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## **MARKET-FOCUSED VENISON ALLIANCES A Major Initiative of the Deer R&D Program**

### Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation

Following extensive consultation with industry participants, a Strategic Plan for venison was endorsed in 2005. This led to significant changes in focus for the RIRDC Deer R&D Program, with the most important of these being support for the establishment of Market Focused Venison Supply Chain Alliances.

A workshop of industry participants held in Melbourne in early 2006 identified priorities for future research and determined the processes that would assist a transition towards the development of Supply Chain Alliances. Participants in this workshop included venison and velvet producers and processors, owners of abattoirs that slaughter deer, the major industry representative organization (Deer Industry Association of Australia – DIAA) and members of the RIRDC Deer Industry R&D Advisory Committee.

Following the Workshop RIRDC offered three layers of funding to support the development of market focused alliances.

This included:

- Funding for a Kick Start Workshop;
- Funding for development of a Business Plan for the Alliance; and
- Funding for ongoing Alliance Development initiatives of a technical, marketing, organizational or business management nature.

This funding included financial support from the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry's (DAFF) and the Industry Partnership Program. The funding was achieved through a successful DIAA application to DAFF. It enabled funding of marketing initiatives not covered within RIRDC's charter.

Six Alliances were developed and all completed Stage 1: Kick Start Workshop. Four Alliances proceeded to Stage 2 and three Alliances have reached Stage 3.

All the Alliances that have reached Stage 3 have undertaken projects that have researched issues in order to resolve commercially significant problems or challenges impeding the Alliances' success under the endorsed business plan. The projects addressed issues of a technical, marketing, organizational and business management nature. These Alliances demonstrated to the Venison Supply Chain Alliances Steering Committee that the issue to be addressed was either limiting growth of the alliance or interfering with the implementation of the business plan AND that it would contribute significantly to resolving this problem.

Alliance projects have addressed packaging, constraints to marketing awareness, abattoir availability, transport and processing of stock, business efficiency and product improvement.

All projects were completed by 30 April 2008 and an evaluation of the initiative's activities will be undertaken in May 2008 and reported on in future newsletters.