

New Technology endorses the importance of Wapiti.

Big numbers of finishing deer on Landcorp's Stuart Farm in the Te Anau basin provided compelling support for the use of Wapiti terminal sires for venison production. The Farm IQ fieldday held on farm in April 2015 not only highlighted the higher killing weights and earlier kill dates of Wapiti cross animals but as farm manager, Luke Wright said the data around yield was "myth busting".

Landcorp's Stuart Farm is home to a Focus Genetics Red Deer Stud but also runs a commercial mob of 3,800 red hinds of which 40% are mated to Wapiti sires of Focus Genetics Wapiti. The large numbers of finishing deer on the farm plus the different classes and breed types pose challenges for recording. However as Paul McGill (Farm Innovation Manager at Landcorp Farming Ltd) could demonstrate, that with EID and Farm IQ software the information can be traced and analysed at the push of a button.

The chilled season for venison runs until early November to coincide with peak "game season" demand in Europe. A premium is paid for producing venison in the chilled season.

The table below reflects the deer finished by Stuart farm during the 2014 chilled season.

Breed	Tally	Average Processing Date	Average Carcass weight	Proportion killed in chilled season
Red Stags	306	27 October 2014	54.1kg	38%
Wapiti x Hinds	236	20 October 2014	54.5kg	48%
Wapiti x Stags	463	7 October 2014	56.4kg	80%

Not only were 80% of the Wapiti cross stags processed in the chilled season compared to just 38% of the Red stags but their average carcass weight was more than 2kg higher and their average processing date 3 weeks earlier. This all has a huge impact on profit to the farm. The actual amount is quantified in the table below which covers the period beyond the chilled season and up to the end of March.

Breed	Tally	Average Processing Date	Average Carcass weight	Gross Margin
Red Stags	812	2 December 2014	53.9kg	27c/kgDM
Wapiti x Hinds	492	5 December 2014	54.1kg	25c/kgDM
Wapiti x Stags	576	23 October 2014	56.0kg	36c/kgDM

The Gross margins are from Farmax based on the 15th of May starting liveweights and a store price per kilogram for the three groups of deer. Red Stags 69kg liveweight at \$4.00/kg. Wapiti x Hinds 74kg liveweight at \$3.80/kg. Wapiti stags 78kg liveweight at \$4.00/kg.

Back in the 1980's Dr Ken Drew was able to demonstrate that Wapiti cross yearlings yielded higher than their red yearling counterparts. Over the decades there has been a perception develop that Wapiti cross being a later maturing animal was more leggy, more rangy and more bone. This perception is a total myth and the FarmIQ data from 1700 yearlings grown on Stuart farm dispel the myth and back up that original work of Dr Ken Drew. The Saleable Meat (SM) was calculated from weighing the boned out venison from all 1705 carcasses.

Breed	Tally	Average Carcass weight	SM/Head	SM Yield
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Red Stags	738	54.0kg	42.0kg	77.7%
Wapiti x Hinds	436	54.1kg	42.6kg	78.7%
Wapiti x Stags	531	56.1kg	44.2kg	78.8%