

THE DEER FARM & PARK DEMONSTRATION PROJECT



Welcome to Clathic

28 July 2015



The funding is being made available through the SRDP Skills Development Scheme which is jointly funded by the Scottish Government and the European Union



THE DEER FARM & PARK DEMONSTRATION PROJECT



- 10.30 Farming for Venison: Barriers to deer farming in Scotland
Dick Playfair
- 10.55 Update on the year so far at Clathic
Jamie Landale
- 11.20 Feeding and nutrition
Callum Thomson
- 11.55 Financial support for the deer sector
Barclays Bank PLC
- 12.15 Venison – its consumer appeal
Tom Lewis, Monachyle Mhor



The European Agricultural Fund
for Rural Development:
Europe investing in rural areas



The Scottish
Government



The funding is being made available through the SRDP
Skills Development Scheme which is jointly funded by
the Scottish Government and the European Union

Faming for Venison: Investigating the Barriers to Deer Farming in Scotland

A research study by:



Funded by the Partners and:



Scope of The Study

- To find out what the barriers to entry into deer farming are NOW
- To identify how to overcome them
- To focus a bit on 'Reinvention' and assess whether deer farming in Scotland has changed since 70s and 80s

Some outline facts from the report

- Farmed deer numbers in Scotland peaked in 1990 when there were 16,000 farmed deer
- The number had dropped to 6,000 by 2006 where it has remained
- Venison production from Scottish farms is estimated only at c 50 tonnes per annum – less than 2 per cent of Scotland's total venison outturn.
- Market demand is increasing steadily in the UK
- Venison features in analyst Mintel's '50 Fascinating Markets You Need To Watch' in 2015



‘Scotland the Pioneer’

- Scotland was the pioneer in research and innovation in farmed venison in the 1960s and 1970s – before NZ got going – but the industry has declined over time.
- If reinvention is occurring this should help address current and fresh challenges rather than repeat the same mistakes.



How was the research undertaken?

Research consisted of a questionnaire (20 responses), followed up by detailed interviews. The interviewees were selected to cover different aspects of the sector.

- 18 already working on farms or estates
- 15 already farming livestock
- 8 already farming deer
- 12 upland
- 3 lowland
- 4 upland and lowland



Barriers identified

Of the 8 respondents who were or had considered entering deer farming they cited barriers as:

- Lack of knowledge
- Risk
- Working capital
- Marketing their product
- Slaughter

“A challenging sector to enter.”

“It’s a sector that we know very little about. Previous attempts to establish deer farming in Scotland have had mixed results despite strong market fundamentals.”



Barriers identified – Analysis of all Respondents Prompted

- Start up costs - finance 12
- Investment in fencing 11
- Investment in handling facilities 10
- Access to slaughter 9
- Knowledge to find stock 9
- Lack of Government support 7
- Lack of development in sector 6
- Lack of husbandry knowledge 6
- Lack of contact with others 4
- Conflict with other farm/estate activities 3

Finance

- What financial support is available for deer farmers?
- How high are start up costs likely to be?
- Lack of established routes to finance for deer farming
- Lack of knowledge about the sector among lenders
- Fencing singled out as a “significant capital outlay” and the main hurdle.

Practicalities

- How to lay out the farm properly
- Finding suitable land
- Farm plans needed to work out cost of fencing
- Handling

*“I think people are a bit intimidated
about handling them.”*

Community

- Those involved in deer farming are a diverse group
- Generally those involved are open to sharing knowledge
- The cooperative concept could be beneficial particularly in terms of accessing markets

Information

- There is a lack of information available
- There isn't much online either
- There isn't a great deal of experience to draw on
- Some people are put off by spending too long considering whether to get going or not
- NZ is seen as the model with experience and know how

Stock

- Lack of stock perceived as a problem
- Not enough farms to supply breeding stock to new entrants
- Live capture a possibility?

Political

- SFP for the deer sector – reassurance
- Further Government support would help progress
- Government should take lead on deer farming co-op



Marketing and the market

- Not a barrier but a concern – how to get product to market, and where?
- Number of different options to choose – sell locally?
- Restaurant trade
- Export
- Make use of strong story and pedigree



Epidemiology

- Concern about disease – particularly TB
- Disease outbreak could change public perception of venison

Processing

- Distance to closest slaughterhouse an issue.



There were some strong positives expressed too – although not requested

- A developing market with high returns
- It's simple farming with low labour inputs
- Can be self-sufficient in the longer term (without subsidy?)
- The industry has 'attractive prospects'

Reinvention

- There is an imbalance between the individual and industry perspectives when assessing innovation in deer farming
- Individuals are more innovative; the sector less so.
- It is important that deer farming moves beyond the stage of innovation to confirmation – ie is accepted by the broader agri-sector as a constituent part



What actions do we need?

- Produce a finance guide
- Provide more information about practicalities – plans, equipment, infrastructure
- Generate and maintain a deer farming ‘community’
- Investigate cooperative opportunities
- Comprehensive online information portal (for public, starter farmers and established farms)
- Ongoing political engagement
- Access to breeding stock
- Continued marketing – keep the market buoyant
- Epidemiology guides
- Investment in slaughter and processing
- Clearer distinctions between wild, park and farmed.

