we may explore.</p>

Question	Answer
Do all buyers support VelTrak?	Most buyers are supportive of protecting the industry so are largely in favour of the concept. But like any new technology being rolled out to the rural sector, some buyers are concerned that there may be teething problems. DINZ is doing all it can do to minimise the risk that these might occur.
Tags and costs	
Will there be new velvet tags?	Yes. From the 2021/22 velvet season, each stick of velvet will need to be tagged with a 'wristband-style' black VelTrak tag. The new tags carry a barcode and an embedded UHF RFID chip, each carrying a code that is unique to that tag. The blue tags used in the last two seasons may no longer be used.
Will vets still supply farmers with tags?	Yes. Before allocating them to farmers, the vet clinic will record the tag numbers on the VelTrak website. They will be able to do this manually, or use their clinic barcode scanner.
What will the chipped tags look like?	The new tags will be a black wristband-style self-adhesive synthetic paper strip, similar to the blue tags used in the 2019/20 and 2020/21 seasons. The feel of the paper may be different to previous tags.
Will the tags be long enough?	Tags will be the same size as those used in recent seasons. These have been long enough for all except a few very large sticks, where they won't fit around the main beam. In this case, wrap the tag around another part of the antler where it does fit and cannot fall off.
Will the tags be suitable for spiker and regrowth?	No. Stick-level traceability for spiker and regrowth is not being introduced, as this is not yet practicable. The new tags will be needed to be attached to bags of spiker and regrowth as at present.
Once we've received tags, could they be used at any time in the future?	Yes, unless and until you formally fail a RCS audit or become NVSB discredited. If you fail the RCS audit or become discredited, those tags will be automatically blocked from further use in the VelTrak system.
If my neighbour runs out of tags, can I lend them some of mine?	No. Your tags link the vet who supplied the tags to your farm, to the buyer, to the exporter, to the overseas customer. The whole purpose of VelTrak is to provide this unbroken electronic chain that links individual sticks of velvet to a particular farm.
Can we still sell velvet into the food chain if we're in the process of a RCS audit or NVSB supervisory checks?	Yes. Tags allocated to you will be active in the system so you can tag and supply your velvet and an eVSD will still be able to be raised by a depot or packhouse.
I understand farmers will have to pay for tags. Why?	Tags will be part-paid for by levies and part-paid for by farmers. This is to discourage the mis-use or loss of the tags and to spread costs fairly across users. Vets will be billed by DINZ for the tags and they may pass this cost on to their farmer clients, along with an appropriate mark-up to cover their handling and inventory costs. DINZ will publish a recommended retail price for the tags. This is likely to be 49c a tag.
Why doesn't DINZ simply charge farmers for the tags directly?	We looked at this, but a DINZ-based billing system would be more costly for levy payers in the long-run. Because vets already have automated billing systems for their clients it is far more efficient to bill for the tags through them.

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	<p>Also, DINZ has determined that veterinarians are critical in the tag supply process of the NVSB programme. This is to ensure the programme continues to provide the best oversight of the industry scheme which allows farmers to remove velvet.</p>
<p>What other costs are there?</p>	<p>DINZ has paid for the development of VelTrak (~\$450K). It will continue to fund software development, maintenance and upgrades from levy funds.</p> <p>To participate in VelTrak, buyers and packhouses need to purchase a specific brand and model of UHF RFID scanner. DINZ has negotiated a bulk order with the supplier so that costs are minimised.</p> <p>Buyers will be making a significant investment in these scanners. This is an investment in the long-term reputation of NZ deer velvet. It will allow the industry to get the full market benefit from the major investments deer farmers have already made to bring their deer sheds up to MPI Regulated Control Scheme standards.</p>
<p>Will the tags still work after processing?</p>	<p>We have tested the new tags to ensure they survive all processing methods. Trials have shown that when tagged velvet arrives in the market after freezing, cooking and drying, the tags are still attached, they look clean and tidy and the UHF chips are readable.</p>
<p>Registration</p>	
<p>Who needs to register on VelTrak?</p>	<p>All farms, vet clinics and businesses associated with velvet removal, procurement, warehousing, processing and packing for shipment will need to be registered with VelTrak before the start of the 2021/22 velvetting season.</p> <p>If your deer farm, clinic or business is known to DINZ and you are designated as the main DINZ contact, registration instructions will be automatically emailed to you.</p> <p>If no-one in your operation receives this email you'll need to get in touch with DINZ so that we can email a registration invitation to you.</p>
<p>When will we know it's time to register?</p>	<p>If your business is known to DINZ you will be sent an email inviting you to register on the following dates:</p> <p>6 April 2021: deer vets 6 April 2021: buyers/receivers, packhouses and processors 3 May 2021: farmers</p> <p>It is important that you register as soon as possible after these dates, but certainly well before the start of the 2021/22 velvet season. DINZ will make every effort to inform you of the need to register.</p>
<p>What happens if a farmer doesn't register?</p>	<p>In order to sell their velvet for export, or for use as a food product, a farmer must be registered with VelTrak and tag their velvet with VelTrak tags.</p> <p>Anyone velvetting in unregistered facilities and outside our industry-agreed standards will find it very difficult to sell their velvet.</p> <p>This will reinforce the integrity of the industry and help protect the investment everyone in the industry has made in the production and marketing of quality assured velvet.</p>

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Can multiple people in our business register with VelTrak?	Yes. The initial 'primary user' for the business can specify any number of colleagues who can register on VelTrak to carry out VelTrak transactions on behalf of their business.
Can everyone at my operation just share the same login and password?	<p>We advise you not to do this because anyone with your password can make legal declarations that bind you.</p> <p>It's better to formally register trusted employees and colleagues as members of your team on the VelTrak website and make them responsible for keeping their own password secure. You will then have a record of transactions made under their log-in.</p>
What will VelTrak mean for farmers?	
Will VelTrak make my life more complicated?	<p>No. VelTrak is designed to make things easier for farmers. You will no longer need to record tag numbers and fill out a VSD.</p> <p>Instead, the firm that buys your velvet will generate a draft electronic (e)VSD for you to approve in VelTrak. When your velvet is collected or received in their store they will scan it with an UHF RFID scanner. VelTrak will then automatically generate the eVSD.</p> <p>You will be sent an email telling you the eVSD is waiting for your approval in VelTrak.</p> <p>Once you get this email, it will be important for you to promptly check and approve the eVSD. Your velvet can then be forwarded for export or processing and you can get paid.</p>
How long will it take before the eVSD is ready for approval?	The time-frame will vary. With a private sale it could be virtually immediate. In the case of firms that use a central depot, it could 3-4 working days. Your buyer will let you know when you might expect to receive the email and we strongly encourage you to approve the eVSD as soon as you receive it.
Do we need to scan the tags on-farm?	No. The buyer will do that. They will then email you an eVSD capturing all the stick numbers.
Can we enter data against the stick such as stag ID, weight and grade?	<p>Not in VelTrak itself, but you can enter the tag barcode numbers and other data about the stag into your farm management records alongside the stag's NAIT number.</p> <p>If you want to, you can scan the barcodes with a barcode scanner and enter the numbers into your farm management software electronically. Barcode scanners cost from \$100 to \$300. Your farm management software supplier can advise you how to integrate a barcode scanner into your recording system.</p>
Can I record my stag details on the new tags?	No. We ask that nothing is written onto the new tags. Remember these tags will go all the way to the market. When customers see them they should be clean and presentable.
Can we still choose to use paper VSDs and other paper records?	No. For VelTrak to function efficiently and deliver the benefits, the industry and its participants need to systematically capture all relevant data in one database.
Will velvet record books still be needed?	NVSB velvetters will still need to maintain information in velvet record books of velvetting sessions carried out including veterinary drug information.

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Will the tags still have a printed number?	Yes, the barcode will have a unique number printed underneath. This is the number that will be entered into VelTrak if a stick needs to be tracked forward or back. However to initiate eVSDs, only UHF RFID scanned files of tag numbers can be entered into VelTrak.
We don't use email. How can we participate in the system?	VelTrak is a digital system that requires users to have an email address. DINZ can work with individuals who do not have email access to ensure their statutory obligations are met.
My shed has mobile coverage but no internet connectivity – can we still get eVSDs sorted at the time of velvet pick-up?	Yes, your buyer can scan your velvet and prepare the eVSD on VelTrak by “hotspotting” the scanner to a mobile phone. You can approve the eVSD by logging onto VelTrak on your smartphone in the shed.
My shed doesn't have phone signal or internet connectivity in the velveting shed – how can the eVSDs be created for us?	No problem. Your buyer can scan your consignment in the shed, then when they get connectivity they will be able to send the scanned tag numbers to VelTrak. The eVSD will then be raised for your approval.
If my buyer does the scanning off-farm, how will I know all the sticks have been captured without having counted them first?	<p>Our performance testing shows that errors will be rare. As at present, there is no need for you to cross-check the exact number and identifiers of sticks listed in the eVSD as the traceability system will function smoothly even if there is an occasional error.</p> <p>It is only if the number of sticks listed in a draft eVSD is vastly different to what you recall being in the consignment that you would indicate an issue to your buyer.</p>
If the scan misses a tag, will I still be paid for that velvet?	VelTrak is independent of the commercial arrangements you have with your buyer, so if you are paid by weight and grade, you'll still be paid on the same basis.
Will buyers still send me payment advices that list the number of sticks, weights and grades of product we supply?	VelTrak is not an invoicing/payment system. Buyers will continue to use their own systems to calculate payments due to you.
What if our buyer sends us the eVSD for someone else?	VelTrak will only send a draft eVSD to the farm to which the vet allocated the tags. If you receive a eVSD for a consignment you do not recognise, this may mean someone else is using tags allocated to you. This could happen if your vet makes an error when allocating tags in VelTrak.
	When you obtain tags from the vet, it's a good idea to log on to VelTrak to check that the tags have been correctly allocated to you. It is also sensible to keep the tags in a secure place when they are not being used.
Can velvet competitions use the database to identify competition sticks?	Yes, administrators of velvet competitions can apply to DINZ to have temporary VelTrak access to a tool that provides the farm of origin of competition sticks.
What will VelTrak mean for vets?	
Would each separate vet in a practice need a dedicated allocation of tags?	No, tags will be allocated by DINZ to a named clinic or even to a network of clinics, if their vets velvet on behalf of multiple clinics in the network. These tags can be allocated to clients by any vet who has been registered by the primary user in VelTrak as an associate of the network or clinic.

Question	Answer
If our clinic runs out of tags, can we get some from another local clinic?	No, unless you are part of a network of clinics that is registered on VelTrak as a network. If you obtained tags from an unrelated clinic, you wouldn't be able to allocate them as the system would spot a mismatch between the clinic to whom the tags have been allocated and your VelTrak registration, which is associated with a different clinic.
Will tag packs have series information so that we can select the right tags to allocate without needing to scan each individual tag?	Yes, packs will be labelled with barcodes of the starting and ending tag of their contents and this series information can be entered into VelTrak to record transfers of multiple tags.
What sort of tag scanner will we need?	Vets can use any off-the-shelf barcode scanner. These scanners are available for \$100-\$300 each. Barcode reader apps on smartphones are not suitable.
Can vets still allocate and distribute individual tags to clients with fewer than 50 tags?	Yes but, as happens currently, those individual tags will need to be individually recorded against the recipient, whether by using barcode scanning or manually entering the first and last tag numbers.
Can we distribute tags to ineligible clients?	<p>No. As at present, vets must not provide tags to clients who have failed a RCS audit. Nor will it be possible to allocate tags to farmers who aren't NVSB accredited, unless a deer vet does their velvetting.</p> <p>If a client wishes to do their own velvetting, a named vet in your business must have a current NVSB velvetting contract with them.</p>
What will VelTrak mean for buyers, packhouses and processors?	
What sort of tag scanner will we need?	Buyers and packhouses need a specific model of UHF-tuned RFID scanner in order to participate in VelTrak. DINZ can advise you on the models that may be suitable for your operation and the name of the supplier.
Will the RFID tags be readable through the bags, bins and crates we use?	Yes. We have tested chip readability in various bulk containers commonly used in the velvet industry and performance has been excellent in all of them.
Can we scan tags on-farm rather than in the depot or packhouse – or require the farmer to scan the tags?	Depots and packhouses can choose whether to scan consignments on-farm or at their premises. We have set up VelTrak to allow only a registered buyer or packhouse to enter the scanned data files into VelTrak.
Can we apply tags to velvet when it arrives at the depot or packhouse?	No, tags can be applied only on the farm where the velvet is removed.
After picking up velvet from several farms on the same collection run, will we need to separate it at scanning to get the correct draft eVSDs raised?	<p>No. You can scan mixed consignments in one 'read' and VelTrak will generate the correct transfers and allow you to raise the correct eVSDs.</p> <p>If it is easier, you can even scan a large truckload in multiple reads that do not necessarily relate to each discrete farm of origin and VelTrak will sort all the scanned sticks from those files into the correct number of eVSDs.</p>
If we are unable to create an eVSD because velvet is either not tagged or incorrectly tagged, or because of RCS	It is a commercial matter between the buyer and the farmer supplier as to what happens if a buyer receives velvet that does not meet regulatory requirements. Such velvet cannot legally enter the food chain.

Question	Answer
non-compliance, will we still have to pay the farmer?	
We don't touch, grade or mingle the velvet in our facility; would we really need to record a transfer of product on VelTrak?	<p>No. The risk of product cross-contamination or contamination on your premises would be too low to warrant data capture in VelTrak.</p> <p>You will need to maintain compliance with the RCS though. Also, in order to comply with food safety legislation or for commercial reasons, you may need to keep consignment-level records about product passing through your premises (including declaring that while velvet has been under your control, it has met its cold chain management requirements).</p>
As an agent, do I need to use VelTrak to record velvet consignments to a packhouse?	<p>Yes, you still need to complete an Agent VSD (AVSD) for movements to packhouses and this should be done in VelTrak. Even if you are the person or entity selling the velvet overseas, and are only using an exporter for packing and shipping, you still need to raise an AVSD in VelTrak for the movement to the packhouse/exporter.</p>
Can we use VelTrak to record movements to and from a coolstore, for processing or even export?	<p>Yes. As an optional extra for packhouses, VelTrak allows production of a Velvet Transfer Record ('VTR') if you wish to scan consignments in and out so long as each stick is already covered by a valid eVSD and AVSD if applicable. If you use a VTR for stick-level recording of your exports, you'll still need to complete e-certifications required by MPI.</p>
Can the system be used by us as our inventory for RCS purposes?	<p>Because weight and grade information is not recorded on VelTrak it will be of limited value for recording stocks on hand for other business purposes.</p> <p>But by showing all velvet that has been supplied by a farm into the food chain (although not velvet still in storage on-farm), VelTrak will show the most crucial information for RCS purposes.</p>
Can the system be used by us to generate a supplier payment advice?	<p>The system could provide useful information on the date and weight of consignments but we have not developed an invoicing tool within VelTrak.</p>
How will I show eVSDs to auditors?	<p>You can demonstrate compliance with traceability requirements by logging into VelTrak and accessing the eVSDs automatically archived against your account. You can search by the period of interest, or buyer or supplier.</p>
Can we let overseas customers trace sticks back to our business and even farms?	<p>This sort of access is not planned at present, but once VelTrak is up and running, this is something we may explore.</p>
How secure is my information on VelTrak?	
How much information about my business can other participants see on VelTrak?	<p>VelTrak is a 'one-up, one-down' traceability system as required by our food safety laws. Buyers, warehouses and processors will only see data relating to an individual shipment from the farm or firm they received it from. An exporter who buys from an agent won't see the names of the farmers the agent bought it from.</p> <p>When users log on to VelTrak they land in a part of the website that is specific to a category of user. For instance, only veterinary practices will be able to allocate velvet tags to farmers on VelTrak and only farmers will be able to approve draft eVSDs.</p>
Will any business we supply be able to see information on	<p>No. The next person in the chain will only be able to see information on the immediate origin of the velvet in that consignment.</p>

Question	Answer
all other velvet we've supplied elsewhere?	
If I'm buying velvet from an agent or other intermediary can I see the farm of origin of the velvet?	No. The Agent VSD in VelTrak will only identify the name of the firm that supplied you with the consignment.
Will there be any limits on DINZ access to the data?	Yes. DINZ may use VelTrak data for industry-good purposes, but its access will be limited by protocols published on the DINZ website.
Will parties such as MPI or IRD have direct access to the system?	<p>No. Non-velvet industry participants will not be entitled to register in VelTrak.</p> <p>But MPI has the legal power under food safety and other legislation to obtain information on the farm of origin of particular sticks of velvet. It may also request tracing of velvet that has been through a particular farm or other premise, but it will ask DINZ or system registrants for this information. Access will be granted in line with the agreed protocol and within the confines of the law.</p> <p>The IRD has the power to access information about the business activities of any taxpayer.</p>
Can we be asked by MPI to demonstrate where a particular stick of velvet has come from or been sent to?	Yes, MPI will still be able to require you to provide one-up one-down traceability on request. VelTrak will make such a request easy to comply with.
What assurance do we have that our information can't be accessed by a hacker?	It is not possible to say 'never'. All forms of business records can potentially be stolen. However security of data has been a key requirement for the firms that have built VelTrak.
VelTrak technology	
Why was UHF RFID technology chosen for VelTrak?	<p>VelTrak uses UHF (ultra-high frequency) RFID technology because it is much better suited than low frequency RFID to reading and recording multiple individual tags in a single scan.</p> <p>This is important for velvet buyers and receivers handling thousands of sticks a day at the peak of the season. VelTrak is not set-up to accept UHF scanning data from vets, because most vet practices are already set-up with barcode scanners.</p>