

Bloodlines, breeding and growth rates

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Bloodlines and sources of breeding stock.

- Glensaugh and Rahoy provided purely **Scottish** red deer although some experiments with wapiti and Pere David deer were conducted. The sales of calves from these farms provided base stock for most Scottish deer farms established during the 1980's and 1990's. Red deer from the Highlands Invermark, Black Mount and Glenavon, also historically provided the stock for the deer in Otago, New Zealand.

Many wild Scottish hinds were brought on to farms directly in the 1980's and 1990's.

- **English park deer**, especially stags have been imported into Scotland since the early 19th century but have probably contributed little to the gene pool. They have been used increasingly in Scottish deer farms.
- **Wapiti** imported into Britain during the 19th and early 20th century have had some impact in a few deer parks but not directly in deer farms.
- **East European deer** have been imported from Yugoslavia and more recently from Romania via Austria.

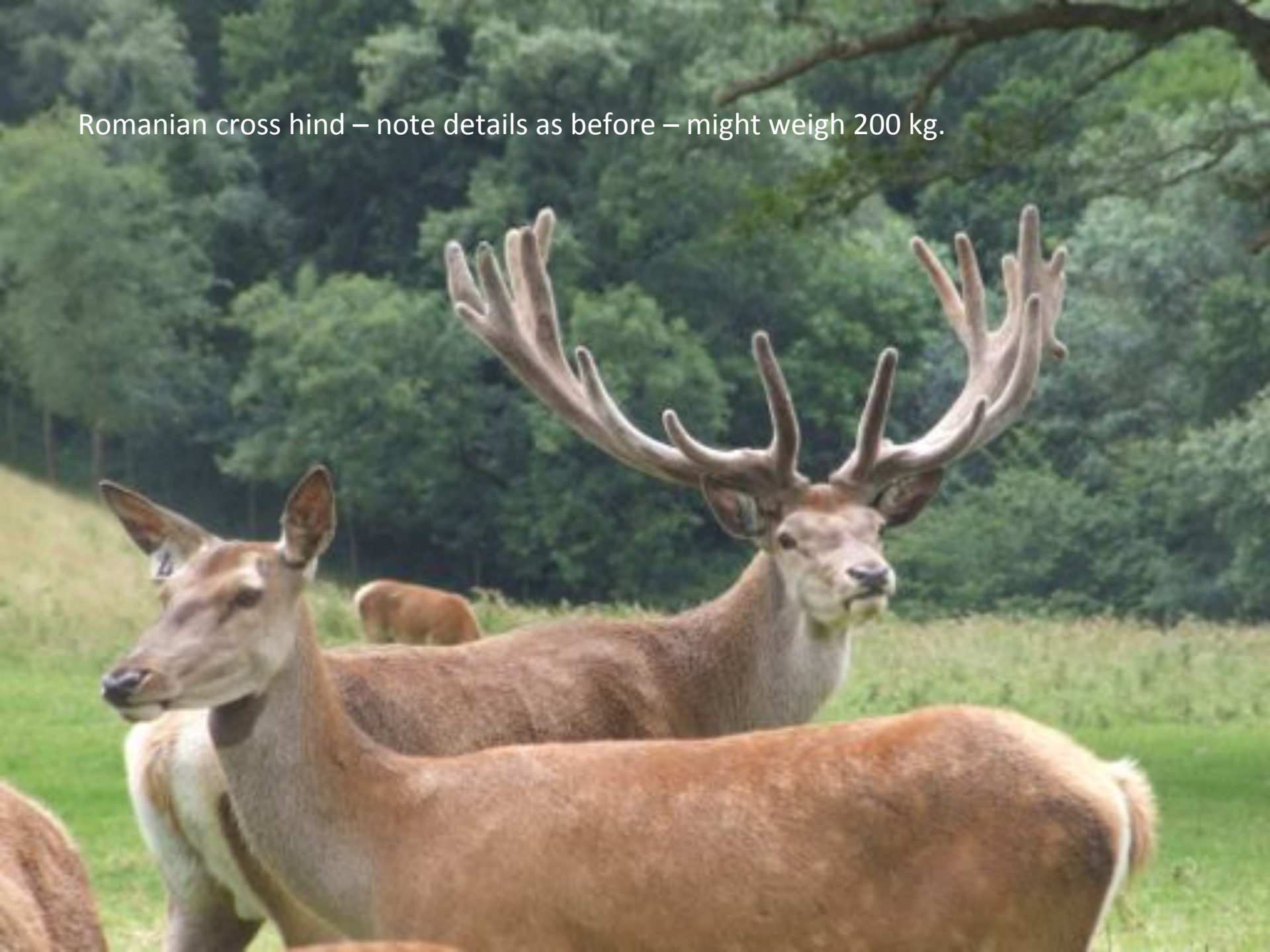
A selection of stags at John Burdge's deer farm in Devon. Predominantly Romanian imported via Austria.

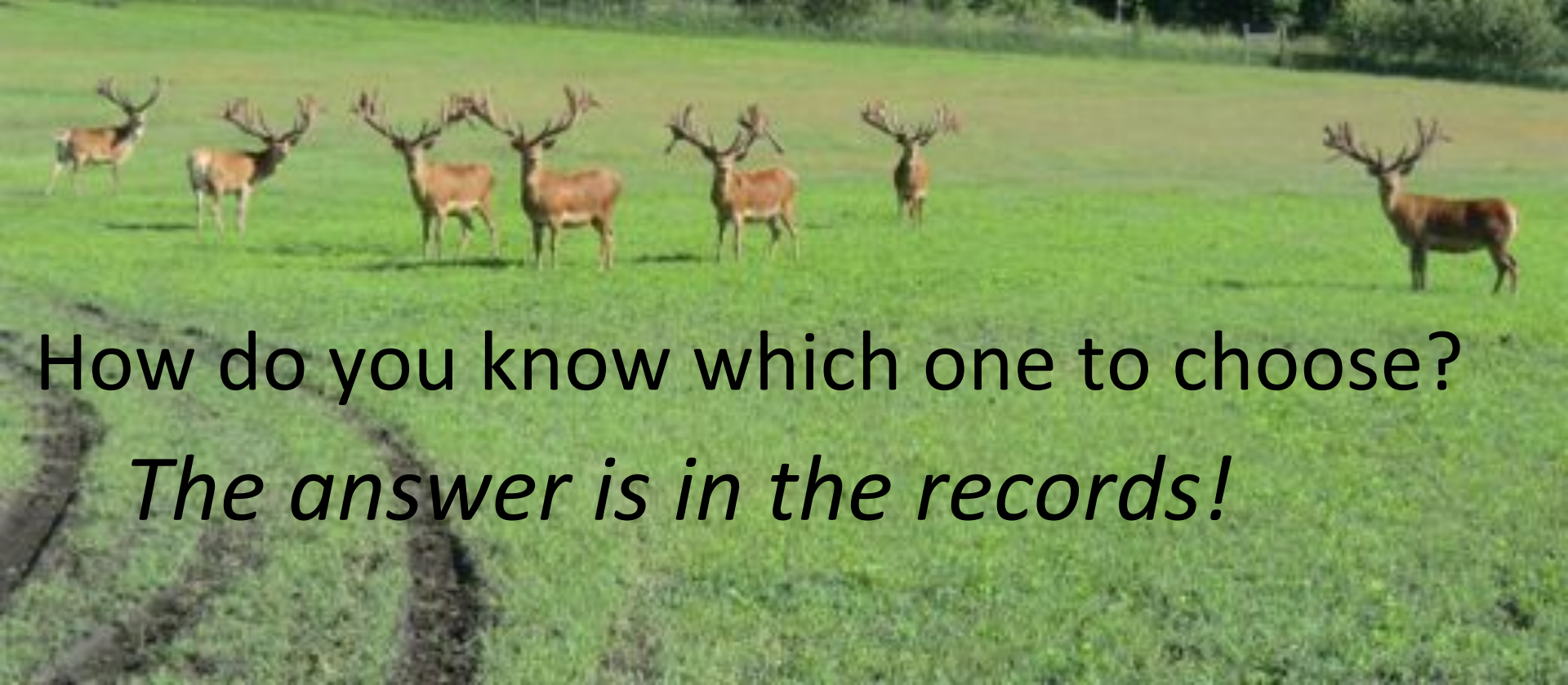


Romanian stag – note small tail, large white target at rump and thin summer coat
this stag could weigh up to 350 kg or more..



Romanian cross hind – note details as before – might weigh 200 kg.





How do you know which one to choose?

The answer is in the records!

Records...

Weighings: at the end of autumn (post rut weaning)
 end of winter (turn out)
 end of spring period (worming)
 end of summer (pre rut weaning)

Of the above, weaning and turn out are the minimum.

Remember that it is pointless comparing growth rates between different groups of deer unless differences in feeding are taken into account!



Deer in too much grass...

Differences between average and excellent growth rates in stags from weaning to 15 months – assumed starting weight 48 kg

| | Autumn 20 Sept – 23 Nov | Winter 24 Nov – 28 Feb | Spring 1 March – 9 June | Summer 10 June – 19 Sept |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Lwt gain (gm/day) | 150 - 200 | 50 - 100 | 200 - 300 | 180 - 240 |
| Kg gain | 10 - 13 | 5 - 10 | 20 - 30 | 18 - 24 |
| Liveweight | 58 - 61 | 63 - 71 | 83 - 101 | 101 - 125 |
| Carcase wt. (55%) | | | 46 - 56 | 56 - 69 |

Note that in the second winter there is little or no gain but in second spring to end of April growth rates between 250 – 320 g/day may be achieved to give between 64 and 79 kg carcasses.

Nearly 40% of annual weight gain is in the spring – hence good pasture vital.

Liveweights (kg) of yearlings at Culquoich

| | Turnout | 10/4 | Worming | 2/5 | Worming | 17/6 |
|-------|---------|--------|---------|--------|---------|--------|
| | Average | Range | Average | Range | Average | Range |
| Stags | 96 kg | 75-110 | 95 | 77-110 | 116 | 94-138 |
| Hinds | 75 | 63-85 | 74 | 63-86 | 89 | 71-102 |

Apart from weighing there are many other possible criteria to record... Date of calving; failure to wean a calf; longevity and temperament. – but crucially note progeny performance which requires pairing of mother/ offspring. Temperament is less easy but at least cull nasties.



Few deer are available from farms that are fully recording.

So if you cannot find points of comparison through records use your instinct!

Do the deer look healthy?

Are they being fed very hard?

ABOVE ALL ARE THEY FROM A TB FREE AREA AND A HERD WITH GOOD HEALTH STATUS. YOU CAN ALWAYS TEST BUT UNLESS YOU TEST A LARGE SAMPLE RESULTS ARE NOT COMPLETELY CONCLUSIVE!

Remember that if antler is what you are after, half the antler genetics come from the hind.....

