

April / May / June '20

Volume 24, Issue 2



# MnEBA News

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## President's Message by Mark Luedtke



Hello everyone,

These are some incredibly unusual times we have been living through. I hope you and your loved ones are staying healthy and enduring the social distancing restrictions.

There does not appear to be much in our society that resembles what we know as normal in the last several months, but the elk do not seem to care. They can be a bit of normalcy in these unsettled times, growing antlers like just another normal year, and cows looking like their calves will be coming any day. I cut my first velvet just yesterday and I am guessing my first calves will be on the ground by the time you are reading this.

The legislative session has been quiet but not silent and there are a few proposed amendments that have made their way through the House of Representatives but do not currently have a companion version in the Senate. We are monitoring this closely with hopes we can keep these senseless changes from getting passed.

My understanding is the Board of Animal Health is moving forward with opening the farmed cervidae rules and making changes to address the changes from last year's legislation but currently I do not know any of the details related to any proposed changes.

I hope you are not in the same boat as me regarding TB or Brucellosis certifications. This year was my anniversary for doing my whole herd test which got done and submitted fine but that was where the wheels came off. After my samples were submitted, they apparently ran out of TB blood test kits and supposedly the company that furnished the test kits has transitioned to making COVID-19 testing materials. Luckily, my brucellosis test was completed but last I heard on the TB tests, they could not provide me with any information as to when my samples would be completed. The good news is that USDA understands we have no control over this situation and they have established a position that as long as samples were submitted in the proper time frame for our certification history, they will acknowledge our herd as being compliant. Unfortunately, I have already learned that not all states will follow their lead which they do have the right to do and at least some states will see myself and others in my same situation as being non-compliant. I do not know what to do and currently am just hoping this works itself out prior to the time when permits are needed for the trophy bull market.

Hope you all have a great season and by all means give me a call if you have a question, comment, or just want to talk elk.

Mark

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### A Note About Purity Testing Bulls for Movement this Fall

*NAEBA is planning to launch a new purity test very soon. This test uses hair instead of blood. For anyone who is needing a purity test on any bulls being shipped out this fall, you will want to order this test at least a 4-6 weeks before movement to make sure it is completed on time. Watch NAEBA e-blasts for more information coming soon!*

**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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#### Executive Secretary to the Board

Brenda Hartkopf  
(320) 543-2686

## 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 Updates

### Market Update by Scott Salonek

With the current state of the world right now, our elk product markets are also somewhat challenged and forecasting what will happen is truly a crap shoot.

#### Velvet

I will start with the largest question mark in the industry right now and that is VELVET. I spoke with the one buyer we have and for 2020, we will be buying antler. However the generally normal late July buying may not take place until August, September, or could push until the end of the year. The world is in such turmoil it is very hard to forecast. Another factor is that New Zealand production is some 200 tonne over demand. Our buyer also has 10-11 tonne (all processed) but also left over from 2019. We are again going to be stuck into the problem of cutting and NOT having any price.

The largest bright spot is there will be a buyer! This will allow producers to cut two and three year old bulls, then make a farm choice on cutting other bulls or letting some grow out. The main thing on growing or not is caution in creating an over-supply of hard antler bulls; this will cause a price drop to producers for a product which has been positive in past years. Also out of our control is the fact that oil markets are very soft, along with corporate profits which drive clients for the hunt market.

#### Meat

The meat market is currently the brightest product we have going; the demand is high and the prices are in my opinion, not going down anytime in the future. I processed more animals last fall and this spring than I have in recent years and could use 50-100 head as soon as calving and velvet seasons are complete. We have a small problem with some plants that in the future will REQUIRE the producer to take the offal back with them. I do have a solution in that the month of January 2021 at the Foley locker, I have a 60 head kill date set up with 20 head currently reserved. I can have a dumpster set for the month and spread the cost of the dumpster over the 60 head instead of each producer paying the full charge, which is not possible.

Though not great news, keep doing what has worked in the past, stay involved in your membership and I will inform everyone when I start buying velvet. I can be reached at 612-850-8684 with any questions you may have.

### Market Update by Brian Wagner

#### Hard Antler Bulls

Last year the bull market was good and with all that is going on in the world right now, I'm getting mixed reports from hunt ranches on what to expect. I'm still expecting a good year.

But to keep the price and demand up, it will be up to ya'll as producers to cut velvet and not flood the hard antler bull market. This will be the only way to save the market we created.

I get calls every week about the trophy bull market. Make sure to call early to have your bulls on the list as I'm planning for another record year. I also plan to buy velvet this year. You can reach me at 612-366-5078. Stay safe, thanks.

## Board Meeting Minutes

### Board Meeting Minutes March 13, 2020

The Board of the Minnesota Elk Breeders Association held a phone conference on Friday, March 13<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 p.m. Mark Luedtke, Brian Wagner, Greg Lubinski, Kraig Wurst and Brenda Hartkopf were present. Perry Olson was absent. Jim Byrne, Paul Anderson and Tony Kwilas were guests. Luedtke called the meeting to order at 3:06 p.m.

Luedtke asked Kwilas to give an update on the earlier 1:00 p.m. news conference from Governor Walz and potential temporary closure of state government due to COVID-19. Kwilas reported that a Peacetime Emergency was declared which allows the Governor more emergency power to take such action. Government leaders plan to meet again on Sunday night to make further decisions on closing the government for a time.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the cervid-related bills which are scheduled to be heard in the House Ag and Food Finance and Policy Committee on Tuesday March 17<sup>th</sup> and discuss talking points.

HF2972 (Hansen) – Cervid facility closure or transfer state oversight recommendations required. *Board does not support this bill as written as there is no official decontamination protocol for farmed cervid facilities other than for CWD-positive facilities in the federal CWD Program Standards as referenced in Appendix 4.*

HF4331 (Hansen) – Farmed cervidae escape provisions and ID requirements modified. *Not supportive of DNR taking of escaped cervids immediately after escape. Not supportive of DNR taking the CWD sample. Producers are responsible for their own testing and need to submit required CWD samples themselves for assurance that it is being done properly. Not supportive of paying the bill for DNR to capture escaped farmed cervidae.*

HF4228 (Becker-Finn) – Moratorium placed on farmed cervidae registrations and facilities. *Kwilas reported that this language would be amended to refer to only farmed whitetail deer and for a period of two years. This would not go to another committee and would go straight to the House floor.*

HF 4233 (Green) – Live animal CWD surveillance required, BAH required to consider farmed cervidae test results from other states. *Kwilas reported this bill is being heard for information only and that it is not planned to be referred to another committee.*

It was decided that Kwilas would testify on MnEBA's behalf. Hartkopf, Byrne and Wagner plan to attend.

Board discussed and approved legislative language to be pursued by MnEBA as follows: *The commissioner shall adopt science-based rules to be followed by all taxidermists licensed under this chapter relating to the proper handling and disposal of taxidermy waste from chronic wasting disease-susceptible species to control the spread of chronic wasting disease. The commissioner shall regularly monitor and inspect licensed taxidermists for compliance with the rules.* Kwilas noted that this bill would also require a fiscal note and would be an extension to current requirements. He suggested introducing in the Senate first.

Hartkopf reported that she is hopeful of sending out the bid sheet for the 2021 Annual Conference to the Board later next week and would like to have a decision made soon.

Hartkopf also reported having just received notice that the Minnesota State FFA Convention has been postponed tentatively until June. She will stay in touch with the board on when that is rescheduled. Meeting was adjourned at 4:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Brenda Hartkopf, Executive Secretary

### Legislative Update

The State Capitol went into lockdown shortly after the above board meeting and the scheduled committee hearing was postponed. Ultimately, only HF4331 moved forward and was merged into the HF4554 DE1 Amendment which is a larger environment funding bill. The companion bill SF4499 which passed the Senate does not contain any farmed cervidae language. A conference committee must compromise to make both bills identical then the compromise bill must pass both bodies before going to the Governor for signature. This did not happen during the regular session which ended on May 18, but is still on the table for any upcoming special session. MnEBA's lobbyist will continue to monitor and lobby against including this language in the final version. See letter on the following pages submitted by MnEBA to the chairs of both the House and Senate Environment and Natural Resources Finance committees.



# MINNESOTA ELK BREEDERS ASSOCIATION

May 13, 2020

Representative Rick Hansen, Chair  
Environment and Natural Resources Finance Division  
430 State Office Building  
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155

Senator Bill Ingebrigtsen, Chair  
Environment and Natural Resources Finance Committee  
3207 Minnesota Senate Building  
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155

RE: Opposition to HF4554 DE1 Amendment

Dear Committee Chairs,

We are writing this letter to express our concern and opposition to several sections of the HF4554 DE1 Amendment currently making its way through the legislative process. We believe that many of these concerns could be worked out between legislators, stakeholders, the Board of Animal Health and DNR if given an opportunity to work on this together.

Of extreme concern is Article 2, Section 15, Subdivision 1 where the authors have removed any ability of a farmed cervid owner to recapture their own animals. New language would require herd owners to immediately notify the commissioner of natural resources of a cervid escape. Authors of the language have said during committee hearings this is not a big change, but in reality, this is a huge change. This language effectively does not allow the owner of an escaped farmed cervid to recapture their own animal. In effect, it would drain money and resources of the DNR to do something the farmed cervidae owner can do much more effectively and quickly. There is an extensive section on policies for dealing with farmed cervidae running at large in the Board of Animal Health Rulebook that is all-encompassing, practical and efficient. We would suggest a thorough review of these policies before making a new law which would be in direct conflict with already established protocols.

Also in Section 15, new language has been added allowing a hunter licensed by the Commissioner of Natural Resources or the DNR themselves, the ability to not only kill but also to possess escaped farmed cervidae. Dr. Linda Glaser of the Board of Animal Health testified in committee that in 2019, there were 99 farmed cervids that escaped, however, 42% of those escapes were from vandalism. These illegal activities, along with Acts of God should not allow for an immediate loss of ownership of the animal. This language would likely cause more vandalism to take place when a hunter knows they can have an animal behind fence if they want it, they just have to cut the fence and let it out. This language will cause more harm than good and a great deal of hardship on producers. Additionally, no other pet or livestock species is allowed to become property upon escape to the general public or DNR. This language is discriminatory against the property rights of cervid owners and is extremely harmful.

New language at the end of Section 15 also would require that, "Escaped farmed cervidae killed by a hunter or destroyed by the commissioner of natural resources must be tested for chronic wasting disease at the owner's expense." We agree the animal needs to be tested for chronic wasting disease. However, the samples must stay in the hands of the owner so the animal can be tested according to the guidelines set by the Board of Animal Health, not the DNR. Board of Animal Health requires a more stringent set of sample testing guidelines. Besides running not one,

but two CWD tests, ear tissue must be submitted and all identification must be surrendered to comply with the program. The new added language would actually have the reverse effect by immediately making the producer non-compliant with the program.

Finally, Section 16, Subdivision 6 includes new language stating, "Either incorporate global positioning system technology or include a phone number, address, or other contact information that enables the reader to readily identify the owner of escaped farmed cervidae." Technology for a global positioning system that the authors' desire does not exist. Secondly, adding an owner's phone number or name and address to the information already on the ear tag is not practical as the ear tag would need to be extremely large for that information to be read from 50 yards with the naked eye. Ear tags that size are simply not available because a tag of that size would not stay in the ears of any kind of animal. This is again counterintuitive to the desired outcome of the added language.

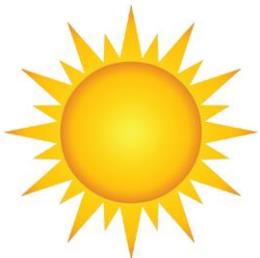
A large dangle tag with a producer-chosen number is currently required, along with an additional "official" identification number on either the large dangle tag or a secondary tag. Official identification is a series of numbers or letters that are unique to only one animal and is easily traced to the owner by simply contacting the Board of Animal Health, or the local Board of Animal Health inspector of that region. The ability to quickly identify the owner of an escaped farmed cervid is already in place.

The DNR has testified that they have not requested these changes and the authors have testified they have not engaged stakeholders in these discussions. The arguments presented by this letter and others, show that these changes will do more harm than good. For these reasons, we request the language changes noted above be removed from the HF4554DE1 Amendment.

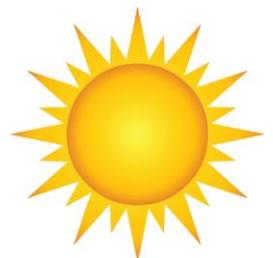
Sincerely,



Mark Luedtke, President  
Minnesota Elk Breeders Association



*Make Plans to Attend!*  
**2020 MnEBA Summer Picnic**  
**Saturday, July 25, 2020**



*Hosted By*  
**Stony Brook Elk Farm – Jerry & Linda Campbell**  
6497 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue SW – Pequot Lakes, MN 56472  
218-568-8241(Home) or 218-820-5515 (Jerry's cell)

**POT LUCK LUNCH BEGINS AT NOON**

The MnEBA Summer Picnic is still scheduled pending state COVID-19 orders for the end of July.  
Plan for a Noon Potluck meal followed by the MnEBA summer membership meeting  
and farm tour. Bring a dish to pass, beverages will be provided!



## News Release

For Immediate Release: April 29, 2020

Contact: Michael Crusan, Communications Director, 651-201-6815 or michael.crusan@state.mn.us

# CWD Investigation Spurred by Douglas County Deer Farm Detection Concludes

**St. Paul, Minn.** - The Minnesota Board of Animal Health's investigation of all herds with connections to the CWD-positive Douglas County farm is complete and revealed a total of six CWD positive deer. In all, eight herds in six counties were linked by animal movement and six herds were quarantined. All the CWD positive deer were in two herds, the one in Douglas County and another in Pine County. With the investigation wrapped up, only one site has farmed cervids that remain quarantined in Chisago County.

"The quarantined herd will have a signed herd plan with the Board and will not move deer or related products onto or off of the farm during the agreement," said Assistant Director, Dr. Linda Glaser. "The quarantine will be lifted in October 2022 if the CWD-exposed buck is alive and shows no clinical signs of CWD. The date is five years after the buck was exposed to known CWD positive does when it was in the Pine County herd."

The investigated herds, test results and outcomes are broken down by the six counties in chronological order:

1. **Douglas County:** One doe died in late November and tested CWD positive. The remaining animal, a buck, was harvested and tested, with the result of CWD not detected. No deer remain on the farm and it's quarantined for five years.
2. **Pine County (two herds):**
  - Herd 1: One doe died in December and tested positive for CWD. The producer accepted USDA indemnity for the herd, which was depopulated in January. Eight deer were harvested and two does and two fawns tested CWD positive. No deer remain, the farm is quarantined for five years.
  - Herd 2: Herd closed before the investigation.
3. **Clearwater County:** One CWD-exposed animal was identified and it had been previously harvested and tested. CWD was not detected, and the quarantine was released.
4. **Wadena County:** Three CWD-exposed animals were identified and appraised by the USDA. Only two of the three deer could be found in the pen during the depopulation, and the third deer was never confirmed. The producer harvested the remaining two animals in the herd. CWD was not detected in any of the animals tested. No deer remain on the farm and because the CWD status of the third CWD-exposed animal could not be verified, the farm is quarantined for five years.
5. **Chisago County (two herds):**
  - Herd 1: Herd was identified with a CWD-exposed animal. The producer has not accepted USDA appraisal and indemnity, and the herd remains quarantined.
  - Herd 2: Herd closed before the investigation.
6. **Kandiyohi County:** Herd was determined to not be a source of CWD, and quarantine was released.

The Pine County, Douglas County and Wadena County sites are not allowed to have any deer or elk for five years. Owners must maintain fencing to prevent wild deer from accessing empty pens. Biohazard signs have been posted on the fencing and must be maintained for the entire five-year fallow period.

The Board's investigation included reviewing and verifying herd histories, accuracy of records, identification tags, and meeting with the producers to inspect fencing and interview producers to gather information for USDA's epidemiological questionnaire to identify risk factors for CWD exposure.

CWD is a disease of the deer and elk family caused by prions, which can damage brain and nerve tissue. The disease is most likely transmitted when infected deer and elk shed prions in saliva, feces, urine, and other fluids or tissues. CWD is not known to naturally occur in other animals. The disease is fatal in deer and elk, and there are no known treatments or vaccines. Consuming infected meat is not advised.



## Wild Deer in Dakota County Confirmed Positive for Chronic Wasting Disease

**DNR NEWS RELEASE**  
**March 13, 2020**

### *Discovery marks first case of CWD in this area of Minnesota*

A wild deer in Dakota County was confirmed positive for chronic wasting disease, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources said.

The deer, an adult male, was reported by a local resident near Farmington as displaying neurological symptoms and was tested as part of the DNR's risk-based disease surveillance program.

It is the first detection of the fatal neurological disease in a wild deer in this county, and this deer was found nearly 100 miles from the state's primary CWD area near Preston, Minnesota.

"An informed citizen did the right thing by calling DNR, which allowed us to identify and remove this deer from the landscape," said Lou Cornicelli, DNR wildlife research manager. "We're hopeful the disease is not widespread in the area."

In the short term, the DNR is developing plans to sample deer opportunistically until the fall hunting season. Cornicelli said deer hunting is the primary tool for managing this disease and the DNR will follow its CWD response plan to identify a CWD management zone that will be at least 15 miles around the positive deer.

Hunters can expect to see carcass movement restrictions and mandatory surveillance. People who are unfamiliar with how deer are managed in Minnesota can find deer-related information, including hunting, natural history of deer and the state's deer management plan, on the DNR deer management webpage. The DNR will work closely with tribal communities and with cities, townships and counties to manage this disease collaboratively.

In addition, the DNR will prohibit recreational deer feeding. Until then, the DNR asks that residents voluntarily stop feeding deer.

The Board of Animal Health, which oversees farmed deer and elk in the state, is expanding its endemic area for CWD based on this new detection by the DNR. The Board establishes the endemic area boundary 15 miles around all confirmed cases of CWD in the wild.

### **Additional CWD information**

CWD affects the cervid family, which includes deer, elk and moose. The disease is not known to affect human or pet health. It is spread through direct contact with an infected deer's saliva, urine, blood, feces, antler velvet or carcass. There is no vaccine or treatment for this disease.

For more information on chronic wasting disease, including maps of CWD surveillance areas, frequently asked questions and hunter information, visit [mndnr.gov/cwd](http://mndnr.gov/cwd).

## Board Blog by Brian Wagner, MnEBA Secretary/Treasurer



What a crazy time we are all living at this time. Like everyone else, we at Black Velvet Elk are looking forward to getting back to something more normal. Some have been affected more than others. But it really makes you appreciate farm life that much more when your government tells you that you can't leave your property. At least we could all get out to feed and work our animals.

This year we had our TB and Brucellosis test that was due so should be good for another three years. We keep thinking this will change from every three years to five years but that doesn't seem to happen.

As I write this, it is the week of May 18th and we plan to cut our first velvet this week. Looking at about the same amount as last year. No calves yet but should start with AI calves next week. Bulls are looking good on nice green grass finally!

Hope everyone has a profitable year and stay safe tagging and working animals. As always we are looking for hard antler bulls. Call ahead with what you think you might have.

Regards,  
Brian

## 2020 MnEBA Scholarship

MnEBA is pleased to announce the winner of the 2020 MnEBA Scholarship valued at \$350. Thank you to both Eileen Byrne and Rita Prodzinski for managing the scholarship applications this year. There was one applicant for this year's award.

**Zoe Pohlman**



Zoe Pohlman is the daughter of MnEBA members' Perry & Sandy Olson and the granddaughter of MnEBA member Don Olson. She will be starting her sophomore year of college at South Dakota State University this fall where she is studying marketing and communications.

Zoe has already achieved outstanding success in both FFA livestock judging and numerous awards in 4-H Meat Goat competitions. She was active in high school athletics earning an all-conference track award her senior year and also making the All-American Team in cheerleading in both her junior and senior years. Zoe has also been active in her church through volunteer activities and several mission trips.

Being active in both 4-H and FFA taught Zoe many life-long skills. Zoe says, "I would not be the person I am today if it weren't for being in 4-H and FFA. I have learned great communication and public speaking skills from the organizations, I have learned how to be confident, humble, proud, how to be a good leader and responsibility." MnEBA wishes Zoe all the best as she pursues her goals and dreams. With the skills she already possesses, she is sure to be successful in her future endeavors.

## Welcome New Members

*MnEBA welcomes this recent new member!*



**Brad & Leah Snelling**, Family Freedom Elk Farm, 27205 Witter Ave, Park Rapids, MN 56470, 218-639-9700, bsnelling34@gmail.com

## MnEBA Kitchen

Here's a filling meal you can make at the end of a busy day that will come together quickly. Serve over hot cooked rice or egg noodles.



### Peppered Elk Skillet

1 lb. elk steak, cut into thin strips  
 2 Tbsp. vegetable oil  
 1 clove garlic (or 1 tsp. garlic powder)  
 Salt & pepper to taste  
 2 green peppers, cut into strips  
 1 medium onion, chopped  
 1 cup beef broth

1 Tbsp. soy sauce  
 1 (14.5 oz.) can diced tomatoes  
 8 oz. sliced mushrooms  
 1 (15 oz.) can corn, drained  
 1 1/2 Tbsp. corn starch  
 1/4 cup water  
 Hot cooked rice or egg noodles

#### DIRECTIONS

Heat 1 Tbsp. oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the elk strips and garlic; cook and stir until the elk has browned, about 4 minutes. Once done, season to taste with salt and pepper and remove elk from the skillet. Pour the remaining 1 Tbsp. of oil into the skillet and stir in green peppers and onions. Cook and stir until the vegetables are tender, about 5 minutes, then add the beef broth, soy sauce, tomatoes, mushrooms and corn. Bring to a boil. Dissolve cornstarch in water and stir into boiling vegetables; stir until thickened. Stir in the browned elk until heated through, then serve over hot cooked rice or egg noodles.

**Do you have a favorite elk recipe? Please send a copy of the recipe to the MnEBA office so we can share it with others!**

## RACK PLUS™ FOR OUTSTANDING RESULTS

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 AN\_DeerHelp@adm.com  
 www.ADMAnimalNutrition.com/wildlife



## Vet Corner by Glen Zearth, DVM

*This article was printed in MnEBA News a few years ago, but bears reprinting. While many producers use a ring block while velveting bulls, there may be others who still do not. For those who have not tried it, I would highly encourage you to give it a try on just a few animals and see what a difference it makes.*

### Using a Ring Block When Cutting Velvet Antler

As velvet season approaches, I would encourage anyone who is not presently using nerve block pain management to try it on a few animals. You will be surprised at the difference it makes.

Apply lidocaine ring block round the pedicle of the antler and wait 3 minutes for it to take effect. While you're waiting, place tourniquet around base and if you give a copper bolus, this is a good time to do that as well.

Use a good large tooth saw to harvest the antler and spray the wound well with fly spray. I don't recommend using blood stop or cement powder. These are both irritants and do more harm than good. Elk have a fantastic vasodilation constriction system and when handled with efficiency and with less stress, they can stop bleeding more quickly than you think possible. The more you wrestle with them in the chute, the worse the bleeding can become. Plus, there's really nothing you can put on a wound to make it heal any faster.

#### Procedure for Cutting Velvet Antler (From NAEBA Velvet Handbook Third Edition)

Preparing the squeeze chute and area for the procedure.

1. Velvet is a food product; therefore, it should be handled carefully and treated with cleanliness.
2. Equipment used during the velvet procedure should be cleaned. This includes the pen and chute, as well as the small equipment used.
3. In order to reduce the time the animal is in the chute, personnel and materials should be prepared.
4. Check that all equipment is in working order prior to introduction of elk into the handling facility.

#### Preparing the bull in the chute

1. To reduce time in the chute, record keeping and photography should be completed prior to restraining the animal.
2. The chute should have ample room to allow the bull to enter without stress or damage to the velvet antler.
3. Care must be taken to adjust the height in the chute to make the animal comfortable. Monitor breathing and check for proper airflow. A blindfold may be used during the procedure.
4. Check to confirm that the head is positioned to allow for a quick, even cut.
5. A head restraint may be used to limit the movement of the elk's head.
6. Apply analgesia to the pedicle area and allow time for maximum effect. (see section below on "pain control")
7. Make sure antler area is clean.
8. Surgical latex tubing is used as a tourniquet to block the flow of blood. (Refer to the section below on "blood control".)
9. All procedures involving a medication for parasite or fly control are done after antler is harvested so the antler is not contaminated.

#### Equipment and medications required for cutting, pain control and blood control.

1. **Pain control-** A local anesthetic can be injected using a ring block around the base of the pedicle (Figure 1). For the proper technique on performing this procedure, contact your veterinarian. By repeating this procedure around the pedicle, overlapping areas of local anesthetic are created.
2. **Blood Control-** A tourniquet is applied using medical grade silicone tubing by stretching the tourniquet twice around one pedicle (see Figure 2). Then make a figure 8 by stretching the tourniquet across the skull and around the other pedicle and back to the first pedicle. Use a hemostat greater than 12 inches in length to clamp the tubing. This method of applying the tourniquet is quick and allows for rapid removal.

**Cutting velvet antler-** *This procedure should be completed in the shortest period of time to keep stress to the animal at a minimum.*

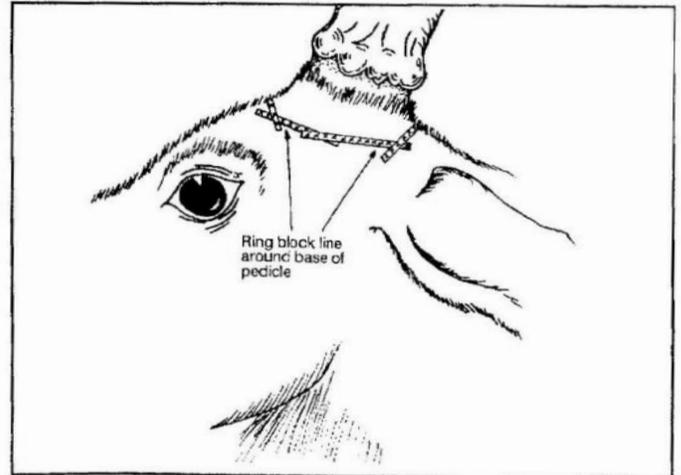
1. It is recommended that a #10 disposable scalpel or disinfected utility knife be used to cut the skin to the bone along the exit and entry points of the intended cut line. This will increase comfort and reduce chances of tearing of the skin.
2. Align the saw to allow cutting  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch above the coronet across the whole diameter. As a guide, wrap the thumb and index finger around the antler above the burr. Cut above your fingers.
3. Take long, steady, continuous strokes until the antler is removed.
4. Support the antler during the cutting procedure.
5. After removal, invert the antler to eliminate blood loss.

#### Removing the animal from the squeeze chute

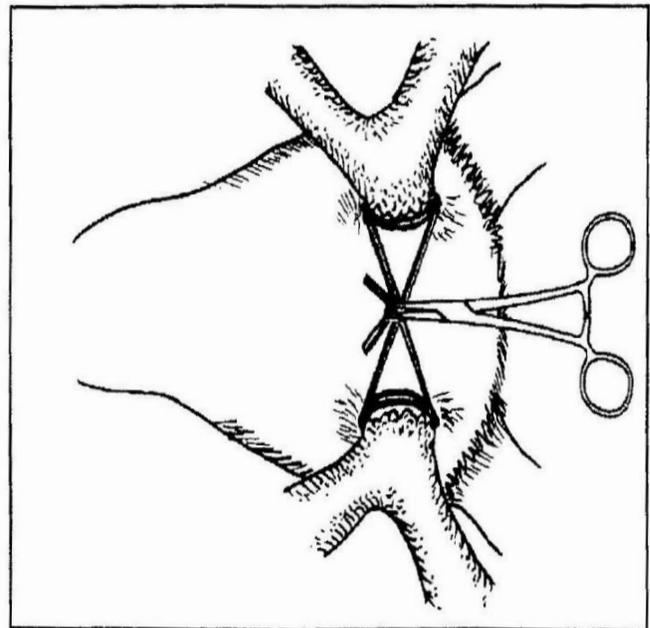
1. Immediately after antler removal, vaccinate and apply fly control (using screw worm spray for the velveting site and pour on insecticide for residual fly control on the body). Use de-wormer if your schedule coincides with this opportunity. Remove the blindfold and tourniquet as you open the squeeze chute. Immediate release of the animal will facilitate a speedy recovery.
2. The exit path should be a straight path with firm footing.

#### Cleaning the squeeze chute area and equipment

1. Thoroughly clean and disinfect the squeeze chute area. Avoid a slippery floor.
2. Leave the facilities neat and tidy.
3. Disinfectant with Nolvasan (chlorhexidine)- All instruments used in the procedure should be disinfected between animals.



*Figure 1.* The local anesthetic is injected along the ring block lines around the base of the pedicle.



*Figure 2.* A tourniquet is applied using a medical grade latex tubing. The tubing is clamped using a 15" hemostat.

*This article first appeared in the NAEBA May 2020 Journal. Even though calving has begun for many elk farms in Minnesota, there are many more calves expected throughout the coming weeks!*

## **Pulling Calves – Prevention is the Best Medicine**

*Interview with Glen Zebarth, DVM, written by Brenda Hartkopf, NAEBA Staff*

In just a few short weeks, baby calves will be hitting the ground on farms and ranches all across North America. Proper preparation before calving season begins is a good start to hopefully a successful calving season. This article will focus on what signs to watch for when making the decision to intervene on a birth that does not seem to be going the way it should.

### **Normal Birth**

The best and most important point of the whole calving process is to produce a normal, live birth. Cows normally calve within three hours of beginning the birthing process. For a first-year heifer, or overweight cow, the birthing process could be closer to four hours. Elk cows most regularly calve early to mid-morning, then again in the evening before sundown. Calves are very rarely born overnight. A cow will generally begin to walk the fence 12-24 hours before she gives birth. This is your signal to keep an eye on her.

There are things a producer can do in the weeks before calving to help raise the chances of a normal, live birth:

1. Place the cows in a pen that will allow as much exercise as possible.
2. On a body condition chart of 1-5, a body score of 3 is ideal for calving. A body condition score of 3 will show that the spine is not sharp and the individual processes can still be seen. Only the last two ribs are visible. Withers are more rounded, but still sharp at the point. Hocks are smooth. The thurl has a slight depression and the tail head is flat and smooth. The brisket is starting to fill up. In other words, not too thin nor too fat.
3. Cows should be in good health on good quality grass or should be receiving a grass/alfalfa mix ration. Make sure the cows are up-to-date on their worming schedule and also that they are vaccinated for clostridium or for any other viruses you have encountered in the past.
4. If cows are too thin, calves may be born too light (20 lbs or less), making the calf more susceptible to dehydration or disease.
5. If cows are too fat, you will often times need to pull the calf.
6. Exercise and changing the food ration can help even just 2-4 weeks prior to calving to help adjust to the correct body condition.
7. Take the time to gather supplies to have on hand for an assisted birth in case you run into trouble.

### **Signs of Problems**

If a cow has been pushing for a prolonged period of time, greater than 3-4 hours, you may have trouble.

Next, determine the position of the calf. Normal presentation would be two feet out, feet facing downward, followed by the head. If this is the case, she might just need a little help to push it out. Depending on the disposition of the cow, sometimes you can go out to the field and come at her from the back or side and grab ahold of the feet to help her out a bit.

About 20% of live births are backwards (feet appear upside down.) That does not mean she is having a problem but could be a possible sign of trouble. Do not get alarmed but watch her closely, especially if she has been pushing for a long time. However, while cows can successfully deliver a backwards calf, note that these birthings generally take longer.

Another common malposition is to see the head and just one leg, or the tip of the second foot can be seen but no progress is being made. Again, if she has been pushing for an extended period of time without progress, or you can see the cow is overweight, you may need to assist to straighten the leg to help the cow birth the calf.

It is typical for some cows to appear quite vigorous in straining. You may see lots of kicking, straining, pushing up on her side and kicking, getting up and down frequently, licking, etc. This behavior is not unusual and should not be seen as a sign of problems.

### **When to Assist?**

When you determine a cow is having a problem, you need to decide if you are going to intervene. Then, decide if you want to do this yourself, or get help to do it. Try to avoid trying yourself for a long time, then calling someone to help, in which case, your chances of success will be lower.

While monitoring the cow, make sure to get supplies ready just in case the decision is made to assist the cow in calving. Supplies to have ready include:

1. Warm, soapy water with disinfectant
2. Plastic sleeves
3. A clean place to put the calf and cow (dry straw or back out in pasture once the calf is up and nursing)
4. Antibiotics for the cow if she looks like she has torn
5. OB straps/chains
6. Iodine for the navel

When you have the supplies ready, then you can make the final determination on the need for assistance. Sometimes you can pull the calf right out in the pasture as mentioned previously, but generally not. You usually have to bring the cow to inside confinement, such as a chute or box stall. Most cows that are having trouble calving will go more willingly to the barn than usual. Try to avoid having to dart the cow if at all possible. The anesthesia goes right into the calf. This will lower your chance of a successful outcome.

When pulling a calf, you will need to determine its position. Normal presentation is the head and two front feet coming out. A common malposition is two back legs coming first. If you have the back feet, you can just pull, but if the front feet are coming first, you have to get the head also. If coming backwards and you are pulling, once that umbilical cord is pinched off, the calf needs to be pulled as quickly as possible. These are the times it is better to have a veterinarian with you. Also, for a big calf that is mal-positioned, most people have a better outcome if the veterinarian is there to help. If you can see both feet and the head, she just needs some assistance. The trick here is that the calf normally comes out in an arc, so when you pull, you need to pull back and also down (not straight out). This helps a lot. Pull only by hand if possible, but calving straps or chains can be used if necessary. If two people are pulling, calves are fairly fragile, and they can more easily be injured by the force from two people. If the head needs to be put in the correct position, you will need a snare that goes around the back of ears and slide that goes in the mouth to help position the head to come out. If you manually pull on the jaw, it can break right off.

### **Once the Calf is Pulled**

When you get the calf pulled, the first thing to do is to make sure the calf is breathing. If it is not, you can lift the calf up by back legs and shake it good to get the fluid out which might stimulate breathing. You can also take a straw and put it in and out of nostril to stimulate breathing. If these options fail, you can pump the heart and open up the chest wall by lifting the rib cage up and down. Lastly, they do make an oral breathing tube for cattle that works for elk. If you have this breathing tube, you would pull the tongue out and slip the breathing tube down into the throat and blow into the breathing tube. If this is something you think you may need to do in the future, you would probably need to have your veterinarian show you how to do it. These breathing tubes are generally available at calf supply stores or your veterinarian can help to purchase it. Some people use injectable stimulants, but you would need to talk to a veterinarian; those would be prescription items.

As soon as you are certain the calf is breathing, look at the cow to make sure she is not bleeding or torn. Get the cow to some clean, dry straw. Do not help to clean the cow; let her pass the membranes on her own. Pour iodine on the calf's navel.

The next hurdle is to get the cow to take the calf. My best advice is to put them in a clean, dry box stall and leave them alone. Make sure the cow is not beating up the calf. Watch from a distance, but leave them alone. If she starts licking off the calf, you are probably in good shape. If she does not pay any attention to the calf, just leave them together. She should eventually take the calf, but it could take a few days. If that is the case, supplemental feeding will be needed until she takes the calf. It is sometimes hard to know if the calf is nursing. If the calf is restless and mewing, it is probably not getting fed by its mother, but if it is sleeping in the corner, happy and content, it is probably nursing. This is not always an easy thing to tell.

### Pulling Calves – Prevention is the Best Medicine continued...

If you have a squeeze chute and can get some colostrum from the cow, try to do that to feed to the calf. You can purchase commercial colostrum, but that is not as good. The way to milk a cow in a chute is to approach the udder from a side door and clean it off. Take a 30cc or 50cc plastic syringe, saw the end so it is an open tube, put cooking oil on the cow's udder, then use the open end of the tube, put it up against the udder and pull back on the syringe. Oil helps you get a seal. Have a clean cup to put the colostrum in. Then you can go back around and give it to the calf. This is a rare occurrence. You might only have this happen once or twice in your whole time raising elk, if ever. It is typical to be able to draw 30-60cc out of each quarter. If you can get at least 60cc total, that's very beneficial for the calf.

The best case scenario is to have a normal birthing process, which can typically be accomplished by the good husbandry steps listed above. But if pulling a calf is deemed as warranted, you will have a better outcome if decisions are made sooner than later. Let's hope all your births are normal!

## 2021 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 2021 MnEBA Gun Raffle Calendar. This year's sponsors to date include: Brian Wagner, Lance & Brenda Hartkopf, Perry & Sandy Olson, Kraig & Jenny Wurst, Mark & Lisa Luedtke, Greg & Roxi Lubinski, Craig, Kathy, Klint & Lora Wylie and Bill & Karen Knutson. **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!

**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, 2020 to be eligible for the drawing. Sellers can be entered multiple times for each group of 10 calendars sold. The 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!

**800 Calendars** will be available again this year. While we didn't sell out last year, there were more 2020 calendars sold than ever before due to the extra calendars which were available. MnEBA was just 31 calendars away from selling all 800 calendars!

**2021 Calendars will be available** at this year's summer picnic on July 25<sup>th</sup> in Pequot Lakes if the event is able to take place. They will also be available at the NAEBA Convention in Colorado Springs, CO if that event takes place. Regardless, calendars can also be mailed out from the office or by contacting a board member. Whatever you can do to help sell calendars would be greatly appreciated. Please contact the MnEBA Office with any questions or comments at 320-543-2686 or [info@mneba.org](mailto:info@mneba.org).

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# Committee Reports

## State Fair Committee

State Fair officials reported on Friday May 22<sup>nd</sup> that the 2020 Minnesota State Fair will be cancelled due to COVID-19. Mark your calendars for the 2021 Minnesota State Fair which is scheduled for August 26-September 6, 2021. MnEBA and many other vendors hope to come out better than ever next year!

## 2021 MnEBA Annual Conference

The 2021 MnEBA Annual Conference will be held the weekend of January 8-9, 2021 at the Crowne Plaza Minneapolis West in Plymouth, Minnesota. This is the same location where the 2020 conference was held.

Again this year, the hotel is offering a free hot breakfast buffet for two each morning for anyone staying at the hotel the previous night. This breakfast buffet is amazing!!

There will be plenty of timely topics and good discussion. If you have any seminar subjects you would like to see offered, please let Rita or the MnEBA Office know. You will want to make plans to attend!!

MnEBA COMMITTEE CONTACTS	
Annual Conference	Rita Prodzinski (507) 452-1282
Fundraising	Brenda Hartkopf (320) 543-2686
Government Relations	Jim Byrne (507) 358-6505 Dr. Paul Anderson (952) 212-6109
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## Minnesota Elk Breeders Association

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

## Calendar of Events

**July 25, 2020** – MnEBA Summer Picnic, Stony Brook Elk Farm, Pequot Lakes, MN

**August 6-8, 2020** – NAEBA Annual Convention & International Antler Competition, Hotel Elegante, Colorado Springs, CO

**January 8-9, 2021** – MnEBA Annual Conference, Crowne Plaza Minneapolis West, Plymouth, MN

**August 26-September 6, 2021** – Minnesota State Fair, St. Paul, MN

## Classified Ads

**For Sale:** NV Elk Modular Handling System, (8) swing gates, (7) slider gates, (2) homemade slider gates, one unit has Manual Squeeze and one unit has AI door. Also Elk-Rite 7000 Squeeze Chute with electric hydraulic unit, 10K for all. Also other elk raising related equipment for sale. Contact Pat Prodzinski at 507-312-0327.

**For Sale:** Elk Rite "Almar 9000 Squeeze Chute" with pump and hoses, \$8,000. Contact Jim Byrne at 507-358-6505.

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

**Services Offered:** Outback Fence & Fabrication is here for all your fencing needs. We specialize in - Exclusion Fencing, Trellis Fencing, Chain Link Fencing, Woven Wire Fencing, Steel and Wood Post Fencing. We fabricate fences and enclosures for applications like Deer, Elk, Bison, Livestock (cattle, horses, goats, sheep, etc.). We are also here for your fabrication needs specializing in - Livestock Equipment (feeders, bunks, cattle gates, buckets, etc.), Repair and Modification (trailers, wagons, tractors, machinery, etc.), Custom Entry and Enclosure Gates, In Shop or On-Site Equipment and Machinery Repair Services. Contact us today with questions or an estimate on your project at 507-951-7632 or [outbackfence@hotmail.com](mailto:outbackfence@hotmail.com). Book for your fencing needs and projects for 2021 now! Visit our website at [www.outbackMN.com](http://www.outbackMN.com).

## MINNESOTA ELK BREEDERS ASSOCIATION

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