

THE FACTS

NORTH AMERICAN RETAIL ACCELERATOR PROGRAMME (NARA) – WHAT’S IN IT FOR FARMERS?

Building Demand, Balancing Markets



WHY NARA EXISTS

The North American Retail Accelerator programme is about keeping New Zealand venison ahead of the curve — ensuring steady demand, diversified markets, and sustained returns to the farm gate.

COVID-19 showed that relying too heavily on European food service was risky. When restaurants closed, venison demand fell sharply. NARA was established to help balance that dependence by growing year-round retail sales in the United States — the world’s largest protein market. By expanding into retail, the industry is creating a second pillar under the sector’s revenue base, alongside Europe and China. Together, these three core markets create a stable, diversified, and future-focused foundation.

WHAT IT MEANS FOR FARMERS

The benefits flow both tangibly and intangibly:

Tangible	Intangible
Higher export revenue and better utilisation of leg cuts	Greater resilience across markets and reduced volatility
Consistent retail demand, even when restaurants slow	Enhanced brand reputation and storytelling power
Improved balance across all parts of the carcass	Confidence that NZ venison holds its own against other proteins
This is good business practice: keeping demand ahead of supply, managing market disruptions, and building resilience against events like shipping delays, economic downturns, or trade policy changes.	For farmers who also run beef and lamb, venison’s retail expansion complements other revenue streams — strengthening the overall business portfolio.

BUILDING SHELF PRESENCE AND SALES VELOCITY

Securing retail shelf space in the U.S. isn’t easy — and keeping it requires consistent sales performance. Retailers look for velocity: product that moves steadily off the shelf and keeps consumers coming back. That’s where NARA plays a vital role, helping New Zealand venison companies to:

- Expand shelf space through reliability and professionalism
- Drive sell-through with digital campaigns, promotions, and recipe-based content

- Differentiate venison from other game meats and proteins by highlighting a unique story — farm-raised, natural, sustainable, nutritious, and traceable

The result? More American consumers discovering New Zealand venison, more retailers investing in the category, and a stronger long-term footing for the industry.

PLAYING THE LONG GAME

NARA isn’t about quick wins. It’s about building momentum, creating and protecting value, and staying ahead of global headwinds. It helps ensure that when one market slows, another keeps moving — keeping processors, exporters, and farmers connected through stable demand.

For farmers, this encourages balanced revenue streams, better demand for every cut, and stronger industry resilience. NARA underpins how New Zealand venison stays competitive, relevant, and valued — now and into the future.