



Special Interest Articles:

- Market Watch
- Board Meeting Minutes
- Velvet Antler is the Big Market for Elk Farmer
- Elk Industry Brimming with Optimism
- Alberta Elk Sales Results
- Economic Impact Study Press Release
- MnEBA Officer Blog
- NAEBBA News Alert
- National PR Campaign
- Inserts Information
- 2012 NAEBBA Convention & International Antler Competition
- Vet Corner
- Committee Reports

President's Message by Mark Lucas

Happy early spring to you all! It was amazing how quickly the pastures greened up once we got a shot of rain. The elk are already enjoying the new tender green shoots. You wouldn't think there is enough there yet to really make a difference in their diet but I have noticed the hay bales are not going nearly as fast as they were a short time ago. Combine the early access to grass with the lower consumption due to the warm winter and I find myself with a fair amount of hay left over this spring. I'm sure many of you are in the same situation.

Spring is always exciting with the daily anticipation of when the first button will drop. On our farm the first was a four year old Blast son on Saturday March 25th. It will be interesting to see if the mild winter has an impact in the antler growth this year. I guess we will find out at the antler competition. It sure looks as though the bulls are in pretty good shape this spring compared to normal.

Earlier this month I took the opportunity to attend the Minnesota Deer Breeders Association Winter Banquet in Alexandria. I had never been to one of their events and I am very glad I took the time to attend. The attendance at the event was very good and the general tone was one of optimism about the deer industry.

They had a fine line up of speakers, one being Charly Seale, NAEBA board member and Executive Director of the Exotic Wildlife Association. I mentioned his recent 60 Minutes segment in last month's MnEBA newsletter about the Texas Preserve industry. Charlie did a great job of driving home the point that the animal rights activists are a huge threat nationally to much that we in the cervid industry hold in high regard. Today they are winning the fight in Texas to limit how preserves operate and if not challenged and stopped it

is a matter of time before cervid farms and animal agriculture in general come under fire. His point was well presented and well taken. I want to give the Minnesota Deer Breeders Association a tip of the hat; it was a top notch event all around.

Thanks to all who helped out with the MnEBA booth at the Deer Classic at the Minnesota State Fairgrounds. My son Joey and I worked the booth most of Sunday and were impressed by the number of hunters that stopped by to chat. Education of the public about our industry at events like this is so vital I only wish we could do far more of it. I found it very interesting that not one person we talked to took issue with elk farms being here in Minnesota. Most came to talk because they enjoy deer and elk, be it in the wild or on a farm. Most seemed almost envious that we as producers get to be around the elk daily where they only get to see them on occasion during the hunting season.

Continued on Page 15...

The Economic Impact of Cervid Farming in Minnesota survey is complete!

This survey can be accessed on the MnEBA web site in the Member's Only section under Newsletters. A copy was distributed a few weeks ago to everyone who has an email address registered with MnEBA. If you do not have email access, or simply wish to have a hard copy, please contact the MnEBA Office at (320) 543-2686.

Thank you once again to all who took the time to fill out the survey. Your efforts helped make this project a success!

MnEBA News is a bimonthly publication of the Minnesota Elk Breeders Association. It is mailed out on the first day of February, April, June, August, October, and December. Deadline for information, articles, and advertisements is the 15th of the preceding month.

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MnEBA

Mission Statement

The Minnesota Elk Breeders Association represents a unified voice that strengthens the Elk farming industry in Minnesota by creating awareness about Elk production and promotion and consumption of Elk products.

Market Watch

Spring Outlook by Two Local Buyers

The future looks bright for elk!

Velvet - The frustrating thing for most producers is we don't get a price out by May/June before we cut. We don't have a price yet but all indications would lead me to believe it should be as good as last year or better. There was no carry over velvet from last year which means buyers should be actively looking for antler.

With a price or not, you need to do what's best for your farm. We need a good mix of velvet and hard antler bulls to supply the markets. On my farm I need to cut all the younger bulls and spikes and grow out a handful of older bulls. To generate my maximum dollars, this is what pays the bills. If it is too much to ask of you to cut velvet, then don't complain that there is no money in elk.

Meat - The meat market continues to go up just recently hitting \$4.00/pound on the rail. If you have any open cows or after you velvet some lower end bulls you find are not worth feeding another year, let me know because the meat prices are at an all time high!

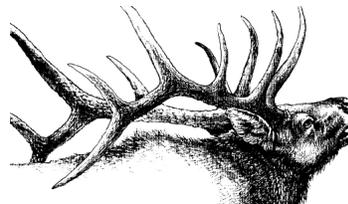
Regards,
Brian Wagner
612-366-5078

Velvet - The 2012 markets all look to be on the upside from 2011 prices. New Zealand velvet prices were in the mid-\$40 range, this does not suggest we will see that number but I expect to see better money than what we did last year. Last year, most of Canada was paid \$28, a small pocket in the U.S. was paid \$27, but the majority saw \$25. For us to see \$27-\$30 is quite possible and I would be shocked to see the market fall below 2011.

Meat - Meat prices are higher and this should help raise shooter bull prices this fall also. Good quality well fed 300 inch bulls will now bring \$2,000-\$2,250 for meat and velvet and no shooter bulls should hit the hunt farms for less than \$2,500 picked up on your farm.

These are the markets as I see them for this season.

Scott Salonek
763-428-8561



Board Meeting Minutes

March 5th Phone Conference

The MnEBA Board of Directors held a phone conference on March 5, 2012. Mark Lucas, Jim Byrne, Brian Wagner, Wade Schimmelpfennig, Richard Zajac and Brenda Hartkopf were present.

Lucas called the meeting to order at 8:12 p.m. He asked for additions or corrections to the January 14th board meeting minutes. Byrne moved to accept, Wagner seconded, motion carried. The 2012 financials to date were reviewed. The March 1st checkbook balance was \$29,954.59. Byrne moved to accept as presented, Schimmelpfennig seconded, motion carried.

Hartkopf reported 19 members have not renewed for 2012 and each was recently sent their last notice. Board asked for a list of non-renewals so they could each call a few members and encourage them to renew.

OLD BUSINESS

Board reviewed draft budget. Schimmelpfennig moved to reduce the charitable elk hunt line item and lobbyist line item by \$2,000 each. Wagner seconded, motion carried. Budget was adopted once those two changes were made.

Hartkopf was directed to get a bid from The General Store for the 2013 MnEBA Gun Raffle Calendar. Byrne moved to postpone making a decision on including Bonus Days until mid-year. Schimmelpfennig seconded, motion carried.

Discussed creating a new version of the Raise the Legend book. Board decided the book we have now is still current except that some of the contacts in the Information Directory are outdated. Hartkopf was asked to check and see if an electronic version of the Raise the Legend book could be obtained to be placed on the MnEBA web site. She was also directed to see what it would cost to update the Information Directory page.

Hartkopf reported that two members have volunteered to host the MnEBA Summer Picnic, one member from out-of-state and one from in-state. Board appreciated both offers but preferred to keep the event in Minnesota and accepted Richard and Deb Zajac's offer to host on July 21, 2012.

Hartkopf reported that the Economic Impact of Cervid Farming in Minnesota survey is now complete. It will be distributed electronically to all members who have an email address with MnEBA and physical copies will be mailed out as requested. It is already posted on the MnEBA web site in the Member's Only section. Hartkopf was directed to have 100 copies made.

NEW BUSINESS

Board reviewed bids for the 2013 MnEBA Annual Conference. After review, Wagner moved to host the 2013 conference at the Holiday Inn in Alexandria, MN. Zajac seconded, motion carried. Hartkopf was directed to obtain bids from venues in St. Cloud and also the Arrowwood in Alexandria for 2014.

Discussed MnEBA's involvement with the upcoming NAEBA Convention which is coming to the Northland Inn in Brooklyn Center, MN on August 2nd-4th. Byrne moved to have MnEBA sponsor one of the breaks, Schimmelpfennig seconded, motion carried. Board was in favor of putting on an Elk 101 seminar Saturday morning of the convention and will work to promote it publically through newspaper and radio.

Hartkopf reported that she has spoken to two spice companies who sell spices relating to elk meat, and both would be interested in working with MnEBA and allow us to sell their spices in the MnEBA State Fair booth. Board favored the Atomic Spice brand size and pricing. Board was not in favor of handing out samples during the event, but would ask if we could have samples to give to our members who will be working the booth so they can talk knowledgably about the product. Hartkopf to continue to pursue.

Discussed the Minnesota Deer Breeders Association request to get together and talk about farmed cervid issues with the MnEBA board in a joint meeting before the next scheduled Cervidae Advisory meeting on April 19th. Also discussed Shawn Schafer's possible involvement in a future meeting. Board agreed to meet in a face to face meeting. Hartkopf was directed to see if Saturday March 24th would work for their group.

Hartkopf reported that the MN State Fair contacted MnEBA by phone to say that they are moving our booth, along with the bison and alpaca booth, across the street. When the paperwork was received by the office, not only was the booth moved across the street, it was also down a block. Hartkopf reported the MN Bison Association had the same experience as MnEBA and is not in favor of this move. Board was not favorable to this move either. Hartkopf was asked to resist this move on behalf of MnEBA.

Wagner moved to adjourn, Byrne seconded, motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 10:03 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Brenda Hartkopf

Velvet antler is the big market for elk farmer

By Heather Thorstensen
hthorstensen@agrinews.com

02/23/12 - HOWARD LAKE, Minn. — Brian Wagner is a former dairy farmer who spends his time these days with a different type of cow.

He began raising elk in 1999 at his family's farm in Rockford. About five years ago, he moved to his 127-acre property in Howard Lake, Black Velvet Elk Ranch, where he keeps 130 to 140 elk. "I like being around the animals," said Wagner. "They are totally amazing animals."

He likes that elk keep him connected to agriculture and that they have several different markets. Producers sell elk meat, trophy bulls, breeding stock and antlers. "I need to cover all the markets to make it work," he said.

Wagner is secretary and treasurer of the Minnesota Elk Breeders Association and he was president of the North American Elk Breeders Association from 2009 to 2011. He knows elk farmers across the state and throughout the country.

Those connections help with the biggest part of his business: Buying velvet antler to ship to Asia. He estimates that he sent half of the U.S. supply of velvet antler to Asia last year.

Before a bull's antler hardens and it's still furry, it's "in velvet". Velvet antler is harvested at approximately 72 days of growth, typically in May or June. A mature bull produces 20 pounds to 40 pounds of antler per year. Antlers grow back the following year. Wagner's herd produces approximately 700 pounds of velvet antler annually. He spends a month each summer traveling to elk farms to collect more. Once collected, the product is shipped frozen in a 30,000-pound container. He tries to fill the container to at least 75 percent capacity.

Velvet antler is said to have more nutritional properties than an antler that has calcified. It's used to treat joint pain and to provide other health benefits. It can be freeze-dried and the inner material is sliced to be consumed with tea or it can be made into pills. Some in the United States use velvet antler for arthritis, increased energy and recovery from injury.

The price of velvet antler has been stable for the last three years at around \$25 per pound. Wagner also buys hard antler and ships it to Asia for the medicinal market. Hard antler is seeing a growing market in the United States for dog chews, he said. The domestic market also uses hard antlers for jewelry, furniture and other decorative pieces.

Wagner's other big business is buying and selling trophy bulls. In three months, he puts 30,000 miles on his truck to haul hundreds of trophy bulls all over the country, delivering them to game farms where they are hunted for sport.

Having much of the nation's domestic elk herd in Minnesota and the rest of the upper Midwest helps Wagner get the supply of elk products he needs. "Minnesota is the largest supplier of everything," he said.

At his ranch, Wagner enjoys hearing bugling during fall's breeding season, watching for newborn calves and checking out antler growth. "They can grow an inch a day at some point," he said. "You can actually see the growth."



Brian Wagner holds a hard antler, left, and velvet antler. The velvet antler is freeze dried and the inner material is sliced into pieces that Asians put in tea for medicinal purposes. It can also be consumed in pill form.

Wagner evaluates his cows based on the amount of velvet antler or total inches of hard antler their sons produce. "That cows needs to prove herself by raising good stock," he said. The largest antler grown on his farm measured 500 Safari Club International inches. This accounts for main beam length, tine length, main beam circumference and the inside span.

The breeding stock that Wagner sells is typically bred cows, but he also sells breeding bulls and semen for artificial insemination.

While elk meat production represents a smaller portion of his business, Wagner said people enjoy its nutritional qualities. A USDA comparison of three ounces of cooked meat found elk had less calories, fat and cholesterol than skinless chicken, beef and pork, but it had more protein.

Elk industry brimming with optimism

By **Heather Thorstensen**
hthorstensen@agrinews.com

02/23/12 - HOWARD LAKE, Minn. — A past president of the North American Elk Breeders Association says now is a great time to get into the elk business.

Brian Wagner of Howard Lake has been raising elk for more than a decade. Because prices are up in all elk markets, 2011 was his best year so far.

The industry is optimistic that markets will remain strong in 2012. Prices are high because supplies are low. Some people got out of the business because elk product prices had declined, Wagner said.



Brian Wagner raises up to 140 elk at his Black Velvet Elk Ranch in Howard Lake, Minn. Here he is with a few of his cows. Low supplies of elk products are expected to keep prices high this year.

The economic recession was likely a major reason why some people stopped elk farming, said Paul Anderson, leader of the Minnesota Board of Animal Health's farmed cervidae program. The number of domesticated elk in Minnesota has been dropping in the last five years. "We probably have 1,000 less elk in the state today than we had a year and a half ago," said Anderson.

Now, breeding stock are starting to sell again. Meat prices jumped from \$1.50 per pound on the rail in 2010 to \$3.40 per pound in 2011. "Producers are starting to see the light at the end of the tunnel," said Wagner.

Even with dropping numbers, Minnesota remains one of the nation's largest states for elk farming. A recent statewide inventory found 5,545 domesticated elk at 175 farms. Herd sizes range from 350 to a few per farm.

Elk are popular in Minnesota because it's a good place to raise livestock. It has good grazing ground, good access to feed and an active farming sector, Anderson said. "It's a pretty tight community of elk producers in Minnesota," he said. "They know each other and they help each other."

The industry is also stronger because of its testing program for Chronic Wasting Disease. A voluntary CWD testing program for Minnesota elk farms began in 2001; it became mandatory in 2004. "It helps other states as well as countries accept those products," said Anderson.

Asia, a major market for velvet antler, is one customer more open to accepting elk products because of CWD testing, Wagner said. The last Minnesota elk farm to have CWD was depopulated in 2009. Currently, the state has no known infected herds.

Alberta Elk Ranchers Sale Results

2012 Alberta Elk Ranchers Production Sale

Executive Royal Inn, Leduc, AB Canada

Friday February 17, 2012

High Selling Male – \$9,000

High Selling Female – \$6,100

Sale Average on 80 lots – \$2,222

Hard Horn Bull Average \$8,900

2011 Bulls Average \$2,017

2010 Bulls Average \$2,830

Bred Female Average \$2,723

2011 Female Average \$1,482

2010 Female Average \$1,227

66 head stayed in Alberta, 7 sold to Saskatchewan, and 7 sold to Idaho

See www.gwacountry.com for a complete catalog and results by lot.

2012 Alberta Elk Convention Animal & Semen Auction

Alberta Elk Commission Fundraising Auction

Ramada Inn, Edmonton, AB Canada

Friday March 23, 2012

2011 Female Average \$1,485

2011 Bulls Average \$2,000

2011 Bull (White) \$8,200

Bred Female Average \$1,925

Mature Bull \$5,400

Donated semen and other large items brought \$6,780 altogether. Alberta Elk Commission charged a 10% commission on all sales and raised \$10,706 for their Association through this sale. See www.albertalelkcommission.com for more information.

Look for NAEBA to conduct an elk & semen sale in conjunction with the NAEBA Convention & International Antler Competition on Saturday, August 4th at the Northland Inn in Brooklyn Center, MN. Details are still being put together but should be available in the next few weeks!!!

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Tuesday, March 27, 2012

CONTACT:

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Susan Van Overbeke, Minnesota Deer Breeders Association, 507-823-4476, www.mndba.com

Economic impact study shows cervid farming in Minnesota is \$17 million industry

Cervid farms are located in nearly all 87 Minnesota counties

ST. PAUL, Minn. – Minnesota's cervid industry is valued at \$17 million according to a newly-released economic impact study from the Minnesota Elk Breeders and Minnesota Deer Breeders associations. Cervids, or cervidae, include elk, fallow deer, mule deer, red deer, reindeer, sika deer and whitetail deer.

The current U.S. Census of Agriculture shows Minnesota ranks first nationally in the number of elk raised on farms and third in the number of commercial elk farms. Minnesota Elk Breeders Association spokeswoman Brenda Hartkopf says 41 percent of the farmers participating in the economic impact study said they plan to increase the size of their herds in the near future.

"Much of the reason for this is the demand for meat and antlers is exceeding current supply," said Hartkopf. "For elk farmers, we're seeing record breaking prices for elk meat and that's an incentive to add to the herd."

Hartkopf says the study shows the cervid industry supports more than 1,200 jobs. She says most cervid farms are small agricultural businesses which are very important to Minnesota's rural economy.

"Our study showed that while cervid farms are primarily located in rural areas, they are widely distributed throughout the state with herds located in 76 of Minnesota's 87 counties," she said.

Minnesota ranks fifth nationwide in the number of commercial deer farms and sixth in the number of deer raised on these farms. Many deer farmers are using acreage that is unsuitable for other types of agricultural use, according to Susan Van Overbeke of the Minnesota Deer Breeders Association.

"By utilizing land unfit for other ag purposes, these farmers are preserving the concept of the family farm for future generations," said Van Overbeke. "Sixty three percent of those surveyed said their cervid operations are included in part of their long term business and retirement plans."

Van Overbeke says most whitetail deer farmers started deer farming for the love of the animal and are avid hunters. "Our members spend countless hours encouraging kids to spend quality time with their family and friends by hunting, fishing, and any activity related to outdoors."

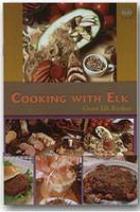
MnEBA Promotional Materials

The following items are available for promotional purposes. To see the full line of MnEBA promotional offerings, check out www.mneba.org and click on the "Promo Materials" button.

You can order online and pay by credit card or print off an order form and mail it to the MnEBA office along with a personal check. Contact info@mneba.org or call the MnEBA office at (320) 543-2686 with further questions.

MEAT PROMOTIONS

Elk Meat Poster 11" x 17" laminated poster in full color featuring elk burger and steak. Can personalize free of charge, no minimum order. \$5/each.



"ELK, Meat for a Healthy Life" Brochure 50 ct., \$10/each

3rd Edition "Cooking With Elk" Cookbook

1-9 copies, \$2.00/each; 10-99 copies, \$1.50/each; 100+ copies, \$1.00/each (*pictured*)

Table Tents feature a juicy elk burger, a MUST HAVE for restaurants selling elk burgers. Sold in packs of 20 for \$5.

VELVET PROMOTIONS



Velvet Antler for People Brochures is an updated, general velvet antler brochure. \$12.50/pack of 50 (*pictured*)

Velvet Antler for Pet Brochures is a first of its kind general info brochure about velvet antler & pets. \$12.50/pack of 50

Velvet Antler Brochures is a general velvet antler brochure produced by NAEBA. \$.30 each

GENERAL INFORMATION



Elk Info Brochure with general elk health and market info. FREE to MnEBA members up to 100 copies. \$.50 each to non-members. (*pictured*)

Raise the Legend Book, a general info booklet specifically created for the new breeder or those contemplating raising elk. Up to five copies FREE to MnEBA members!

Elk, America's Greatest Animal – Minnesota Elk DVD (NEWLY REVISED!) A DVD promoting all elk markets, with special emphasis on promoting Minnesota grown elk. Great tool for speaking to civic groups and classrooms. \$5 each.

HOME DÉCOR

Price includes shipping & handling.



Elk Trashcan (*pictured*) \$25 each

Elk Rug (Small) \$27.50 each

Elk Rug (Large) \$40 each

Now Available!

MnEBA Officer Blog by Brian Wagner, MnEBA Secretary/Treasurer

A winter you will always remember. You didn't have to travel south for warm weather this winter, and it sure was a nice break after last winter's record snow falls.

For everyone who missed this winter's convention you sure missed a good one, some good seminars and everyone had a great time. As the elk numbers keep getting less, so do the member numbers. You need to keep supporting your associations that keep you doing what you do. And this year is our big chance to show that Minnesota is still a leader in the elk industry as the NAEBA convention and antler competition is right here at the Northland Inn in Brooklyn Center, MN on August 2nd-4th. Make your plans now to attend and support the industry.

I have traveled to a few meetings this winter and just recently returned from Texas. I attended the EWA conference in Kerrville which was good to see how they do things the Texas way. Also was at the NADEFA conference in Dallas which was very well attended and a great time had by all.

With the recent rain may your pastures grow fast, bulls grow big and have a great calf crop.

God bless you all,
Brian

Elk 101 Seminar

An Elk 101 Seminar is being sponsored by MnEBA and will be presented at the upcoming NAEBA Convention & International Antler Competition on Saturday August 4th at 9 a.m. This will be followed up by an Elk Economics presentation. There will be an Elk & Semen Sale later that evening!

If you know of anyone interested in getting into the elk industry, or someone who has recently begun, this seminar and day is for them!!! Please let them know so they can make plans to attend!

See more info about the NAEBA summer event on Page 16 of this newsletter!



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We look forward to working with you in the future.



NAEBA NEWS ALERT

QDMA Attacks High Fence Industry

February 29, 2012

Those that received the Exotic Wildlife Association and the North American Deer Farmers Association alerts over the past couple of days should be very concerned about the Quality Deer Management Association's attempt to further divide sportsmen in this country. Their first press release was extremely critical of the whitetail breeding industry not to mention the proverbial slap in the face at our private property rights. They have now released a second press release that was even more critical than the first. It is a total criticism of game farming in general. Whether you raise exotics, whitetail, elk, catfish, pheasants or rabbits they, at QDMA, believe that if it's not done in a wild setting it is wrong and should be stopped. Never mind that it is your private property.

One could compare QDMA's recent comments about deer ranching to the comments made by animal right's activist, Pricilla Feral, who stated on 60 Minutes she would rather see the exotic animals extinct than to see them thrive in Texas. In QDMA's opinion, if it isn't traditional hunting they don't want to see it (high fence hunting) exist.

The QDMA is playing right into the hands of animal activists. Again these activists love what is happening within our own industry. These fights, however, are nothing new within agriculture industries. Prime examples are the sheep and cattle wars of the 1800's, the invention of barbed wire fence and the landowner's struggles with free grazing cattle, and the cattle drives from Texas into other parts of the country. The point is, times change as do methodology and ideologies, but not our fight for our personal and private rights.

Brian Murphy, CEO of QDMA has emphatically stated that it is the captive whitetail breeders that are the main cause of the spread of Chronic Wasting Disease and other diseases into the wild whitetail herds. He has fired this shot over the bow with absolutely no science to back it up. He needs to be reminded that it was the research facilities in Colorado that started this whole issue in the first place and all one has to do is trace back the research of CWD in Wisconsin and their improper disposal of research material to find the connection in that state.

Almost every case of CWD in a farm/ranch can be traced back to infection from the wild herd, not the other way around. In the state of Wisconsin for an example, almost all the CWD positive animals that were discovered in captive facilities, through Wisconsin's extensive monitoring program, can be traced back to animals that were purchased from the DNR's wild herd. Wisconsin has since put an end to the captive herds purchasing animals from the wild herd and has eliminated the chance of spreading the disease by this means.

If QDMA really wants to stop the spread of disease let's start with hunters bringing whole carcasses across state lines. We are so concerned with the movement of whitetail deer across state lines that we don't even address this issue. What QDMA is doing is making those sportsmen that are not knowledgeable of the subject of CWD and its affects turn against their fellow sportsmen who happen to enjoy another aspect of managing whitetail. To do that they use a disease that affects less than two percent of the susceptible populations. Anthrax and EHD kill more deer each year in the wild than CWD ever will. Deer breeders test 100% of their deer that die in pens for CWD and most herds are TB accredited and Brucellosis certified but QDMA and regulatory agencies claim it is the captive industry that is putting the wild herds at risk. The wildlife agencies test a very small percentage of deer from the wild compared to the deer breeders. I do not see QDMA advocating more testing in the wild populations because it is easier to blame the captive industry for the spread of CWD and it is always the same old story with the wildlife agencies, "we don't have enough resources". Deer breeders, on the other hand, have to bear the total expense of all testing in their pens.

We, as whitetail deer, exotic, and elk breeders, are being attacked like no other time in our history. Not only are we fighting the animal rights activists but the regulatory agencies across this country are launching their own attack and other sportsmen are playing right into their hands. This is an age old ploy that is being used against our industry; divide and conquer. You first make those who are on the fence concerning this issue afraid of it; you tell them who is responsible for it and then you advocate legislation to stop it. And that my friends is how you win the battle. If you don't believe it just look at the QDMA's advocacy message to its members in the various states with pending legislation that will allow deer farming. A few people who do not like what you do then try to impose their ideology on the rest of society. If that doesn't work they then try to regulate it or legislate it out of existence.

Continued next page...

So how do we fight this attack on our private property rights and the relentless attacks on our industry? The national and state associations are launching a PR campaign aimed at educating those who do not oppose what the captive industry does but simply does not know and understand what it does. Since the airing of the 60 Minutes program on CBS, showing the positive side of the exotic industry in Texas, followed by the interview surrounding certain aspects of the captive industry on the Fox network, we have been inundated with positive phone calls and emails from people all over this country. Some identified themselves as animal rights activists and some as simply non-hunters but they said they understand what we are trying to accomplish and can't see why anyone would oppose this aspect of the captive wildlife industries. If we show our industry in a positive manner we will win the hearts and minds of some of those that do oppose us and those who are just uninformed.

Industry leaders met in Wilmington, Ohio at the Midwest Select and heard our PR firm representative lay out a basic PR plan. We will be meeting again at the NADeFA conference in Dallas on March 15 during the Hunting Ranch Council from 1:45 P.M.-2:30 P.M. to see his specific plan for our industry on a national basis. An update is also planned to be given at NAEBA's March Mingle on March 31st in Overland Park, KS. We have already received support from the North American Elk Breeders Association, the Alabama Whitetail Association, Iowa Elk Breeders Association, Whitetails of Wisconsin, Midwest Select Auction Company, and the Exotic Wildlife Association.

The time is right with the national exposure our industries have received. There is a small window of opportunity and we have to act now. Please make every effort to be at this important meeting. This industry has historically played defense and now we are going on the offense. What we do is ethically and morally right and it's time to let the citizens of this country know what we do is good for the land and the animals on it. We will not apologize to anyone.

Charly Seale
NAEBA Secretary/Director
Executive Director - Exotic Wildlife Association

See <http://www.qudma.com/corporate/qdmas-stance-on-captive-deer-breeding> for more info on QDMA's attacks.

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National PR Campaign

This past month has been filled with continuous attacks on the cervid industry and, more importantly, our private property rights. These attacks are coming, not only from various state wildlife agencies, but also from hunting groups that one would think would be in our corner, the Quality Deer Management Association and the West Virginia state chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation. Our industry has come to expect the attacks from the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) and People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), but to have fellow sportsmen's groups campaign negatively against us and attempt to drive a wedge between our industry and other sportsmen is uncalled for.

I, for one, am tired of the out and out lies they perpetuate and like you am tired of trying to put out fires in every corner of the country. As a result of these relentless attacks, industry leaders have said enough is enough. It is time to meet these attack groups head-on and become proactive instead of being reactive as our industry has historically done. It is time to take a two pronged approach and show the people across this country who we are and what we do. We will not apologize to anyone for our industry and our beliefs. Our industry is one of the greatest and fastest growing agricultural industries in the nation. 50-70% of the people in this country do not oppose what we do, they just do not understand what we do and we, as an industry, have done a poor job explaining it. One only needs to read the negative comments made by QDMA and HSUS about our industry to see that we are losing ground.

Most recently, West Virginia lost their battle to move from the DNR to the Department of Ag. Georgia lost their battle to allow whitetail deer farming in their state, while New Jersey, Mississippi and Tennessee are still fighting for their right to bring deer farming to their respective states. Several of these states received opposition not only from their state's wildlife agencies and HSUS, but sadly enough from sportsmen's groups as well such as QDMA and the West Virginia Wild Turkey Federation. These attacks against the cervid industry were so similar in nature that one would think their press releases were all written by the same person.

I am very proud of the members who took action and fought back by making phone calls and writing letters to QDMA and the sponsors of QDMA, voicing your displeasure with their comments. It did make a difference. Many of the QDMA sponsors publicly denounced their sponsorship of QDMA. Sportsmen across this country need to stand together against our true enemies, the animal rights activists, or rest assured, we will all fall separately.

Many of you had the opportunity to see the 60 Minutes and Fox & Friends news episodes that recently aired in regards to the three antelope species that are thriving in Texas while reaching extinction in their native countries. Both of these interviews were presented in such a way that our industry was shown in a very positive way. I truly believe momentum was gained in the right direction. The time is right to strike while the fire is still hot with a national public relations campaign, expanding upon the success of these two shows. The positive public relations that the industry received from these two shows could not have been purchased for any amount of money. For the first time, the true agenda of the animal rights activists was unmasked. They would rather see animals go extinct than to have someone own them and hunt them in this country. This is a statement that our industry can expand upon and use against the animal rights activists in a national PR campaign.

The Exotic Wildlife Association's office has received so many comments from animal rights activists stating that they don't approve of hunting, but they finally understand what we do. Some even asked what they could do to help. How amazing is that? There has never been a better time for our industry to go on the offensive.

This national campaign is not going to focus on any one species. It is going to encompass the entire industry. If you have an interest in serving on this committee, please let me know. Several industry leaders have volunteered their services. With their assistance, we will be able to strategize and create an offensive plan that will best utilize our financial resources.

Laurie Seale

I am very proud of the members who took action and fought back by making phone calls and writing letters to QDMA and the sponsors of QDMA, voicing your displeasure with their comments. It did make a difference. Many of the QDMA sponsors publicly denounced their sponsorship of QDMA. Sportsmen across this country need to stand together against our true enemies, the animal rights activists, or rest assured, we will all fall separately.

Inserts to this Newsletter Mailing

2013 MnEBA Gun Raffle Calendar

Sponsorship Applications Now Being Accepted!

The past three MnEBA Gun Calendar Raffles have been tremendously successful thanks to the many members who have taken part in the fundraiser. A few lucky members have also won some great guns! The fundraising committee is once again organizing a MnEBA Gun Calendar Raffle for calendar year 2013. Sales for these calendars will be conducted beginning this coming July and will conclude on January 12, 2013 during the MnEBA Annual Conference at the Holiday Inn in Alexandria, MN.

MnEBA members also have an opportunity to sponsor a month in the calendar. Sponsorship applications are included as an insert to this mailing. All that's needed is a picture from your farm, a business card (or business card info) and payment. This is a great way to advertise what is special about your farm. A great bull or a unique photo you captured of your animals can be viewed by hundreds of people for an entire calendar month!

New this year, there will be a big incentive to sell more calendars which would allow the opportunity for more members to benefit. Any member selling 30 or more calendars and turning in those stubs and money by December 31st will receive a free 2013 MnEBA membership (up to a \$125 value)!

If you're wanting to sponsor a calendar month, be sure to forward payment as soon as possible to secure a spot. The deadline to sponsor an ad is **May 15th**.

MnEBA Scholarship

If you have a college age young adult in your family, make sure to check out the MnEBA Scholarship worth \$500 which is available to a son/daughter or grandson/granddaughter of any active/lifetime MnEBA member who is pursuing a post-secondary degree in the Fall of 2012. An agriculture-related field of study is preferred, but not limited to.

For further details, see the insert in this mailing, or if you receive your newsletter online, see the insert included with your 2012 Membership Directory mailing. Deadline to apply is **May 15th**! There will be no extension of this deadline.

Committee Postcards

Any time is a good time for a new idea! Enclosed you will find a self-addressed, stamped postcard listing MnEBA committees. Many of these committees have only one chairperson and no committee members! Help would be appreciated in many ways.

You are being asked to consider helping on any one or more committees. Many are seasonal and duties can usually be accomplished over the phone or by email. Being on a committee is a great way to get to know your fellow elk producers as well.

This committee list encompasses many different aspects of the elk industry. Please take a moment and consider helping in the area(s) you have an interest in and return the enclosed postcard by **May 15th**. If you're not sure but would like more information, please contact the MnEBA Office.

Thank you for your consideration. Any assistance you could provide would be very much appreciated!!!

STYX TEQUILA SON

24.82 lb. — 1st Place 2011 International Antler Competition

20 in. + 1st and 2nd tines in Velvet — 39.5 in. wide at the 4th tine in velvet.

Best combination of WIDTH, VELVET, WEIGHT AND HIGH SCORING TINE LENGTH!

Excellent quality Styx semen has been tested and is ready to go!



OBI-WAN

19.96 lb. — 3rd place 2011 International Antler Competition. 36.5 in. wide at 4th in velvet. Yoda son out of a Blast cow. This bull is for sale as a breeder bull.

ZEUS

20.09 lb. — 2nd place 2011 International Antler Competition 37 in. wide at 4th tine in velvet. Drops on 3rd tines. Tequila son out of an Bounty King cow. *Semen for sale, tested and ready to go. \$150/straw*

MOHLMAN ELK FARM

Eric, Kim, Chase and Kyra Mohlman

402-469-1831

mohlmnelk@gtmc.net

MnEBA Kitchen

With corn, black beans and cheddar cheese, this recipe resembles Tex-Mex. Add jalapenos or green chiles if you like! Recipe found at www.food.com.

Ground Elk Casserole

1 lb. ground elk
1 cup onions, diced small
1 large garlic clove, minced
½ cup green peppers, diced small
1 Tbsp. olive oil
Salt & pepper to taste

1½ cups dry elbow macaroni
1 quart diced tomatoes
1 – 15oz. can kernel corn, drained
1 – 14oz. can black beans, drained
2 tsp. chili powder
1½ cups shredded cheddar cheese



Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In large dutch oven, brown elk, onion, garlic and green pepper in skillet with olive oil until fully cooked. Season with salt and pepper.

Meanwhile, cook elbow macaroni according to package directions for al dente.

Add in to dutch oven the tomatoes, corn, beans, cooked pasta and chili powder. Mix well. Top with shredded cheese. Bake at 350 degrees for 35 minutes until cheese is melted and it's hot and bubbly.

President's Message Continued...

After attending the Deer Breeders Banquet and the Deer Classic I thought about what we as elk producers, the deer farmers and deer hunters all have in common. We have far more in common than what divides us when you stop and think about it. For starters, we are all nature lovers in one way or another. We all find ourselves going out, braving all kinds of weather that others find too extreme to go out and enjoy. Some of us go out to do chores while others go out to hunt. Many of us do both. Why? Because we love the animals. The thrill of hearing the first bull elk bugle is just as exciting for the farmer as it is for the hunter on a crisp, cool, fall morning.

Shouldn't cervid farmers and hunters work together to ensure that the thrill is not taken away for all of us by some animal activists group? To me the answer seems pretty clear, yes. As an association, we need to strive to find ways to work with other groups to ensure that we protect our right to raise and hunt deer and elk so that the next generation can share in it as well. Perhaps we need more cross association participation to point out these commonalities. I would love to hear your ideas on the matter if you have one. Shoot me an email with your thoughts if you like.

Mark.lucas@fcstone.com

Thanks. Mark Lucas

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August 2-4, 2012

Northland Inn

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Minneapolis, MN 55428
www.northlandinn.com

Reservations

(763) 536-8300

This is an all-suite hotel!
Mention NAEBA to receive
the discounted suite rate of
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will be released on **July 15th!**

Local Attractions

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Lakes
Cabelas
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Outlets
Mall of America
Science Museum of
Minnesota
Minnesota Zoo
Valleyfair
And so much more!!!

For more info

Brenda Hartkopf
Conference Coordinator
(320) 543-2686
or
Eric or Kim Mohlman
NAEBA Office
(402) 756-3355



**2012 NAEBA
Annual Conference
22nd Annual Conference &
International Antler Competition**

*Network with antler, meat and shooter bull buyers,
elk product vendors, industry leaders & more!*

Tentative Schedule

Thursday, August 2nd

Antler Check-In & Judging
Exhibitor Set-Up
Antler Judging School

Friday, August 3rd

Opening Ceremonies & General Meeting
Regional Meetings
Seminars
Entertainment
Fun Auction

Saturday, August 4th

Seminars
Fun Contests
Antler Competition Viewing & Awards
Elk & Semen Sale

Make Plans to Attend—You Won't Want to Miss It!

Vet Corner by Glen Zebarth, DVM

Lots of Things to Think About in the Spring Season

As bulls have begun dropping their buttons, it's time to end their winter feeding program and begin getting some grain into the bulls again. It's not a bad idea to start sorting your velvet bulls from the bulls you plan to grow out. The sooner this can be done will minimize the possibility of damage from handling the animals at a later stage of velvet growth.

I know some producers in the U.S. and Canada who are actively culling out the bulls with narrow, shorter tynes. They velvet them, then butcher after that. They are close to salvaging what they'd get in the hunt market with a smaller bull. With the higher feed costs these days, it's something to consider.

With calving just around the corner, it's time to get the mineral levels up in your cows. The primary mineral to be concerned with is copper. They require 220mg/head/day. Cows are now depleting their copper supplies as they are putting them into the calf they're carrying. This is why it is so critical to keep copper levels up that this time.

It looks to be an early grass year which will give a good start to all age groups. By about May 1st, it's time to begin supplementing better quality hay and grain for the cows to better prepare them for calving.

If your herd has a history of neonatal or diarrhea problems in calves, now is the time to address this issue. Consult with your veterinarian on how best to avoid those problems this calving season.

The best way to prevent calf diseases is to calve your animals on the "cleanest" pasture possible. A new or newer pasture is preferable. A new pasture goes a long way in breaking up most disease cycles.

The USDA is still working on the TB blood test. The latest is that they are now wanting a workable blood confirmatory test. Chem Bio is working to develop and prove validity of a blood test to do this, probably working with the same original blood sample. Development of this test has its advantages, but it will probably delay working the TB blood test into the Tuberculosis UM&R for another year. If you're due for whole herd testing, don't wait for the blood test, it's not going to happen that fast. You will have to go ahead and do the skin test for another round.

MnEBA Summer Picnic

Saturday, July 21, 2012

**Double A Elk Farm ~ Rick & Deb Zajac
Hillman, MN**

Rick & Deb have graciously volunteered to host the 2012 MnEBA Summer Picnic at their elk farm in Hillman, MN (45 minutes NE of St. Cloud).

A Noon potluck meal is being planned. The Zajac family will provide the meat and attendees are asked to bring a dish to pass. Non-alcoholic beverages will be provided.

More details to follow in the June 1st newsletter! Make plans to attend!!!

Committee Reports

Minnesota Deer Classic Thank You

The Minnesota Deer Classic booth was once again very successful due to great volunteer members who stepped up to help out! Many thanks to Lance & Brenda Hartkopf (booth set up), Dennis Wernsing, Jim Byrne, Pat Prodzinski, Wade & Norman Schimmelpfennig, Mark & Joey Lucas and Perry Olson. Special thanks to Mark, Joey and Perry for taking down the booth and to Mark for dropping it back to Howard Lake the same day! That was awesome!!!

2013 MnEBA Annual Conference

The 2013 MnEBA Annual Conference will be held at the Holiday Inn in Alexandria, MN on January 11-12, 2013.

Would you believe, this will be MnEBA's 20th annual conference? What would you like to see to make it an extra special anniversary conference? Do you have any speaker and/or fundraising ideas?

Contact Kaye Zebarth at (320) 834-4064 or oakpoint@gctel.com, Rita Prodzinski at (507) 452-1282 or rprod@hotmail.com, or Brenda Hartkopf at (320) 543-2686 or info@mneba.org with your ideas!

MnEBA COMMITTEE CONTACTS

Annual Conference	Kaye Zebarth (320) 834-4064
Nominating	Fred Neubert (320) 352-6733
Government Relations	Jim Byrne (507) 358-6505
Antler Competition	Kaye Zebarth (320) 834-4064
Health	Dr. Glen Zebarth (320) 834-4064
Auction	Jerry Strodman (507) 451-3107
Awards	Patty VanGundy (507) 896-2380
Promotions	Brenda Hartkopf (320) 543-2686
State Fair	Morrie & Daphne Evenson (320) 354-5156
Fundraising	Brenda Hartkopf (320) 543-2686

Advertiser Index

Stearns Vet Outlet

Page 6

Spring Coulee Freeze Drying

Page 9

ADM Alliance Nutrition

Page 11

Mohlman Elk Farm

Page 14

Farm Bureau Financial Services

Page 15

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1x	\$75	\$50	\$30	\$20
6x	\$400	\$300	\$180	\$120
Size	9 ¼ x 7 ¼	4 ½ x 7 ¼ or 9 ¼ x 3 ½	4 ½ x 3 ½	2 x 3 ½

Ads must be camera ready. To place an ad, call the MnEBA Office at (320) 543-2686.

2012 MnEBA Directories Now Available!

The 2012 MnEBA Directory has been included with your newsletter mailing, or if you receive your newsletter by email, will be arriving in your mailbox shortly.

Call the MnEBA Office at (320) 543-2686 if any corrections or additions need to be made or if you would like additional copies.

Do you know anyone who has been talking about renewing or taking out a new membership with MnEBA? Please share this application and newsletter with them. MnEBA would gladly send you a replacement newsletter!



**MINNESOTA
ELK BREEDERS ASSOCIATION**

2012 Application for Membership

Name _____ Spouse _____

Farm, Ranch, or Company Name _____

Address _____

City _____ County _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone(Residence) _____ Work _____

Fax _____ E-mail Address _____

Premises ID# _____ # of elk owned _____ Referred by _____

=====

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY (Check membership desired)

\$ 125 _____ ACTIVE (Must live in MN and own elk---full voting rights)

\$ 50 _____ ASSOCIATE (For out-of-state membership or MN residents who do not own elk---no voting rights)

\$ 50 _____ JUNIOR (18 yrs old & under who own elk---full benefits)

\$1,000 _____ LIFE-TIME (Entire lifetime membership)

Memberships run from January 1st to December 31st each calendar year. Please make checks payable to:

Minnesota Elk Breeders Association
9086 Keats Ave. S.W.
Howard Lake, MN 55349
(320) 543-2686

Minnesota Elk Breeders Association

9086 Keats Avenue SW
Howard Lake, MN 55349

PHONE:
320-543-2686

FAX:
320-543-2983

E-MAIL:
info@mneba.org

OFFICE HOURS
8:30-11:30 a.m.
Mondays, Tuesdays &
Thursdays

Calendar of Events

July 21, 2012 – MnEBA Summer Picnic, Double A Elk Farm, Hillman, MN

August 2 – 4, 2012 – NAEBA Annual Convention & International Antler Competition, Northland Inn, Brooklyn Center, MN

August 23 – September 3, 2012 – MN State Fair, State Fairgrounds, St. Paul, MN

January 11 -12, 2013 – MnEBA 20th Anniversary Annual Conference, Holiday Inn, Alexandria, MN

Classified Ads

Wanted: Wolf Creek Elk Ranch is buying hard antler at \$8 per pound delivered to the ranch in Sturgeon Lake or to Wapiti Labs Inc. in Ham Lake. Must also include copy of CWD certification from the MN Board of Animal Health. Call Klint at (877) 497-9653.

Wanted: A younger, excellent quality bull, 2½ to 3½ years old if possible. Call (507) 896-2360 or email me at skrage@acegroup.cc.

For Sale: Used fencing wire. 8 ft. woven wire approximately 3,500 feet. Asking \$0.75 per foot. Call Jim Byrne at (507) 358-6505.

Wanted: Meat animals wanted. Contact Brian Wagner at (612) 366-5078.

For Sale: (2) Kiwi squeeze chutes. Call Larry Gerdes at 715-594-3534.

Elk Hide Tanning: Elk hide tanning, \$325 hair off or \$12.50 per square foot, hair on. We can also make jackets, vests, gloves and more from your hides. Call for free catalog or for more information at (800) USA-FOXX. Check out our web site at www.usafoxx.com or email info@usafoxx.com. USA Foxx & Furs, Duluth, MN.

Advertise Here Free: If you are a MnEBA member, you can advertise here free of charge. If you are not a member but are interested in advertising, the cost is \$25 up to 25 words and \$.45 per word over 25 words. For more information, contact Brenda Hartkopf at (320) 543-2686.

MINNESOTA ELK BREEDERS ASSOCIATION

9086 Keats Avenue SW
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