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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

By Jim Moir

After so many reports of trying to put a positive spin on bad news, it is great to start off with some honest to goodness good news.

Both venison and velvet prices are returning to profitable regions. Feed prices are lower, with feed barley just over the \$100/tonne for example. Also, most areas in the south look like having a good hay season.

We had a win with a senate hearing on new AQIS charges for export abattoirs. The Government planned to remove the 40% funding to AQIS and directed that it be a full user pay system.

AQIS briefed us at the Orange AGM on the proposed charges. Initially we were led to believe that it would have a minimal effect to the venison trade. However, when the Myrtleford abattoir reviewed the charges, they advised that they were increasing their costs such that it equated to approximately 26c/kg extra. The DIAA presented our opposition, along with the Emu, Ostrich and other associations to the plan of noting that it would be the death of game farming in Australia. The Senate rejected the Government plan and we will just have to wait for the Government's response. I hope they see the long term benefits for viable game farming to the national interest rather than a small short term money grab.

In New Zealand, a new organization is in place for velvet selling. It is an expansion to the plan outlined by John Smith at the Orange AGM. The new group estimates to control approximately 75% of the NZ velvet crop which puts them in a strong selling position. The group aims to set a minimum price for the velvet season and sell over the whole season rather than in large lots as per the pool system. This will give the buyers certainty that they will not be left holding velvet on a falling market, as happened over the last couple of years, but does not exclude prices rising over the season.

ADH&CP have entered into an agreement with the group that ensures our velvet will be sold at the ruling NZ prices and our cost will be equivalent to NZ charges. If you have any questions please call Ross Lawrence on (03) 5628-4298.

ADH&CP believe that our farmers will receive more favourable returns with this arrangement. Plus it feels good to be part of a price setting arrangement rather than the usual price takers.

The next World Deer Congress will be in China next July. A few of us are planning a side trip taking in some deer farms plus sightseeing on route. If you are interested in visiting this part of the world, let me know at jmoir@hotkey.net.au and I will send you details.

With plenty of rain about in most of Victoria the growing season looks promising. With velvet/venison being in short supply, we should all be in the black for a change.

Jim Moir
President DIAA