LENAH
GAME MEATS of TASMANIA

Commercial use of feral deer – a management tool

Feral deer are recognised as an agricultural and environmental pest. The only debate seems to be around how to manage them.

Lenah does not suggest that commercial harvesting is THE answer. It does however contend that commercial harvesting can be a PART of the answer.

All legislative and food safety requirements are in place to enable commercial harvesting of wild deer for both human consumption. Lenah sells typically 6000 kg of wild harvested venison PER WEEK, all sourced from Mainland States. Lenah supplies wild harvested venison to every major supermarket in Tasmania, as well as restaurants and other food trade customers in Tasmania and on the Mainland. Our markets have expanded 100% in the past 12 months and continue to grow.

This trade amounts to all the venison from over 20,000 fallow deer per year. Commercial deer harvesting by itself has limitations in reducing deer numbers to very low levels. However in most situation, and the Tasmanian example in particular, harvesters are not simply targeting deer. Commercial game harvesters in the Tasmanian example principally target wallaby and would simply take whatever deer are opportunistically available. Thus making commercial harvesting a much more attractive option in maintaining lower levels of deer than can be achieved through deer specific harvesting.

An opportunistic harvest of 20,000 deer per year would indeed make a significant contribution to deer control in Tasmania.

It also generate jobs and income from a resource which is to a significant extent currently wasted.

I would be more than happy to expand on these theme in person.

Regards

John Kelly

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