



August (Winter) 2011, 3 pages

REPORT TO THE DIAA AGM – DEER R&D PROGRAM

Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation

OVERVIEW

- This is the last year of the current Five Year Plan.
- The R&D Program had built quite high reserves. These are slowly reducing, as expenditure exceeds levy income, but still remains at \$415,000, down \$20,000 from last year.
- A total research budget of \$60,684 was proposed for 2010-11 (\$350,000 budgeted in 2007-08). \$59,000 is proposed to be spent on research in 2011-12.
- RIRDC is currently reviewing all program areas in preparation for the development of the new RIRDC Corporate Strategy 2012-2017. Allocation of investment and resources will be balanced against updated RIRDC, government and industry priorities.

Goal of the Five Year R&D Plan

The Program objective is to improve industry performance in four key areas where the industry has identified problems at both whole-of-industry and industry sector-specific levels.

Key long term R&D Strategies

- Improve understanding of and cooperation between participants in the value chain for venison and velvet products
- Improve market demand for venison and velvet products by improving product quality and quality control systems and improving consumer understanding of deer products
- Improve market demand for deer products by improving end-user knowledge of the attributes of Australian venison products and developing new value-added venison and velvet products that reflect current and emerging market requirements
- Promote utilisation and adoption of research results to improve the uniformity and quality of industry products and the capacity of producers to consistently supply them
- Communicate research outcomes and promote their adoption to the deer industry through strong relationships with key industry organisations.

PROJECT UPDATES

PRJ-005266 Communication for the Deer Industry in Australia. Solange Shapiro

To achieve widespread dissemination and use of R&D information by the deer industry and to ensure that the industry is kept up to date by:

- Making the Australian Deer Farming (ADF) Magazine available to all deer farmers currently on the RIRDC and DIAA Lists.
- Using the ADF magazine as the vehicle by which all RIRDC news and information is disseminated.

The Summer edition of the magazine has been distributed to all deer farmers who registered an interest in receiving the publication. The Autumn edition is currently at the printers and will be distributed before the end of April. This meets with the milestone deadline of 30/5/2011.

The Summer issue welcomed the new DIAA Secretary Marika McKinnon and farewelled the previous Secretary Solange Shapiro.

There was also an interesting article on 'Genetics and Velvet' by an experienced deer breeder. In addition, the editor Andy Cowan has published an article on IGF-1 Insulin-like Growth Factor. These articles will also be available for reading on the DIAA website www.diaa.org by the end of May.

The Autumn edition is mainly an administrative one for the DIAA with notices for the DIAA AGM with agenda, minutes, notices of motion, accounts and proxy forms.

PRJ-003775 Defining the Australian market for velvet antler products.
Gordon Dryden

This project is completed and has been passed on to the Deer R&D Advisory Committee in February for comment before publication.

General aim: To define the size and nature of the Australian domestic market for VA products, those factors which constrain or may support the development of this market and the characteristics of a successful supply chain.

This information will be obtained by interviews, and from databases and a literature review:

- (a) Interviews: with representative retailers of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) and complementary medicine products; academics in schools of TCM and complementary medicine; organisations representing TCM, and human and pet complementary medicine users; manufacturers of complementary medicines; VA processors; tourism operators.
- (b) Data bases: Australian statistics on VA and complementary medicine production.
- (c) Literature review: of the similarities and differences between TCM and western medical views about VA products, and to summarise the available western medical evidence of VA efficacy.

The project will elucidate present attitudes towards the use of velvet antler products (VA) in Australia by TCM and complementary therapies practitioners. It will assess the amounts and value of VA used in Australia (including that bought domestically), identify the reasons why individual practitioners may be reluctant to use VA, identify "ignorance factors" in the harvesting and processing of VA by potential users.

PRJ-004052 DIAA website maintenance and information for the Australian deer industry.
Solange Shapiro

The project will maintain industry support for the RIRDC Deer R&D Program through the effective use of the DIAA website. To achieve this, the website will be regularly updated, making the latest RIRDC Deer R&D newsletter, as well as news and information, available to all parties interested in the deer industry.

This project was contracted in November 2009, and will continue until 2012.

PRJ-004358 Deer velvet antler- research quality and returns through the pools.
Ross Lawrence

The project objectives are:

1. To review the present NZ grading system, currently used by ADH with respect to prevailing market conditions and cost effectiveness.
2. To identify the changes in the quality of velvet antler sold through the Australian velvet pools system from 2001 to 2011.
3. To list and analyze the quantities of velvet antler sold through the pools system from 2000 to 2011.
4. To review current markets for velvet sales and identify potential markets for specific grades of velvet that attract a premium price.
5. Research the reasons for the changes in velvet antler quality.
6. Detail a strategy to achieve more than 80% of velvet harvested from mature stags being sold in premium grades by 2010, which is a performance indicator target in the Five Year Plan.

Progress so far:

1. Further information has been collected and collated from ADHCP, DIAA and NZVM for the 2009-10 velvet season for velvet sold through the Australian Velvet Pools System. This data has been added to the data previously collected from 1999 to 2009 and will form the basis of this project.
2. Known deer farmers have been contacted over the past 12 months by mail, email, phone and personal visit to discuss issues relating to velvet antler quality and farming practices. Topics discussed included improved genetics, feeding and velvet antler removal under the National Velvet Accreditation Scheme.
3. Velvet antler buyers and processors, both locally and overseas, have been contacted during the past 12 months about velvet antler quality and supply issues. Included was a trip to China and Hong Kong by the investigator where velvet antler supply, quality and grading requirements for premium velvet were discussed with major buyers and processors.