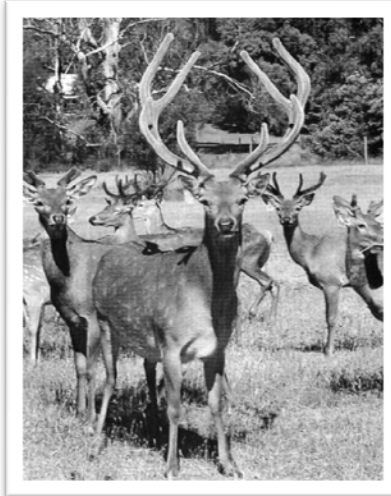




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## FROM THE EDITOR

By Andy Cowan



Although the volume of velvet sent through the Pools to New Zealand was quite small, everything went smoothly. When I delivered my velvet, there was an established work force of Solange, Deanne, Jim and of course Ross. Unfortunately, being in the middle of hay and velvet harvest, some people were not able to stay and help out. Those who did stay however, had a chance to catch up on industry developments as well as to chat with people they may only see once a year. Apart from this, I find it interesting to see who is growing the good velvet. As there will no longer be a velvet competition, this is really the only way to have a look at other farmers' velvet. I hope the story on the New Zealand Velvet Marketing Co Ltd will help growers understand the selling system a little better. In order to reduce the costs per grower for those supplying the Pools, more velvet is needed.

Members should be aware that the next World Deer Congress is to be held in China in next July. It is early days yet as the "Call for Papers" has only recently gone out. If you are interested in going to the Congress, contact Jim Moir. Jim is trying to put together a group that may go on a tour before the Congress but this is dependent upon numbers. Jim will also be able to send you more information and registration forms. Now might be a good time to book in and pay – unless you think the US dollar will drop even further in comparison to the Aussie dollar.

The photo on the front cover (above) is a picture of a 4 YO sika/red stag. I still do not have the capability to run my entire velvet herd into the yards because the fencing is still incomplete. I have had to sacrifice some of the velvet until I get laneways etc finished. This is not all bad as I get a better idea of which way the genetics throw by observing the antler when fully developed.

I have included a summary of all the RIRDC research papers for the last few years in the newsletter. It is interesting to observe, given the four key areas where the industry has identified problems, whether or not we have achieved our goals. More detailed accounts of each of the projects are given on the RIRDC website – <http://www.rirdc.gov.au>. Follow the prompts to the Deer Industry.

As Jim has said in his editorial – it has been a tough year. I believe we have a bright future – starting with a happy and safe Christmas period.