

Issue 210 | June 2025

Executive Committee Report

Winter officially starts in June and certainly arrived in force following King's Birthday weekend, no doubt setting the winter-feeding programmes into action for many. For a number of regions that also marked the arrival of porina grubs which can wreak havoc on feed levels if left unchecked. The chopper arrived here on Saturday and given the air traffic locally it appears to be a real issue in Taihape this year.

This year's well attended conference in Queenstown marked the milestone of 50 years of the NZDFA. A trip across Lake Wakatipu on the TSS Earnslaw for dinner at Walter Peak Station the night before conference certainly set a historical tone for the event. The NZDFA AGM, full conference programme, awards dinner and field day at the iconic Fairlight Station ensured there was not a dull moment over the two days. Additionally, we had a Branch Chairs meeting the afternoon prior to conference commencement to ensure that we are keeping abreast of the issues affecting farmers throughout our national network. It was great to hear from and acknowledge those who have given so much to our farmer led and run organisation, which has been a constant pillar of our industry since the fledgling days of deer farming.

Following the disappointment of the last velvet season, DINZ have floated the concept at conference for the creation of an **export licencing system for velvet buyers**. The intention is to ensure buyers within our shores

adhere to business practices that support the long-term stability and success of the velvet industry, while balancing the benefit competition brings. A working group has been created with a balance of farmer, industry and buyer representation to explore and create a potential structure to achieve this. I will be attending the inaugural meeting this week as your elected farmer representative and will be advocating for farmers interests during this process. Please keep in touch with your local branch chairs or the executive committee directly to keep connected to the progress of the work undertaken.

Many of you may have seen Sunday's episode of **Country Calendar**, or the episode that ran a few weeks earlier, with both featuring short clips of velvetting. While it's great for deer farming to have national coverage on such a flagship rural programme, we always have to be aware that the general public is mostly un-informed around velvetting or the stringent regulatory framework around the practice. As with any farming sector, maintaining a positive public perception is very important for our industry and farmers play a key part in this.

Greenhouse gas policies are still being discussed and considered by government. While the messaging from this government is far more positive for farming, we still need to be vigilant for potential impacts ahead. The Pastoral Sector Leaders Group has been formed to represent the wider livestock sector in these discussions, with the deer industry being represented by DINZ Chair, Paddy Boyd.

Issue 210 | June 2025

The NZDFA Executive Committee have consulted with the branches and their committees to seek support for the bottom lines that Beef + Lamb NZ announced recently. This approach was undertaken so there is unity across the drystock sector, and the farmers' position is clearly understood by our representatives and government in this process. This was overwhelmingly supported, and we have formally informed both the DINZ board and office of the NZDFA position. The details are included in this edition of DFA Stagline.

This year's [Next Generation event](#) is to be hosted by the Marlborough branch of the NZDFA on 31 July and 1 August. A full programme has been created to showcase the area and deer farming and registrations are now open. Continuing to connect and expose new or young people to the deer industry is key for the future, so please encourage anyone who may be interested to attend.



Thank you Justin Stevens



Welcome Tom MacFarlane

Finally, I would like to take the opportunity to thank Justin Stevens for his eight years of service on the Executive Committee and wish him well for what endeavours he has planned ahead. I'd also like to welcome Tom McFarlane to the team as we continue to advocate for deer farmers in ever changing world we live in.

Mark McCoard, NZDFA Chair

Industry Conference, 13 – 14 May

Another industry conference is over, but this year was a special one, combining a mix of the past, present and future as the 50th year of the NZDFA was marked.

Deer Industry News, out end of June, will have more in-depth coverage of what was covered at conference, so here are some photos that provide a glimpse of the Queenstown bash, as well as a video of previous NZDFA Executive Committee Chairs and significant NZDFA figures, which was played at conference.

Available here >> [NZDFA - 50th Anniversary Celebration Video_v06 on Vimeo](#)

DFA STAGLINE



Issue 210 | June 2025

On the TSS Earnslaw



Conference Day



DFA STAGLINE



Issue 210 | June 2025



Matuschka Award winner, Laura Billings and Tony Pearse.



Deer Industry Award winner, Graham Carr

Awards Dinner



Elworthy Award Winner: Raincliff Station (David and Jan Morgan and family) – David, Millie, Janet Gregory, Paddy Boyd

Issue 210 | June 2025

Fairlight Station Field Day



Letter to the DINZ Board – NZDFA Position on Climate Change Policy

The following letter and statement were sent to the Paddy Boyd, Chair of the DINZ Board on 16 June 2025. The letter is supported by NZDFA branches:

NZDFA Position on Climate Change Policy

Following the 13 May 2025 Branch Chairs meeting, there was clear message from the branches that the NZDFA should develop a position on New Zealand greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions policy – specifically as it relates to agricultural emissions. This follows a letter from the SCNO Branch last year raising concerns over potential GHG emissions policy implications for deer farming. At that time, the wider branch consensus was to take a wait-and-see position, pending formation of the Pastoral Sector Leaders Group (PSG) and the deer industry’s position within it.

We were pleased to see that on 15 May, Beef + Lamb New Zealand (B+LNZ) released its bottom lines for climate change policy. The NZDFA Executive Committee has considered these bottom lines and is in full agreement with them and the supporting rationale. The Executive Committee has consulted with the NZDFA branches and has received overwhelming endorsement for NZDFA to support the B+LNZ position.

In doing so we think this demonstrates a united view from the drystock sector.

NZDFA’s statement is below, while the B+LNZ media release is found here <https://beeflambnz.com/news/blnzs-bottom-lines-climate-change-policy>

Mark McCoard

Chair, NZDFA Executive Committee

Issue 210 | June 2025

NZDFA Position on Climate Change Policy

16 June 2025

The New Zealand Deer Farmers Association (NZDFA) fully supports the Beef + Lamb New Zealand (B+LNZ) “bottom lines” for climate change policy, namely:

- New Zealand’s domestic **methane targets must be amended**, based on no additional warming.
- **Any targets must not put our economy or rural communities at risk**, nor send food production overseas to less efficient producers.
- The **pricing of agricultural emissions must be taken off the table**.
- **Farmers must be able to choose whether or not they use new tools and technologies to reduce their emissions**, and we must step carefully through rolling out new technologies to ensure they are safe.

The NZDFA notes that around 80 percent of deer farmers also farm sheep and/or beef cattle, therefore the B+LNZ bottom lines are equally relevant and applicable to deer farmers. Further, the NZDFA also note that deer farms typically incur greater costs of production, and previous analysis indicates that deer farms are disproportionately (negatively) impacted when pricing of agricultural emissions is applied.

As a small industry that complements other livestock farming and provides a valuable alternative income for the country and farm businesses, the NZDFA question how unrealistic emissions reduction targets and punitive pricing will lead to any meaningful and sustainable effect on New Zealand’s contribution to reducing impacts from climate change.

Field Days Galore

Post-conference, several field days have taken place around the country:

The Benefits of Multi-Species Livestock Farming (20 May)

This was held in South Canterbury at Tom and Samantha MacFarlane’s and was a collaboration between DINZ and Beef + Lamb New Zealand. The field day was run with two systems in mind; breeding and then finishing, with a bit of a deer farming flavour to show the opportunities to bring deer into an existing sheep and beef farm system.

Wayne Allan – a local farm consultant with a good number of deer, sheep and beef clients – was one of the main speakers for the day. Wayne was able to talk gross margin figures for each of the stock classes in a breeding and a finishing operation, alongside management balance and fitting all three species into the seasonal pasture growth patterns.

Ginny Dodunski from Wormwise also joined the day to bring in expertise in the parasite

Issue 210 | June 2025

management space, where having all three species can be very beneficial for parasite management. She was able to talk about specific management coming out of winter and into spring with crop management and early pasture growth, and also talked to a finishing system, where many young stock may be on a property and the benefits of multi species, while keeping in mind the importance of drenching when and where required.

Alongside Tom, two local deer farmers joined the day: Hamish Orbell, of Clayton Station, and Charlie Johns, of Coleridge Downs. They shared their experiences and knowledge from a few years of farming multi-species livestock. Together, they were all able to bring real and practical examples of the information that Wayne and Ginny shared.

Keep an eye out for an article in the next *Deer Industry News* for more in-depth coverage.



Ballance Farm Environment Awards - Southland Regional Supreme Winner Open Day (20 May)

It was a great turnout at Cam Nelson and Christina Vaughan's farm (Nelson Farming Company) open day. They were great hosts and only too happy to talk about their commitment to environmental stewardship on their deer farm.

Topics discussed included wintering deer indoors, riparian planting, crop management and feed pad design.

"Cam is far too modest about his massive achievement. His attention to detail, passion for deer farming and long-term vision really stood out to me," said Luka Jansen, DINZ Environmental Stewardship Manager. "DINZ is extremely proud to see a deer farmer win the Regional Supreme Award."

In awarding the Regional Supreme Award, judges observed that the Nelson Farming Company exemplifies what can be achieved with a strong business plan, clear strategic

Issue 210 | June 2025

focus, superior livestock performance, and strong environmental values.

“Their commitment to biodiversity is evident through well-considered native plantings that are thoughtfully integrated into their farming system, and their livestock management reflects in-depth planning, particularly around stock movement and wintering, to ensure a very high level of animal welfare.”



Weaning, Ticks and Velvet (6 June)

Around 20 brave Taihape-Ruapehu souls turned up to Andrew Peters' woolshed on what was the coldest day of the year so far in Taihape. This was a classic deer farmer event, with Andrew outlining his approach to weaning (in particular, habituating hinds and weaners to moving through gates towards the deer shed) that resulted in low stress for the deer and farmer alike. Richard Hilson then spoke on animal health, covering ticks in depth – thankfully not a major problem in Taihape yet – before also leading a discussion Fusiformis (foot abscesses), again, thankfully not prevalent in the area this season. Note: Information on ticks can and on foot abscess can be found here <https://deernz.org/deer-hub/health/major-issues/abcess-fusiformis>

The group moved on to the old Waiouru deer sales yard, where a warming lunch was followed by updates and discussion on freshwater policy, NZDFA activities, and the velvet export licensing working group. A good day out, with a mix of practical on-farm advice and updates on beyond-the-farmgate issues.

Issue 210 | June 2025

A turning point for Freshwater Policy: Government opens door for feedback

Farmers and rural leaders urged to seize opportunity to shape the future of freshwater regulation.

Luka Jansen, DINZ Environmental Stewardship Manager

The Coalition Government has launched Phase 2 of their targeted changes to national direction under the Resource Management Act (RMA) and freshwater regulation reforms. Public consultation is now underway and runs until **27 July 2025** and includes 26 proposals across three key areas: infrastructure and development, the primary sector, and freshwater. These proposals aim to simplify and improve the way environmental rules are developed and applied across the country. Housing is another new package that will form part of Phase 2 but the details are yet to be released.

For the deer industry and wider agricultural sector, this is a critical moment. Freshwater policies and national bottom lines have long been a source of frustration, with many regional rules proving unworkable in practice.

DINZ welcomes the opportunity to influence the future of freshwater policy and move toward a practical, outcomes-focused system.

A call for practical, risk-based regulation

There are significant issues the implementation of freshwater regulations across New Zealand; many policies do not make sense on paper, let alone on the ground, and therefore fail to create positive outcomes for our farmers, our communities, our waterways and ecosystems, and our economy.

Why this matters

The freshwater proposals include changes to the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management and the National Environmental Standards for Freshwater. These changes aim to rebalance objectives, simplify complex decision-making processes and rules, and provide more flexibility for landowners. DINZ has long advocated for a risk-based approach, such as Freshwater Farm Plans, but current regulations have fallen short.

In Southland, for example, this winter many dairy, sheep, beef and deer farmers are non-complying with the Southland Water and Land Plan rules for intensive winter grazing — not due to negligence, but because the Council has failed to provide sufficient guidance as to what a Southland Farm Plan must contain. It seems that even the Council doesn't understand what their rules mean on the ground. Freshwater regulations disproportionately burden farmers; the impacts are significant, and this message needs to be heard loud and clear by all New Zealanders and the central government.

Issue 210 | June 2025

In Canterbury, four farms, covering two main catchments of Ashburton Lakes, are facing lengthy and costly separate hearings at the hands of Environment Canterbury (ECan). Three of the stations are deer farms.

Meanwhile, in the Bay of Plenty and Auckland regions, Council policy staff have told industry bodies that land use change — such as converting farmland to forestry — may be necessary to meet water quality objectives. This kind of messaging discourages investment in on-farm mitigations and any focus on good farming practices. These examples highlight that national freshwater bottom lines are not practical, fail to consider other environmental benefits and risks, and most worryingly, aim to hold individual deer farmers accountable for issues beyond their control.

A call to action

DINZ encourages all farmers to engage in the consultation process. It is vital that the Government understands the real-world impact of the existing regulations and bottom lines — as well as any opportunities for improvement.

The Ministry for the Environment is hosting a series of webinars to explain the proposals and answer questions. These sessions are open to the public and will be recorded for those who cannot attend live.

DINZ will be running additional online sessions, and a survey will be sent to all deer farmers to gather information on key areas of concern.

How to get involved

Consider providing feedback as an individual or via your local Deer Farmers' Association. This is a once-in-a-decade opportunity to help shape the rules that will govern our land, water, and livelihoods.

You can read the full discussion documents and submit your feedback through the Ministry for the Environment's consultation portal:

👉 <https://consult.environment.govt.nz/resource-management/freshwater-national-direction/>

Let's make sure the voice of the deer industry — and the wider farming community — is part of that conversation.

Do not hesitate to contact Luka Jansen, DINZ environmental stewardship manager, to seek further guidance on how your voice can be heard luka.jansen@deernz.org

2025 Next Generation Programme

The NZDFA Next Generation Programme fosters the growth of those Next Generation deer farmers in the industry that are keen to learn more about deer farming, connect with other like-minded deer farmers and get on farm to see what is possible with the input of knowledge, technology and a little know-how!

This year's Next Generation Programme is shaping up to be a fantastic event. Based out of Blenheim, Marlborough (New Zealand's

Issue 210 | June 2025

sunniest town in 2024!) on Thursday 31 July and Friday 1 August, the programme will include farm visits and some theory alongside a social evening.

Register here:

<https://form.jotform.com/251387461740863>

Noticeboard

Freshwater Policy Feedback Survey

DINZ will be submitting its position on the Government's freshwater regulation reforms (see earlier article from Luka Jansen). Farmers are invited to take part in a 10-minute survey to help Luka provide workable and pragmatic recommendations. Link to complete survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Q3PW23L>

Foot abscesses

NZDFA and DINZ are aware of several reports of foot abscesses (*Fusiformis*) in South Canterbury and Central Regions. The bacteria that cause this condition enters through damaged skin and is exacerbated by stress brought on by events like cold weather, mixing mobs or yarding. Consult your vet if you think your deer may have foot abscesses. More information: <https://deernz.org/deer-hub/health/major-issues/abcess-fusiformis>

Facial eczema is not just a sheep problem—and we need your voice.

DINZ, as an in-kind partner of the Eliminating Facial Eczema Impacts (EFEI) programme, is supporting a national survey to understand

how FE affects the people managing it, not just the livestock.

We've seen how hard FE hits deer: lower hind conception rates in high-FE years, higher susceptibility in fallow and elk, and cumulative liver damage in hinds and stags leading to decreased herd productivity. These challenges go beyond the physical impacts on our animals; they impact you, the farmers, and your decisions, livelihoods, and wellbeing.

The survey:

- takes 15 minutes to complete
- closes Friday 18 July
- is anonymous and confidential
- \$10 will be donated to Rural Support Trust for every completed survey response

Survey link:

<https://surveys.cinta.co.nz/wix/p483346700410.aspx?hSample=8>

Farm Planning update

There's plenty happening in the world of farm planning! Upcoming workshops will cover topics like soil and nutrient management, pest and disease control, and ongoing work around freshwater farm plans. Be sure to check the [Events page](#) to see what's happening in your area—and take advantage of the funding support available while it lasts.

Not sure where you stand with your farm planning? A rapid assessment is a quick and easy way to get a snapshot of what plans you

Issue 210 | June 2025

already have in place and what might still be needed to meet assurance scheme requirements. Assessments can be done over the phone or in person. They're usually quick to complete, depending on your specific needs.

If you'd like to learn more or book an assessment, get in touch with Sarah at ifp@deernz.org.

2025 MSD/Afflex Deer Industry Photo Competition winners

Congratulations to Leeza-Marie Pratt who won first place in the MSD Animal Health/Allflex Deer Industry photo competition for 2025 with 'Sunset Roar.' [Go](#) to the DeerNZ website to see all results

Job search enquiry

Florian Taissidre is a 24-year-old traveler from France currently in New Zealand on a Working Holiday Visa (valid until January 2026), he is very keen to join a team for the upcoming winter season. He's fit, motivated, and flexible with roles and hours, with past experience in physically demanding jobs like kumara harvesting and housekeeping. He is looking for a hands-on, socially rewarding role. He has his own vehicle, international driver's license, IRD number, NZ bank account, and would appreciate staff accommodation if available.

Florian can be contacted on +64 21 085 69391 or florian.taissidre@gmail.com

Vet student placement

Second year vet student is looking to do a 2-week deer placement between 25th of August and 5th of September.

Preferred location is Manawatu or Central North Island regions.

If you could accommodate this please contact Latoya email latoyajadeva@gmail.com

MetService Outlook - June 2025

Expect some dynamic weather for the first week of June as a low from the north brings wet, windy and mild conditions for most of the country, then a dramatic shift later in the week as a surge of Antarctic air floods onto the country. This cold air hangs around throughout the weekend – ski fields will get a great boost from this system, and we may even see snow falling close to sea level in the South Island.

Next week starts with high pressure moving in and may remain stuck in place for several days, trapping the cold air and bringing frigid days and nights to inland regions. There's a good shot at the full gamut of classic winter scenes – snow, freezing fog, black ice and possibly hoar frost. If you're going to be out in the paddocks, now would be a good time to remember where you stashed your warmest socks.

Week two ends on a milder note, with a Tasman Sea low bringing bursts of rain and warming temperatures to much of the country, though the South Island basins will hang onto the cold air as long as they can. However, the cold will struggle to win out in the long run.

Issue 210 | June 2025

The second half of the month likely brings a north or northwest dominated pattern, with milder conditions and rain focussing on northern and western parts of the country, either from Tasman Sea fronts or lows from the north. Trailing behind these systems we could still see a few Southern Ocean cold snaps with tail-end snow events, especially for the South Island.

While the upcoming cold spell may live in the memory and the Camera Roll, it will probably struggle to put a serious dent in the overall temperature anomaly for the month: expected to come in near average for the South Island, and more likely on the milder side overall for the North Island.

We have been producing the Monthly Outlook for a decade and appreciate your readership, however, the decision has been made to discontinue it with this edition being the last.

Thank you also to those who took the time to answer the survey in the last email, highlighting their particular areas of interest. We are using this feedback to help us inform what could be developed for our website.

Bottom Line

A low-pressure system this week heralds a major shift into some genuinely wintry weather, which should last several days. This may be the best cold of the month though, as milder systems are more likely to dominate in the second half of June, continuing the overall wetter trend of recent months.

You can sign up for the MetService's Monthly Outlook right to your inbox - [click here to subscribe](#).

Source: <https://www.metservice.com/rural#monthly-outlook>

Joke of the month

A married man went into the confessional and said to his priest, "I almost had an affair with another woman."

The priest said, "What do you mean, almost?"

The man said, "Well, we got undressed and rubbed together, but then I stopped."

The priest said, "Rubbing together is the same as putting it in. You're not to see that woman again. For your penance, say five Hail Mary's and put \$50 in the poor box."

The man left the confessional, said his prayers, and then walked over to the poor box. He paused for a moment and then started to leave.

The priest, who was watching, quickly ran over to him saying, "I saw that. You didn't put any money in the poor box!"

The man replied, "Yeah, but I rubbed the \$50 on the box, and according to you, that's the same as putting it in!"

Events

[Farm Mapping and Freshwater workshops \(Mossburn, Hamilton, Ranfurly, Invercargill, South Otago\) >>](#)

DFA STAGLINE



Issue 210 | June 2025

[Farm Mapping and Biodiversity workshops
\(Hastings\) >>](#)

[Soil and Nutrient Management workshops
\(Gisborne, Rotorua, Hastings\) >>](#)

[Pest and Disease Management workshops
\(Geraldine, Oxford\) >>](#)

[Next Generation Programme, Marlborough, 31
July 2025 >>](#)

[National Velvet Competition and Awards Night
>>](#)

[DINZ Parasite Management Webinar: The second webinar in DINZ's new bi-monthly webinars is on parasite management, looking at the current challenges in the season and the ongoing parasite burden. We will hear from North Island vet and Wormwise lead Ginny Dodunski, alongside South Island vet and Wormwise facilitator Lorna Humm. 1 July 7:30pm. Sign up link:](#)

<https://events.teams.microsoft.com/event/fccf7d1-6748-4e7e-a097-12e3596789be@eaa4e65d-2ab2-4637-ba8b-b9e935ebf724>

If you have an event that would be of interest to the deer farming industry, please email info@deernz.org with details.