Australian Government

Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation

National Velvet Accreditation Scheme Database Development

A report for the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation

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" National Velvet Accreditation Scheme Database Development "
Publication No W05/122
Project no. DIP-14A

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In submitting this report, the researcher has agreed to RIRDC publishing this material in its edited form.

Foreword

Velvet antler is one of two major commodities produced by Australian Deer Industry.

Velvet antler is managed, harvested, handled and stored in a hygienic manner and as required by the National Velvet Accreditation Scheme (NVAS). The ongoing operation of the NVAS is in part dependent on the ongoing interactive cooperation between the Australian Deer Industry Association (DIAA) and the Australian Veterinary Association (AVA). An integral part of that interactive cooperation is related to the ability and preparedness of the DIAA to provide detailed reports on various aspects of the scheme to the Chairperson.

The database software produced by this project provides the administrators of the NVAS with that data storage and reporting capability in a form that is easily managed and updated.

This project was funded from Industry revenue which is matched by funds provided by the Australian Government.

This report, a new addition to RIRDC's diverse range of over 1500 research publications, forms part of our Deer R&D program, which aims to foster an Australian Deer Industry as a profitable and efficient mainstream agricultural enterprise.

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Acknowledgments

I wish to acknowledge those who contributed to planning the specifications for and testing of this database software, in particular Mr Jim Moir and Mrs Solange Shapiro.

I also wish to express my acknowledgement to Mr Mike Stevens from MSC consulting for his patience with the particular requirements of the software.

Executive Summary

The ongoing operation of the National Velvet Accreditation Scheme is, in part, dependent on the ongoing interactive cooperation between the Australian Deer Industry Association (DIAA) and the Australian Veterinary Association (AVA). An integral part of that interactive cooperation is related to the ability and preparedness of the DIAA to provide detailed reports on various aspects of the scheme to the Chairperson.

This project has developed an easily managed and upgradable database program that allows the NVAS coordinator to easily record, store and report activities of the NVAS.

This new database will allow for a broad range of future reporting capabilities likely to be required of the NVAS and provide industry with the ongoing ability to ensure consumers of deer velvet and the wider community that:

- Acceptable standards of animal welfare are maintained
- Deer Industry QA Programs product traceability requirements are supported
- Occupational Health & Safety requirements for personnel involved in velvet removal are maintained.
- QA, residue and animal welfare expectations of international and domestic communities and clients are maintained

1. Introduction

The Australian Deer Industry Association (DIAA) and the Australian Veterinary Association (AVA) cooperatively developed the National Velvet Accreditation Scheme (NVAS).

The NVAS was developed to allow farmers accredited by the scheme to harvest velvet antler from deer they own or manage. If it did not exist Australian deer farmers would be unable to harvest velvet from their deer.

The DIAA operates the NVAS of behalf of all deer farmers irrespective of whether they choose to be members of the DIAA or not. Farmers achieve accreditation by:

(i)   Attending and passing a theory course about the physiology of deer antler and the use of analgesic drugs

(ii)   Undertaking and passing a practical velvet harvesting and drug use course with their nominated veterinarian

(iii)   The nominated veterinarian providing a certificate of competency

(iv)   Providing an annual audit return to the NVAS detailing drug use, number velveted and any associated animal problems

(v)   Paying an annual fee to the NVAS

Ongoing accreditation requires that farmers:

(i)   Provide an annual audit return, that signed by the supervising veterinarian, to the NVAS detailing drug use, the number or animals velveted and any associated animal problems

(ii)   Paying an annual fee to the NVAS

(iii)   Undertaking and passing an open book examination every there years.

Prior to the development of the database produced by this project, limited data records for the scheme were recorded in spreadsheet format. However increasing concern by the AVA about the use of S4 drugs has required that more detailed data about the scheme is recorded and the records are maintained in a format that allows a range of detailed reports to be provided on request of the Chairperson of the Scheme.

The new detailed records will be an invaluable aid for audit requirements.

2. Objectives

To develop an interactive database to record store and report on activities of the National Velvet Accreditation Scheme (NVAS).

3. Methodology

Project methodology will include:

1. Development of an easy-to-use Microsoft Access database that records all information required by the NVAS and allows the existing scheme administrator to produce reports as required

2. Training of the NVAS administrator in the use of the database

4. Results

The ongoing operation of the National Velvet Accreditation Scheme is in part dependent on the ongoing interactive cooperation between the Australian Deer Industry Association (DIAA) and the Australian Veterinary Association (AVA). An integral part of that interactive cooperation is related to the ability and preparedness of the DIAA to provide detailed reports on various aspects of the scheme to the Chairperson.

This project has developed an easily managed and upgradable database program that allows the NVAS coordinator to easily record, store and report activities of the NVAS.

This new database will allow for a broad range of future reporting capabilities likely to be required of the NVAS.

5. Discussion

This project has produced a database that allows recording of required data in a format that provides for a range of required reports. The database allows for future addition of new fields including a future requirement to include National Livestock Identification System (NLIS) numbers.

The improved record keeping and reporting ability provided by this database will in turn provide ongoing confidence to DIAA's partners in the scheme, the AVA, that all activities of the scheme are managed appropriately.

6. Implications

This database will assist the NVAS in its ongoing program to ensure consumers of deer velvet and the wider community that:

- Acceptable standards of animal welfare are maintained
- Deer Industry QA Programs product traceability requirements are supported
- Occupational Health & Safety requirements for personnel involved in velvet removal are maintained.
- QA, residue and animal welfare expectations of international and domestic communities and clients are maintained

7. Recommendations

That the NVAS administrator continues to monitor reporting requirements of the NVAS and ensure that the NVAS database is upgraded as necessary to meet new reporting requirements.

8. Communications Strategy

The existing NVAS administrator has been trained in the operation of the new NVAS database.