

# SA Deer Advisory Group (DAG)

## Meeting Summary

Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> December 2005

**NOTE: At the time of distribution, the Minister has not approved the outcomes listed in this document. Any misuse of information by individuals or associations will cause this service to be withdrawn.**

The meeting commenced at 8:30 am.

### 1. Welcome

The Chair welcomed all members and guests to the teleconference.

### 2. Attendance

<i>Milton Stevens (Chair)</i>	<i>Deer Industry Representative</i>
<i>Dr Jack Van Wijk</i>	<i>Ministerial Representative</i>
<i>Doug Clark</i>	<i>Deer Industry Representative</i>
<i>John Delaine</i>	<i>Deer Industry Representative – Velvet</i>
<i>Angus Lees</i>	<i>Deer Industry Representative</i>
<i>Prof. John Thonard</i>	<i>Deer Industry Representative</i>
<i>Jeffrey Varcoe</i>	<i>Deer Industry Representative</i>
<i>John Morley</i>	<i>Deer Industry Association of Australia Representative</i>
<i>Trudi Goodwin</i>	<i>Executive Officer, Livestock Advisory Groups (PIRSA)</i>

### Guests:

<i>Elena Petrenas</i>	<i>Manager, Livestock Advisory Groups (PIRSA)</i>
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### 3. Apologies

<i>Kevin Barnes</i>	<i>Deer Industry Representative - Venison</i>
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### 4. Confirmation of the 13<sup>th</sup> Meeting – 14 March 2005

The minutes from the DAG meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2005 were accepted as a true and accurate record, subject to identified amendments.

#### 4.2 Confirmation of the 14<sup>th</sup> Meeting – 6 June 2005

The minutes from the DAG meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2005 were accepted as a true and accurate record, subject to identified amendments.

### 6. Correspondence

Correspondence was noted and members were provided with a brief update on the national position on animal welfare, including the development of the “Australian Animal Welfare Strategy” (AAWS), as background information for the subsequent discussion on the South Australian Prevention of Cruelty to Animals legislative review. The Federal Government has provided \$6 million dollars over the next four years to assist in implementing the strategy – including the review and updating of the 22 Codes of Practice. The structure involves the Animal Welfare Working Group (AWWG) – tasked with the job of implementing the AAWS who reports to the national Animal Health Committee.

Members were also advised that the World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA) is intending to launch a national media campaign against long haul livestock transportation (land and sea) in January 2006. Their aim is to phase out long distance livestock haulage and have it replaced with exports of meat and meat products.

Discussion then moved onto the Department for Environment and Heritage (DEH) review of the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1985* legislation. DEH sought feedback (deadline October 2005) from a range of livestock production groups and the general public through an advertisement placed in the Advertiser. The original intent of the review was to strengthen the legislation to prevent individuals and groups from initiating civil action against industries and the Government. Consultation with the SA Livestock Advisory Groups, along with a number of other livestock organisations, revealed that these groups were unaware of the review. Currently the RSPCA is accountable for animal welfare issues.

It was recommended that the deer industry (through the DIAA) should get involved in reviewing and developing animal welfare strategies for the industry. This could include updating industry standards and on-farm QA programs to ensure that welfare issues are covered. It was emphasised that Codes of Practice must be based on scientific evidence.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**SA DAG members unanimously supported the transferral of production livestock welfare issues to PIRSA rather than the RSPCA.**

## **7. Business**

### **7.1 Introduction of Members**

The Chair confirmed that the Ministerial Representative's term of appointment had ceased and welcomed the Dr Jack Van Wijk, Manager, Disease Control (PIRSA) as the new Ministerial Representative to SA DAG.

### **7.2 Terms of Reference**

Given the recent staggering of members' terms of appointments, members were advised that the position of Chair normally remains with the incumbent for the term of their appointment. Members supported the continuation of the current SA DAG Chair (M. Stevens) for the term of his appointment (due to expire on the 31 August 2006).

Discussion subsequently moved to the reason for the delay in members' appointments. Members were advised that the hold up arose due to a lack of female representation on the Group. Advice from the Minister's office was that no further SA DAG appointments would be considered unless at least a couple of female nominations were submitted in the August 2006 appointment cycle.

Members agreed to identify suitable candidates and encourage them to apply.

### **7.3 Deer Industry Fund**

#### **2004/2005**

An unaudited cash flow statement for the Deer Industry Fund for the 2004/2005 period was tabled. The opening balance was \$117,980. Over the 12 months total of \$7,385 was received as revenue – 83% of this was from interest. Expenditure totalled \$1,977, comprising of \$1,500 for the annual audit of the Fund and \$477 for an advertisement in the Stock Journal seeking nominations for the SA DAG. The estimated closing balance for the period was \$119,388.

#### **2005/2006**

The cash flow statement for this period commenced with the unaudited opening balance of \$119,388. Revenue until November 2005 totalled \$2,389, comprising \$1,645 from interest and \$744 from levies. It was noted that revenue totalling \$3,312 was removed from the Fund in September and October. No expenditure against the Fund has occurred to date.

## 7.4 Escaped Deer – Fleurieu Peninsula

The Hon Mike Rann MP received correspondence from several residents in the Fleurieu Peninsula, voicing concerns about escaped deer in the area. It was noted that the concerned individuals did not attempt to contact PIRSA for comment on the issue.

The APCC has reviewed the *National Resources Management Act* in July 2005 and now have strengthened the ability to enforce legislation and have also increased penalties. Fence audits of registered deer operations will be undertaken by the NRM board (who replace the APCC) throughout 2006, with a view to making fence security recommendations. If the NRM board finds any inappropriate deer fencing, the owners will be required to upgrade their facilities to meet industry specifications and will have until the end of 2006 to comply. The NRM board will have the ability to enforce fines of up to \$20,000 dollars and if the NRM board is forced to rectify a problem, compensation will be sought from the owner.

There have been issues where all escaped deer were not returned to the property of origin or shot and this upset some neighbours.

The National Resource Management board has recently developed a position for a Deer Officer in South Australia, for the purpose of review ongoing issues between deer producers, escaped stock and local residents. This position is being advertised locally.

Contributing factors in relation to escaped deer include:

- wild deer were originally from farmed populations which are now breeding in the wild;
- wild populations were once protected by law, though legislation is now in place with assistance from the APCC to control existing populations;
- often lack of available feed; and
- difficulty for government bodies to contact likely deer owners.

Members noted that a property owner that has escaped deer on their premises has the legal authority to dispose of the deer after 48 hours has passed and a genuine attempt has been made to contact the animals' owner.

In the event of an escaped deer complaint, the regional NRM board, Local Council or PIRSA need to have a deer property register available to locate the owner. Members were reminded that due to the Privacy Act, PIRSA requires permission from deer owners to release their detail.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

**Seek endorsement for PIRSA to forward correspondence to all known registered deer owners seeking their support for the release of their contact details in the event that a Government agency is notified of escaped/stray deer.**

### **RECOMMENDATION**

**Request the establishment of a joint working group between the Department of Environment and Heritage and the SA DAG for the purpose of developing a fence audit standards for the containment of farmed deer.**

In addition, a letter will be sent to the Premier from PIRSA in response to the residents concerns.

## 7.5 Bundaleer Forest Update

Members were advised that the Jamestown community held a meeting on the 14 November 2005 for the purpose of receiving an update on escaped deer in the area. The next Jamestown meeting is scheduled for February 2006.

PIRSA has appointed a local shooter to cull deer in the Bundaleer forest. It is estimated that when the shooter was initially employed there were between 16 – 20 escaped red deer in the region. This has been reduced to three.

Deer escapes from the deer properties in the region have appeared to have stopped as evidenced by a recent eartag audit. This improved status is as a result of improved boundary fences and a reduction in the stocking rate.

Members were notified that the off-label permit for the use of OJD vaccine on deer is due to expire shortly. A renewal application has been forwarded to the Australian Pesticide and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA), however it will take at least three months before it's known whether the permit will be extended.

It was recommended that SA DAG should maintain a watching brief on the Bundaleer issue.

## **8. Other Business**

### **8.1 Abattoir Inspection**

It was reported that JD inspections are still being undertaken on deer lines processed at the Strathalbyn Abattoir. No evidence of JD has been detected to date.

Between January – March 2005, 19 inspection days were paid for at a cost of \$760 (\$40 per day) with samples taken from 598 fallow deer and 73 red deer. In April – June 2005, the number of animals inspected decreased slightly, with 593 fallow deer and 77 red deer being tested. This represented 23 inspection days at a cost of \$920.

This project is due to cease on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2006. After discussion, it was agreed that there was merit in continuing the project and J. Van Wijk was encouraged to submit a project application for consideration in the 2006/2007 funding cycle.

### **8.2 Ruminant Feedban**

Concern was raised about the apparent lack of knowledge amongst some deer-farmers about PIRSA's ruminant feedban. Members were advised that the program is designed to prevent the feeding of material such as meat and bone meal to ruminants, as it has been determined that this is the principal means by which diseases such as BSE are transmitted and amplified. To measure compliance and to increase awareness of the restrictions on what can be fed to ruminants, PIRSA has implemented a program of audits of feed mills, renderers, retailers and primary producers. The first round of audits was completed in September 2001. Compliance was found to be very high amongst all groups.

A disease surveillance representative will be invited to attend the next SA DAG meeting to provide an update on the ruminant feed ban program.

## **9. Next Meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday 8th March 2006** from 11:30am – 4:00pm in the Seminar Room, Level 1, Primary Industries and Resources SA, 33 Flemington St, Glenside.

Meeting closed at 10:55am.