



GUARDIAN

Farming

MAY 2018



AHEAD OF THE GAME

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Staying ahead of the deer game



This year's Deer Industry Conference follows a good year for New Zealand deer farmers.

The theme of this year's deer industry conference is Staying Ahead of the Game and Deer Industry New Zealand chief executive Dan Coup believes those farmers who attend next week's event will put themselves in a prime position to do so.

Coup hopes deer farmers from around Canterbury will find the time to come along to the conference, which is being held at the Caroline Bay Hall on May 15 and 16.

"I certainly understand that there are a 101 jobs to be done on the farm and it's really hard to get way for one or two days.

"But I also know that most cockies will have heard the term 'working on the business' and the conference should fall into that category," he said.

"We're aiming for the conference to



Colin Williscroft RURAL REPORTER

deliver value back to attendees by giving them some ideas, some inspiration and a chance to think about the big picture that their business operates in.

"It is a great opportunity to connect and catch up with other folks running businesses like yours and facing the same sort of challenges," Coup said.

"All going well farmer attendees will go home thinking 'that was really interesting and inspiring and I had a great time'."

Along with the usual venison, velvet and general research sessions, this year's conference has a particular

focus on the environment.

The conference kicks off with the 13rd annual meeting of the New Zealand Deer Farmers' Association, which begins at noon on the first day of the conference.

After that the conference's technical sessions begin.

First-up is an update on key DEERResearch projects, beginning with a DEERResearch and Velvet Antler Research New Zealand programme overview by DINZ science and policy manager Catharine Sayer.

During the same session Dr Dawn Coates from the University of Otago will discuss stem cell mediated healing, AgResearch's Dr Geoff Asher will look at long-term monitoring of deer impacts on waterways, while Jamie Ward, also from AgResearch, will cover current parasite research, before a general discussion and Q&A.

The focus of the next session is applying P2P (Passion2Profit) experiences.

Deer Industry New Zealand chief executive Dan Coup is confident this year's conference will provide ideas and inspiration for deer farmers. PHOTO SUPPLIED

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From P3

That will begin with Hayden Barker from South Canterbury Vet Life and deer farmer Tom Macfarlane reporting on their experiences with the Animal Health Review, before Jamie Gordon from Macfarlane Rural Business explains the feeding systems concept.

DINZ deer genetics manager Sharon McIntyre will then look into utilising genetic gain, providing first-hand farmer experience of deer breeding and the use of EBVs.

Then it's the turn of P2P project manager Innes Moffat, who will look at some headlines from the 2017 CINTA report.

After an afternoon tea break conference attendees will hear from OSPRI chief executive Michelle Edge, who will provide an update on changes to the national TB testing programme, risk-based testing and industry funding, and an update on the Nait review, which was released last month.

Deer farmers always have one eye on the future and in the next session, facilitated by DINZ board member Kris Orange, a South Canterbury/North Otago Next Generation panel will talk to industry leaders about future leadership, issues and



expectations.

The final session of the conference's first day is an international deer calendar overview, with Sayer discussing the fourth International Antler Science and Product Technology Conference in Changchun, China, before Russian Deer Farmers Association chief executive Natalia Sorokina and DINZ producer manager Tony Pearce preview the World Deer Farming Congress VII, being held in Altai, Russia, this August.

Day two of the conference begins with an address by Agriculture Minister Damien O'Connor, before DINZ chairman Ian Walker and Coup give a state of the industry overview.

The first of the conference's

featured speakers is Rabobank animal proteins specialist Blake Holgate, whose topic will be "Another good year ... spend it wisely". He is a former environmental lawyer who grew up on a South Otago sheep and beef farm that he now farms in partnership with his parents. Part of Holgate's role with the bank is to provide it with research and analysis on the impact that impending environmental regulations will have on the agricultural sector, so his insight is timely and will be worth listening to.

He will be followed by business futurist and innovation expert Craig Rispin, who specialises in emerging business, people and technology trends – and how companies can benefit from them.

Following a session on venison, marketing and the markets, it's the turn of former Zespri chief executive Lain Jager, who will give his perspective on the Zespri story and whether venison can be the next kiwifruit.

Following a session on velvet antler, the first environment keynote speaker, special agricultural trade envoy Mike Petersen will look at why New Zealand needs a new story, while providing his perspective on trade, the CCPTP and the importance of environmental stewardship.

Petersen, an independent director of Anzco Foods who spent 10 years as chairman of Beef + Lamb NZ, has recently spoken out about the need for New Zealand to revamp its primary sector story with an emphasis on sustainability if the country is to expand the reach of exporters in existing markets, while also breaking into new ones.

The second keynote environment speaker is Guy Salmon, chief executive of Ecologic Foundation, who will discuss the environment, society, farming and evolving expectations.

Farmer perspectives are not forgotten in the environmental discussion

and South Canterbury deer farmers Hamish and Anna Orbell, along with Hamish and Julia MacKenzie, will provide their thoughts on environmental stewardship, legacy and environmental response succession in deer farming before 2017 Nuffield scholar Ryan O'Sullivan talks about global food production and expectations around environment stewardship in farming.

Fittingly, the conference's focus on the environment will wind up with the launch of the deer industry's Environmental Management Code of Practice.

A highlight of any deer industry conference is the awards dinner and this year will be no different, with the NZDFA Matuschika Award, the Deer Industry Award and the MSD Animal Health Deer Industry Award among those to be presented.

Interested deer farmers who cannot get to Timaru need not miss out on the conference as, just as has been done for the past three years, proceedings will be livestreamed.

Those farmers still in the area a day later will have the opportunity to travel by bus up the Rangitata Gorge for tours of the Peel Forest Estate and Mesopotamia Station.

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