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ARDNO DEER PARK: APOLOGY & CLARIFICATION

By **Andy Cowan**

In the last edition of the ADF, Autumn 2012, P.9 I wrote “In the past, ET programs were used to bring genetics from a quarantine farm to the main herd. The animals they have on their quarantine block were purchased from Maradene Deer Stud many years ago but had tested positive for Johne’s.” This statement is incorrect. The animals that Ardno Deer Park purchased from Maradene tested clear and negative. Further testing again supported this. I apologise to Ardno Deer Park for this error and for any confusion that may have developed.

To provide clarification, I have had the situation explained to me by Marika McKinnon and hope that this will allay any fears.

Many years ago Maradene Deer Stud, amongst others, were found to have Johne’s Disease in their stock. This involved much testing of their stock before any were allowed to leave the farm - unless for slaughter. Ardno Deer Park was one of the many deer farming operations which bought stock from Maradene. The animals bought were tested twice before leaving Maradene. Both tests were clear and negative.

Nevertheless, the McKinnons set up a quarantine farm with a different PIC (Property Identification Code) number to their main farm. This “simply” involved a few acres, double fenced with a shed, a crush and water. A foot bath with disinfectant had to be installed and everyone going in/out had to disinfect their boots. An old ute was purchased to be used only within the inner fence perimeter.

All the females in this quarantined mob were AI’d. The embryos collected from this procedure were then transferred to the other “commercial” farm and implanted into recipient hinds. Of course, this was all under Government supervision.

At about this time, the McKinnons had about 300 hinds slaughtered. Being part of the Government Johne’s testing program for deer, all these deer were tested at slaughter. All tested negative to Johne’s. For the next four years, all tests done for Johne’s on the property were negative. The Government then allowed the bought hinds to be run with the commercial herd.