

## **Terms of Reference for a study to determine the feasibility of a trial to use wild shot fallow deer carcasses for commercial use and to provide design details of such a potential trial.**

**6 May 2020**

### **Introduction**

Wild fallow deer which were introduced into Tasmania during the 1830s are classified as Partially Protected Wildlife under the *Nature Conservation Act 2002*. Consequently, wild fallow deer can only be harvested using a game licence or crop protection permit. Animals taken under these instruments cannot be traded hence their carcasses are used for personal consumption by shooters (including for pet food), given to friends or they are left to decompose. This scenario differs from that in some other states where wild shot deer can be processed for sale including human consumption.

Fallow deer are farmed in Tasmania and thus must be processed in a manner that meets the requirements of the *Primary Produce Safety Act 2011* and the *Food Act 2003*.

Management of the wild fallow deer herd in Tasmania is complex because of the diversity of outcomes desired by the stakeholders which include the following:

- Recreational hunters desiring to maintain a deer herd as a hunting resource providing trophy heads and meat.
- Farmers whose main business is producing crop and livestock products for commercial sale whilst managing the impacts of browsing wildlife, including deer, to have minimal impact on their farming system. Farmers often charge hunters a fee to access their properties to hunt deer hence this could be considered a small enterprise within their farming business.
- Foresters producing plantation timber desiring minimal impact by browsing wildlife, including deer, whilst trees are establishing and vulnerable to browsing damage.
- For those whose aim is manage land for conservation and to conserve natural values, which in some circumstances can be compromised by damage from wild browsing deer,
- Fallow deer farmers produce and market fallow deer and deer products from captive herds.
- The general community has an interest in wild fallow deer management as their geographic range increases to include peri-urban areas thereby increasing their interaction with the general public which can include collision with vehicles. The general community is also concerned about waste including animals shot and not utilised and animal welfare.

The Hodgman Government made a number of commitments in response to the 2017 Legislative Council inquiry into wild fallow deer in Tasmania. The complete response can be found at <https://dpiw.tas.gov.au/Documents/Government%20Response%20to%20Leg%20Co%20Report%20on%20Wild%20Fallow%20Deer.pdf>

One of these responses is to request the Tasmanian Game Council (formed as a commitment from the above Inquiry) to provide advice on the feasibility of conducting a limited fixed term trial to evaluate the potential for deer farmers and landholders to supply value added wild deer products for the regulated food and restaurant trade.

Following consultation with the Tasmanian Game Council and other stakeholders, the Government is now seeking the services of an independent provider to undertake a study to determine the feasibility of conducting such a trial (the consultancy).

## **Scope of Services**

Undertake investigations and discussions necessary to determine whether it is feasible to conduct a limited fixed term trial to evaluate the potential for deer farmers and landholders to supply value added wild deer products for the regulated food and restaurant trade. It should not be assumed that deer farmers and landholders would need to undertake all or any of the value adding in their own right as they may simply supply field shot carcasses to a supply chain. The determination on feasibility must include reasoned arguments that support the conclusion.

If it is concluded that it is feasible to conduct such a trial to evaluate the potential for deer farmers and landholders to supply value added wild deer products for the regulated food and restaurant trade, develop at least one design for such a trial, including a trial implementation plan.

Whether a trial is ultimately undertaken, and hence the conduct of such a trial, is not in the scope of this consultancy. The outcomes of this consultancy will inform a decision by Government.

### **I. Feasibility Study**

The purpose of the feasibility study is to inform future Government decision-making by undertaking analysis and discussions that will enable a reasoned and rational conclusion as to whether it is feasible to undertake a trial that will evaluate the potential for deer farmers and landholders to supply value added wild deer products for commercial use.

For the purposes of this consultancy, and consistent with the Government's policy commitment, 'commercial use' means for the regulated food and restaurant trade. However, the potential application associated with pet food can also be considered as appropriate.

In assessing feasibility of such a trial it is expected that in addition to all the issues canvassed in relevant parts of the Government response to the Legislative Council review into wild fallow deer (<https://dpiwwe.tas.gov.au/Documents/Government%20Response%20to%20Leg%20Co%20Report%20on%20Wild%20Fallow%20Deer.pdf>) at least the following issues will be considered in terms of the ability of a trial to assess the relative benefits and costs (or impacts and opportunities) of providing wild shot venison for commercial use (and markets) on:

- The values and activities of all stakeholders including, farmers, recreational hunters, foresters, conservationists, commercial deer farmers and the general community.
- The economic value of game hunting in Tasmania and any impacts on or opportunities for, recreational hunting and arrangements between landholders and hunters.
- The profitability and viability of Tasmania's deer farming industry and downstream businesses and jobs that rely on those farms together with the ability to supply a year round wild shot venison product.

- Policing and enforcement given that wild shot venison would have a realisable commercial value.
- The regulation, quality control and product differentiation of wild shot venison and venison products entering the Tasmanian market for either human consumption or in pet food and the impacts on the markets (and reputation) of farmed deer products.

The following associated issues have been raised by stakeholders and hence could be considered, and/or commentary provided on, by the service provider, as appropriate:

- Risks associated with harvesting wild meat from deer;
- Similar examples using other wild shot species or products;
- The Tasmanian Brand, product quality control and potential processing capacity;
- Deer herd composition and structure;
- Potential local and regional business and employment;
- Identification of, and potential competition with, imported and local wild or farmed venison products;
- Product traceability.

It is noted however, that determining the actual financial viability of, or market development for, wild shot deer products, ie a specific business case, is not the role of Government or purpose of this consultancy; rather that would be for a business proponent(s) to determine should the activity ultimately be approved by Government.

The feasibility study report will include findings, analysis of impacts and opportunities, conclusions and recommendations in relation to the feasibility of conducting a trial.

The findings of the feasibility study will inform a decision by Government as to whether a trial will proceed.

## **2. Trial Design**

The wild deer herd in Tasmania is managed for multiple outcomes. If it is determined that it is feasible to conduct a trial, develop at least one trial design and implementation plan that is capable of answering at least the following questions (below) assuming the number of deer taken and thus available for commercial use is determined by the number of deer required to be taken to meet desired crop protection outcomes. This means that the potential supply of deer carcasses for commercial use is not driven by a commercial market(s), but rather by using and value-adding any currently under-utilised deer resource made available from achieving farming, forestry, conservation and hunting outcomes.

The trial design should also take account of issues raised during the feasibility study component of this project.

2.1 - What is the impact on commercial farmers of allowing deer carcasses taken to be used for a commercial purpose?

- 2.2 - What is the impact on recreational deer hunters and the wild fallow deer herd of allowing deer carcasses to be used for a commercial purpose?
- 2.3 - What is the impact on commercial forestry businesses of allowing deer carcasses to be used for a commercial purpose?
- 2.4 - What is the impact on achieving natural resource conservation outcomes of allowing deer carcasses taken to be used for a commercial purpose?
- 2.5 - What is the impact on commercial fallow deer farming businesses of allowing deer carcasses taken to be used for a commercial purpose?
- 2.6 - What are the views of the general community of allowing deer carcasses to be used for a commercial purpose?
- 2.7 - What is the impact of establishing a commercial value for wild shot deer on the ability to effectively police relevant legislations and regulations including the *Wildlife (General) Regulations 2010*, *Wildlife (Deer Farming) Regulations 2010*, *Primary Produce Safety Act 2011* and the *Food Act 2003*? This should include and not be limited to, managing any risks associated with withholding periods of agricultural chemicals.
- 2.8 - Should royalties be paid to the Crown for deer carcasses used for commercial purposes and if so what factors should be considered in determining their value?
- 2.9 – What is the potential local and regional economic value and benefits and costs?

## Outputs and timelines

1. A concise feasibility study report that presents a reasoned argument regarding the feasibility of undertaking a limited fixed term trial to evaluate the potential for deer farmers and landholders to supply value added wild deer products for the regulated food and restaurant trade.
2. At least one trial design (if more than one provided a comparative analysis of the alternatives) developed to answer the above questions (2.1 - 2.9).
3. A trial implementation plan that addresses issues including but not limited to duration, cost, evaluation and resources required.

The above outputs are required to be delivered in a draft report by 5.00pm on Friday 3 July 2020 with the final report delivered by 5.00pm on Friday 17 July 2020.

## Submission and content of Quotes

Quotes should include an outline of the methodology proposed to undertake this work, experience of the providers undertaking the work and cost.

Quotes should be submitted electronically to Robin Thompson by email: [robin.thompson@dpiwve.tas.gov.au](mailto:robin.thompson@dpiwve.tas.gov.au) before 5pm on Friday 22 May 2020.



## **Evaluation of Quotes**

Quotations will be assessed against the equally weighted criteria of appropriateness of proposed methodology, demonstrated experience of the providers and value for money.

### **Contact:**

Robin Thompson, Manager Game Services Tasmania  
Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment  
Phone: 03 6777 2157  
Email: [robin.thompson@dpipwe.tas.gov.au](mailto:robin.thompson@dpipwe.tas.gov.au)