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FROM THE EDITOR

By Andy Cowan

It will be interesting to hear what happens with the velvet sales this season. There is a strong demand from both Korea and China with local buyers looking to fulfil large orders. Hopefully the price will go up a little this season. The biggest complication maybe that some potential buyers may be deterred from purchasing from the Pools as none of the velvet is graded. The arrangement we had with New Zealand Velvet Marketing last year overcame the need for us to do this, as they graded all our velvet in New Zealand. Apart from earthquakes in Christchurch which caused significant disruptions to their business, last year's system worked very well. It will be interesting to see what happens this season.

The second part of this story that I have written on Traditional Chinese Medicine will, I hope, be of interest to velvet growers. It is merely an interpretation of a conversation I had with a practitioner of TCM whose first language is not English. The most fascinating difference to me is that, in the past our two cultures have had a very different interpretation of "contentment" or "happiness". This, I suspect, is changing for many TCM practitioners as China's economy develops, becoming more similar to the west. In my friend's case, contentment is based on good health and respect for others. Financial gain from keeping people healthy is not on his list of priorities.

I thank Marika Mc Kinnon for her article on her visit to China for the World Deer Conference. She and Andrew took all the pictures for the story. The first thing that struck me, after seeing the pictures of the stags, was the extraordinary variation in the velvet length. If they were cutting velvet to be used in TCM, why do we have such a complicated grading system? Secondly, just the scale of everything seems overwhelming – in this particular case the sheer number of deer by-products. Dawn Evans must be green with envy!

Happy Christmas and holiday season to you all.