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FROM THE EDITOR

By Andy Cowan

Well our life here in Victoria is slowly returning to some form of normality. People in my area are getting on with the job and, although there is still much to do as a result of the fires in February, most are beginning to come to terms with the enormity of the event. In our wind-breaks, and in the forests generally, there are still many trees which have on epicormic growth. This is of great concern. Hopefully more trees will re-grow in the springtime.

I apologize for running late with this issue. Little things seem to cause large delays. I would also like to appeal to members to express their thoughts about our industry in writing and have them published in the ADF. For example, you may have an opinion on the best way to sell our velvet.

In his President's Report, Jim mentions the possibility of wild-shot deer being sold as "organic venison". I have been in touch with the Organic Federation of Australia and the National Association for Sustainable Agriculture, Australia but as yet have not had a definitive answer. Do you have an opinion? Let us know. I remember speaking to a venison vendor some years ago about organic venison. At that stage there was not much demand for it and definitely no monetary incentive to grow venison organically. The possibility of being able to sell wild-shot deer as organic venison may impact on all of us. At present there is no research relating to the health benefits of wild-shot deer. The hygiene issues and the lack of testing for diseases are cause for concern. It will be interesting to see how/when/if any levies are collected in order to maintain our research projects.

Unfortunately I was unable to attend the AGM in Orange. Our executive has been seeking clarification on the recently introduced AQIS fees. Their fees are now based on "full cost recovery" which means that the abattoir fees will increase. This may have a negative impact on many industries.

For those who think we may have made a typo in Sue Joubert's report, "bleb" means "an elevation or the skin filled with serious fluid".

It must be comforting to be an economist. You can change your plans and predictions every month and still be regarded as being good at your job and get paid!!!!