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## DEER PROGENY INITIATIVE

On 11 July, 2011 the Otago Daily Times wrote an article on what is a major change in direction for some deer farmers in the South Island of New Zealand. Collaboration between AgResearch and White Rock Station, in the Rangitata Gorge, is aimed at redefining breeding values and breeding tools of red deer.

The research was instigated by the move of deer farming to “extensification”. This is a polite way of saying that the dairy industry is now taking over all the high-quality lowland downs.

Deer farms are now being pushed into New Zealand’s hill and high country. Research is needed to find out what is the best type of hind for this new environment. Deer farming since the 1970s has been largely based on high-quality pastures. Research was based on the best types of fodder that could be grown in these situations.

With this change of direction, there is a need to redefine the performance and profitability of red deer. Along with this, there will be a need to expand trait measurements and breeding values.

This is where White Rock Station contributes to the partnership with Invermay. Stags and hinds will be selected and mated and hopefully new parameters will be set for breeding values and types of hinds.