

Northeast Deer and Elk Farmer News



Winter 2007

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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 Bob Root

What a year this has been, most assuredly the weather has taken the forethoughts of everyone's mind, a near draught in April to catastrophic flooding, through out the northeast and elsewhere. And now a very mild winter, there are reports of spring flowers blossoming in Washington DC., and an article on higher temperatures for this coming year. Al Gore would have us believe that it is the effects of global warming; the scientific sector says it is a climate change which is cyclical. None the less we as farmers/ranchers have to deal with the weather on a daily basis, wet we need drainage, hot we need shelter, dry we need more water, cold, well you know.

At this writing the final steps of the Velvet Antler Grant are in the works, a lot of work has gone into this, by a very spread out group. In the business world with a main office and employees, responsibility would fall on a group which would share information in a face to face fashion. Whereas our organization does not have that flexibility, the information flows from Susan Lordi and her efforts at pet shows and research, to a central point, in our case Bonnie Brae Farms, with Henry, Cindy, and helpful advice from Helen Costello, putting it all together and then emailing to the steering committee for response and feed back. To date Susan has put together the report for submission, and Henry is getting ready to submit the financials. At this point all looks well for the successful completion of the grant, and the possibility of the next step which is marketing.

During the research, it was found, there is an interest in velvet antler in the holistic pet industry. Because it is a natural substance harvested with no long term effects to the host animal, this has made it attractive to many consumers. Unlike one source of glucosamine and chondroitin, (shark cartilage) which is obtained from a dead host.

Give this a thought; those spiker antlers, and broken sets, which seem to just lay around are worth dollars as chew toys for dogs, have a sample cut and bagged, if you give tours, mention it to the group, sell them some venison chew toys. The bones from your butchered deer or elk are also a source of income. I understand that some butchers will take your scrap butcher bones, smoke them, put in zip lock bags, and sell them at a good price, as venison chew toys. If you are hesitant to be in the sales part other than selling whole animals, get with someone who has a farmers market stall and have them sell your venison products from there, you will both make money.

NADFA and NAEBA have been quite active this summer, with efforts to educate government and the public. NADFA has sent out a survey to its membership, the reason for this survey is to glean information, for presentation to local and federal government, of our viability and worth as an industry. NAEBA is putting the finishing touches on its video, which will give the public an up to date prospective of the elk industry.

The state of Idaho has halted the killing of escaped elk from the Chief Joseph Elk Ranch and Preserve. It seems that the people who were given permission to shot these animals were mistakenly shooting some elk through the compound fence, claiming it was not visible. The animals that were taken were all sampled for CWD, and other diseases, which were widely published by opponents to preserve hunting, that would destroy the wild herd, **negative**. Also, a rumor that several were

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President's Paddock Continued

Red Stag crossbreeds, which again they thought would contaminate the local wild herd, **negative**. It is still up to the owners of the escaped animals to expedite the recovery of the escapees at their own expense. Efforts to close down these areas will not stop, at this time other concerned groups are trying to persuade the government of Idaho to close down the cervid industry in that state, or restrict it so it will gradually remove itself. Be assured if efforts like these are present in other states, they will raise the same attitude in our respective states. We must be proactive, work with government to set reasonable guidelines, and present our stance that we are an important part of the economy, and offer safe, clean, and well managed operations, which pose no harm to indigenous wildlife.

This may be the last newsletter before our next convention, which will be in the state of Maine this year, hosted by Ken Swett, and Tony Tuttle. Included in this issue will be the announcement and sign up sheets, you can also visit our website at www.ndef.org for all the particulars and sign up sheets, plan early for discounts, attend early or stay late to visit historic Augusta, Maine. First and foremost, please make every effort to attend. Attendances, and participation, are the driving forces of any organization. With out these two disciplines it would be impossible to relay the meaning of this organization in the education of its membership, and have a positive outcome in the improvement of their business.

Looking forward to seeing you there.

Bob Root

Tid-Bits

Isn't it strange; that some hunters will sit over, deer trails, food plots, salt licks or corn baits, and have their hunting mates drive the woods, and still complain about how unfair preserve hunting can be?

Sad news: With all the sadness and trauma going on in the world at the moment, it is worth reflecting on the death of a very important person, which almost went unnoticed last week. Larry LaPrise, the man that wrote "The Hokey Poke" died peacefully at the age of 93. The most traumatic part for his family was getting him into the coffin. They put his left leg in. And then the trouble started. Come on you know this is funny!

Vermont News By Koran Cousino

Vermont Deer and Elk Farmers are gearing up for the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Board's public hearing on the Proposed Rules Governing the Importation and Possession of Animals for Taking by Hunting. When the last update was given in October a draft of the rules had not been voted on by the Board. In November a first draft was accepted and has been put out for public comment, a hearing is scheduled for February 12, 2007 in Montpelier. This first draft of the rules is just that, the Board can and will make changes after the comment period. As they stand the rules will permit the current hunting facilities to continue operating with restrictions. The restrictions in their entirety will not be given in this rule. These rules essentially establish a permitting process for continuing the operation of the current hunting facilities. The Commissioner of Fish and Wildlife will have the ability to impose as many restrictions as he/she deems necessary to "protect Vermont's Fish and Wildlife resources". The Board has suggested imposing restrictions on when animals can be hunted and which species can be hunted with elk being the controversial species as they are supposedly considered a "native" species of Vermont. They would also like require mandatory hunting licenses. These are just some of the suggestions. These rules would also make it impossible to start any new hunting facilities in Vermont after July 1, 2006. To view the draft of these rules please go to www.vtfishandwildlife.com, click on Law Enforcement and then Rules and Proposed Rules. To comment on the rules contact a Vermont NDEF Board member for information.

In other news there are a few new faces in the Vermont Agency of Agriculture. The new Secretary of Agriculture is Roger Allbee, the new Deputy Sec. of Agriculture is Anson Tebbetts and we also have an additional Assistant State Veterinarian Dr. Katherine McNamara. Vermont NDEF members are eager to meet these new people as soon as possible to find out their views on cervid farming in Vermont.

News from BALMY New Hampshire !!

By Jim Neil

As I write this column at 5:36 AM it is 57 degrees. What is with this weather?

Since I am no longer dependent on the forestry industry for our living, it sure is nice in many ways. However, certainly not the weather on which our North Country economy is based.

When I say "nice in many ways" – it has given me the opportunity to get some late season fencing done at Eastridge, but not without the stress of always looking over my shoulder for that arctic blizzard that I am sure is swooping down at any moment.

I have kept a work journal for 40 years now (Boy! Do I hate to say that), a habit I picked up from my first boss on my first job as a forester for the old Davis & Symonds Lumber Company. It was 27 degrees below zero in 1981 on this date. I am not sure our systems have adjusted to an 84 degree weather change! On that note, some elk farmers in our region have experienced an occasional death from a southern disease called "babesia." This is a tick borne (alternate host) disease spread from white-tails (the carrier). It attacks the red blood cells and death often results in 3-4 days if not treated. It appears the herd may eventually build an immunity over several years. But, it is a price that comes along with milder weather and the resulting northward migration of ticks.

What about some news, Jim!

In my last column I mentioned Russ and Michele Haney's startup of a store in Bath, NH. My son, Jeff, and I stopped at Bridgeview Deli over the holidays for lunch. Business was brisk and the elk chili superb. I was amazed at the volume of ground red deer and elk that Russ told me he was going through. Looks like a good move for the Haney's. A very pleasant stop.

One of our largest elk farms is retiring this year. John and Julie Morse of Wilmot, NH have decided to sell their farm and liquidate their elk herd over the next several months. Julie says it was a tough decision for them, but time marches on and caring for over 200 acres and 60-80 head of elk is a tough job. Leaving a house where they have raised their family and lived for forty-five years is not an easy thing, nor is cleaning out that many years accumulation, says John. Imagine! The best of luck to John and Julie. Perhaps

another trip to Alaska?

From all reports, 2006 was a brisk year for deer and elk product sales in and around the Granite State. Producers' comments are for an even brighter horizon as more emphasis is put on eating healthy, and locally. I was visiting with Donn Cann of Celtic Moon Elk Farm in East Plainfield, NH this past week about this very subject. Donn works hard at his summer Farmers Market schedule and servicing a few high-end retail and restaurant outlets with his elk products. Donn says his sales increase yearly, and he is always on the lookout to add to his supply stream, particularly in the porterhouse and sirloin steak area. If you have any extra elk steaks, it may be worth a call to Donn, his number is 603 448 6418 (piperdonn@aol.com).

An impressive number of deer and elk farmers participated in an Agricultural rule change hearing in Concord on December 18. The rule pertains to slaughter methods for deer and elk. I think most in attendance felt it another unnecessary rule. Hopefully it will die a natural death. The participation obviously impressed our State Veterinarian, however. Dr. Crawford did mention that with the encouraging test results for CWD presence in both domestic and wild deer and elk herds, he will consider opening discussion with other state vets for lifting the ban on importation, with restrictions.

Well, back to that late season fencing project, and looking over my shoulder!!

News from New York

By Bob Root

Good news from the NYSDEC, 1,789 CWD samples have been taken from the Oneida County Containment Area and another 7,905 samples from the whole of New York State with all samples to date negative. This is a good sign, however there is still a lot of concern about CWD and its effects on the state deer population, sampling will continue, surveillance and testing will be the key.

By the time you read this issue of the NDEF Newsletter, the NYS Farm Bureau Lobby Days will be past; they are scheduled this year February 5th and 6th. The following bills need prompt attention, and opposition, from all deer and elk farmers.

State Correspondents

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

MAINE

Tony & Beth Tuttle
ttuttle@uninets.net

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Jim Neil
nhelk@adelphia.net

NEW YORK

Bob Root
rootnyelk@aol.com

SOUTHERN NEW ENGLAND

John Barnatowicz
ajbarnat@earthlink.net

VERMONT

Koran Casey Cousino
kcasey823@aol.com

Bill S00784 and Bill A02612 (The 2007 version of the Canned Hunt Bill), this bill will prohibit the killing of animals in an enclosed area in which escape is not possible.

Bill S01429 (The prohibition of hunting/shooting preserves and domestic safaris) this bill would prohibit the killing of an animal in captivity, domestic or wild, not only shutdown hunt preserve, it will effect organized contest such as coyote contest.

Bill S901 (Larkin) and A9429 (Magee) this bill would allow the sale of venison for hunter harvested white-tailed deer, which would be direct competition for New York State deer and elk venison producers.

These bills will be voted on this year, it is not too late to contact the proper representatives and have these bills voted down.

Grant Update

By Cindy Downing

Grant committee members are breathing a collective sigh of relief as the grant project is winding down. After hundreds of hours of report generation, spreadsheet-producing, and number crunching, the final report by our marketing research consultant, Susie Lordi, with the assistance of committee members, has been submitted and printed. As this is being written, the final reimbursement request is being processed, and Helen Costello, our grant writer and co-ordinator, is working on the final paperwork for the USDA.

This last leg of the project has been very time-consuming. Since September, Susie traveled to four trade shows—a consumer show in North Conway, a holistic vet show in West Point NY, a pet groomer (pet industry professional-PIPs in future references) show in Warwick RI, and a new consumer show in Manchester NH. We have produced and sent out numerous questionnaires, letters, bottles of velvet antler capsules, velvet powder, and treats to participants in our research project.

Susie spent hours on the phone following up on the mailings, talking to additional vets, PIPs, and consumers who also wanted to participate, and hearing from participants who were very happy with the results exhibited by their pets. As deer and elk farmers, we have seen the benefits ourselves of taking velvet antler. These people, most of whom had never heard of it before this project, reported that their pets had shinier coats, more energy, better movement, less pain. We had a couple of neutral responses (the respondents felt that they needed more time) and no negative responses.

Interest in the products is high; awareness has been increased; good contacts have been made. Hopefully this can translate into more business for our members who produce velvet antler and benefit the industry as a whole. As Susie has relocated to Florida, we will need to look for a sales/marketing partner if we wish to move into sales of these products.

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**NORTHEAST DEER & ELK FARMERS
CONVENTION & ANNUAL MEETING**

April 20- April 22, 2007

Senator Inn & Spa

Western Ave at I 95

Augusta, ME

NDEF CONVENTION REGISTRATION & Membership/Renewal Application part 1

Name _____ Date _____

Farm/Company Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Province/Country/Zip _____

Phone _____ Fax _____

E-mail _____ Web _____

_____ New Membership

_____ Renewal Membership

Is above an Address Change? Yes ___ No ___

Currently Own Deer? _____ Type of Deer 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, auction and entertainment

Sunday full breakfast for overnight guests, (farm tour & lunch optional)

All Saturday and Sunday seminars and events

	Received Before 4/1/2007	After 4/1/2007
Conference (NDEF Member**)	\$100 ea _____	\$110 _____
Conference (Non NDEF Member)	\$120 ea _____	\$130 _____
Conference Guest (meals only)	\$65 ea _____	\$70 _____
Child	\$50 ea _____	\$60 _____
<i>Annual Dues</i>	\$40 _____	\$40 _____
<i>Total</i>	\$ _____	\$ _____
<i>We plan to attend farm Tour</i>	Yes _____	No _____

** FOR MEMBERSHIP PRICING STATUS, PLEASE BE SURE YOUR 2007 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:

Kenneth Swett
Ash Hill View Deer Farm
89 Swett Road
Carmel, ME 04419
Tel. 207-848-3866
Email: reddeer@adelphia.net

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

The NDEF Annual Hard Antler Contest will be held on April 21 at the Annual Convention at Senator
Inn & Spa
Western Ave at I-95
Augusta, ME

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.
-

Entry Form
2007 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
2007 BENEFIT AUCTION**

The benefit auction is the financial mainstay of our organization. Donated items make this event possible. Please list and ship your auction donations early so they can be properly displayed giving you credit throughout the Convention.

All NDEF members THANK YOU!

_____	\$ _____
Donated Auction Item(s)	value
_____	\$ _____
Donated Auction Item(s)	value

Name(s): _____

Farm / Company _____

City, State/Prov, Zip: _____

Fax: _____ Phone: _____

Email: _____

SHIP AUCTION ITEMS TO:

Kenneth Swett
Ash Hill View Deer Farm
89 Swett Road
Carmel, ME 04419
Tel. 207-848-3866
Email: reddeer@adelphia.net

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NORTHEAST DEER & ELK FARMERS
CONVENTION & ANNUAL MEETING

April 20- April 22, 2007

Senator Inn & Spa

Western Ave at I-95

Augusta, ME

EXHIBITOR INFORMATION

Northeast Deer & Elk Farmers is an association with more than 100 members actively involved in the industry of commercially farming deer and elk. Our membership area covers the six New England States, New York State and Southeastern Canada.

The Convention and Annual Meeting normally draws a stay-over group of 60-80 persons. All of these persons are either already in the business or seriously considering. They are buyers of a wide range of feed, fencing, advertising material and livestock related equipment, buildings and accessories.

EXHIBITOR REGISTRATION FORM

REGISTRATION FEE INCLUDES:

Space 10' w x 8' D Setup on Friday after 4:00 PM through Sunday a.m. Convention attendees will be arriving Friday evening through Sunday.

Teardown may take place between 8-9 a.m. and 11-noon Sunday.

Friday evening: Informal gathering & cash bar

Saturday: Coffee breaks included in registration

Luncheon & banquet/auction and Sunday farm tour *optional*

Exhibitor – Member	\$65/space	\$
Exhibitor – Non-member	\$75/space	\$
Optional Saturday Lunch	\$30/person	\$
Optional Saturday Dinner	\$35/person	\$
Annual Dues	\$40/each	\$
Total		\$

Farm / Company _____

City, State/Prov, Zip: _____

Fax: _____ Phone: _____ Email _____

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NORTHEAST DEER & ELK FARMERS
2007 PHOTO CONTEST ENTRY FORM

You may enter ONE photo to 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 10:00 AM on Sat. April 21 Please have name, animal name and age of animal(s) on back.

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

Category_____

Year of Birth_____

Name of Owner_____

Farm/Ranch Name_____

Address_____

Phone _____ Fax_____

Email_____

Species_____

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DIRECTIONS

From the south: Take I-95 North. In South Portland, take Exit 6A for I-295 North. Follow 295 through Portland until it once again becomes I-95, just past Falmouth. Continue North for approximately 50 miles. After the Gardiner toll booth, go 7 miles to Exit 30 in Augusta. Bear right off the exit onto Western Avenue. The Senator Inn is immediately on your right.

From the north:

Take I-95 south to Exit 30A. Bear right off the exit onto Western Avenue.

The Senator Inn will be immediately on your right.



BEST WESTERN



SENATOR

INN & SPA

Western Ave. at I-95, Augusta, Maine 04330

Telephone/Fax: (207) 622-5804

e-mail: senatorinn@senatorinn.com

www.senatorinn.com

Toll-free Reservations:

1-877-SPA...AAAH

(1-877-772-2224)



Accommodations
And Hotel Reservations

The Convention and Annual Meeting will be held at the Senator Inn & Spa (a Best Western motel) Western Ave at I 95, Augusta, ME <http://www.senatorinn.com> Room rates are \$89.10 /night single and \$98.10/ night double occupancy.

Please note to obtain these rate reservations must be made before March 18, 2007.

For reservations call the Senator Inn

1-877-772-2224 or on-line

<http://www.senatorinn.com>

Ask for the special rates for the Northeast Deer and Elk Farmers Annual Convention.

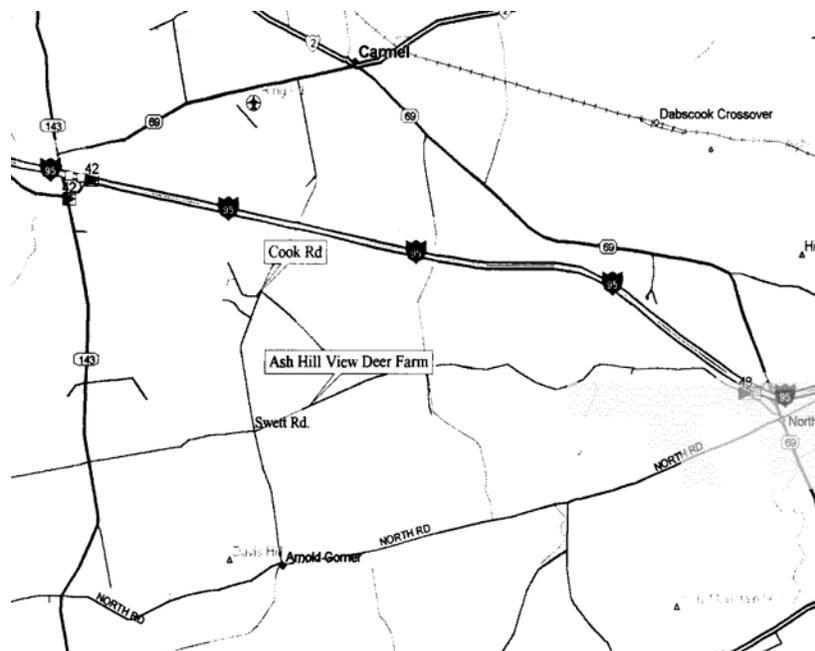
Directions for Farm Tour to
Ash Hill View Deer Farm



We are located 60 Miles north of Augusta between exits 167 & 174 of Interstate 95. From Augusta take I 95 North to Exit 167. Turn right on route 69 toward Carmel. Turn right onto the Cook Road, Follow the Cook Rd. to the first four corners. Turn left onto the Swett Rd.

Follow the Swett Rd. 1/2 mile to the end of the road.

89 Swett Road.



Norma & Wm (Butch) Mierke

The Back-Forty Elk Farm

Est. 2002

126 County Rd 12C
De Ruyter, NY 13052
315.852.6278

Spike, left, 5 yrs. & Thunder 4 yrs.



NDEF Membership/Renewal Application

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 Deer? _____ Type of Deer 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: _____

To join or renew membership in the Association, complete the information above with a check or money order for \$40, mail to:

Northeast Deer & Elk Farmers
Henry Ahern, Treasurer
601 Daniel Webster Highway
Plymouth, NH 03264

Editor
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