

## Recorder's Report to BFS 2006

1. My apologies for being unable to attend the meeting. Family business is the problem.
2. For those interested I have made copies of a discussion paper on rainfall records compared with trophies taken over the life of the scheme. This is part of an analysis of scheme data, made possible by putting our records on computer. I left a printout of those records in the cupboard for members to look at, during their second week on the scheme.
3. I did say to a couple of members who expressed interest, that I'd run a workshop on ageing deer from their jaws. This will need to wait until next year. However, I need to make the point as strongly as possible that obtaining the ages of both trophies & culls is essential to our evaluation of all the other records, & to judge how the scheme is progressing. Those who have seen the R.I.D.G.E. scheme DVD or video will appreciate what I mean. Thanks to all those who kept their jaws for me, especially the doe jaws, collected for the first time this year. I have yet to tooth section the doe teeth to compare with their eruption & wear.
4. Those who have jaws, report forms & photos for me, please give them to Greg Haywood (or Steve Isaacs if Greg is absent).
5. Ages of bucks taken to the end of round 2, & Mark Isaacs' 2005 trophy are; Nigel's cull 5 1/2 yrs, Dick's culls 3 1/2 & 4 1/2 yrs, Gordon's 221 DS trophy 3 1/2 – 4 1/2 yrs, Richard's trophy 3 1/2 yrs, Bernard's trophy 3 1/2 yrs, Mark's 2005 trophy 4 1/2 – 5 1/2 yrs. N.B. tooth wear is variable between animals, & seems to change during drought, so ages over 2 1/2 years are usually only accurate to within about one year. Where just a single figure is given, I'm much surer than where an age range is given.
6. The importance of maintaining good records of the scheme cannot be over stated. There are important people & organizations we need to impress with the fact that this is a managed herd. These include the Cobcrofts, Keith & the Game Council. The coordinators can enlarge on this statement. Unfortunately too much of our data is incomplete, which makes our analyses of the state & development of the herd very difficult to do. Please take all the required measurements (so carry report forms, a pencil & a tape always), fill in the other form details then double check for things left out. Photos need to be written on the back with your name, the year, & whether it is a cull or a trophy. When photos get separated from report forms, it's often just a guess as to what it is & who shot it when. Likewise, on Douglas score sheets please write the same information, for the same reasons. Then, if you can't hand your details to me personally, please post them to my home address ASAP. Today you should give them to Greg (or Steve).
7. A new report form is needed to make life easier for everyone, especially me! I'm suggesting that we adopt the one I've prepared, or some improved version of it. Notice that it doesn't ask for sight reports. The old, simple counts have little value now that

the herd numbers have seemingly peaked. If every member agreed to report the locations of bucks & does sighted, (using the grid system overlay on the map), we would get valuable data, paralleling what happens on the RIDGE scheme. That's something to think about & decide honestly, because falsified reports would be worse than none. Problems I've had with the old forms include; use of the term "stag" instead of "buck" for fallow (i.e. an animal described as a "red stag" might be a red deer, or a menil fallow); no indication whether a shot buck is a cull or a trophy; no dates (particularly the year); no name; no measurement unit given (although not hard to guess); & it's hard to read. I've designed the new report form to make it easier to complete, & easier to read.

8. Finally, there are plenty of trophies from earlier years for which I have no records at all. We would like to complete the records. We want to make them available on the web site. When that's complete & provided the members vote to make them available there, you will be able to check to see if your trophy is listed.
9. Finally, I'm going to try to get a copy of the RIDGE scheme DVD for loan to any BFS member who hasn't seen it. Should be available in a few weeks. The cost of borrowing it will just be the postage both ways.

Thanks for listening.

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