

266

Deer Yard Design Requirements and Plans

Part A: Plans 1 to 4

Some form of yards, no matter how simple, is essential on every deer farm right from the time it is first stocked. There is no such thing as a 'standard' deer yard. Every farm has its own design, although many are variations of basic themes.

It is not necessary to lavish money on building elaborate yards, especially if the herd is small. Many large yards are totally impractical; smaller, well designed yards are often much easier to work. As long as there are a sufficient number of holding pens or paddocks, the actual yards for close handling of stock can be kept to a minimum. Good design makes provision for future extensions.

The advice presented here should be considered in conjunction with the requirements for farm location and design (AgLink FPP 246).

Most successful yards have some or all of the following points in common:

- A long lead-in race, close boarded for about 9 m out from the yards. Ideally, it should not be straight, but should offer an indirect approach so that the yards are hidden from the animals' view until the last minute.
- The whole working area, or at least some of the pens or main handling area, completely roofed-in and darkened. Whether roofed or not, all walls should be close-boarded and at least 2.1 m high for red deer (2.6 m for fallow).
- Sheet or corrugated iron is avoided because it is noisy.
- Plywood is well supported on framing to avoid 'drumming' on impact.
- A central, circular crush pen with two centrally swung gates is common in many designs. Farmers often use them more for directing stock into lateral pens rather than as a 'crush'. Five metres is a suggested maximum diameter.
- Small pens (the actual number depending on the size of herd) for working with small numbers of animals at close quarters. Larger uncovered areas can be used for holding large numbers of deer.
- A floor covering of sand, wood chips or coarse saw dust.
- Storage facilities for equipment.
- Usually, sheep-type drafting gates do not work very well. Hand drafting is easiest.
- Long, narrow race-ways should be avoided.
- Corners should be avoided, especially in areas used for close handling.

The accompanying plans are all based on existing yards and exhibit the great variation possible, but they do not claim to be exact representations of those yards. Some of the drawings have been modified to eliminate obvious design faults and some may not show recent additions or alterations to the actual yards. In drawing metric plans of yards originally constructed to Imperial specifications, some measurements have been rounded off.

At this scale it has not been possible to show structural details or precise dimensions. The drawings are intended merely as a guide to layout design. Unless otherwise stated, they are intended for handling red deer.

There are a number of AgLinks in this series:

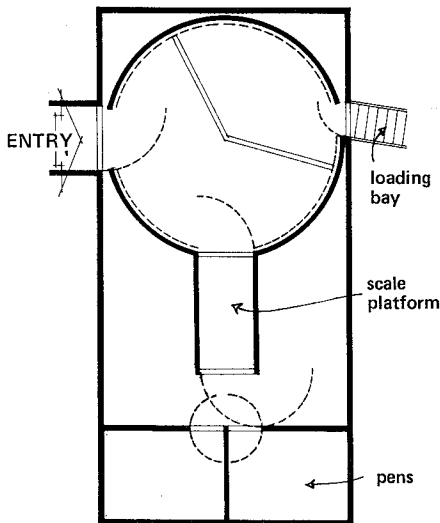
Part A: Plans 1 to 4
Part B: Plans 5 to 8
Part C: Plans 9 and 10

FPP 251
FPP 252
FPP 253

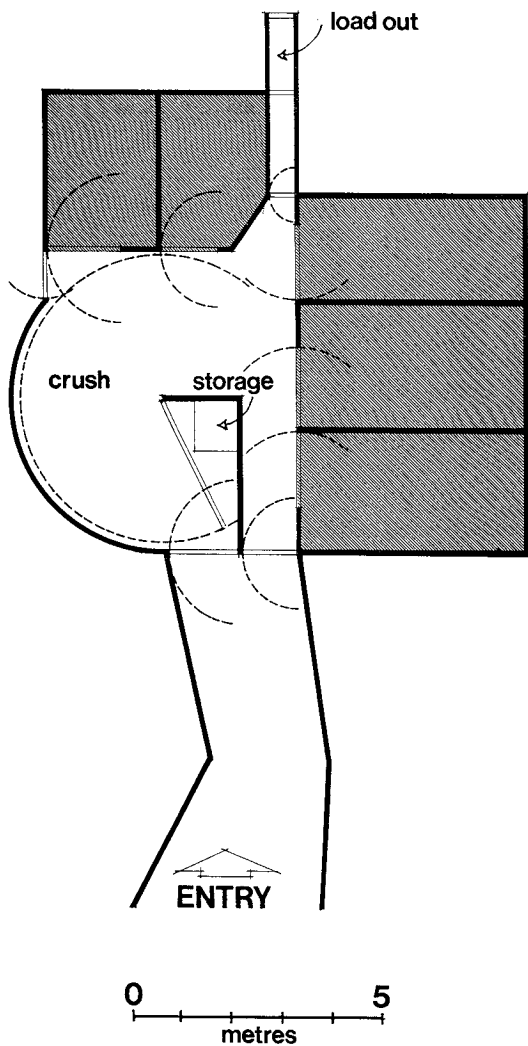
PLAN 1

J. Grinsven, Opatiki

This simple set of yards is built into an existing shed. They consist basically of a circular crush with two swinging gates at one end of the barn and two pens at the other. Access to the pens from the crush is by a fixed weighing platform, with adjustable sides, which can also be used for veterinary inspection, etc. This basic design can be easily extended with the addition of other pens round the circle, thus, forming the covered and darkened handling section of a more extensive set of yards.



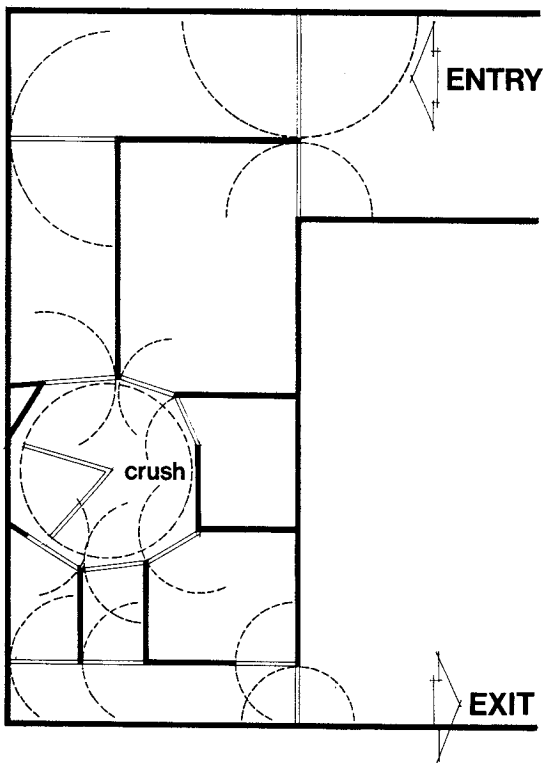
0 5
metres



PLAN 2

G. Branson, Kaharoa

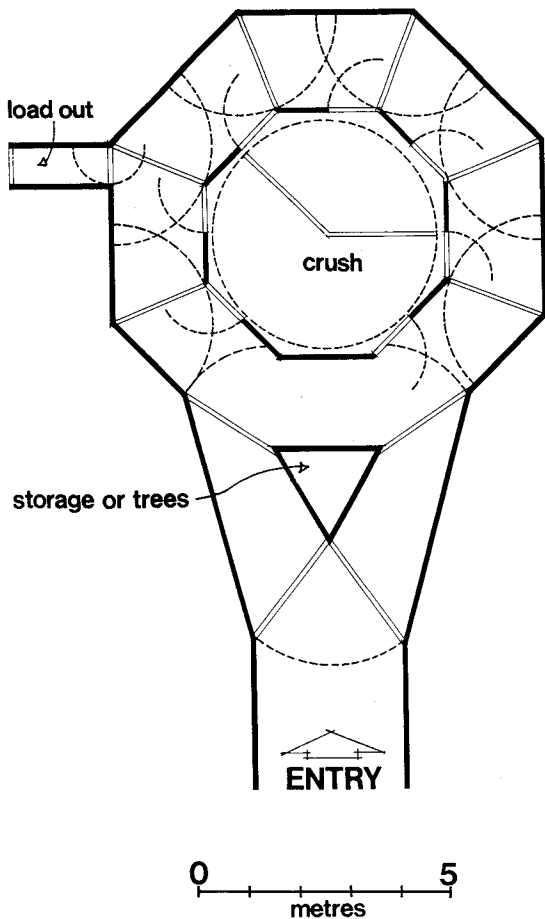
Five completely covered and darkened pens are easily accessible from an open 'D' shaped crush which functions as an auction ring. Buyers obtain a clear view of stock in the ring from an embankment to the left. Deer move well in this design.



PLAN 3

B. Managh, Kaharoa

Built within an existing haybarn, these yards have 2.4 m high sides. The variety of pen sizes is a good way to ensure close confinement of different numbers of animals. There is a walkway over the top of the yards. Individual pens could be close covered if desired.



PLAN 4

G. Hope and B. Cooper, Opotiki

At Opotiki, these yards (designed by B. Cloughley, Farm Advisory Officer, Whakatane) are used to handle fallow deer very successfully. A much larger version handles several hundred red deer on the property of D. Managh at Te Puke. In both cases the whole complex is covered and, at Te Puke, there is a walkway round the top.

The plan is very flexible and versatile. The outer ring can act as a circular race or be divided into up to eight pens of varying size.

The central, circular crush with its two gates and the gates of the outer ring allow multi-way drafting, either inwards or outwards.

A slight modification would allow direct access for stock from the entry race to the central circle if desired. The entry race is close boarded for about 9 m.

Acknowledgement: W. Pillbrow, Draughtswoman, Dunedin.

*K.H. Giles
Farm Advisory Officer (Animal Husbandry)
Advisory Services Division
Rotorua*



*N.L. Round-Turner
Liaison Officer
Research Division
Invermay Agricultural Research Centre*