

Ms Jenny Mannering
Inquiry Secretary
Legislative Council
Parliament House
HOBART TAS 7000



deer@parliament.tas.gov.au

Dear Ms Mannering

Please see below submission to the inquiry into the fallow deer population in Tasmania.

Introduction

I own and manage a mixed farming enterprise of livestock and irrigated cropping on a 6000acre property which neighbours crown land, MIS tree plantations and properties that actively manage deer populations. Our property has a game management plan with a structured hunting club of 38 hunters.

I would like to raise the following points based on the terms of reference:

1. Cost to manage feral deer populations – “Environmental Impacts on public and private land”
2. Permit periods “Partly protected status of fallow deer under the Wildlife Regulations”
3. Neighbour issues in regards to managing feral populations “Impact on Commercial activities on private land

1. **Cost to manage feral deer populations – “Environmental Impacts on public and private land”**

Each year on our property upwards of 500 animals are culled or hunted as part of the game management plan. 100 of which are fallow deer. The financial impact of carrying the 100 deer that are shot equates to a lost implicit **cost equivalent to adjusting stock of over \$9,000 per year**. It could be assumed that for every fallow deer shot that there is at minimum 4 more live animals, living on our property, this equalling a **lost realisable value of \$50,000 per year**.

There are no other reasonable means to control deer other than culling by method of shooting.

In the past 2 months of March & April 2016, deer alone have wiped out an equivalent feed value of \$7,200 (3 tonnes dry matter of grazing oats over 8 ha conserved for sheep feed during drought).

Damage to fences is very difficult to ascertain if the issue is wallaby or deer, however maintenance costs and repairs due to wildlife damage to stock fences can easily exceed \$10,000 per year annually.

- Total Impact of Deer to our 6000 acre operation: Over \$60,000 per year, equivalent to interest repayments on a \$1.2 Million loan.

2. **Permit periods “Partly protected status of fallow deer under the Wildlife Regulations”**

In Spring / Summer last year 2015/16 we were allowed for the first time to obtain male deer permits “out of season”. This allowed us to protect mature cereal crops that were ready for harvest. This was invaluable to us and I support any future allocation of any sex deer during key seasonal trigger points.

Key trigger points for my business to maintain the ability to manage deer populations are March-May (Autumn Growth and new crop/pasture planting establishment) and August through to January (Harvest of mature crops and protecting Spring growth).

- *I request that cull permits are easily obtainable for male and female deer during all periods of the year.*
- *I believe that recreational shooters with identified areas to hunt, be provided more tags than currently prescribed to encourage more people to take animals.*

3. Neighbour issues in regards to managing feral populations "Impact on Commercial activities on private land

Forico manage and own an Ex Gunns plantation neighbouring our properties. Since Gunn's demise little has been done to manage populations of deer and their numbers have sky rocketed.

- There should be great pressure placed on large landholders that provide habitat for deer to spread onto neighbouring properties and cause commercial damage.

We also neighbour large tracts of crown land. This land is also not actively managed for deer populations thus causing us significant pressure on surrounding farming areas.

A neighbouring property conservatively manages their deer population to provide "sporting pursuits" and "trophy heads", which also means we have large amounts of game travelling from this area as well.

- To summarise these 3 neighbour issues: If neighbours are unable/unwilling to manage their deer populations, individual landholders that need to control this pest should have the capacity and the ability to obtain unlimited amounts of cull tags to protect their commercial interests. No different to a neighbour not being able to use a specific type of chemical that could wipe out a vineyard within a 20km distance.

Conclusion

Thankyou for taking the time to read and understand my submission.

Yours Sincerely

George Gatenby

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