

**FEDFA AGM  
BRUSSELS  
MARCH 27<sup>th</sup> 2008**

**National Association's Reports**

**Sweden:** Growth occurring.

Deer farming is moving to more red deer and bigger farms,( average 110 ha)  
Slaughtering facilities also improving and there is no extra fee for EU  
approved.

Local field killing also allowed with no great problems up to 75 animals if  
selling locally.

**Belgium:** The number of deer owners in the past was 1500 it is now closer to 3000 but  
mostly only 5 – 10 fallow

Have a working group on 'blue tongue' looking at vaccination and fees for  
small ruminants; there is no evidence of illness in deer so vaccination would  
not be on economical but if 80% of active animal farming population then deer  
farmers would also. No evidence of blue tongue in deer in infected sheep farms  
either. But there are question being asked with regard to deer acting as a  
reservoir for blue tongue.

**Netherlands:** Johnnes disease research work with Utrecht University and New Zealand.

Numbers struggling at the moment and are possibly going down due to  
poor prices and the % contribution to regular salaried income. 35 active  
members of the association 10 – 15 commercial deer farmers selling directly  
from their farms This method is seen as the most profitable into the future.  
Farm land is expensive in Holland at €35,000 per Hectare. Worried a bit about  
maintaining momentum so may merge back again to form Benelux.

**Latvia:** 60 deer farms. 30 members in the association

Size: 5 – 1000ha mostly parks, medium farms 100 – 150ha are intensive with  
hunting also. The biggest farm is 500 – 1000 Belgium farmer mostly park  
areas with lots of animals with housing for 300 calves and up to 2000 overall.  
Have their own slaughter plant and associated facilities (German manager) have  
two shops for selling the meat and also do live-hunting and tourism. There is a  
10 member co-op selling to supermarkets and restaurants and are getting €14.07  
per kilo carcass.

Selective Breeding Program: Nine farms participating in it, evaluation is mostly  
for trophy traits. The state contributes to the cost of evaluating the animals  
(25lots/year)

LDFFA has 2 scientific programs and a good farming practice protocol for food  
animal producers.

One scientific program is assessing meat evaluation, feeding effects, organic  
versus conventional.

The other is investigating bullet types for shooting, comparing lead v iron and  
the hunters are now moving to a iron/copper mix

There will be a scientific conference involving the universities in the autumn and  
Dainis invited any one who would like to attend and he will give more info in  
the yahoo site, the working language is English and German.

**Ireland:** Both red and fallowed deer being farmed. Rising feed cost is heavily impacting on financial returns. No blue tongue to-date. The association meets 3 times a year with usually a marketing or production feature. Some historic problem carry-over.

There is a shortage in the amount of venison available due to an increase in demand; so there is potential for expansion but the cost of winter feed has increased significantly so that may put a damper on it. There are some discussions occurring between BDFA and IDFVA with regard to holding a joint conference. Nearly all animals are abattoir slaughtered and over 80% of venison is being exported to the UK, Denmark, Germany and France.

A seminar on Breed improvement was held in August 2007. Lyn Rhodes from New Zealand a deer AI practitioner was the keynote speaker on the subject of deer growth improvement using improved selected stags via AI. It may be possible to develop the same such programme in Ireland in the next few years. An EU health check for CWD is being carried out by testing all red deer that die on farm.

**Denmark:**

Grain prices have increased three fold while venison prices have remained stable. There are no regulations or restrictions for people keeping 5 animals or less; consequently many people are doing this. They should be encouraged to join DDFA as there is a lack of activity in the association at present. Vets are visiting deer farms with regard to Good Farming Practice compliance. The vets will be giving courses on this.

**Austria:**

There are 15 – 20 new farms coming being set up every year but there would be some going out also. We are trying to get venison prices up to compensate for the rise in grain prices. They are receiving €8 to €10/kg at present. 600 deer were tested for CWD all negative. Blue tongue is present in Germany.

**France:**

The fallow and red deer associations have amalgamated into one association. Deer numbers are stable and prices were up in autumn 2007. Due maybe to less New Zealand venison coming in, but there is also a more nationalistic approach to choice of meat for consumption decisions and people opt for French products. There is Blue tongue present in 50% of France but no reference to deer with regard to it.

CWD testing was done but no results released. Sheep and cattle farmers are experiencing a down-turn at present.

**Switzerland:**

Growth is steady. 200 members were present at their 25th year in existence celebrations. Farms are slightly bigger than they use to be, so are more sustainable rather than just a hobby.

Blue tongue spread through-out Switzerland very quickly and there are some discussions about it but it is hoped that maybe some more information on it in deer might come from the group.

**Czech Republic:**

The deer slaughtering veterinary laws have changed and the ministry is now more aware and has more respect for deer farming. This was due to CWD testing being done on deer heads. It was first thought that they would only examine heads coming through meat factories, but because there were none coming through they became more aware of and more open to free-bullet shooting on farms, but it still varies quite a lot between districts. New laws for shooting on farm have been introduced with safety protocols being the dominant feature. Market development is also changing for the better. But, deer farming is still being done as a hobby and also for agric.-tourism. Deer hunters do not have great PR at present so this is good for farmers. Blue tongue is a problem in the republic also

Czech association will host the autumn meeting of FEDFA on the 25<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> September. Suggestions for visits are: A 500 fallow deer farm, over-night in a cottage situated in the middle of a red deer farm and also a visit to a red deer park. Maugli to persist in getting the survey on European deer farming finished.

**United Kingdom:**

There is not enough deer to meet the demand that there is for venison. Blue tongue is impacting on the movement of live animals and is resulting in much debate on farms and parks. A meeting of the British Veterinary Deer Society is to take place in Woburn. Mike Winkle a Dutch expert will be in attendance; John Fletcher will be attending also and will report back to the group. The BDFA is struggling financially at present due to not enough deer farmers joining the association. The BDFA have run very successful information days and courses on deer and related topics. The findings from the meat research work which is complicated and at times conflicting will be discussed in detail at the autumn meeting

This completes the national association's reports.