

Northeast Deer and Elk Farmer News



Spring 2009

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Membership is available to anyone at a cost of \$40 US per year. Checks should be made out to NDEF and mailed, along with the filled out Membership Application in this issue of the Newsletter, to Henry Ahern, Treasurer as listed below. Membership includes a newsletter subscription, and 2 free classified ads per year.

Advertising rates:

Full Page \$50.00
Half Page \$25.00
Quarter Page \$12.50
Classified Ads \$.15 per word

Camera Ready Ads for the NDEF newsletter should be sent to Robert Root, Mariah Elk Farm, 13055 Route 38, Berkshire, NY 13736 or e-mailed to Rootnyelk@aol.com.

Payment for Ads to be sent to:

John Morse, Treasurer
83 Patterson, Rd.
Wilmot, NH 03287

President's Paddock by Bob Root

Presidents Paddock

Hello All, the object of this newsletter is to inform and educate not only the Deer and Elk Farmer/Rancher, throughout the industry, but the public as well. As I sit writing this article for this segment I can not stop thinking of our dilemma, is this selfish I hope not, maybe someone will glean some information from this and if so I have done my job not only for myself but the industry and other livestock producers as well.

Here There Be Dragons; have you ever see or heard of such a thing. My first encounter of this was years ago while looking through a World History book; I came across an old Sea Chart which had an unexplored area with a depiction of a dragon raising from the sea and the words "Here There Be Dragons". You may say; what sort of line of thought has this to do with Deer and Elk farming in the Northeast, read on.

We all as producers of animals, not just deer and elk, but all livestock in general have had our problems with parasites and stress, and have had to suffer the slings and arrows of these particular conditions on our farms/ranches. Going into our 7th year I thought that we were immune, to the contrary, we have found that we are not. Coccidia; a parasite known and prevalent throughout the world has been our dragon for this year. How to control this parasite is the question that is in our minds all of the time; absolutely no one wants to lose animals to parasites.

This does not mean that we have been without some problems of

other types; the occasional calf that scours and is not noticed until just before weaning, the mother has kept its problem under cover so to speak, by her constant cleaning of the calf while feeding. By then it is too late to intervene, the intestines have been damaged, with the end result, loose stool and soiled shanks, this will not usually destroy the animal and they will grow and reproduce without difficulty.

Parasitism on the other hand is made worse as the calf is weaned from the cow, the calf's condition will decline in a few days, as it calls for its mother and runs the fence. However, most times the calf is strong enough and within a short time is not fussing as much and all is well. However, if the calf has picked up a parasite problem it will start to show signs of stress such as facial fur puffed out; its stomach will be swollen as it is overeating and drinking excessive water, stool will be excessively loose and the backside and shanks will be covered with feces. It will separate from the group and within a very short time, the rest you may say is history. At this time intervention with parasite control will help, Cydectin a pour on parasite control, which we use at six month intervals, or Safe Guard Crumbles, are some of the products used with effective results. We

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took action with the Safe Guard Crumbles. We actually overdosed as the package directions indicated that using the product to an excess had shown no adverse effect on treated animals. Within a week all was back to normal, our loss was three of the weakest calves, and a fourth, a week later after treatment. We had Cornell in Ithaca, New York; perform necropsy on two of the calves, the findings were poor condition from parasite contamination, and because of poor condition pneumonia.

Now is the question do we have a sick paddock and what should we do about it? Do we have a carrier in the herd which is contaminating the rest? Is the paddock overrun more with these parasites than other paddocks? Another breeding group, in a different paddock did not suffer this malady. More questions than answers. In working with our veterinarian the decision was to spread lime on the paddock as it is felt that the paddock in question is severely contaminated, as the winter freeze up will kill parasites in the soil, the adding of lime will also kill parasites as they hatch in the spring. Since this has started it is felt that the rest of the paddocks will start to have a higher level of parasites so, liming of these as they are emptied will be done. There is also a natural water source in this paddock; an attempt will be made to divert the water through drainage tile to the outside. No young stock will be grazed in this paddock for more than a year. Parasite control will be moved up to every three months.

At this writing I can only think as I enter this paddock that, Here There Be Dragons and that our efforts will pay off getting this under control. We as stewards of livestock often learn and move forward by problems which arise unexpectedly. The cost may be high through lost animals and expense to correct, however, move forward we do.

News from New Hampshire

By: Jim Neil nhelk@comcast.net

All is well in New Hampshire following the December 19th ice storm of epic proportions. Public Service Company of New Hampshire, our electric provider, reports it the largest storm related outage in their history. I spoke recently with one of our association members, Matt Aucoin of Aucoin Farms in Henniker, NH regarding damage in his area. Matt tells me he had several trees on his elk fences, but no loss of animals (Ya gotta love those fences). The maple sugar orchard and pipeline system suffered very badly, however. With maple being a major income producer for the Aucoins, and sugaring season not that far away, Matt is hustling. The family got along on generators and wood stoves for nine days including the Christmas weekend before power was restored. Our farm being a bit more north and higher in elevation received several inches of snow prior to the turn to rain and ice. Seems we got off easy with power out for only four days and some fence damage that will require attention in the spring.

I am pleased to report that John Morse was finally instated as our treasurer following an audit of the books and turnover to John. Even though John and Julie sold their farm a couple of years or so ago, they still want to remain active in the association. Great to see. I saw John a couple of weeks ago and he was telling me about their second trip to Alaska. It doesn't sound like retirement is so bad after all. It sure will seem odd to see someone other than Henry and Cindy of Bonnie Brae Farms handling our money. You have big shoes to fill John.

It seems the local 2008 farmers markets once again set new sales records for some of our more active marketers. We are already getting processing dates set for the 2009 slaughter season to ensure timely

availability of animals for our buyers. It makes one wonder if and when sales will begin to level off. Steady annual growth now for the past several years. Perhaps that is some good news all of us could use at this time.

Bare spots in the fields and some button drops – it must be spring. With that, I will close.

PS: I look forward to seeing everyone in Vermont at Lake Morey in April, a great place for the convention. Sue and I will certainly be there as we have limited wall space at camp.

Vermont News

By: **Hank Dimuzio**

After almost 10 contentious years of battling with the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Dept, Vermont finally has rule in place governing the importation and possession of animals for the purpose of hunting. Unfortunately, it only applies to the two preserves currently in operation. The industry thought it had finally achieved a breakthrough when last year the Legislative Committee on Administrative Rules (LCAR) once again rejected the proposed rules and asked the VT F&W Dept to sit down with the industry. After a few false starts, this was achieved over the summer and by the fall, the industry and members of the Dept and F&W board had crafted what was felt by all involved to be a fair and workable document. At the final board meeting, before the rule was to go back to LCAR, a grandfather amendment was proposed and passed unanimously. The industry felt betrayed and expressed their concerns at the LCAR hearing. However, LCAR passed the rule (this correspondent thinks that they were tired of seeing us yearly) and now VT becomes yet another state to restrict the hunting of cervids behind high fence. No new preserves are allowed.

On yet another bad note, there has been talk of discontinuing the red meat program (state slaughterhouse inspection) because of budget constraints. This would mean that the exotic producers would have to slaughter under Federal inspection at a Federal plant, adding \$60 plus dollars an hour to their processing costs. Vermont is one of 26 states with their own inspection program. The outpouring of support of this program from all types of producers has been encouraging, and it is unlikely that the program will be terminated.

The good news from Vermont is that we are hosting NDEF annual meeting at the Lake Morey Resort in Fairlee, a most bodacious spot. Bring your rod and do a little fishing (trout season opens April 11). Bring your wallets to take home auction items. Bring your appetite to feast on venison at the dinner. And bring hearty congratulations to Richard Frost for putting this event together! Get your taxes done and we'll see you April 17!

State Correspondents

Please send any information or articles for inclusion in the Newsletter to the following State Correspondents:

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legendfarm@comcast.net



“Chill-a-bration”

By: Norma Mierke

There was a “Chill-a-bration” in Cortland, NY on Saturday, February 28, 2009. It was a “Chilly Cook Off” and a very “chilly” central New York day with below-average temperatures of only slightly above 0 degrees. Executive Chef Paul Smith from the Ramada Inn entered the contest with confidence and enthusiasm. He is the Chef that presented at our NDEF Convention in 2008 in Cortland. He received the Grand Champion award in the Professional/Traditional chili category with his “Mountain Man Chili” made with elk burger from The Back-Forty Elk Farm (Butch & Norma Mierke) in De Ruyter, NY. Congratulations Chef Paul!

***Congratulations Dick & Lori
Krebs***

~ Mountain Ash Elk Ranch!

Mountain Ash Elk Ranch participated in the Cervid Livestock Foundation’s 2009 Processed Meat National Championships. This competition was held during the 20th Annual North American Deer Farmers Association Conference in Lexington, Kentucky on March 4-7, 2009. Mountain Ash Elk Ranch **WON 1st PLACE** for their **VENISON SAUSAGE!!!!** They have their meat processed by Schaff’s Custom Meat Processing.

Calving Tips

By: Russell Sawchuk from notes taken at a presentation by Dr. Glen Zebarth at the NAEBA 2002 Convention in Vegas.

Preparations for calving should start during the breeding season. Have the elk cows that you plan to breed on a rising level of nutrition. This is very important. Feed them as much as they will eat. If they are gaining weight, conception rates will increase. If possible, turn your cows out into fresh pasture - forage is the best for them.

If pastures are light, feed good hay and maybe some grain. Good quality hay has 19% protein. The only grain that should be fed is oats, and maybe some corn. Feed 6-8 lbs per head per day, or 2-3 lbs if there is adequate pasture.

This is a good time to cull poor performing cows - those that won't conceive, have a history of birthing problems, or that over-mother. The percentage of cows that calve is the single most important economic factor that determines the profitability of your elk farm.

Since gestation is 245 days, remove breeding bulls (e.g., by November 15) to manage calving time. Cows that calve late usually have more problems. Use bulls that are proven breeders. Do a check on their fertility.

Check your cows in mid-December. Put them on hay with 12-14% protein. Provide supplemental mineral - a pound of pellets several times a week. Do not feed grain after the cows are pregnant.

In February and March, examine your cows. You should be able to see some ribs. They should not be fat. Early winter is a good time to give Vision 8 vaccinations as the immunity is transferred to the calves. It is also a good time to

to give vaccinations as the immunity is transferred to the calves. It is also a good time to do any TB tests.

Two weeks before calving, increase their feed so they produce adequate milk supplies.

Rotate the location of calving each year. Try and have your cows calve on clean ground. This will do much more for disease prevention than any vaccines.

Group your cows for calving. The ideal number to monitor and tag is about 30 cows. If you know breeding dates, group cows by early calving group and by late calving group. There is an advantage to have calves about the same age. This prevents spread of “bugs” and disease. Have heifers calve in a separate group. This will cause fewer problems and will reduce the risk of older cows stealing the heifer's calves.

Cows will walk the fence for ten days to two weeks prior to calving. As calving approaches, cows will walk in earnest or even run. During this time, you need to watch cows closely - at least twice a day or every 4 hours. Do a head count.

Calving problems with elk are not very common but do occur. When it comes to assisting cows with calving problems, know your limits and comfort zone. If you feel you are going to be in over your head, get professional help.

Wait 3 hours before intervention if nothing happens. If parts of the calf are sticking out but nothing is happening, you should intervene sooner. If you have to pull a calf, this will create many new problems. If only the head and one leg is sticking out, there is a guaranteed problem. If only the head is showing, there is a problem. A significant number of elk calves are born backwards.

If you need to pull a calf

out, do so without anesthetic. If you do use a drug, reverse both cow and calf. Elk cows will tolerate assistance from people.

Get the cow into a chute if possible. Have all the necessary equipment ready - soft rope, plastic sleeves, etc. - clean and disinfected. Cows will get infections if equipment is not clean. If you have to go into the birth canal, there is a greater risk of infection. Give the cow antibiotics afterwards.

When pulling the calf out, do it by hand, and be gentle. Calves are easily injured. If the calf is difficult to extract, get the help of a vet. Calves come out in an arc; pull down towards the cow's heels. Do a c-section in an emergency. However, the conception rate after a c-section is only 50%.

After the calf is pulled, put both animals on clean straw. Watch the cow to make sure she accepts the calf. There is no need to hide; the cow knows you are there. If the cow starts licking the calf, she has accepted it. You also need to make sure the calf is nursing. If you are not sure, provide supplemental feedings.

First feedings should be colostrum which is best obtained from an elk cow that has lost its calf. This can be obtained by putting the cow in a chute and milking her with a 60 cc syringe or using a vacuum pump. If you take it slow and easy, the cow won't kick. Freeze the milk for later use. Elk milk is best, but you can use colostrums from sheep, goat or dairy cow as well.

Feed the calf 4 times a day until you are sure the calf is nursing. If the calf is content, then it is nursing; if it is wandering around, then there is a problem.

Watch for cows with over-mothering syndrome (constantly licking the rectum and eventually destroying the anus). Some sort of cloth protection may be required for the calf, or you may have to bottle-feed it. You

may also want to consider culling that cow from your breeding herd to avoid future problems.

Calves drink lot of water. Give them pans of clean water. Also keep the calves away from swamps and mud holes to decrease risk of disease and infection.

-Reprinted with permission from Russell Sawchuk, Deer Farmers' Digest



Recipe of the Issue

Elk Chili

- 2 lbs. ground Elk
- 1/2 onion, diced
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 pkg. chili seasoning mix
- 2 cups water
- 2 (8 oz) cans tomato sauce
- 1 (14 - 15 oz) can of kidney beans
- 1 (28 oz) can of Bush's Baked Beans

Brown meat, add onion and garlic, cook for 5 more minutes. Add chili seasoning mix and water, simmer 10-15 minutes. Add remaining ingredients (may need to transfer to bigger cooking pot) and simmer for 1/2-1 hour, covered, stirring occasionally. Serve topped with grated cheese or sour cream. - Wapiti.net

Membership Contest

Can you spot the antlers? If you can you could win a free one year Northeast Deer and Elk Farmers' Association membership! All you have to do is circle the antlers and send the picture back to: Koran Casey Cousino, 2998 Vt Rte 116 Starksboro, VT 05487. The first correct submission received will be the winner.

We will announce the lucky recipient at the Convention. (Hint: there are three sets of antlers.)

Advertisement

For Sale: used Solid Lock 8' fence, priced at 50% cost now or best reasonable offer. Also for sale, 8' wire fence dispenser for 3 point hitch, \$200 or best reasonable offer

John & Julie Morse, Wilmot, NH 603-526-6386 or 603-748-0945"



**NORTHEAST DEER & ELK FARMERS
CONVENTION & ANNUAL MEETING
April 17- April 19, 2009
Lake Morey Resort
Fairlee, VT**

NDEF CONVENTION REGISTRATION & Membership/Renewal Application (part 1)

Name _____ Date _____

Farm/Company Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Province/Country/Zip _____

Phone _____ Fax _____

E-mail _____ Web Address _____

_____ New Membership _____ Renewal Membership

Is above an Address Change? Yes _____ No _____

Currently Own Cervids? Type/Species Owned _____ # of Deer Owned _____

Topics of Interest _____

Do you wish to be included in the Association Website? Yes _____ No _____

Do you wish to be included in the Association Directory? Yes _____ No _____

Sponsored by/Referred by:

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NDEF CONVENTION REGISTRATION & Membership/Renewal Application (part 2)

FULL CONFERENCE INCLUDES:

Friday informal gathering, cash bar

Saturday full breakfast for overnight guests, coffee breaks, luncheon, evening banquet and auction.

Sunday full breakfast for overnight guests.

All Saturday seminars and events.

	Received Before 4/1/2009	After 4/1/2009
Conference (NDEF Member**)	\$115 ea_____	\$125 _____
Conference (Non NDEF Member)	\$135 ea_____	\$145 _____
Conference Guest (meals only)	\$95 ea_____	\$100 _____
Child (Meals Only)	\$70 ea_____	\$80 _____
<i>Annual Dues</i>	\$40 _____	\$40 _____
<i>Total</i>	\$ _____	\$ _____

** FOR MEMBERSHIP PRICING STATUS, PLEASE BE SURE YOUR 2009 DUES ARE UP TO DATE OR INCLUDED WITH THE APPLICATION.

Please make checks payable to NDEF and mail CONVENTION REGISTRATION & Membership/Renewal Application part 1 & 2 to:

Richard Frost
Blue Mountain Elk Farm
100 Frost Drive
South Ryegate , VT 05069
Tel. 802-584-3187
rff-elk@juno.com

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The 2009 Northeast Deer and Elk Farmers Convention will be held
April 17-19, 2009 at the Lake Morey Resort in Fairlee, VT.

Directions:

Take Exit 15 off I-91.

For Reservations call the Lake Morey Resort at
1-800-423-1211

Rates: (per room, per night)

Single/Double: \$85 + tax

If you have special requests (i.e. lake front rooms, smoking rooms, ground level
access) register as soon as possible.

Dine Friday evening in the Lakeside Dining Room

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**NORTHEAST DEER & ELK FARMERS
HARD ANTLER COMPETITION AND SCORING**

The NDEF Annual Hard Antler Contest will be held on April 18th at the Annual Convention at
Lake Morey Resort
Fairlee, VT

Antlers entered will be judged as pairs and may be sheds or cut off, harvested within the past 14 months. All antlers will be scored using SCI scoring techniques, using a predetermined width credit. There will be five age classes for both Red Deer and Elk, with two categories of awards for each. There will be an open class for the fallow deer with two awards.

All NDEF members are invited to enter, with the entry fee set at \$10.00 per set.

DETAILS:

NDEF membership is required for participation.

Antlers must have been cut or cast in the past 14 months.

Judges' decisions will be final.

All antlers will be tagged before entry

Winning antlers will be displayed at the auction/banquet.

Red Deer and Elk will have 5 age groups: 2 year, 3 year, 4 year, 5 year and mature.

Fallow and Whitetail will have open class.

Awards in each group will be given to the 1st and 2nd highest scoring pair.

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Entry Form
2009 NDEF Hard Antler Competition

ID number attached to each set of antler _____

Year of Birth _____

Name of Owner _____

Farm/Ranch Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Fax _____

Species _____

- Please fill out a separate application for each set of antler you want to enter in the competition

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NORTHEAST DEER & ELK FARMERS
2009 PHOTO CONTEST ENTRY FORM

You may enter ONE photo in the following categories: Adult males Buck/Stag/Bull; Adult Females Doe/Hind/cow; Fawns/Calves; Mixed Group. (We will not be separating them into species).

Photos previously entered are not allowed.

Awards will be given for 1st, 2nd and 3rd in each category and one in Best in Show. Entries will be accepted up to 8:30 AM on Sat. April 18. Please have name, animal name and age of animal(s) on back of each photo.

Format: Preferable size is 8" X 10", others accepted.

Category_____

Year of Birth_____

Name of Owner_____

Farm/Ranch Name_____

Address_____

Phone_____ Fax_____

Email_____

Species_____

Caption for photo (if desired)_____

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