



**Summary of the 20<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting of DEERResearch Ltd  
(incorporating the 1<sup>st</sup> Governance Council Meeting of the  
Venison Supply Systems Programme)**

**Wednesday 20 February 2008, Deer Industry New Zealand, Wellington**

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**AGENDA**

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting (25 October 2007)
3. Matters Arising
4. Register Update
  - A. Interests
  - B. Intellectual Property
5. Financial Report
6. General Business
  - a. Re-appointment of the seventh DEERResearch director
7. Venison Processing/Quality Funding
8. Research Updates (non Venison Supply Systems projects)
- 9. Venison Supply Systems Governance Council Meeting**
  - a. Welcome
  - b. History, programme structure, research team
  - c. University collaborations
  - d. Importance of genetics
  - e. Focus farms
  - f. Milestone delivery progress
  - g. Re-cap of programme outputs and outcomes

Suggested Meeting Dates and Calendar of Key Event

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## Present / Attending

- C Isaacs (Chairman), N Beatson, P Benfell, M Buick, F Griffin, G Keeley, M O'Connor
- N Fraser, T Pearse, L Fung (DINZ)
- W Taylor, M Hawkins (NZDFA), G Carr (DINZ Board), M Shadbolt, A Whaanga (Productivity Working Group), G Ramshaw (DIA) – Agenda items 7 – 10
- G Asher, J Archer (AgResearch), S Hoskin (Massey) – Agenda items 9, 10)

## Apologies

- D Smith (VPTC)

## Matters Arising

Project 20: *Interventions to reduce blown packs requiring confirmation of EU acceptability*. Email from NZFSA received 20/02/2008 advising there will be no impediment to using live stock washes or any type of detergent. Complete.

06/07-19: *Prepare licence agreement for DEERselect*. Awaiting decision on ownership of software. Ongoing.

06/07-32: *Clostridia test kit – obtain costings for further work*. AgResearch require some indications from processors as to how the test kit would be used: In-plant diagnostic tool or as a testing service provided by AgResearch. Purpose of use is also important in developing costings: monitoring levels within DSP (following clean-up), downgrading contaminated meat or diverting to appropriate market, quality assurance for markets. Ongoing – see 07/08-01 below.

07/08-01: *Clostridia test kit – obtain feedback from VPTC*. Email drafted to VPTC but awaiting AgResearch clarification of licensing cost (frequency and who pays). Ongoing.

## General Business

DINZ is in discussions with AgResearch, MIA, M&WNZ and PGGRC to seek funding for two Sustainable Farming Fund (SFF) Climate Change projects:

- On-farm inventory
- Life cycle analysis of venison

### a. Re-appointment of the seventh DEERResearch director

Re-appointment of the seventh DEERResearch director is due after being deferred in 2007. Stakeholder groups will be notified, with a request for preferred candidate nominations as well as a general call for nominations. Shareholding directors and the independent Chair will make the appointment.

## **Venison Processing / Quality Funding**

The DEEResearch Board agreed that unused funds could be rolled over on an annual basis and would be evaluated case-by-case.

The Board agreed to approve \$20,000 as co-funding alongside the \$60,000 AgResearch internal capability funds for work on drip-loss in 2007/08.

The current technology of the Clostridia test kit was such that it would be used to monitor outbreaks and remedial action rather than as a preventative measure.

## **Research Update**

The Board noted the list of articles/presentations included in the meeting papers, and agreed these papers/presentations should be uploaded onto the DEEResearch website where possible.

*Pastoral Genomics* is starting on a strategy to inform producers of new clover cultivars that could be available from 2014 onwards.

*Project 6.09: CT scanning for study of gastro-intestinal development of young deer* – final report due in March. Optimum volume development of rumen reached much earlier than previously thought; between 61 and 85 days.

## **The 1<sup>st</sup> Governance Council Meeting of the Venison Supply Systems Programme**

*G Asher and J Archer joined the meeting at 11:15am.*

### **Programme Overview (G Asher)**

Options for a 15% cash tax rebate were discussed (noting that AgResearch is a Crown Research Institute). The Board agreed advice needs to be sought concerning the tax rebate policy.

The eligibility of Simone Hoskin remaining as the university representative on the Science Management Team was raised. AgResearch is comfortable with the situation at the moment, but is open to change in the future should it be necessary.

The Governance Council discussed the process required to change Objectives: Milestones and projects within objectives can be changed with relatively little difficulty. In the event of a major contract renegotiation, all changes would always be run past the DEEResearch board and VSS Governance Council.

The Council noted there was no proposed research into welfare, - a potentially important topic for European marketing. FRST recognise science and industry needs will change and additional welfare research could be undertaken, although this would depend upon funding availability in an appropriate FRST portfolio.

It was noted that industry levy-funds have been conservatively budgeted, and are in line with the DINZ five-year plan. The funding has been fixed for four years, with a further two years subject to review.

*S Hoskin joined the meeting at 12:30 pm.*

## University Collaborations (S Hoskin)

- Seasonality & genetics – Lincoln
- Rumen development – Massey
- Lactation – Lincoln & Massey

Farmers need to be aware of the benefits drenching can make: more data required to convince farmers to be proactive dealing with parasites.

Accurate diagnosis of parasites in deer is an issue and a key focus for the VSS programme

Johne's disease (Jd) is expected to have a very significant impact on research data into parasites: Deer with both Jd and parasites give variable diagnosis results. This highlights the importance of controlling Jd to some degree, before farmers are able to focus on parasites. A mix of Jd and parasites could explain the significant gut/lung parasite differences displayed between the Hindon and Massey University farms.

## Genetics (J Archer)

Technology is rapidly developing and changing and the cost is coming down. Technology now enables conventional breeding to combine with molecular genetics.

DEERSelect has now been extended to include Elk/Wapiti values, economic indices developed (not yet implemented).

AgResearch is currently developing pilot sequencing project for deer (with Landcorp). Outcome would be 5-10k SNPs and could then migrate current tools (parentage and breed composition) to SNP-based markers.

## Focus Farms (T Pearse)

All Focus Farms have a focus on venison, integrated livestock systems and sustainability.

DINZ is funding the whole Focus Farms programme. This includes a professional facilitator, testing, communications. AgResearch staff time is from FRST funds (ca. \$90,000 p.a.) and NZDFA Branches are to organise the community group and source local sponsorship.

There are three Focus Farms actively running to date.

- Rotorua*: Focus on finishing weaners and less hinds, increasing earlier slaughter, change in genetics, autumn cropping to enhance growth rate. Third field day is scheduled to take place after the drought. Facilitators: Mark Macintosh and Robin Hopkirk.
- Hawke's Bay*: Focus on a wet winter property, self-feeding winter silage and autumn cropping. Large involvement from technical committee. First field day to be held 9<sup>th</sup> April. Facilitator: Richard Hilson.
- Rangitata Gorge*: Focus on breeding and finishing property. Looking at the use of nitrogen in hill country development to promote pasture growth using a spray oversow option. Next field day planned for 27 February. Facilitator: Nicky Hyslop.
- Ongoing search for Canterbury Focus Farm: Dry breeding/finishing property sought, - to be confirmed ASAP. Facilitator: Andy Macfarlane/Peter Bradley.

Approximately 100 people have been attending major field days, and many more are receiving publicity.

Companies supportive of the focus farm concept at a local level have included Ballance, Gallagher, Ravensdown and regional councils. Newsletters are being produced for each focus farm, however it is hoped these may eventually benefit from regional council resources.

### **Proposed Change to Milestones (University Research)**

The supplement paper to Agenda Item 9 was noted.

- *The Governance Council approved the re-allocation of 2007/08 funds from parasite work to the Kisspeptin the proposal outlined and a Variation of Contract to be sought from FRST.*

### **Parasitology Update**

The supplement paper to Agenda Item 9 was noted. The request for an underwriting scholarship would allow a student to be secured in the university system and then seek other scholarships. Once a scholarship was secured, the underwriting DEEResearch scholarship would cease.

Several milestones have been bought forward to keep the momentum of the programme going. The Board were advised several scholarship rounds are coming up where opportunities for further funding for a PhD student will be available.

- *The Governance Council agreed initial funding (\$30,000) for a student scholarship via the DEEResearch discretionary fund starting 1 July 2008 was an acceptable approach to continuing parasite work.*
- *The DEEResearch Board approved funding of \$30,000 for 2008/09 from the DEEResearch discretionary fund to secure a PhD candidate to undertake a parasitology research starting 1 July 2008 for one year only.*

## **Suggested Meeting Dates and Calendar of Key Events**

- 31 March 2008: Nominations close for position of 7<sup>th</sup> Director (processors/exporters)
- 18 April 2008: 7<sup>th</sup> Director appointed.
- 30 April 2008: Board Meeting (teleconference)
- 23 July 2008: VSS Governance Council meeting (Ruakura) – stakeholders will be first asked for preference of once a year or twice a year face-to-face updates.