

Policy position produced by the Tasmanian Deer Farmers Council (TDFC) in response to
Legislative Council Inquiry Into The Wild Fallow Deer Population In Tasmania

Environmental Impacts

Public Land

The TDFC is supportive of allowing the status quo on cull tags to reduce and control feral populations on public land **adjoining** farmland and high conservation areas.

The TDFC is also supportive of the Control and contraction of wild deer populations to conserve natural conservation values of forests and open native pastures.

Private Land

In our view the control of deer causing **negative** environmental impacts on private land is a real issue, easy access to cull permits is essential to reduce negative environmental impacts promptly and rapidly.

Impacts on commercial operations on private land

Browsing of high value crops

We support the TFGA position on easy cull and the large impacts on farming.

Destruction of **infrastructure**

High levels of wild deer running around deer pens and damaging existing fencing while attempting to **enter** the pen is a significant problem.

Wild deer are attracted to deer farms and can present a hazard to road users if farms are near roads

Wild deer outside deer farms attract a criminal element to the adjacent deer farm

There is a public perception that deer farms are **releasing** animals where in fact wild animals are attracted to the farmed and contained animals.

Private Wildlife Parks have been included erroneously as having the same status and commercial intent as deer farms and in some cases may have not had the same level of security.

Devaluing deer farming operations

There have been negative impacts on existing licenced **abattoirs** due to disparity in meat standards and meat **hygiene** regulations for market access.

Any further commercialisation of wild deer will lead to a decrease in the market value of venison due to **uncontrolled** selection of animals and **unknown** age, quality and specification entering the market.

A change in regulation would effectively **devalue** existing livestock through making wild deer harvested by recreational hunters commercial animals with a real cash value. A comparison would liken recreational fishers being allowed to sell recreational caught fish into the open market harvested under different standards.

The partly protected status of fallow deer under the Wildlife (General) Regulations 2010;

The TDFC supports the partly protected status of fallow deer regulations of under the Wildlife (General) Regulations of 2010 however the management of fallow deer population numbers should engage all **stakeholders** including DPIWE, TDFC, TFGA & TDAC.

Commercial opportunities for the use of wild population stocks;

The TDFC strongly opposes the proposal to allow the commercialisation of wild shot deer for human consumption as it would completely devalue and destabilise current market.

As deer farming has developed there has been a strong regulatory oversight by government to control location and numbers of fallow deer. As a result farmers have invested millions of dollars into fencing requirements, livestock handling **facilities**, transport standards to meet animal welfare and meat quality standards, slaughter house **facilities**, compliance for slaughter **facilities** and stock numbers and decades of market development for our products. The recent importation of wild shot venison from outside the state has already had a significant **negative** impact both on consumer experience and wholesale meat quality and market sensitivity.

If wild shot deer become a saleable item for human consumption and meet the minimum meat quality standards which are **grossly** disparitive to the current regulations for venison slaughter it has effectly wiped millions of dollars and decades of investments into assets and **infrastructure** to close to zero value.

Any proposal to allow the meat from wild shot deer to be permitted for sale for human consumption would be the most destructive and disruptive proposal the venison industry has faced to date.

On top of the economic impact to deer farming as a business the social impacts of placing venison which is wild shot and not slaughtered through a structured chain of custody creates a very **attractive** pathway for illegal activity to generate cash. Illegal activity in regional Tasmania is already a serious problem and resources to manage the problem are already stretched and any policy which has the potential **to** increase this burden and problem needs strong review .

Other matters

Social and cultural practices

There are strong historical cultural links in the Tasmanian community and the hunting of wild deer both recreationally and culling. Based upon the last years cull data approximately 123 tons of venison meat from does and antlerless animals were reported under cull permits. On **(space)** top of this 71 tons of venison from antlered animals was harvested under the 2015 cull permits.

Recreationally another 25 tons of venison from antlered animals were taken recreationally and 33 tons of venison from recreationally harvested does **were** taken.

A conservative dressed venison harvest total of 252 tons was taken and **dispersed** within the Tasmanian local population averaging an annual intake of 500g per Tasmanian.

If this meat took on a commercial value as proposed based on \$4.20/kg that is a resource worth just over 1 million dollars being freely shared within the hunting and farming communities. Given the end use of all fallow deer taken under permit is not **known** it is improbable all is eaten by humans but the numbers documented above are still valid numbers for total venison meat yielded and even if fed as pet food still represents a significant quantity of high value protein being fully utilised by hunters and farmers.

Aside the gross quantity and value of venison currently harvested the underlying value is to farmers charging for hunting access. Many properties are charging in excess of \$1000 for stags and also expecting hunters to contribute to repairs to **infrastructure** damaged by deer which are being

managed for hunting and not actively killed to protect crops etc. and must not be overlooked as perhaps the greatest economic factor for farmers with wild deer populations on their farmland or neighbouring properties.

The TDFC realises the cull program is rapidly increasing and given the short timeline the increased cull tags has occurred for it is still too early to fully understand the impacts of this new management strategy. The TDFC is requesting it is considered a key stakeholder in future direction and reviews of the management of the wild deer resource in Tasmania.

The TDFC would like to see cull permits to be perpetual for a period of 5 years like wallaby and possum permits with an annual harvest report being the only reporting obligation.

Anthony Archer

Anthony Archer President of TDFC

Allison Waddington

From: Will Bignell <will@thorpefarm.com>
Sent: Thursday, 30 June 2016 4:40 PM
To: DEER; Anthony Archer
Subject: Tasmania Deer Farmers Council Submission
Attachments: Tasmanian Deer Farmers Council Regulations Submission.pdf

Attention Ms Jenny Mannering,

I have attached the submission on behalf of the Tasmanian Deer Farmers Council for the legislative council enquiry.

Sincerely,

Will Bignell, TDFC committee member on behalf of the TDFC

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