



February (Summer) 2011, 1 page

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

By Andrew Hansen

What a country we live in! A decade of drought, and now a large part of eastern Australia inundated by flood water with, at the same time, parts of the west in drought and ravaged by bushfires. What next?

Being in the NSW central tablelands, I have escaped with damage to several flood-gates and a few washed-out crossings. Nothing compared to the losses of livestock, fencing, homes and buildings and worse, loved ones, suffered by so many in our farming community.

We await a reply to our letter to the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry requesting a reduction in levies. So until then they remain at the 2007

levels to which they reverted on the 1st July 2009 – Deer slaughter levy of 10.5 cents/kg HSCW, Deer export charge \$7.50 per head, Velvet levy 3.5% of sale value and the Velvet export charge 3.5% of sale value. Members will be kept informed of progress in this matter.

In November, I presented a paper at a seminar organised by the Southern NSW Branch of the Australian Society of Animal Production entitled "Considering the Alternatives". The title suggested for my presentation was "Gold on four feet?" and I was asked to review the current state of the Australian deer farming industry.

At the end of November, Nola Anderson (DIAA Representative to RIRDC) and I represented the deer industry at the first Conference and Exposition presented by New Rural Industries Australia. This is an alliance that developed from a forum hosted by RIRDC for new and emerging industries. For more information visit www.nria.org.au.

An impressive array of international and Australian speakers spoke on topics ranging from seaweed to bio-fuels to biodiversity to consumer trends. Industries represented included tea tree oil, buffaloes, camels, crocodiles, mohair, alpacas, wildflowers, olives, exotic fruits and many more.

Both the seminar and the conference gave me pause to think of the status of the Australian deer industry. Over the last 35 years we have been through the testing developmental stages many of the new industries are yet to face. Our industry structures are in place. We have working, efficient supply chains and our products are in high demand locally and internationally. Comparative budgets show that deer compare favourably with other grazing enterprises.

I finished my presentation by saying that deer may not be "gold on four feet" but they are an efficient animal producing a lean meat eminently suited to our modern lifestyle. They also produce velvet antler, desired by an increasingly affluent Asian market for TCM.

Our industry now has a firm foundation upon which to build, expand our herds and supply a demanding world.

Please remember the DIAA AGM which is on the 14th April in Melbourne.

Andrew Hansen
President DIAA

