



## Special Interest Articles:

- Velvet Update
- Minnesota Board of Animal Health Press Release
- Updated Elk Relocation Position Statement
- ACA News Articles
- Important Animal Health Updates
- Getting to Know Outback Fence & Fabrication
- Elk Article in The Land Magazine
- Board Blog
- NAEBA Convention
- Vet Corner
- Changes at the Minnesota Board of Animal Health
- Committee Reports

## President's Message by Jim Byrne



The seasons have once again changed from snow and ice into mud. We can now do all those outside chores and repairs providing it stops raining and we can get our boots out of the mud.

Calves are being born and new antlers adorn our bulls. This time of year is truly an exciting time. These are the things that make this industry so worthwhile. The results of a breeding program will now show in the racks and newborn calves. All the planning and effort that went into developing and maintaining your herd is now right in front of you. We are raising one of the most beautiful animals in the world.

The association calendar is now starting to fill up. On July 22, 2017 we have our mid-year meeting, and I am looking forward to hosting that event here on our farm. Then the following weekend the NAEBA Annual Conference is being held on July 27-29 in Minnesota. This will be another exciting opportunity to see the best antler in the country and to make contacts with the premier breeders in North America. It's also time to renew and to make new and lasting friendships with the great people who make this industry fun.

In August we have the State Fair, which runs from Aug. 24 – Sept. 4. Manning the booth is for me a highlight that just can't be passed by. The interactions with people who are interested in elk make the time at the booth go very fast. It is time well spent and I hope you have signed up to take advantage of this opportunity.

See you soon.  
Jim

## 2017 MnEBA Summer Picnic Saturday, July 22, 2017

**Byrne Farm – Jim & Eileen Byrne**  
11026 Co Rd 113 NW, Pine Island, MN 55963

### POT LUCK LUNCH BEGINS AT NOON

A Noon Potluck meal is being planned followed by a day of great visiting and the MnEBA summer membership meeting.

Bring a dish to pass, non-alcoholic beverages will be provided!

**DIRECTIONS:** Take the US-52 exit into Pine Island. Follow main street south through downtown to the south end of town where main street turns west. Take the first left (south) onto Co. Rd. 3. Go approximately 1 mile and turn right (west) onto Co. Rd. 5 toward Byron. Go approx. 1 mile and take the first left (south) onto Co. Rd. 113. The farm is about 1.5 miles on the left. See you there!!!

**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 15<sup>th</sup> of the preceding month.

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(320) 543-2686

## Velvet Update

### How does this year look for the velvet market?

Many breeders have begun cutting velvet antler by now, with much velvet to be harvested throughout the month of June. One of the most popular questions this time of year is, "Have you heard what the price for velvet will be this year?"

As usual, buyers are not forthcoming with the price as of yet and we're left once again to study the "indicators" to try to get an idea.

Velvet buyer Scott Salonek reports that he will once again be purchasing velvet for Lee Han but that as of now, Lee says he will not be offering a price until they are a couple days away from picking up velvet. That being said, Scott also reports that it seems most velvet in the recent New Zealand season sold for \$100NZ/kilo, which is about the same as last year. All velvet appears to be sold with no stockpile remaining. That is always good news for the North American velvet season.

Velvet buyer Brian Wagner reports that he has seen early interest in North American velvet but has not heard a price as of yet.

In the end, the best advice is to cut antler at the proper time, don't overgrow it, and stay in touch with the buyers as to when they will have the final price and be ready to buy your antler.

Buyers include:

Brian Wagner (612) 366-5078

Scott Groen (320) 979-0911

Scott Salonek (612) 850-8684

## 2017 NAEBA Convention Comes to Minnesota!

July 27-29, 2017 – Verizon Wireless Center, Mankato, MN

For MnEBA members, this is one of those rare opportunities to attend the NAEBA Convention and International Antler Competition close to home! Take in the whole convention or get a day pass – just don't let this chance pass you by!

### Five Top Reasons to Attend:

1. Pre-convention Wednesday July 26<sup>th</sup>, ranch tour and supper at Taylor Elk Ranch and Minnesota Elk Company hosted by the Olson family.
2. Come experience the antler judging schools. There are great opportunities to hone your scoring skills with several seminars offered on Thursday.
3. Take part in, or at least view in person, antlers entered from all over North America at the International Antler Competition!
4. Take in two days of great seminars with topics ranging from animal health to marketing and business forecasting to making elk meat an amenable species.
5. Networking, seeing old friends, fun contests, delicious food, great elk talk and more, more, more....

See full schedule and sign up form on Pages 16-17 of this newsletter! Make plans to attend!!!

## 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.

# Minnesota Board of Animal Health News Release

**For Immediate Release:** May 18, 2017

**Contact:** Michael Crusan – michael.crusan@state.mn.us

## **Four more farmed white-tailed deer test positive for Chronic Wasting Disease**

### ***Part of disease tracing effort reaching back to 2016 Crow Wing County case***

**St. Paul, Minn.** — In late April, the Board of Animal Health and United States Department of Agriculture euthanized a quarantined herd of 14 white-tailed deer in Meeker County. Samples collected from the animals were tested at the USDA's National Veterinary Services Laboratory in Ames, Iowa and four deer were confirmed CWD positive on May 15. This herd was part of an investigation initiated with a CWD infected farmed deer herd found in Crow Wing County late last year.

The Board shared the test results with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, which responds to and manages CWD in wild deer. The Board works with the USDA as it investigates and regulates CWD in farmed deer. The owner agreed to euthanize the animals and test them for CWD as part of a herd plan developed between the USDA, the Board and the owner after finding a trace animal in the herd was positive for CWD in January of this year.

The herd plan also includes tracing animal movements into and out of this herd within the last five years. This tracing revealed two of the four CWD positive animals came from a Wright County deer farm as fawns in 2014. The Wright County farm has also been placed under quarantine as of May 15.

"This emphasizes the need for a strong CWD surveillance program in our captive deer and elk. Although these animals appeared healthy, they were infected with CWD and would have continued to spread the disease if they remained alive. CWD testing all deer and elk that die or are killed on a producer's property is critical to the program," said Board Assistant Director, Dr. Linda Glaser. "We quarantined the Wright County herd after discovering two of the four CWD positives originated there, but that herd is not considered infected. Herd movements are restricted, and the herd will be closely monitored until 2019."

The Meeker County farm is empty and remains quarantined for all deer and elk species, and fences remain in place to keep wild deer off of the site. The next step is to clean and disinfect as much of the herd enclosures as possible. When that is complete, the property will remain quarantined for a period of five years.

CWD is a disease of deer and elk caused by an abnormally shaped protein, a prion, which can damage brain and nerve tissue. There is no danger to other animal species. The disease is most likely transmitted when infected deer and elk shed prions in saliva, feces, urine, and other fluids or tissues. The disease is always fatal, and there are no known treatments or vaccines. CWD is not known to affect humans, though consuming infected meat is not advised.

## Membership Feedback Needed on MN Elk Relocation Project!

At last year's MnEBA Summer Picnic, the membership asked the MnEBA Board of Directors to develop a Position Statement regarding Wild Elk Relocation in Minnesota. At the 2017 MnEBA Annual Conference, a draft version was presented with additional suggestions made by the membership. The following draft is the most recent version containing membership feedback and will be discussed and potentially ratified at the upcoming MnEBA Summer Picnic on Saturday, July 22nd at Byrne Farm in Pine Island. Please read carefully and let any Board member or the office know if you have any questions, comments or concerns.



### MnEBA POSITION STATEMENT

#### *Draft for Discussion*

### Elk restoration projects within Minnesota

Restoration projects have gained in popularity over the past few years with herds being introduced into states such as Kentucky, Tennessee, Arkansas, Missouri and Wisconsin. Over two dozen herds of wild elk have been captured and transported to other states across the nation that do not comply with the current Federal Regulations (Title 9 CFR Parts 55 & 81). These restoration projects have not followed the CWD protocol set forth in the CWD Program Standards and have put at risk the health of farmed and wild cervidae in those states where these unknown status animals are being transported.

An effort to restore wild elk to Northeastern Minnesota continues to move ahead. The Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa have received state conservation grants to pay for a University of Minnesota study. This study is to first determine public attitudes toward elk, then determine if adequate public land habitat exists in that area to support a population of elk.

Currently, Minnesota State Statutes 35.155 subdivision 12 regarding importation of Cervidae states:

A person must not import Cervidae into the state from a herd that is infected or exposed to chronic wasting disease or from a known chronic wasting disease endemic area, as determined by the board. A person may import Cervidae into the state only from a herd that is not in a known chronic wasting disease endemic area, as determined by the board, and the herd has been subject to a state or provincial approved chronic wasting disease monitoring program for at least three years. Cervidae imported in violation of this section may be seized and destroyed by the commissioner of natural resources.

In addition the Minnesota Board of Animal Health Rules 1721.0400 Importation of Farmed Cervidae subpart 3 (A) states: Live cervidae must originate from a herd that has been subject to a state, federal, or provincial approved CWD herd certification program and that has reached a status equivalent to level 6 as specified in part 1721.0420. (Level 6 is the equivalent to a minimum of 5 years of CWD testing.)

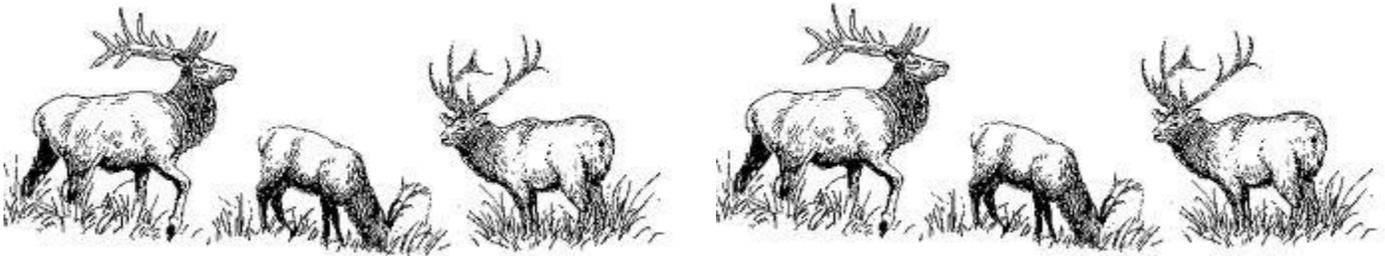
While the state statutes pertain to importation of both farmed and wild CWD susceptible species, we recognize that there are other entities who may fall outside of these statutes that could import cervids into Minnesota.

Entities that are exempt from the Minnesota State Statutes should then follow the minimum interstate movement requirements as outlined in Title 9 CFR 55 & 81 and the VS Guidance Document 8000.1 as amended by the recommendations of the USAHA Committee on Captive Wildlife & Alternative Livestock. That amendment, Resolution Number 32 was recently passed at United States Animal Health Association

meeting held in Greensboro North Carolina. It recommends that Veterinary Services (VS) Guidance Document 8000.1 "Surveillance and Testing Requirements for Interstate Transport of Wild Caught Cervids" require:

- 1) A rectal biopsy or other mutually agreed-on method of antemortem CWD test with concurrent genotyping be performed on the assembled herd; and
- 2) Documentation of a sampling scheme sufficient to detect CWD at 1 percent prevalence with 95 percent confidence in wild cervids within defined source population from which the animals are being moved and conducted within the most recent three-year period. Such sampling scheme shall include both passive (hunter harvest and found dead) and targeted surveillance for CWD.

Therefore, the Minnesota Elk Breeders Association opposes any CWD susceptible species relocation/restoration project unless it follows Minnesota State Statutes 35.155 subdivision 12, or if exempt from Minnesota statutes, the minimum interstate movement requirements as outlined in Title 9 CFR 55 & 81, VS Guidance Document 8000.1 and Title 9 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 81.3 as amended by the recommendation of the USAHA Committee on Captive Wildlife & Alternative Livestock.



## Rack Plus™ for Outstanding results

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- Both products provide 18% protein and no more than 14% fiber; 18-4 provides 4% fat and 18-5 provides 5% fat
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CitriStim®, an ADM proprietary feed ingredient, is a proven, truly unique whole-cell yeast product beneficial for all animals at all life stages. CitriStim may help the animal fortify its defense against health challenges. CitriStim *Pichia guilliermondii* yeast adheres to pathogens and helps modulate body defense mechanisms. The overall result is potential production benefits and an animal that does not as easily succumb to health challenges.

\*Antler D is a trademark of Head Gear LLC.



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The Minnesota Elk Breeders Association is one of many organizations and individuals who contribute to the national Public Relations Campaign organized by the American Cervid Alliance. The ACA has had recent articles published in regional Minnesota newspapers such as the LaCrosse Tribune, Duluth News Tribune and Rochester Post Bulletin. This highly successful campaign is just starting its fourth year!

## A View on Wildlife: Minnesota DNR Needs to Rethink its Deer-disease Strategy

By Nicholas J. Haley

**Duluth News Tribune - Opinion** (*This article also appeared in the Rochester Post Bulletin*)

**April 19, 2017** - Recently, news outlets in Minnesota carried reports about a deadly deer disease called chronic wasting disease, or CWD. It's a concern to hunters because, while long-incubating, it has no cure, and it very commonly hastens an animal's demise. Other states haven't been able to stop its spread, despite aggressive measures.

The state Department of Natural Resources, in response, has started its own aggressive steps. But from a scientist whose research focuses on CWD, I say the most practical response may be more hands-off.

No one is sure of the exact origin of CWD, but it was first reported at a Colorado State University research facility in the late 1960s. CWD was first found in the wild in the 1980s, also in Colorado.

Since then, CWD has been found at sites far removed from the original endemic area; sometimes probable links can be made between these sites through animal or carcass movement, but more often these new

appearances left both scientists and wildlife professionals scratching their heads.

The finding of CWD in Minnesota is one such case, though likely represents the expansion of the disease westward from wild deer in Wisconsin.

The DNR has begun a sharpshooting program in certain areas known to have CWD. This very well may be a misplaced effort of the DNR and its use of taxpayer dollars. Both Illinois and Wisconsin spent millions on sharpshooting; and between the states, results have been equivocal. In both cases, CWD has gained ground - exploding in Wisconsin and increasing more insidiously in Illinois.

Even if the DNR could shoot all the deer in an area - unlikely and costly to attempt - chronic wasting disease persists in the environment, and deer in surrounding areas quickly would fill the void.

Because state agencies generally test less than 1 percent of their deer populations for CWD per

year, and the tests used are not capable of identifying every positive animal, the disease easily has spread undetected. As an example, it was found in an elk in Arkansas last year for the first time, despite more than a decade of passive and, frankly, limited testing. When authorities subsequently increased their testing in nearby areas, they ended up finding it in over 200 animals.

So why haven't we yet seen sharp declines in deer and elk populations where CWD is prevalent? There are a number of reasons, the most important being that deer at least are a very hardy species and can actively sustain population sizes as long as environmental conditions are good - despite their shortened life expectancy once infected. Further, over time, we can expect the genetics of deer populations to change. Those deer with genes that make them more resistant to CWD should outcompete those that do not. Over time, resistance will be in balance with disease prevalence and populations would be expected to persist and, in most cases, thrive. Sharpshooters,

unlike the disease, are unbiased in their selection and inadvertently may remove resistant animals along with more susceptible ones.

Apart from employing sharpshooters, the DNR also is looking to add restrictions to private deer and elk farms that may breed these animals for meat, antlers, or to supply private hunting preserves. As with sharpshooting, this effort would be fruitless and may hinder our understanding and management of the disease.

Deer and elk farms already conduct mandatory testing for chronic wasting disease and are regulated as to fencing, the transfer of animals, and importation. In some cases, farmed deer and elk represent the majority of animals tested in a county. Animals get radio-frequency identification chips, and

their movement between facilities is tracked. If CWD is detected, quarantine procedures are put in place. Adding new regulations won't stop a disease that has been traversing through the woods for years.

So what should the DNR do? A passive approach may be practical. After spending millions on aggressive CWD responses, Wisconsin changed to a more passive strategy. So far, hunting quality does not appear to be affected, based on hunter response surveys.

Instead the state should spend resources conducting more intense testing for CWD to better define where it may be found and predict where it may show up next.

It should also fund research into understanding CWD resistance. While it may be impractical to

attempt to control the breeding of wild animals, deer and elk farmers do have this capability. Since CWD is a prion disease related to mad cow and Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, with many things in common with Alzheimer's disease, the research could have a range of applications that also help human medicine and agriculture.

No one likes finding chronic wasting disease, but we have to ensure we make the most out of our response to this challenge, learning from lessons presented in years past.

*Nicholas J. Haley is a professor of microbiology and immunology at Midwestern University's campus in Glendale, Ariz.*

<http://www.duluthnewtribune.com/opinion/4252908-view-wildlife-minnesota-dnr-needs-rethink-its-deer-disease-strategy>

## Charly Seale: More rules won't solve CWD in Minnesota

*By Charly Seale, American Cervid Alliance*

### LaCrosse Tribune

**January 31, 2017** - Jim Luoma's tirade against deer farms falls flat when you consider how regulated these farms already are.

While Luoma falsely paints them as a risk for Chronic Wasting Disease, farms in Minnesota must be a part of a mandatory surveillance program to monitor for CWD. Any farm where CWD is found can have all of its animals wiped out.

Simply put, CWD is not something that any farmer wants to see any

more than Luoma does. And farmers are already trying to keep the disease away.

Compare that to the unregulated spread of CWD by free-ranging deer. Minnesota authorities only test on average about 3,300 free-ranging deer every year for CWD. That's less than 1 percent of the state deer population, estimated to be 1 million animals. Quite simply, no one can say for sure where CWD is and isn't because there's not enough testing for the disease occurring. Then, free-ranging deer can spread the disease to deer

farms, where it is later found during the 100 percent mandatory testing.

More regulations on farms won't solve the problem of CWD spreading in the wild. The state needs to start doing more testing to figure out where the disease is so that it can then develop a more accurate management plan.

[http://m.lacrossetribune.com/news/opinion/mailbag/charly-seale-more-rules-won-t-solve-cwd-in-minnesota/article\\_849aba97-81c3-5ac2-b05e-1abe97e1fccc.html](http://m.lacrossetribune.com/news/opinion/mailbag/charly-seale-more-rules-won-t-solve-cwd-in-minnesota/article_849aba97-81c3-5ac2-b05e-1abe97e1fccc.html)

## Important Animal Health Updates

### TB DPP Test Kits

MnEBA spoke to officials at NVSL in mid-May to get an update on the availability of more TB testing kits. They reported that after an earlier round of testing this spring, they now have 6,400 backlogged cervid TB samples waiting to be tested. The kit supplier is reporting the soonest test kits may be received is the end of July. In the meantime, skin testing is still an option to complete your accreditation or movement requirements.

### Official Identification Requirement Change Effective January 1, 2018

The Minnesota Board of Animal Health recently sent a letter to all Minnesota farmed cervid producers giving them a head's up that there will be a change in the requirements for what's considered the official ID for deer and elk after January 1, 2018. The letter is as follows:



The requirements for official identification of farmed cervidae (deer and elk) are changing. Official ear tags that are placed in farmed cervidae after January 1, 2018, must adhere to either the National Uniform Ear-tagging System (NUES) or the Animal Identification Number (AIN) system. Ear tags that have the premises number plus a production number will no longer be recognized as official identification for newly tagged animals. See acceptable official identification options below.

National Uniform Ear-tagging System (NUES) ear tags begin with an official state number followed by three letters and then four numbers. The official state number for Minnesota is '41'. All official NUES tags must display the official U.S. shield. Metal NUES tags can be ordered at no cost from the Board of Animal Health online or by calling 651-201-6836. Plastic NUES tags come in various sizes and colors and may be purchased from Leedstone by calling 877-608-3877.

Animal Identification Number (AIN) ear tags begin with an official country code followed by an additional 12 digits (15 digits in total). The official country code for the United States is '840'. All AIN tags display the U.S. shield and most of them also have a radio frequency identification device (RFID) built into them. AIN tags may be purchased from most ear tag distributors.

If you have any questions, please call 651-201-6804 or send an e-mail to [farmed.cervidae@state.mn.us](mailto:farmed.cervidae@state.mn.us).

625 Robert Street North - Saint Paul - MN - 55155 - 651-201-6804 - 651-296-7417 FAX



The



## MnEBA Submits Letter in Opposition of New COOL Standards

North American Elk Breeders Association (NAEBA) recently identified numerous concerns in the USDA Agriculture Marketing Service (AMS)'s proposed changes to the Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) program for venison. This includes elk. They encouraged state associations and members to write letters in opposition of the proposed standards.

COOL is a labeling program that requires retailers, such as grocery stores, convenience stores and farmer's markets, to provide extra labeling noting the country of origin. This change originates from the 2014 Farm Bill. USDA AMS' proposed rule estimates this mandate will cost the industry nearly \$1 million to comply, with little or no economic benefit.

The public comment period ended April 13, 2017. USDA is now considering the submitted comments and will then publish their final rule.



# MINNESOTA ELK BREEDERS ASSOCIATION

April 11, 2017

Julie Henderson, Director  
COOL Division, Livestock, Poultry and Seed Program  
Agricultural Marketing Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)  
1400 Independence Avenue SW, Room 2620-S  
Washington, DC 20250-0216

Docket Number AMS-LPS-16-0014

Thank you for this opportunity to submit comments regarding proposed changes to the Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) program.

The Minnesota Elk Breeders Association (MnEBA) is one of the largest elk producing states in the nation and also one of the largest producers of elk meat. One of our biggest concerns with the proposed rule is that restaurants are exempt from this requirement, whom the proposed rule recognizes as the largest national consumer of venison. The proposed rule even goes as far as to note the majority of venison is imported from New Zealand, which then goes to restaurants. The restaurant loophole defeats the purpose of the rule's intent.

Meanwhile, the small market American producer shoulders most of the burden of this proposed rule. Page nine of the proposed rule acknowledges there would be little or no economic benefit because of this change. Meanwhile, the proposed rule is expected to cost the industry nearly \$950,000 to implement.

MnEBA urges USDA AMS to not take regulatory action. This is an unfunded mandate which does not encompass the majority of the foreign venison entering the United States. Furthermore, it puts an unnecessary burden of cost on American farmers and businessmen.

Sincerely, James Byrne, President  
Minnesota Elk Breeders Association

## Getting to Know Minnesota Vendors

You may have noticed over the past several years, a Minnesota fencing company at MnEBA events or even advertising in the newsletter now and then – Outback Fence whose business is headquartered in Mazeppa, MN. MnEBA asked owner Billy Krusmark to write up a little article to help us get to know more about his business and family!

### Outback Fence & Fabrication

*By Billy Krusmark*

I grew up hunting, fishing and loving the great outdoors. After high school I pursued my love of animals and attended schooling for taxidermy. However, my dream of working outdoors came true when I started my own fencing business, allowing me to work outdoors as well as with animals.

Business started at home but quickly grew as well as family life. In 2005, I married my wife, Brittany, and we enjoyed woods and water activities and looked forward to raising a family. After a few moves, we have found the perfect little farm in the country for us. Brittany and I now have three children, a 6-year-old daughter, Raelyn, who loves kindergarten and helping do chores on the farm. We were also blessed with boy/girl twins, Brettley and Scarlett, age 4, who enjoy preschool and helping out on the farm and at the shop. Our farm animals include elk, mini horses, mini donkeys, a cow, sheep, pigs, chickens, rabbits, cats and dogs. Our children and animals keep us busy and push me to be a better father and business owner.



*Billy Krusmark with wife Brittany*

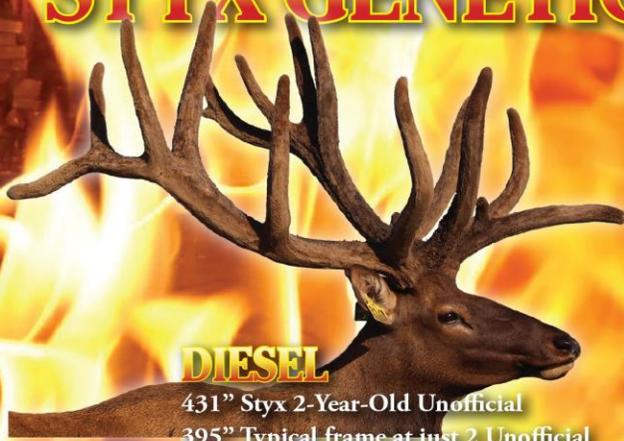
A few miles from our farm is our new business location. Outback Fence & Fabrication is now located at 928 Chestnut Street NE, Mazeppa, Minnesota, 55956. Moving to a larger location has allowed us to grow our business even more. Outback Fence & Fabrication offers fence installation to keep animals in or out, orchards, vineyards and more offering steel post, wood post, woven wire, high tensile or whatever your needs may be. We also fabricate custom gates, feeders, bunks, fence panels and more as well. We service the upper Midwest area where no fencing job is too big. Some favorite jobs include Wildwood Wildlife Park in Minocqua, Wisconsin, and Safari North Wildlife Park in Brainerd, Minnesota.



Working with the animals and outdoors is truly a dream job! We are eager to further grow our business and look forward to working with you!

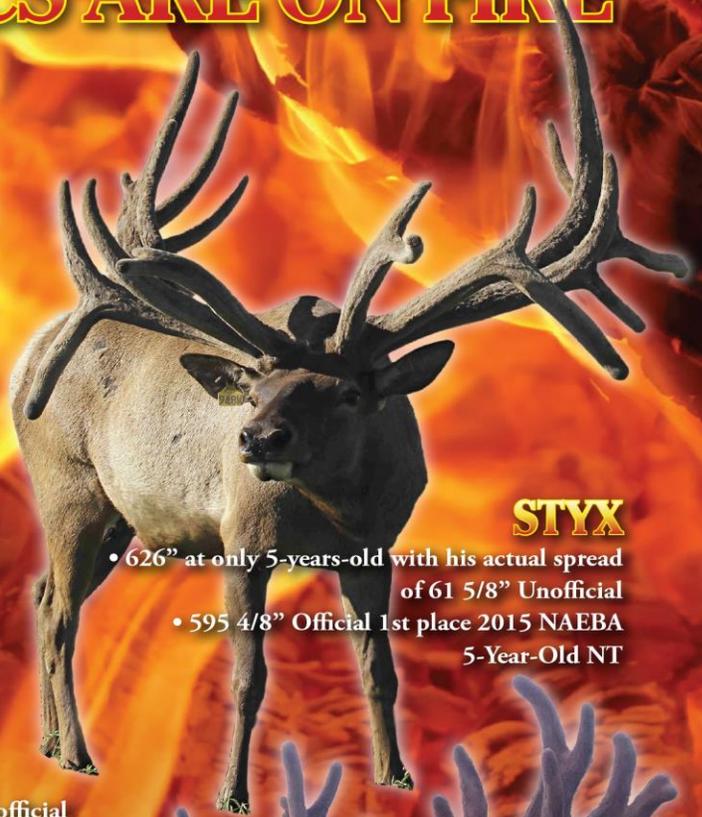
-Billy Krusmark, Owner, Outback Fence & Fabrication

# STYX GENETICS ARE ON FIRE



## DIESEL

431" Styx 2-Year-Old Unofficial  
395" Typical frame at just 2 Unofficial



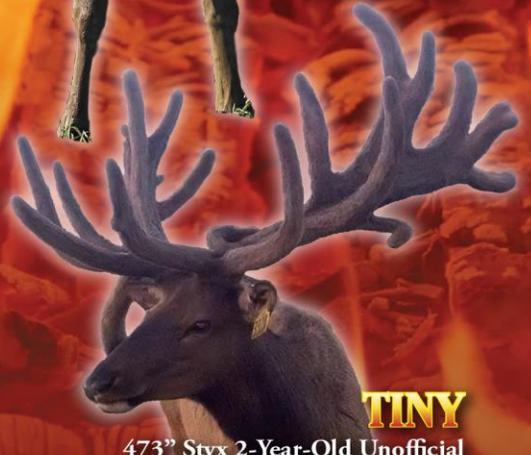
## STYX

- 626" at only 5-years-old with his actual spread of 61 5/8" Unofficial
- 595 4/8" Official 1st place 2015 NAEBA 5-Year-Old NT



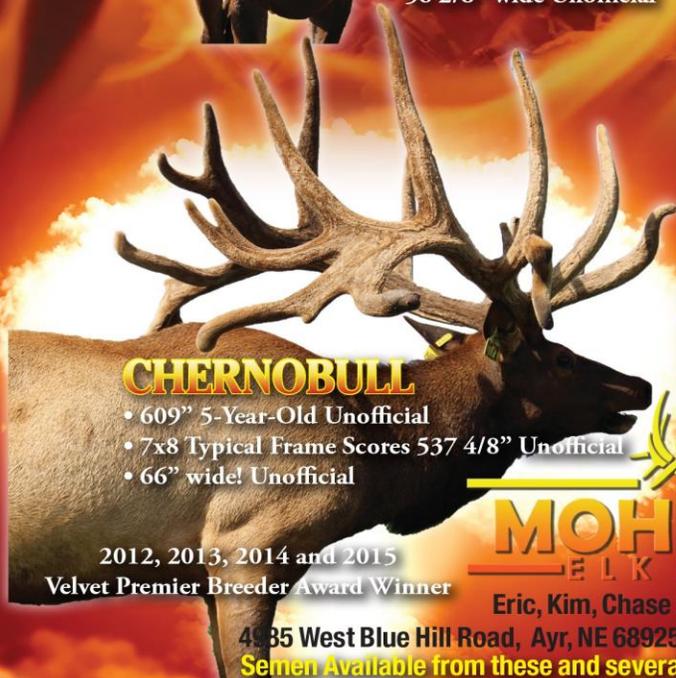
## STRYKER

550" Styx 3-Year-Old Unofficial  
56 2/8" wide Unofficial



## TINY

473" Styx 2-Year-Old Unofficial  
Special thanks to Herb Fritch of Two Feathers Elk & Bison for his purchase of Tiny. Make semen inquiries to Mohlman Elk Farm who retains 1/2 semen rights.



## CHERNOBULL

- 609" 5-Year-Old Unofficial
- 7x8 Typical Frame Scores 537 4/8" Unofficial
- 66" wide! Unofficial

2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015  
Velvet Premier Breeder Award Winner



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2015 Non-Typical Hard Antler  
Premier Breeder Award Winner  
1st Two Class Winner in the Same Year

## Nutritional health makes elk a growing choice for consumers

By Dick Hagen - The Land Magazine

May 5, 2017

**OWATONNA, Minn.** – Minnesota has about 120 elk farms, according to Greg Lubinski, board member of the Minnesota Elk Breeders Association. About 3,900 elk are raised each year on these farms. Statewide, Minnesota boasts about 460 cervidae producers (elk and deer).

Lubinski indicated elk numbers average 40-50 head per farm, but some are considerably larger. At Lubinski Elk Acres near Plainview, Lubinski raises about 200 head.

"We produce mainly meat, but also do velvet antlers for the velvet pills," he said. "People with arthritic problems are a big market for the velvet pills, a joint supplement long touted by various cultures around the world, especially in China, Korea, Japan and Russia."

Lubinski said growing elk is much like raising beef with a few specific regulations. You need an 8-foot fence enclosure for your elk herd. You need to be registered with the Minnesota Board of Animal Health and each animal needs to be identified with an ear tag. If a wild deer gets into your elk enclosure, it need to be destroyed. Your herd needs to be inventoried by an accredited veterinarian and filed with the board every 12 months.

The Lubinskis' pasture their elk herd, then switch to haylage, hay and limited grain in the winter months. "We start our weaned calves on a ration that gradually moves up to two pounds of grain per animal per day. It's a mixed ration running about 16 to 17 percent protein with about a 60 energy rating. We also test our hay each season for protein levels and relative food levels."

Lubinski's local grain elevator at Plainview handles the testing of both dry forages and pasture grass. Samples are sent to a Wisconsin testing lab. Lubinski is particular about nutritional content of his elk rations. "Elk are the predominant source of income for our total farming operation," he said. "This is not a hobby."

Gross income from their elk operation will be over four times income generated from their corn and soybean crops. They farm 240 acres with 110 acres in permanent pasture.

"We sell elk meat by the pound," he said. "Some buy the entire carcass; some buy just half a carcass. We also have producers within our Minnesota Elk Breeders Association that have their own meat distributorship. We'll sell whole animals to them, sometimes moving 40 to 50 head in one shot."

What is dress-out on a market weight elk?

"The last four years for us it's been 64 percent live weight to hanging weight," he said. "A mature cow will average between 500 to 600 pounds live weight. A two-year-old male will be around 700 pounds. Older bulls, four years and older, can be up to about 1,100 lbs. live weight."

### Characteristics

The gestation period for elk is about 245 days. Calving season starts in May. "Cows calve early spring on grass. We check

them twice daily to make certain there aren't any problems," he said. "But cow elk do remarkably well during the calving process. We just don't have any calving issues."

Cows occasionally produce twins, but singles are preferred.

"Twins can be stressful for some cows," Lubinski said. "Deer will twin quite regularly, but not so elk. I've been in the business since 1989 and have only pulled three calves. Elk cows are remarkably trouble-free at calving. Plus, they usually calve during the daylight hours. When you see a foot sticking out, you've got a calf on the ground within a half hour, often in just 15 minutes."

Elk cows are durable. "I've got cows 14 years old still producing good calves," he said. "And a bonus of elk cows, when you cull, you've got good carcass meat to sell. You don't sell for hamburger meat except perhaps cows 10



Greg Lubinski (left) and Ray Smothers of the Minnesota Elk Breeder's Association worked their booth at the North American Farm and Power Show in Owatonna, MN in March. **Photo by Dick Hagen**

years and older. Your prime meats would be from males and females 3 years of age and younger.”

As for bulls – “A good elk bull can service about 30 cows,” Lubinski estimated.

Like most livestock species, elk have a pecking order. But shortly after your herd is grazing, pecking order disappears. Lubinski uses alfalfa with a timothy/orchard grass mixture for his hay and haylage forage. The grass dries the freshly-cut forage a little faster.

“They actually prefer more of a grass mixture with their legumes. Our pasture mix is usually 50 to 60 percent legume, red clover, white clover, or birdsfoot trefoil plus a brome grass/timothy mixture. The hay usually lasts three to four years. Then we have a well-established grass/legume pasture,” he said.

Certain birds relish this habitat also. Lubinski remembers when he was 4 and 5 years old, Bobolinks and Meadowlarks prevailed on their farm. But when field spraying with pesticides became widespread, those birds declined. When he made his first pasture cut a few years back, two Bobolink showed up.

“Now we have eight sets that come year after year,” he said, “and we’re now at 400 to 500 Meadowlark out there. Birds and elk get along well. The birds sit on the backs of the elk and keep the flies away. Even the calves let the birds ride on their backs, so no more fly spray concerns.”

Every elk farmer has a story as to how they entered the field. Here’s Lubinski’s: “I was in Chamberlain, S.D., before I got married. I was out there with my future father-in-law, Lorin Heins, who wanted to

raise elk. So we threw some cattle racks in the back of his diesel pickup just in case he found an elk for sale. I thought he was nuttier than a loon. But when we got to this livestock auction in Chamberlain, they were selling everything, A to Z. This elk cow came running through the auction ring and it brought \$800! This was in the early 1980s. You couldn’t get \$400 for a bred beef cow!”

“So I asked him how many elk can you raise on an acre of pasture? He said, ‘Whatever you can run a beef cow on, you can run three elk cows.’ They are a true browser grazer. They are a ruminant just like a beef or dairy cow. He bought his first elk later that summer on a trip to Missouri where he was checking on some Charolaise cattle. They happened to drive by Lolli Livestock Market in Macon, Mo., which was having a big sale on elk. A couple years later I had convinced my bride that we should get into the elk business too, so I started with three cows and a bull.”

### Markets

Lubinski describes the four legs of the elk business: breeding stock, meat, antler production for velvet, and trophy bulls sold to big ranchers who specialize in \$10,000 hunts for a trophy bull elk.

“Actually, you could count the hard antlers as a fifth leg because there is always a good market for antlers. These are sold for display racks to impress visitors; or to make unique furniture; or as a special holder for family photos. And a new use that has

really taken off is dog chews. Dogs love them because they don’t splinter like a bone. And they want that marrow inside the bone which carries some glucosamine and chondroitin sulfate,” he said.

According to Minnesota Grown, elk meat is known for its high protein and low fat content which makes elk a heart-healthy alternative to other red meats.

Lubinski sees no practical limit to the number of elk that could be raised in Minnesota.

“I would like to see us become like New Zealand, where they process upwards of 300,000 a year. They used to slaughter close to 800,000 a year,” Lubinski said. “The great conservationist Teddy Roosevelt said, America’s farmers and ranchers should consider raising elk as a diversification that would enhance both our soils and our health.”

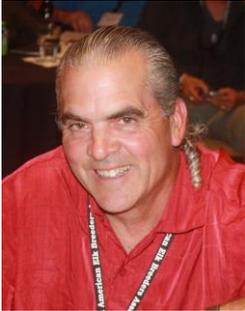
Despite his enthusiasm, Lubinski cautions that raising elk is not a get-rich-quick strategy. And it’s not for everyone. You need some basic understanding of livestock and a genuine respect for the future of the industry.

*Greg Lubinski was interviewed on March 16 at the North American Farm and Power Show in Owatonna.*



*Greg Lubinski (left), Ray Smothers and Martin Zacharias working the MnEBA booth at the show.  
Photo by Dick Hagen*

## Board Blog by Mark Luedtke, MnEBA Vice President



Hello everyone, I hope all is well with your families and your farms. I was lucky enough to have Brenda remind me about a week ago that it was my turn to write the board blog for the newsletter. So, I have been thinking about this a lot - should I write an informative blog about all the different things going on in the industry related to CWD or the multiple things going on related to my USAHA membership or maybe current things happening in NAEBA? Well, I am going to try and touch on several of these and even try tying them together.

I love this time of year on an elk farm. This is the time of year when you get to see the results of your past breeding efforts and get excited about your most recent decisions. When the bulls are growing antler and the cows are calving, it is always exciting to see which bulls will surprise me, which will disappoint me, and which cow is going to have my next breeder bull. For me, I use these results to help evaluate my business plan.

I have always said and I have firsthand experience that although a bull may have incredible genetic potential, he has not done it until he grows the antlers on his head. He may be an exceptional 2-year-old but then grows into an average or slightly above average 5-year-old. Although I am grateful for every above average animal I raise because that is economic growth, if I happened to breed with that animal and I now have 35 additional offspring on my farm, that might not be so good. As the years go by and I experience more, my respect for those bulls that lead their age class every year continues to grow. There are so many variables to the equation from feed, animal husbandry, herd stress, genetics and even the weather that those bulls and those owners that can not only maintain consistency, but also be at the top is incredible. So, this is when I get excited to see my bulls growing that next set of antlers; is the style of antler what I want and expect from my herd? By style I mean tine size and placement, beam circumference and length. In my herd these are the traits that work in my business plan; they create trophy bulls that are desired in the market place and bulls that cut above average velvet weights to help financially support the farm while they are putting on age. This is part of my business plan and what I am striving for. Have you developed your plan?

I highly recommend that each of you have a business plan. It is irrelevant whether you are a very small hobby operation, a mid-range supplement income, or a full time primary focus operation. All of these scenarios will benefit from creating a business plan, monitoring a business plan, and yes adjusting a business plan as the marketplace changes. It isn't a question as to if the marketplace will shift - the only question is when, where and how much will the marketplace shift. This is not unique to elk farming, it is a universal fact in business.

Last fall at the USAHA annual meeting, I sat through an agriculture economics seminar that intrigued me and inspired me to encourage you to work on your plan. In this seminar, they identified the big 4 critical traits of farmer success as being:

- Plan
- Strategize
- Execute
- Monitor

In your plan you need to:

- Understand your cost of production
- Have a written business plan
- Establish goals

The presenters made a much more elaborate case than I am able or willing to recreate in this short board blog. It was based on aspects of global economics with statistics and market place trends that support a concept that the next 5 to 7 years will provide more opportunity for those individuals and operations that are prepared than there has been in the last 20 to 30 years.

I believe the current things going on within our own state and nationally related to CWD are factors of change in the marketplace. Personally, although I may strongly disagree with particular actions or opinions, I do have the sense that there is opportunity for positive change. I would have to say I feel better about the outlook of dealing with CWD and our industry than at any time since I got into the industry.

Obviously, this could be a much longer discussion so feel free to contact me or talk to me in July at Mankato. I hope you all have a great summer and I look forward to seeing you at the NAEBA antler competition and convention in Mankato. I hope you can make it.

## MnEBA Kitchen

*Instead of making tacos for dinner, try using similar ingredients to make Mini Mexican Elk Sliders! It's a quick meal for a busy summer night.*

### Mini Mexican Sliders

#### INGREDIENTS

1 lb. ground elk burger  
1 white onion, chopped  
2 green chilies, sliced  
2 Tbsp. butter  
1 cup shredded Mexican cheese blend  
6 Hawaiian rolls

#### Mexican Elk Slider Rub

½ tsp. garlic powder  
½ tsp. cumin  
½ tsp. salt  
½ tsp. chili powder  
¼ tsp. chipotle powder

#### Easy Guacamole Spread

1 ripe avocado  
¼ tsp. garlic powder  
squeeze of lime

Heat oven to 400 degrees. In a small bowl, combine all seasonings together for the slider rub. Using your hands, mix together ground elk burger and form 6 small slider-shaped patties. Place elk on a plate and rub both sides with the seasoning ingredients.

Heat cast iron skillet over medium-high heat. Melt 1 Tbsp. butter and add onions and green chilies. Saute for 5 minutes or until onions and chilies begin to get crispy. Remove from skillet and set aside.

Using same cast iron skillet, add remainder of butter. Place burgers in skillet and cook for approximately 5 minutes on each side. Remove skillet from heat.

Top each slider with shredded Mexican cheese blend, sauted onions and chilies. Place cast iron skillet in 400 degree oven for 5-7 minutes until the cheese has melted. Remove from oven. Serve on Hawaiian rolls with guacamole spread if desired.



## MnEBA Has Booth at 2017 Minnesota State FFA Convention

The Minnesota Elk Breeders Association participated in the 2017 Minnesota State FFA Convention Agricultural Career Fair held on April 24<sup>th</sup> at the University of Minnesota to introduce FFA members to the concept of elk farming and benefits of elk products. Over 3,500 FFA members, teachers and others attended the three-day event. At the event, students competed in career development events, attended learning sessions and workshops and received awards for their FFA achievements.

The Ag Career Fair was one of the events students could attend. Students were given exhibitor cards which could be validated from vendors. When students received a certain number of validations, they were eligible for special prizes. It was an extra incentive for students to stop by the table to get their card validated and learn more about elk farming and other agricultural pursuits.



*Jim Byrne (left) and Greg Lubinski manning the MnEBA booth at the State FFA Ag Career Fair.*

Thank you to Jim Byrne and Greg Lubinski for manning the MnEBA booth at this year's event! It was an excellent opportunity for MnEBA to get in front of several thousand students in just one day who have an interest in agriculture and introduce them to elk farming. It's one more way MnEBA can help encourage the next generation to raise America's Greatest Animal - Elk!

**27<sup>th</sup> Annual North American Elk Breeder's Association  
ANNUAL CONVENTION & INTERNATIONAL ANTLER COMPETITION**  
July 27 - 29, 2017 ~ Verizon Wireless Center ~ Mankato, MN

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Child(s) Name (for badge) \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_  
 Ranch/Business Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_ City/ State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

**Full Registration** (Registration includes meals, seminars (except SCI Class) and trade show – FRIDAY & SATURDAY LUNCH NOW INCLUDED!)

	<b>Until July 1</b>	<b>After July 1</b>	
Single	\$200	\$225	\$ _____
Couple	\$375	\$425	\$ _____
Day Pass	\$100	\$125	\$ _____
Child (7-18)	\$50	\$75	\$ _____
Child (6 & under)	Free	Free	\$ _____
Wednesday Ranch Tour	Free	Free	\$ _____
SCI Class	\$150	\$150	\$ _____

**Exhibitor Booth Registration** (Includes 10'x 10' area, one 8' skirted table and two chairs)

Sign up by **June 1<sup>st</sup>** to be included in the convention program.

- Monarch Exhibitor (Two booth spaces & choice of space location) First come - First serve. **\$250** \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Check here if electricity is needed
- Royal Exhibitor (One booth space) **\$100** \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Check here if electricity is needed

Contact Person \_\_\_\_\_ Ph# \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Badge Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Description of Products/Services \_\_\_\_\_

**Convention Program Advertising - Advertise in the Convention Program to Increase Your Exposure!**

Convention programs mailed to all members & distributed to all attendees. Convention program advertising deadline **June 1<sup>st</sup>!**

Front or Back Cover \$400	Inside Front or Back Cover \$350	Full Page \$300	
Half Page \$200	Quarter Page \$150	Business Card \$75	\$ _____

**Contributions/Donations - This event is NAEBA's largest fundraiser!** All donations & contributions generate revenue which allows NAEBA to operate throughout the coming year. Please consider making a monetary or item donation to benefit NAEBA. **As an Added Bonus - anyone donating \$1,000 Cash or more will receive a FREE Convention Pass!**  
 (List your donation(s) below to have them included in pre-convention promotions.)

Amount/Description \_\_\_\_\_

**Sponsorship - To call ATTENTION to your company in a BIG WAY ~ Sponsor Convention Events!**

- Evening Banquet – \$3,000 (3 Convention passes **PLUS** Full Page Convention Program Ad **AND** Royal Exhibit Booth) \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Hospitality Suite Sponsor (call for details) \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Coffee Break – \$400 \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Trophy (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>) – \$75/each (trophy class(es) \_\_\_\_\_) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL DUE \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

**Hotel Information – Hilton Garden Inn Mankato Downtown** (507) 344-1111. Ask for NAEBA's special conference rate of \$114/night by using the **group code: NAE** ~ Room block deadline – **Wednesday, July 5, 2017**

**Payment – US Funds**

Circle one:        Visa/Mastercard        Discover        American Express        Check # \_\_\_\_\_  
 Credit Card #: \_\_\_\_\_ Security Code (3#s on Back of Card) \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_  
 Card Holder Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail/Fax this Form with Payment To: **NAEBA, 9086 Keats Avenue SW, Howard Lake, MN 55349 Fax: (320) 543-2983**

**Brenda Hartkopf, NAEBA Office Manager**  
 (320) 543-3665 Fax: (320)543-2983 info@naelk.org

**Taylor Schettler, NAEBA Event Coordinator**  
 (303) 525-8878 tay.schettler@gmail.com



# NAEBA's 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference & International Antler Competition

July 27-29, 2017 ~ Verizon Wireless Center ~ Mankato, MN

## Tentative Schedule

### Wednesday, July 26

2:00 pm

Ranch Tour & Supper at  
Minnesota Elk Company and  
Taylor Elk Ranch, Windom, MN

2:30- 3:15 pm

SEMINAR: Selling Elk Products  
From the Ranch - *Kelly Farmer,*  
*Stonewood Elk Ranch Ltd*

3:15 – 3:45 pm

Afternoon Break

3:45 – 5:00 pm

SEMINAR & ROUNDTABLE:  
Should Elk Be an Amenable  
Species, *Travis Lowe, NAEBA*  
*Executive Director*

### Thursday, July 27

8:00 – 12:30 pm

Official SCI Scoring Class

10:00 – 12:00 pm

AEPF & CEPF Board Meetings

12:00 – 7:00 pm

International Antler Check-in

12:00 – 9:00 pm

Exhibitor Set-up

1:30 – 2:30 pm

NAEBA Board of Directors  
Meeting

5:00 pm

Cash Bar Opens

6:00 – 7:00 pm

Evening Banquet

7:00 – 9:00 pm

NAEBA's Fun Auction

9:00 pm

Hospitality Suite

3:00 – 4:00 pm

Elk Research Council Board of  
Trustees Meeting

4:00 – 5:00 pm

SEMINAR: Advanced Hard Antler  
Scoring - *Tom Watts, NAEBA*  
*Senior Hard Antler Judge*

### Saturday, July 29

8 am – 9:00 am

NAEBA Board of Directors  
Meeting

5:00 – 7:00 pm

NAEBA Hard Antler Judge  
Training & Certification (Closed  
Session)

8 am – 6:00 pm

Tradeshow

8 am – 3:30 pm

Photo Contest Continues

7:00 – 8:00 pm

SEMINAR: Best Practices of  
Velvet Cutting - *Lance Hartkopf,*  
*NAEBA Senior Velvet Antler*  
*Judge*

8:15 – 9:15 am

Silent Auction Continues

9:00 – 10:00 am

Continental Breakfast  
SEMINAR: Business Forecasting  
*Lance Hartkopf, Splendor Ridge*  
*Elk Farm*

8:30 pm

Hospitality Suite

10:00 – 10:30 am

SEMINAR: Identifying & Treating  
Antler Infections - *Brian Wagner,*  
*Black Velvet Elk Ranch*  
Break

### Friday, July 28

8 am – 6 pm

Antler Judging  
Tradeshow  
Silent Auction  
Elk Meat Products Entry  
Photo Contest Entry & Voting  
Board Election Ballots Due  
Continental Breakfast  
Welcome to Minnesota - *MnEBA*  
*President Jim Byrne*

10:30 – 11:00 am

Hard Antler Competition Viewing  
& People's Choice Awards Voting  
Provided Lunch

11:00 – 11:45 am

8:15am

General Membership Meeting

11:45 am – 1:15 pm

Velvet Antler Competition Viewing  
& People's Choice Awards

8:15 – 9:15 am

Break

1:15 – 3:00 pm

Voting; Photos of Velvet Winners  
Afternoon Break

9:00 – 9:10 am

Regional Meetings:  
Central, North Central, Northeast,  
Northern, Southern, Western

3:00 – 3:45 pm

Elk Meat Contest, Photo Contest  
& Silent Auction Ends

3:45 pm

SEMINAR: Getting Started in Elk  
Ranching – *Mark Luedtke,*  
*Luckyland Elk*

9:10 – 10:00 am

Provided Lunch

4:30 pm

Photos of Hard Antler Winners

10:00 – 10:30 am

LUNCH KEY NOTE: *Elk*  
*Advocacy Matters*

5:00 pm

Cash Bar Opens

10:30 – 11:30 am

SEMINAR: Elk Necropsy &  
Diagnostics - Finding Out What  
Killed Your Elk - *Dr. Daryl*  
*Ragland, DVM, Purdue University*

6:00 – 7:00 pm

Evening Banquet

11:45 – 1:00 pm

7:00 – 7:30 pm

Announce Winners of Photo &  
Meat Contests, NAEBA Awards &  
Premier Breeder Awards

12:45 – 1:30 pm

7:30 – 9:00 pm

NAEBA Benefit Semen Auction

1:45- 2:30 pm

9:00 pm

Closing Remarks

9:10 pm

Competition Antler Check-Out &  
Exhibitor Tear Down

9:15 pm

Hospitality Suite

## 2018 MnEBA Gun Raffle Calendar

### Four Sponsorships Are Still Available!

Many thanks to all MnEBA members who have stepped up to sponsor a month in the 2017 MnEBA Gun Raffle Calendar. This year's sponsors to date include: Jim & Eileen Byrne, Leo Windschitl, Brian Wagner, Lance & Brenda Hartkopf, Perry & Sandy Olson, Dennis & Jackie Engebretson, Greg & Roxy Lubinski, and Mark & Lisa Luedtke. Four spots are still OPEN! If you would be willing to sponsor a month in the calendar, please contact the MnEBA Office as soon as possible!



**Anyone who has not yet supplied their pictures, please do so ASAP!** Deadline is June 15<sup>th</sup>! Picture quality is very important. Electronic pictures work best, higher pixels are better. Also be paying attention to the background of the pictures to make sure they are aesthetically as appealing as the animals you're photographing!

**Same great incentives to sell calendars this year!** For each group of ten calendars sold by any one person, the seller's name goes in the hat for a special gun drawing outside of the raffle calendar. Stubs and money for all ten tickets must be turned in by December 31, 2017 to be eligible for the drawing. Sellers can be entered multiple times for each group of 10 calendars sold. The current free membership incentive for 30 calendars sold with stubs and money turned in by December 31<sup>st</sup> will also continue. With 26 guns and six \$100 Bonus Cash days, there are many great chances to win!

**Two years of sell outs!** MnEBA has sold out of gun raffle calendars both of the past two years! Make sure to order what you will need early while there are still calendars available!

**Calendars will be available** at this year's summer picnic on July 22<sup>nd</sup> in Pine Island. They will also be available at the NAEBA Convention in Mankato, Minnesota the following weekend or by contacting the MnEBA Office. Let's sell out once again this year!!! Please forward your sponsorship pledge, questions or comments to the MnEBA Office at 320-543-2686 or [info@mneba.org](mailto:info@mneba.org).

**Looking for Special Donors!**  
*MnEBA is looking for someone to sponsor the gun for the special gun drawing for people selling 10 calendars or more and having stubs and money returned to the office by December 31<sup>st</sup>. Individual gun sponsorships would also be very helpful, as would sponsorship of any of the six \$100 cash bonus days. Please contact the MnEBA Office if interested!*



The Howard Lake-Waverly-Winsted wildlife class recently visited Splendor Ridge Elk Farm. In this picture, one of the students wants a closer look!

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*Spring Coulee  
 Velvet Capsules*



N7447 Cty Hwy D  
 Holmen, WI 54636  
 Phone (608) 526-4477  
 Cell (608) 792-4477  
 Fax (608) 526-2055  
[miniman41@centurytel.net](mailto:miniman41@centurytel.net)

*Bill & Karen Knutson*  
 Home of Spring Coulee Elk

## Vet Corner by Dr. Glen Zebarth

A few weeks ago, I had the opportunity to travel to Washington, D.C. to represent the farmed cervid industry at the 2017 Cervid Sector Meeting. Laurie Seale has written a good recap of the meeting and has shared it with MnEBA below.

### 2017 Cervid Sector Meeting in Washington, D.C.

#### Industry Leaders Meet with USDA/APHIS

By Laurie Seale

Every year, a select group of industry leaders are invited to Washington, D.C. to participate in an annual meeting with the APHIS management staff to discuss issues impacting the cervid industry. In attendance this year were Travis Lowe (by teleconference) and Eric Mohlman representing the North American Elk Breeders Association, Shawn Schafer and Skip West representing the North American Deer Farmers Association, Kyle Wilson representing the Reindeer Owners Association, Charly Seale representing the Exotic Wildlife Association, Laurie Seale representing Whitetails of Wisconsin, Glenn Dice representing Pennsylvania Deer Farmers Association, Glen Zebarth representing veterinarians and elk breeders, and Dr. Linda Hickam, Missouri state veterinarian, representing the state health officials.

Overview by Dr. Alecia Nagle, the Cervid Health Team Leader:

- \$3.5 million has been appropriated for cervid health programs (*this is a \$500,000 increase to help pay for more indemnity*). Approximately \$1.5 million will go towards indemnification, \$200,000 for research and \$1.8 million for field activities. The 2017 funding will need to be used by September 2017. Congress is currently working on the 2018 budget.
- The rectal biopsy and the retropharyngeal lymph node will be approved tests for whitetail deer in trace-out situations. USDA is still working on validating the rectal biopsy for elk.
- USDA is working with the Mexican State of Sonora to develop import rules for cervid semen to enter the United States.
- DPP blood test kits-Chembio has not been able to fulfill their contract for TB blood test kits. When the supply gets to where it needs to be, APHIS would be happy to look at validating the blood test for mule deer and Sika, but the current supply needs to be used for the species that are using the test for recertification.
- TB and Brucellosis rule is on indefinite hold
- CWD Program Standards-USDA would like to publish the new guidelines as soon as possible
- The new administration has informed USDA that for every rule they implement, they must remove two rules
- The new administration has cut funding of all federal agencies by 20%
- USDA is planning a TB summit in late summer to discuss biosecurity and indemnity; very little if any discussion will be regarding cervids, but the cervid industry will be invited to attend.

Industry comments/concerns:

- It is imperative that CWD positive hunting ranches and hunting ranches located in areas where CWD has been found in free ranging deer and elk be allowed to stay in commerce. Therefore, industry asked APHIS to work with state health officials to allow CWD certified herds with good testing records and high CWD surveillance numbers be allowed to release animals into these hunting facilities without the risk of trace-outs.
- The current policy of APHIS prioritizing indemnification for herds located where CWD has not previously been identified in wildlife or farmed herds is not fair to herds that are located within states/areas of CWD infection, but have complied with all the rules and have limited their risk of exposure to possible CWD infection.
- More funding is needed for CWD research and indemnity. Jere Dick, APHIS employee, recommended the cervid industry work with the Animal Ag Coalition to apply for CWD research funding in the Farm Bill.

This annual meeting creates open dialogue and debate between USDA/APHIS and the cervid industry. We, as an industry, have the potential to grow and prosper with the proper messaging and assistance from USDA/APHIS. This was a very positive meeting of which we hope to see positive results in the months ahead.

## Aug. 24-Labor Day, Sept. 4, 2017

# MINNESOTA STATE FAIR

*There are still lots of opportunities to sign up! Call Greg Lubinski today to get your preferred day!*

While it's the beginning of summer now, before we know it, it will be time for the Minnesota State Fair! Interest in raising elk and in elk products continue to rise making it a good time to work in the MnEBA booth!

There are still many openings for members to sign up. This is one of the best opportunities to share our story with a very interested general public! Plus, the State Fair is a fun place to be and has something of interest for everyone. The whole family can have a great time!

If you've never worked the booth or don't know what's involved, Greg Lubinski will be happy to join someone who hasn't worked it before. If he's unable to be there, he will pair you up with someone who will show you what to do. Also, feel free to bring friends or other relatives to help out. It has become a tradition for some of our members to bring other friends and family to work with them year after year.

MnEBA will be once again be selling elk snack sticks, sausage and jerky along with elk antler dog chews. Elk snacks always sell well and dog chews are gaining in sales every year!



Please contact Greg Lubinski at (507) 273-0525 to sign up for any of the open shifts below. Contact Paul Hueg at (612) 791-0443 with any comments or suggestions for this year's booth display. Paul is always thinking about new things to add to the booth and would be interested to hear your suggestions!

Date	Time	Workers	Date	Time	Workers
Pre-Fair		Set Up – Paul Hueg, Greg Lubinski	8/30	8 – 2	Pat & Rita Prodzinski
8/24	8 - 2	Lance & Brenda Hartkopf		2 – 9	OPEN
	2 – 9	OPEN	8/31	8 – 2	Jim Byrne, Norm Schimmelpfennig
8/25	8 – 2	Aase Family		2 – 9	Jim Byrne, Norm Schimmelpfennig
	2 – 9	OPEN	9/1	8 – 2	Jim Byrne
8/26	8 – 2	OPEN		2 – 9	Jim Byrne
	2 – 9	OPEN	9/2	8 – 2	OPEN
8/27	8 – 2	OPEN		2 – 9	OPEN
	2 – 9	OPEN	9/3	8 – 2	OPEN
8/28	8 – 2	Jim Byrne		2 – 9	OPEN
	2 – 9	OPEN	9/4	8 – 2	Greg & Roxy Lubinski
8/29	8 – 2	OPEN		2 – 9	Paul & Lynn Hueg
	2 – 9	OPEN			

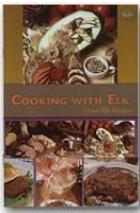
# MnEBA Promotional Materials

The following items are available for promotional purposes. To see the full line of MnEBA promotional offerings, check out [www.mneba.org](http://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](mailto: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

## MNELK / MINNESOTA GROWN BOX

For meat sales or any other Minnesota grown elk products which can be boxed up. Box size 17"x10"x8.25". Designed to hold 30 lbs.

\$1 each



## Changes at the Minnesota Board of Animal Health



Dr. Paul Anderson has been the Minnesota Board of Animal Health Farmed Cervidae Program Director for over 15 years. He recently announced his retirement with his last day on the job being June 12<sup>th</sup>.

Dr. Anderson had been at the Board of Animal Health since 1990 and most recently directed the programs for horses, farmed cervidae and companion animals (dogs and cats). MnEBA members will remember Dr. Anderson as a guest speaker at just about every annual conference since he began overseeing the farmed cervidae program. Even more importantly, Dr. Anderson has been the moderator for the Farmed Cervidae Advisory Committee since 2001. He has the very unique and admirable ability to bring together people with opposite views and have meaningful discussion and outcomes. Dr. Anderson was also a major force for positive change on behalf of the farmed cervidae industry at USAHA annual conventions and helped to write many cervid friendly resolutions over the years.

We will miss Dr. Anderson on many levels and warmly wish him a very happy retirement!



MnEBA welcomes Dr. Linda Glaser as the next Farmed Cervidae Program Director. From the BAH website, *“Dr. Glaser graduated from the University of Minnesota, College of Veterinary Medicine in 1985. She worked in a mixed animal practice for a time and then left private practice due to her interest in wildlife diseases. Dr. Glaser went on to work for the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, the U.S. Geological Survey, National Wildlife Health Center, Wisconsin Division of Public Health and eventually the U.S. Department of Agriculture as an epidemiologist. Dr. Glaser joined the Minnesota Board of Animal Health in 2004 as a senior veterinarian. Her duties include cattle programs, livestock concentration points, and oversight of the animal health database.”*

MnEBA welcomes Dr. Glaser and we look forward to working with you!



### Elk Bull Needed for 2017 MnEBA Charitable Elk Hunt

MnEBA is seeking an elk bull for the 2017 MnEBA Charitable Elk Hunt to be held at Tony's Trophy Elk Hunt Ranch in Baudette, MN the weekend of October 16-18, 2017. MnEBA has half the money needed to purchase a bull. Looking for someone to donate the other half of funding and also someone willing to sell a bull measuring 300"-350".

This elk hunt will be awarded to a disabled Minnesota veteran of the United States armed forces. This will mark the 11th anniversary of this annual MnEBA sponsored hunt!

### Do You Know a Disabled Minnesota Veteran Who Might Want to Apply?

MnEBA is seeking a hunt recipient for this year and is looking for suggestions from MnEBA members. Candidates to be a disabled Minnesota veteran (or have Minnesota ties). Applications are now available and will be **due by August 1<sup>st</sup>**.

Please contact the MnEBA Office at (320) 543-2686 or [info@mneba.org](mailto:info@mneba.org) to request an application!

# Committee Reports

## Legislation at State Capitol

### Bill Amendment on House Floor is Defeated!

The good news is that as of May 26<sup>th</sup>, the 2017 legislative session has officially ended with no new farmed cervidae language! MnEBA's lobbyist Tony Kwilas worked with MnEBA the entire session to the last day, to ensure that no adverse farmed cervidae language was passed. His hard work was evident on April 5<sup>th</sup> when Rep. Rick Hansen introduced an amendment on the House floor as follows:

- 1. 1..... moves to amend H.F. No. 1717, the first engrossment, as follows:
- 1. 2Page 39, after line 19, insert:
- 1. 3 "Sec. 71. **DEER FARM MORATORIUM.**
- 1. 4Until January 1, 2020, the Board of Animal Health must not register new farm-raised
- 1. 5white-tailed deer farms under Minnesota Statutes, section 35.155.
- 1. 6**EFFECTIVE DATE.**This section is effective the day following final enactment."
- 1. 7Renumber the sections in sequence and correct the internal references
- 1. 8Amend the title accordingly

This amendment was soundly defeated with 80 nays and 53 yeas. What was notable about this vote, is that seven Democrats voted with Republicans in defeat of this amendment.

Those legislators speaking up for the industry on the House floor during discussion included:

- Rep. Paul Anderson, Starbuck, (R) District 12B (Agriculture Policy Committee Chair)
- Rep. Rod Hamilton, Mountain Lake, (R) District 22B (Agriculture Finance Committee Chair)
- Rep. Joe McDonald, Delano, (R) District 29A
- Rep. Tony Cornish, Vernon Center, (R) District 23B
- Rep. Steve Draskowski, Mazeppa, (R) District 21B
- Rep. Dale Lueck, Aitkin, (R) District 10B

Rep. Anderson in particular gave some great facts and mentioned the joint presentation given by the Minnesota farmed cervidae industry during the Minnesota Outdoor Heritage Association meeting the previous week.

MnEBA sent a hand-written note to each legislator expressing our appreciation for their support of the farmed cervid industry on the House floor. If any of the legislators named above is your Representative, please offer your personal thanks to them as well!

This is a prime example of the benefits of building a personal relationship with your elected legislators. It makes all the difference at the Capitol!

MnEBA member Jerry Campbell had his local Representative John Poston, Lake Shore, (R) District 09A, out to his farm for a tour recently. Rep. Poston is a committee member of both the House Ag Finance and Ag Policy committees. Rep. Poston featured a picture of himself with Jerry in his weekly legislative update to constituents and said, "Last weekend, I met with local elk farmer Jerry Campbell. It was great to be able to connect with him and learn more about his sector of agriculture."

MnEBA COMMITTEE CONTACTS	
Annual Conference	Rita Prodzinski (507) 452-1282
Fundraising	Brenda Hartkopf (320) 543-2686
Government Relations	Jim Byrne (507) 358-6505
Health	OPEN
Scholarship	Kaye Zearth (320) 834-4064
State Fair	Greg & Roxy Lubinski (507) 534-3247 Paul Hueg (612) 791-0443



Representative John Poston (left) poses for a picture with MnEBA member Jerry Campbell on a recent tour of Jerry's elk farm.

## Minnesota Elk Breeders Association

9086 Keats Avenue SW  
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320-543-2983

E-MAIL:  
[info@mneba.org](mailto:info@mneba.org)

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

## Calendar of Events

**July 22, 2017** – MnEBA Summer Picnic, Byrne Farm, Pine Island, MN

**July 27-29, 2017** – NAEBA Annual Convention & International Antler Competition, Verizon Wireless Center & Hilton Garden Inn, Mankato, MN

**August 24-September 4, 2017** – Minnesota State Fair, State Fairgrounds, St. Paul, MN

**January 12-13, 2018** – MnEBA Annual Conference, Doubletree by Hilton, Brooklyn Center, MN

**March 9-10, 2018** – NAEBA March Mingle/KCBA and MEFA Annual Conference, Overland Park, KS (Kansas City area)

## Classified Ads

**Wanted:** Grande Natural pays competitive prices for Elk Hard Antler drops or cutoffs, spikes, buttons, etc. AND we will pay UPS shipping if you cut them down and pack 'em up. Call Rich at 719-580-0661, or email [Rich@ElkUSA.com](mailto:Rich@ElkUSA.com).

**Wanted:** Grande Natural buys Elk or Whitetail meat animals delivered to Crescent Meats, Cadott, WI or Eickman's, Steward, IL. We will meet or beat the competition on the rail price. Looking for fleshy critters generally 3 years and older on cows, 2 years and older on bulls. Call 719-657-0942 or email [Rich@ElkUSA.com](mailto:Rich@ElkUSA.com).

**Elk Hide Tanning:** Elk hide tanning, \$225 hair off or \$15 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](http://www.usafoxx.com) or email [info@usafoxx.com](mailto:info@usafoxx.com). USA Foxx & Furs, Duluth, MN.

**Wanted:** Any and all elk meat animals, trophy bulls, breeding stock or whole herds. Brian Wagner, 612-366-5078

**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  
Howard Lake, MN 55349