

Northeast Deer and Elk Farmer News



Summer 2005

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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 Meadow Lane Secretarial Services, 7 Meadow Lane, Windsor, VT 05089 or e-mailed to meadowsec@adelphia.net.

Payment for Ads to be sent to:

Henry Ahern, Treasurer
 Bonnie Brae Farms
 601 Daniel Webster Highway
 Plymouth, NH 03264

President's Paddock by Richard Frost

Greetings everyone, it's another cool, damp day in May, and it seems as though the warm weather is never going to get here. That is the view of the pessimist. However we are farmers and true farmers are always optimistic, as the saying goes, "A cold wet May makes a barn full of hay." Although the weather has not been great, it could have been worse.

We had a great convention, hosted by Diane and Punky Rowlee and held at the Jay Peak Resort. The speakers were very informative and everyone present came away with a better understanding of CWD and the issues surrounding it. With the recent discovery of CWD in New York the timing for these speakers could not have been any better

What we need right now is you, the member, to get involved. The reaction in some of our member states was to institute more regulations as soon as possible. In Vermont it will be a mandatory CWD surveillance program, a CWD monitoring program is good for our industry and a few farms have been in a voluntary monitoring program, now it will be mandatory, effecting every Deer and Elk farm and while these new rules were being made only 5 or 6 farms were represented at meetings with agriculture officials or at legislative hearings. The same 5 or 6 that always attend these meetings, over 40 Deer or Elk farms in Vermont and only 5 care enough to get involved. Don't let this happen in your state, GET ACTIVE! GET INVOLVED! and GET GOING!

Each farmer needs to let their legislator know how they feel about any pending legislation that concerns them and also find out what your legislator is thinking. I did not get into Elk farming to rub elbows with politicians, but it has become a part of the business. When there is a legislative hearing or meeting that concerns Deer farming, you have to make every effort to attend, you may not need to speak or address the group, but your presence may help make a difference, just a face in the

crowd lets your legislator know that you care and that you are watching them. PLEASE.....get involved.

If your farm is not currently enrolled in a CWD surveillance program, call your state veterinarian NOW! Sign up and get your herd into the program. It is not that difficult to do, just keep a few records of where your animals go, a yearly inventory, and your animals get sampled for testing at the time of slaughter. The more farms that are in the program, the better it is for all of us.

Keep your herd healthy, if you are buying new additions for your herd, do your homework, know the history of the herd that you purchase from and know where that herd came from. Learn as much as possible about the history of the animals that you buy. And please DO NOT expose your herd to any waste from a Deer that you or someone else may have harvested, it's just not worth the risk.

I have an optimistic view of our future, I know that our industry will survive and grow if we all work together, we have a good Board of Directors that is working hard for NDEF and the cervid industry, but NDEF is the most effective when all the members work together.

Look at your animals and all the work, time and money that you have invested, it really is worth fighting for. Please get active and get involved.



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BOARD MEETING

JAY PEAK RESORT

APRIL 15, 2005

Directors present: Dick Krebs, Tony Tuttle, John Morse, Diane Rowlee, Richard Frost, Hank Dimuzio, Jim Griswold, Jim Neil and Henry Ahern. Missing: John Barnatowicz. Guests were Martha Goodsell and Cody Mikalunas among others.

Secretary's report – Tony made a motion to accept the report as written and distributed from the February Email meeting. John seconded – accepted.

Treasurer's report - Jim asked about the website charges - \$500 for the maintenance and \$345 for the hosting. He also asked about the office expenses – compensation for Secretary and Treasurer for expenses. Jim Neil made a motion to accept the treasurer's report, Richard Frost seconded – carried.

Old Business: Farm signs – Tony reported that the signs would be given out this weekend to all paid members. Richard made a motion to pay bill; Hank seconded – motion carried.

New Business: Hank wanted to know what we would do with the meat that is being cut up on Sat. We would give some to speakers and auction off the rest.

Henry had a survey he wanted to hand out at the meeting. He gave a summary of his trip to Washington. The group representing NADeFA and link organizations met with congressional representatives and/or their representatives. They also met with a high powered lobbyist. They plan to hire the firm for \$7500/mo and was looking for funds from the link organizations to help pay for this service. They will do anything in Washington that we need. Watch out for bills, keep an eye on USDA etc. This should be for one year to start. Hank made a comment that this was needed but Jim Neil felt it should be studied further and brought before the full membership with the board making the final decision.

Martha Goodsell thanked NDEF for contribution to NY Farm Bureau. She also thanked NDEF board members for the vote of confidence. Unfortunately no one in NY felt the same way. She wondered if joining efforts would be better then having a branch of NADeFA in NY and NDEF and whether we were duplicating efforts. Discussion ensued over the reasons for the vote of confidence since she was the only one doing anything in NY. She was only looking for some guidance from NDEF

board. It was felt that it looked better if we could say there were several organizations working on the issues and the board gave her their support.

Jim Neil reported on trip to Maine and Connecticut. He shared his concerns about those farmers who have complied with the CWD surveillance programs needing some assurances that they would be able to ship live animals across state lines at some point to be determined. He felt that we benefited by him being at both meetings since this gave the state vets a chance to hear from the industry. Dr. Hoenig wants a mandate from the membership that farms in CWD program should be able to move animals. This will be done through the position paper.

Jim Griswold passed out the amended Position Paper. After discussion on several of the issues the position paper was amended again and formalized for presentation to the membership on Sunday. Hank made a motion to present the amended position paper to the general membership at annual meeting. Henry seconded – carried.

STATE REPORTS

Maine – Tony reported that the Maine association is losing ground and support. Membership is down but they are trying to keep things going. They have a good working relationship with their Dept. of Agriculture and the Farm Bureau. He mentioned that there has been a loss of some of their largest farms due to many different reasons. Jim added that a Maine rep might be at meeting on Sat.

NH – NH Vet would like to have new regulations in place before he retires in July that includes movement of monitored animals. The new vet is from California. On the USDA grant – Jim and Henry met with grant writer. Applying for \$20,000 due to in kind match. Plymouth State College to participate with testing end product. Velvet will be used as in-kind match and will be used for test market for pet industry. They need letters of support and commitment of matching funds or velvet to be submitted by the 22nd of April. Grant needs to be finished by the 30th.

VT – Hank reported that VT is in a state of panic due to the CWD case in NY. The VT House passed a bill in 3 days without hearings and no input from industry. VT farmers not contacted or informed of bill or asked to take part in task force. Bill now goes to Senate. If passed there is

days to respond before becoming law. It was also reported that Fish & Wildlife personnel have been going onto deer farms illegally.

Other business: Diane asked that several motions that were acted upon between the February Board meeting and this meeting be placed on the record. Motion was made, seconded and passed. Those motions were:

1. Jim made a motion to pay Jennifer Fullerton's expenses at the conference. Hank seconded and motion carried.
2. Edgar made a motion to retain Helen Costello to write grant at \$250 up front and another \$1500 if we are successful. Motion Carried
3. Jim made a motion to contribute \$500 to the NY Farm Bureau upon request from Martha Goodsell. Richard Seconded. Motion carried.
4. Diane made a motion to reimburse Jim for trip to Maine and Henry's trip to Washington for lobbying efforts. Edgar seconded with request for receipts. Motion carried.
5. Motion made by Richard to fund Jim's trip to CT to speak at the USAHA meeting. Edgar seconded. Motion carried

Meeting was adjourned.



Dr. Morales gives an update on CWD research.



NDEF ANNUAL MEETING JAY PEAK, VT APRIL 17, 2005

President Dick Krebs opened the meeting by stating that the board encourages all farms to join their respective farm bureaus. Our support in the NY farm bureau helped to defeat the canned hunt bill once again. He also wanted the general membership to contact board members if they have suggestions or need help.

Secretary's report: Motion to accept report as printed in the Newsletter by Diane Rowlee, seconded by Norma Mierke. Motion carried.

Treasurer's report. Henry Ahern presented financial status as of 4/15/05. Balances do not reflect all of the proceeds collected for the conference nor the auction. Motion was made by Diane Rowlee to accept treasurer's report. Seconded by Richard Frost. Motion carried. Henry and Diane reported that the auction brought in \$3,912.50.

Jim Neil presented position paper put together by the board. The industry must let the state agricultural departments know where we stand as well as the state veterinarians. He also reported on his trip to Mystic, CT and the response to his report. Jim then asked for any discussion on the position paper. As there was none, he then asked for a show of hands in support of the position paper. Result was full support.

Report on the study by Cornell University on marketing of venison products. The main problem remains getting someone to sell the product. They have not given up and will keep trying to bring the program full circle.

Henry and Jim reported on the new grant that NDEF is applying for in regards to studying the possibility of selling antler products to the pet industry. The board formed a committee to contact a grant writer. The committee was Henry Ahern, Jim Neil, Jim Griswold and John Morse. The grant writer was paid \$250 to put the grant together and will get an additional \$1500 if we are awarded the grant. We have requested \$20,000 due to the fact that we have to match the grant. This can be in-kind product. The committee has met with a processor who will help putting the product together and graduate students from Plymouth State University will meet the matching funds. Martha suggested that everyone write letters of sup-

port that can be included with the grant. These letters needed to be submitted before 4/22/05.

Henry then reported on his trip to Washington. The group met with a well known lobbyist firm that NADeFA wants to hire at \$7500/mo. Henry asked members for board to determine what financial support NDEF can give. There was a unanimous vote in favor of supporting this endeavor and letting the board decide on contribution.

Nominating committee presented slate of candidates for board of directors. They are:

- Bob Root-NY
- Jim Neil-NH
- Ken Swett-ME and
- Jim Griswold-NH.

Jim Neil nominated Bob Root. Butch Mierke seconded. Henry nominated Jim Neil. Matt Aucoin seconded. Diane nominated Jim Griswold. Hank Dimuizo seconded. Dick Krebs nominated Ken Swett. Edgar Dolbec seconded. Cody Mikalunas nominated Tom Peryea (NY). Henry seconded. Jim Neil made a motion to close nominations. Bob Root seconded. Voting then took place. Results are as follows:

New board members are: Jim Neil, Jim Griswold, Bob Root and Tom Peryea for 3 year terms.

Hank expressed appreciation to Punky and Diane for job well done and to Dick Krebs-out going president for his contributions over the last 2 years. Tony Tuttle also expressed appreciation to Jim Neil for all his efforts. The membership also showed appreciation to John Barnatowicz and John Morse for their service while on the board of directors.

Jim and Lou Ann Griswold will be hosting the 2006 Annual Meeting in the Portsmouth area of NH. They indicated that it will probably be the first weekend in April next year.



The CWD Roundtable Discussion

Dick expressed once again that the membership needs to participate. It was suggested that we use the website. There is a forum section now so that comments and suggestions can be posted. Members should check it regularly.

Meeting was adjourned

NDEF Board of Directors Meeting April 17, 2006

Those present: Jim Griswold, Jim Neil, Tom Peryea, Henry Ahern, Bob Root, Hank Dimuzio, Dick Krebs, Richard Frost, Tony Tuttle, Edgar Dolbec and Diane Rowlee.

First item of business was to elect officers: Nominations were: Jim Neil nominated Richard Frost for President, Hank seconded. Nomination carried.

Henry nominated Hank for 1st Vice President. Bob seconded. Nomination carried.

Henry nominated Diane for secretary. Jim Neil seconded. Nomination carried.

Tony nominated Henry for treasurer. Edgar seconded. Nomination carried.

Henry nominated Jim Griswold for 2nd vice president. Tony seconded. Nomination carried.

Hank talked about the situation in Vermont. We will try to push for hearings before the senate votes on bill.

Canned hunt bill in NY dead for now. Will probably pop up again as it does every year. Canned hunt bill in Washington is stalled.

Edgar brought up the newest thing in hunting – computer hunt parks. He asked what our position was on this. After discussion all agreed that we were not in favor of this form of hunting.

Henry also thought we should position ourselves as opposed to rehabilitators. Tony also thought we should get our position papers out to the papers.

Tom questioned whether we should meld state organizations together with NDEF to make us stronger. It was felt that the more organizations that represent the cervid industry, the stronger we appear.

Jim and Tom brought up the quality of antlers that were being entered in our competition and wondered if we should be hiring outside scorers. After some discussion it was suggested that we table this discussion until next board meeting.

Before adjourning Tony brought up a problem that John Morse had brought to his attention. Discussion was centered on how to police our own industry and those that do not adhere to the interstate importation of cervids during the moratorium. It was felt that we should be diligent in reporting KNOWN violations to the proper authorities. Meeting adjourned at 11:00 am.

NDEF at the NADeFA Annual Meeting By Cindy Downing

For the first time in recent history, if not for the first time ever, the Northeast Deer and Elk Farmers exhibited at the North American Deer Farmers Annual Meeting in March. Members Henry Ahern, Cindy Downing, and Hank Dimuzio manned the booth. To test the waters and to keep costs down on this first appearance, NDEF and Bonnie Brae Farms shared space. Other members, Keith and Janet Reid from Reid Mfg. in Ontario, Canada, had their own exhibit.

While at the booth, your fellow members handed out NDEF brochures, membership applications, and farm brochures from some members who were unable to attend. We sported a new banner promoting NDEF, and used a laminated map with the seven states that NDEF represents outlined, so that our area of influence was apparent to those who visited. We also handed out the latest newsletter that included our own annual meeting information. The largest number of membership applications went to folks from Pennsylvania.

NDEF was well represented at this meeting. Also attending were Mark Drew, Beth and Tony Tuttle, and Byron Ellis.



Carol Graff from NADeFA speaks.

Mark, a former President of NADeFA, and Hank, a new NADeFA Board member, were also guest speakers at the meeting. Henry Ahern attended a session on a lobbying trip going to Washington, DC in April, and became a member of the delegation (summation of that trip in another article in this newsletter).

CWD, of course, was on everyone's minds. At least four seminars, and parts of others, were devoted to it. Other topics provided variety, and included DNA, transitioning the family business, artificial insemination, selling venison, playing with your food (this one was fun!), nutrition, velvet, fighting back regulations, and many more.

For the most part, the food at this hotel was less than impressive. But we were all blown away by the Amish Wedding Dinner hosted by several Amish families at the meeting. It was delicious and plentiful, served family style (very close family; roughly 60 people per long table). It was one of the highlights of the meeting!

At the banquets on Friday and Saturday evenings, state organizations, who had chosen to link with NADeFA by providing monetary support based on their membership totals, received recognition plaques. NDEF was one of those groups. This was the same plaque that Carol Graff, a NADeFA Board member, re-presented to NDEF at our own annual meeting in Jay, VT.

These are some of the ways NDEF and its members are working for you. With your help, we can do more, and there is more to do. Contact any of the Board members to volunteer.



Hank, cool duds!!

DC Lobbying Trip April 10-13

By Henry Ahern, Bonnie Brae Farms,
Plymouth NH

On April 10, a group of twenty-six deer and elk farmers, representing a total of nineteen states (because I represented the 7 NDEF states), met in Washington DC for three days of meetings with, and presentations to, legislative, senatorial, and governors' staffs, as well as people from the CWD program at the USDA. Our intent was to send a strong message to our leaders in DC that ours is a legitimate, credible form of agriculture, and that we deserve to be treated with fairness and respect.

We met with legislative aids in a briefing session Monday afternoon. In her synopsis of the trip, Laurie Prasnicky from Wisconsin summed up some of our frustrations with our regulatory agencies this way: "To date, we have complied with all their rules and regulations and yet we continue to have brick walls placed in front of us. Every time we jump through a hoop, another one takes its place."

Thanks to Martha Goodsell, Hank Dimuzio, and the other NDEF members who kept posting emails regarding the situation in New York and Vermont. We were able to speak with our representatives' and senators' staffs using up-to-date news and no surprises. Thanks also to Cindy's daughter Danni who works in DC and was allowed to use her place of work as a fax, email, and copy center to keep all of us informed as information was updated. This helped tremendously in our meetings on Tuesday and Wednesday morning. We all felt that our meetings with our own state's staffs were very productive.

Tuesday afternoon found us at USDA, meeting with Dr. Dean Goeldner, who heads up the CWD program. If he wasn't aware before, he certainly was before we were done, that we need the UM&Rs finalized. We need the uniformity from state to state. We also discussed the necessity for a live animal test, for a second test, and DNA verification. We asked that, as an industry, we be included in any discussions on protocols for DNA verification.

That evening we met with a lobbyist who is also a deer farmer. The group felt that, with his knowledge of the industry, his contacts in DC, and the way he presented himself, he would be an ideal person to represent our positions on Capitol Hill. We

are recommending that NADeFA hire him in this capacity for a year, and are hopeful that the state associations will assist with funding.

This was a worthwhile trip. While we learned a lot, we think our representatives did, too. We can't stop here, though. This battle is far from won, and there are others on the horizon. It's not enough that we farmers have to deal with weather, equipment breakdowns, and the usual animal health issues. We also have CWD and people whose primary goal is to put us out of business one way or another, and will use any excuse to do it.

We must keep in touch with our Farm Bureaus, with our local, state, and federal legislators, and with our Departments of Agriculture and Wildlife. A handful of people won't keep us in business. It will take all of us.



Butchering Demonstration



NEWS FROM MAINE

Maine Deer and Elk Farmers Association met at the John Martin's Manor, Waterville, on April 30, 2005 for their annual meeting. Guest speakers included the following:

Arnold Luce—Luce's Meats and Maine Farm Brands—demonstrated cutting up a red deer hindquarter. Luce explained to the audience the different options we have when sending a deer in to be processed.

Keynote Speaker, Ned Porter, Deputy Commissioner from the Department of Agriculture stated the Department would like to offer us marketing help individually or as a group. He stressed it is important for us to learn to "effectively work the state house."

Shelly Doak, Director of Animal Health & Industry, Department of Agriculture—updated us on New York CWD cases. Importation Embargo—Where would MDEFA like to go with the issue of importation of cervids into Maine? Would we prefer mandatory or voluntary CWD surveillance program? Ms. Doak also asked MDEFA President, Norman Luce, to name a member to meet with officials to make our policy on CWD and importation rules. She is also asking for a representative to be assigned to the animal ID/tagging committee.

Rodney McCormak, Publicity Officer for the Department of Agriculture told us all about the new "Maine Agriculture in the Classroom" license plates and urged us to spread the word that they are available.

Jon Olsen, Executive Secretary, Maine Farm Bureau spoke on benefits of membership and MFB SERVICES. Jon's main point was to urge us to contact our legislatures on issues concerning us. He stressed this can make a huge difference. He also told us MFB dues reduced from \$55 to \$40 annually.

Jeff McCabe, Natural Resources Conservation service spoke on several programs including the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).

Butch Tobin, Tobin Farms, told us about growing, cutting and processing quality velvet antler.

Tony Tuttle explained to us the benefits of linking with the North American Deer and Elk Farmers Association. A motion was accepted to pledge \$5.00 per membership to link with NadeFA. NadeFA is also thinking about hiring a lobbyist to

DC LOBBYING CONTACT INFORMATION

Here is contact information for people Henry either spoke to or left information with during his NDEF-sponsored DC trip. Many of these people, as well as others representing the other states, met with the delegation during their briefing session. Many met with them in their offices. They are our representatives. Let's keep them informed.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>Email</u>	<u>Rep/Senator/Gov</u>
Kathryn Godburn	Agricultural Staffer	202-225-4476	katie.godburn@mail.house.gov	Rep. Nancy Johnson, CT
Stephanie Ashwell	Environmental Staffer	202-225-4476	stephanie.ashwell@mail.house.gov	Rep. Nancy Johnson, CT
Dave Natonski	Agricultural Staffer	202-225-5541	dave.natonski@mail.house.gov	Rep. Christopher Shays, CT
Elizabeth Stafford	Agricultural Staffer	202-347-4535	estafford@sso.org	Gov. Jodi Rell, CT
Matthew Nelson	Agricultural Staffer	202-225-6116	matthew.nelson@mail.house.gov	Rep. Thomas Allen, ME
Jeffrey Turcotte	Agricultural Staffer	202-224-3324	Jeff_Turcotte@gregg.senate.gov	Sen. Judd Gregg, NH
Jennifer Warren	Agricultural Staffer	202-225-5206	jennifer.warren@mail.house.gov	Rep. Charles Bass, NH
Michael Licata	Agricultural Staffer	202-225-5456	michael.licata@mail.house.gov	Rep. Jeb Bradley, NH
Melissa Ho	Agricultural Staffer	202-224-5643	melissa_ho@clinton.senate.gov	Sen. Hillary Clinton, NY
Betsy Sellers	Agricultural Staffer	202-224-6542	betsy_sellers@schumer.senate.gov	Sen. Charles Schumer, NY
William Rayball	Agricultural Staffer	202-225-5614	bill.rayball@mail.house.gov	Rep. John Sweeney, NY
Anthony Zagora	Agricultural Staffer	202-434-7100	Anthony.zagora@chamber.state.ny.us	Gov. George Pataki, NY
Amy Judge	Agricultural Staffer	202-225-2735	amy.judge@mail.house.gov	Rep. James Langevin, RI
Jeffrey Weaver	Agricultural Staffer	202-225-4115	jeff.weaver@mail.house.gov	Rep. Bernard Sanders, VT
J. Michael Schmidt	Agricultural Staffer	202-224-5323	mike_schmidt@feingold.senate.gov	Sen. Russell Feingold, WI
James C. Ivy	Intergovernmental Affairs Specialist	202-720-2511	james.c.ivy@aphis.usda.gov	USDA/APHIS

Maine News Continued . . .

to help with deer and elk farmer issues on the national level.

CWD—Nick Richardson, from Bayley Hill, will continue to be our CWD spokesperson with the Department of Agriculture. Nick will take MDEFA's current stand on CWD, which is, "to keep Maine borders closed to all endemic states and all deer except from CWD monitored herds".

Election of Officers 2005-2006: President—Tony Tuttle; Vice President—Norman Luce; Secretary—Geoff Smith; Treasurer—Beth Tuttle.

Added to the current Board of Directors: Geoff Smith and Ken Swett. The Board of Directors will be meeting prior to the next scheduled MDEFA meeting of July 17, 2005. Details will be posted on the MDEFA website.

Submitted: Tony Tuttle

Maine Rep/NDEF Newsletter



Marvin Scott—Allflex



Ed Jackson—VT Dept. of Ag.



Dave Kennard—Wellscroft Fence

Hard Antler Contest Results 2005

	Elk	Fallow Deer	Red Deer
2-year Old			
1st Place	Back Forty Elk Farm - The Mierkes		Shakaree Red Deer Farm - Mark
2nd Place	Hidden Meadows - Dave Lepper		Bonnie Brae Farms - Henry Ahern
3-year old			
1st Place	Mariah Elk Farm - The Roots		Shakaree Red Deer Farm - Mark
2nd Place	Mariah Elk Farm - The Roots		Ash Hill View Deer Farm - Ken
4-year Old			
1st Place	Mariah Elk Farm - The Roots		Shakaree Red Deer Farm - Mark
2nd Place	-		Granite Acres Deer Farm - John
5-year old			
1st Place	Tom's Elk Ranch - The Peryeas		Alta Crest Red Deer Farm - Byron Ellis
2nd Place	Mountain Ash Elk Ranch - The Krebs'		Hollandeer Farm - The Rowlees
Mature			
1st Place	Tom's Elk Ranch - The Peryeas		Bonnie Brae Farms - Henry Ahern
2nd Place	Mariah Elk Farm - The Roots		Crown Point Farm - The Tuttle
1st Place		LedgEnd Farm - Hank Dimuzio	
2nd Place		Fallow Hollow Deer Farm - Martha	



Vermont Update

By Koran Casey Cousino

In the weeks since chronic wasting disease was discovered in New York State, the Vermont Agency of Agriculture and Department of Fish and Wildlife have been scrambling. Their priorities have been to identify all sites that farm deer and elk and to enact new rules governing farmed cervids.

On April 20th a few of NDEF's Vermont members testified in Montpelier before a joint senate hearing of the Natural Resources, Agriculture and Public Safety committees. The hearing was in regards to Bill H.526. This bill called for the Agency of Agriculture to regulate animals in the deer family for the purpose of disease control. It says the Secretary of Agriculture shall regulate all farmed cervids with regards to transport, fencing, inventory, testing etc. However, cervids imported, possessed or taken for the purpose of hunting will be further regulated by the Fish and Wildlife board and the Commissioner of Fish and Wildlife.

Testimony was focused on two specific areas of concern to the Vermont cervid farmers. The first was CWD test turnaround time. It is our belief that the turnaround time is too long and should be shortened and consistent. The second area of concern was hunt park regulation. We do not want the Department of Fish and Wildlife to have authority over any part of our industry. We knew this bill was going to be passed and while our testimony was well received by the senators on this subject, it was decided that this was not the time to make real changes.

On May 5, 2005 Hank Dimuzio, Koran Casey Cousino, Richard Frost, Punky Rowlee as well as three other cervid farmers attended an informal meeting with the Agency of Agriculture to discuss the proposed "Rules Governing Captive Cervidae". The intent of this meeting was to iron out any issues we had with the rules in an attempt to put forth a fair proposal for public comment. Dr. Kerry Rood, Vermont State Veterinarian and Carl Cushing, Director of Food Safety and Consumer Protection, represented the Agency. There were also two representatives of the Department of Fish and Wildlife and one from the Department of Health. We were able to quickly change a couple of issues that

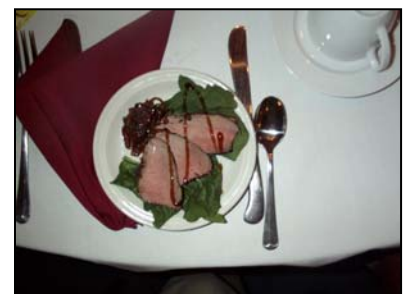
were of great concern to us. We were also able to reach a compromise on how long farmers have to return escaped elk/deer to pasture. The agency proposed 48 hours and farmers felt they needed seven days. We agreed on four days, with a provision that would provide for additional time to be granted by the Secretary following a written request. We were able to persuade the Agency to grandfather six foot fences for fallow deer if they have been proven effective in containing them in the past. We discussed the section on entrapment of native wildlife and the requirement to remove them before adding farmed cervids when fencing large parcels. The discussion was productive, however, no changes were made as the Fish and Wildlife representatives were very adamant that no matter what, no whitetail deer or moose will be behind fences in Vermont. Vermont cervid farmers requested a mandatory second test and DNA trace-back in the event of a positive test result for CWD but, the Agency refused to add it into the rules. We hope to continue this discussion with them in future meetings.

As mentioned above the area of greatest immediate concern to the Vermont deer/elk industry are the rules regarding carcass retention time at the slaughterhouse pending negative test results. We continued to discuss this issue and though there was a great deal of dialogue on this topic with the Agency they are unwilling to budge. Even despite the fact that the uncertainty created when test turnaround is not guaranteed, we are unable to sell fresh meat or even commit to frozen meat delivery, they refused to guarantee test turnaround time. The Agency has looked into using the University of Connecticut (UConn) to shorten carcass retention but, that has been their only effort and no outcome has been realized.

The expedited rules are now at the Legislative Committee on Administrative Rules (LCAR). Their job is to determine if the rules follow the legislative intent of Bill H.526. This committee also has the ability to object to the rules if they go beyond the authority of the Agency or are arbitrary. On June 2, 2005 Hank Dimuzio, Koran Casey Cousino and Richard Frost attended the LCAR meeting on the proposed rules. We all gave very strong testimony as to why the section of the rules regarding carcass retention would be detrimental to our meat business. After a great deal of

contemplation one of the Senators made a motion to object to the rules on the grounds that this section was arbitrary. The senator said that she didn't feel right forcing cervid farmers to do a test that could hurt our business. Since, the Agency feels it is necessary to complete the test before the meat enters the food chain there has to be a way to shorten the test. The committee then asked that the Agency to go back and work on shortening the test turnaround and report back in two weeks. The next LCAR meeting is on June 16, 2005.

It is our hope that the Agency has been able to contract with the UConn lab and test turnaround will be shortened. If not, the rules will likely be passed to the Secretary of State and be made official. Deer/elk farmers will then be forced to decide what their next move will be.



New York News

Testing Shows Chronic Wasting Disease Not a Widescale Epidemic in New York

(From the June 2005 New York Farm Bureau Newsletter, *Grassroots*. Reprinted by permission)

Deer farmers visit Albany to head-off overreaction to CWD scare

After several weeks of negative publicity, the state's deer farmers got good news on the chronic wasting disease (CWD) front last month. In March, CWD was confirmed in a white-tailed doe from a captive herd in central New York. It was the first time the disease has been confirmed east of the Mississippi River, and the media coverage of the event had some deer farmers fearing for the future of their livelihood. But after two months of intense testing by state officials, it has become apparent that the disease is not a growing problem on the state's farms. Instead, the more facts that emerged about the case, the more it became apparent that the incident in Oneida County was unique.

The Westmoreland farm where the disease first appeared is also used to rehabilitate wild deer. In addition, owner John Palmer takes in carcasses from around the country for taxidermy purposes. Department of Agriculture and Markets spokesperson Jessica Chittenden said Ag & Markets is not speculating about how the disease was introduced into the 18-deer herd. But an official from the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) was quoted in the Albany Times-Union indicating that there may be no way to pin down the disease's origin.

The DEC is responsible for monitoring CWD in the wild. Ag & Markets monitors the state's 500 deer farms. "We do have the most aggressive surveillance and monitoring program in the nation for CWD," Chittenden said. "That is exactly how we found this first case."

Chronic Wasting Disease, which has not been linked to humans, affects the brain and central nervous system of deer and elk. It is a transmissible ailment that causes chronic weight loss and often death in animals. The state requires that deer farmers deliver ten percent of their

herds to Ag & Markets each year for testing. Large captive herds where the animals cannot be counted—usually hunting preserves—are required to deliver samples from every animal that dies to Ag & Markets for testing. There is no live-animal test for CWD.

Since 2000, we have tested 706 captive deer, and five have tested positive," Chittenden said. All five of those cases occurred this spring. Four came directly from Palmer's premises. A fifth came from the property of another Westmoreland resident who received three live deer from Palmer's herd, Chittenden said.

Deer farmers head to Albany

Nevertheless, about 20 deer farmers came to the capitol last month to participate in a day of meetings coordinated by New York Farm Bureau senior associate director of public policy Jeff Williams. The New York farmers were joined by the president of the North American Deer Farmers Association, Gary Nelson, who flew in from Wisconsin to support his brethren and provide a cautionary tale for legislators who may be tempted to overreact to the incidents of CWD. The real harm will come if legislators rush to institute any new regulations in response to media hysteria over CWD, Nelson said. In his home state, officials mismanaged an outbreak, and in so doing, severely hampered the deer farming industry. "The general public came to recognize that the state's representatives misled them about chronic wasting disease," Nelson said. "But there was so much institutional inertia that the people who instituted the program continued to march down this path. "Decisions are being driven by public perception. Before you do anything, try to get the facts of the matter. Chronic Wasting Disease is not the monster it's represented to be. Chronic Wasting Disease will not devastate the farming industry or hunting in the state. The only way that happens is if you in the legislature rush to try to 'fix' the problem," he said. In fact, Nelson explained, the evidence shows that CWD is not a "farm problem" nationally. The state with the highest incidence of the disease, Wyoming, does not have any deer farms. But New York deer farmers are afraid that opponents of their industry will use the CWD scare as ammunition in accomplishing their broader agenda: passage of the so-called "canned shoot" bill.

Hunting preserves may take the heat

The Canned Shoot bill, sponsored by Senator Frank Padavan, R-Queens, would effectively outlaw hunting preserves in the state. Although few of the farmers who came to Albany operate preserves of their own, their industry relies on such preserves as an "end market" for their mature cervids, according to North American Deer Farmers Association (NADeFA) New York chairperson Martha Goodsell. Goodsell owns Fallow Hollow Farm in Candor (Tioga County). "It's very difficult to make a living in venison," Goodsell told a legislative aide in one of the lobbying sessions. "We're competing against New Zealand, which subsidizes its venison industry. So a lot of farmers have switched to breeding, and the end market for breeding is the preserves." State law currently outlaws so-called "canned shoots" on preserves of ten acres or less. Padavan's bill would expand that prohibition to fenced-in areas of any size. Animal rights activists have tried to paint a false picture of preserves by conjuring images of animals tied up and shot with no chance of escape. But Goodsell pointed out that most preserves in New York are at least 100 acres, and other farmers at the capitol defended the preserves as a humane way to cull their herds. While in Albany, Goodsell sought to educate lawmakers about the growing importance of deer farming for New York agriculture and agri-tourism. According to New York NADeFA, the state's 500 deer farms and 110 preserves employ about 1,800 small family deer farmers. The preserves alone attract tens of thousands of tourists and hunters that bring \$38.5 million to upstate New York each year. The industry makes productive use of about 21,000 acres, much of which is not suited to other types of farming. Although most deer farmers do not operate hunting preserves of their own, sales to those preserves can account for 30 to 70 percent of farm income, depending on the farmer. That is why the "canned shoot" bill is such a concern. "In the newspaper, there were quotes from various state agencies stating that they believe it is a deer farming problem," Nelson said. "Deer farmers are an easy target because the industry has programs to discover (CWD) and manage it. Because of that, we are where the disease is discovered first." Mark Serrapica of Dakota's Trophy White Tails in Bloomville (Delaware County) shared that sentiment. "If you're going to

Chronic Wasting Disease, you're going to find it on a deer farm," Serrapica said. "Through our cooperation with the (testing) program, deer farmers can catch a lot of flack. Eventually, we'll be OK because testing will show no Chronic Wasting Disease on deer farms. But we don't want CWD to be a catalyst to get a 'canned hunt' bill through or an animal cruelty bill through." While it is still not clear how Chronic Wasting Disease came to Westmoreland, each passing day and the preceding years without any positive tests demonstrate that New York's deer farms are essentially free of the disease. And farmers are working harder than anyone to make sure their herds are protected.



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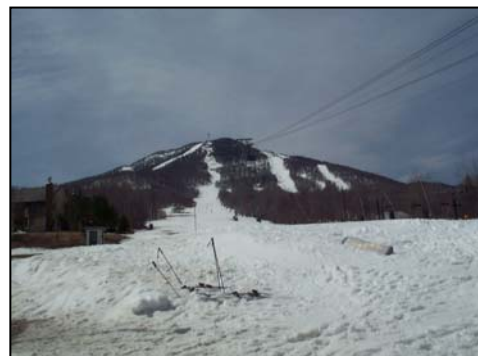
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 WWA REID 8
 WWA 402 W -
 WWA 9 Y W

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 PLATINUM -
 WWA SUPERMOM
 ECLIPSE
 WWA 611 W -
 WWA 11W

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 WWA 654 Y

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