

**DEER INDUSTRY NEW ZEALAND
FORMAL GENERAL MEETING
Timaru
2011**

**JOHN TACON
QUALITY MANAGER**



16 years

- “Take quality issues seriously”
 - Has the power to damage
- Wide definition of quality
 - Reassure customers
- Not just product on a plate or in a portion
 - Everything involved in getting it there



DeerQA

- Processing 1991
- On-farm 1993
- Transport 1994
- Velvetting 1994 (NVSB)
- Animal Welfare Act 1999
- Code of Welfare for Deer 2007
- Focus farms, Land Care Manual



Still relevant?

- Emphatically YES
- Safeguard
 - our reputation
 - our industry
 - our animals
 - our livelihood



Has it worked?

- Mostly “Yes”
 - Processing
 - Industry Agreed Standards successful
 - On-farm
 - Initially successful – But is it still a source of pride
 - Transport
 - Successful but must avoid complacency
 - Velvetting (NVSB)
 - A setback in 2007 but back on track and very successful



What's changed?

- More regulation
- More enforcement
- More government initiated welfare programmes
- More public awareness of welfare issues
 - Are we doing as well as we could?

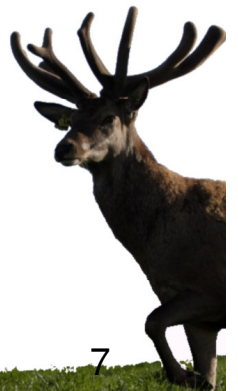


Why tell you this?

- We need to be thinking about the next “level” of progress
- We used to be well ahead of the pack
 - Conscious of the issues
 - Implemented industry-wide programmes
 - Strong practical farmer input and support
- Not necessarily in that position now
- Good in some areas but not in others



DEER INDUSTRY
NEW ZEALAND



NVSB

- Velvetting is a ‘shining light’
- Started strong, slipped back, recovered
 - MAF identified problems and supported change
- Velvet surveillance programme
 - Jointly DINZ, MAF ED and NZFSA
 - Good example of regulators and industry working together



NVSB programme

- 1020 certificated velvetters 2009/10 season
 - Audited 96 farmers
 - 2 farmers failed and received extra training
- Vets also audited
 - Audited 15 practices
 - High standards



Performance Indicators

KPIs	Percentage
Stags settled	98
Effective Analgesia at removal	97
Compliant facilities	94
Appropriate level of sedation	99
Tourniquet before local anaesthetic	99

Congratulations!

- Excellent compliance rate
 - Farmers to be congratulated
 - Vets to be congratulated
- Performance levels back where they should be
 - Annual NAWAC benchmark reports
 - Only marginal improvements possible now



Compliance

- *“Everyone taking responsibility for the welfare of animals”*
 - MAF initiative for Improving Animal Welfare Compliance in New Zealand
 - Covers every single animal in New Zealand
 - Special emphasis on animal-based industries
- Key word for us is **Compliance**

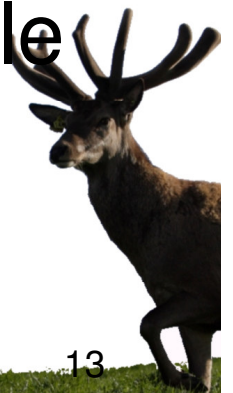


Compliance

- Most of you will agree that animal welfare means

“avoiding cruelty, preventing unnecessary suffering and providing a reasonable standard of humane care”

- But would you all agree where the line is that defines “unnecessary” or “reasonable standard” or even “humane care”?



Compliance

- I would suggest not
 - Even though most deer farmers treat their animals very well, most don't know what the standards actually are
- Animal Welfare Act requires us as an industry – and you as farmers, transporters and processors - to ensure that welfare obligations are met



Perceptions

Yorkshire's National Newspaper
YORKSHIRE POST

8 May 2009: *“However despite being on the opposite side of the world, New Zealand has cornered nearly 75 per cent of the UK [venison] market. Operating at lower welfare standards than seen in the UK, deer farmers in New Zealand effectively have two markets.”*



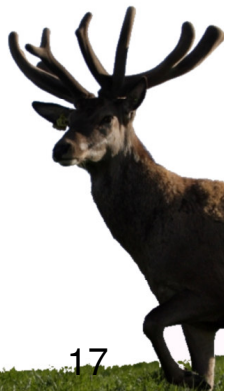
How does this affect you?

- Deer industry has a good reputation on animal welfare
- ***“Animal welfare will be the biggest issue this industry faces in the years ahead and we need to take it very seriously”***
 - Tom Williams, NZGIB, Deer Industry Summit 1991
- 20yrs later it still remains a serious issue

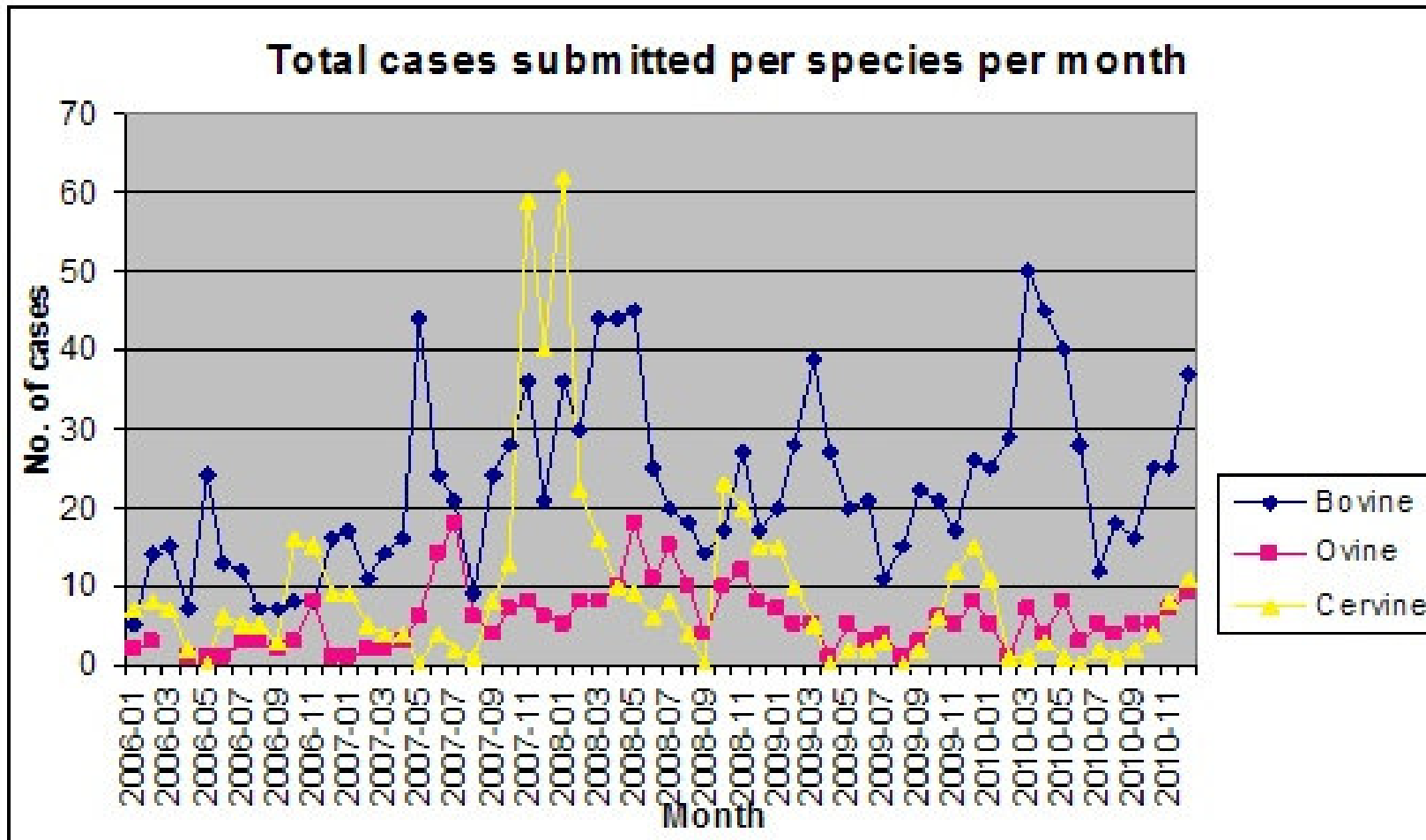


Big picture

- Animal welfare complaints to MAF rising
 - Especially in “high” to “very high” categories
 - Not only in deer industry



WELFARE



Big picture

- Industry **MUST** be able to show compliance with the Act
- Independent verification of claims is vital for credibility
- Industry agreed standards that include codes of welfare are essential



Research

- Most but not all processing companies have quality programmes
- Less than half of farmers are accredited to a venison company quality programme
 - Companies with quality programmes do audit them; mostly internally and externally
- BUT ... Standards are not consistent across programmes



Do we need change?

- YES
- We need to get back onto the front foot as an industry in terms of quality assurance
 - Remembering our very wide definition of quality including animal welfare
- We need to ensure *all* farmers are accredited to an on-farm programme



How?

- The strongest position for the industry would be to commit to an integrated set of industry agreed standards
- Independently verifiable through companies own systems
 - Including animal welfare standards to comply with the Code and Act,
 - including velvet removal
 - environmental standards



United we could stand

- It would be great to agree a way to unite the whole industry to ensure everybody shares some consistent standards for aspects of their operation



To summarise

- Deer industry embraced quality strongly
 - But now need to move to the next level
- Could do better
 - We need to achieve integrated industry-agreed standards
 - Unite all deer industry sectors with an agreed base 'quality' level
- We can lead the pack

