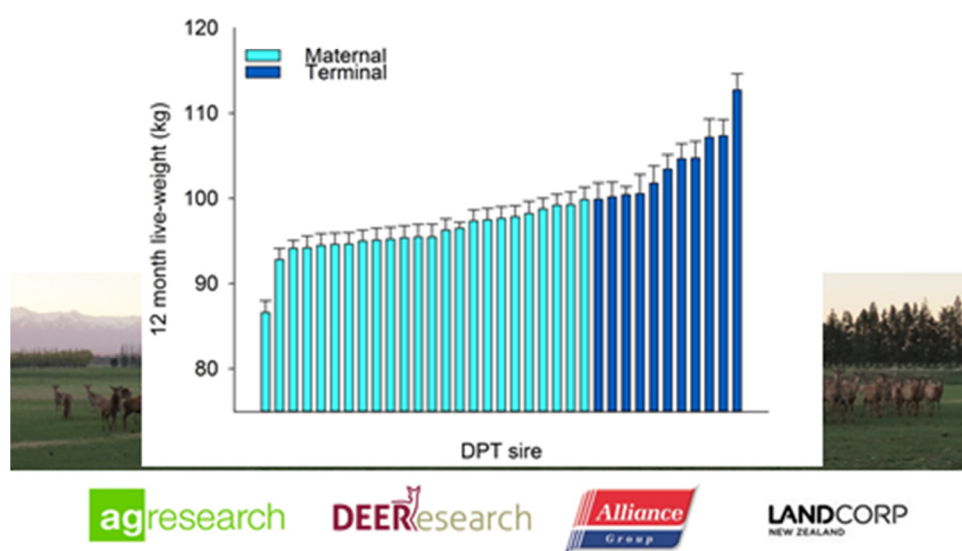


## DPT – How do Wapiti stack up?

At the Deer Farmers Conference held in at the end of May in Napier the first public presentation of results from the DPT (Deer progeny Test) were made. These results were the evaluation of progeny following the AI of almost 2500 hinds over three years. 35 sires were used in total and 11 of these were terminal/Wapiti type sires. This was a huge and very expensive project undertaken by the industry with a massive and valuable amount of data generated. One of the primary aims of the programme was to provide a platform to evaluate BVs across breed types. This work is almost complete but in the interim there were two very significant data sets presented. The table below highlights the position progeny of Wapiti terminal sires occupy at 12 months compared to the progeny of the fastest growing Red maternal sires. The graph below shows **English and Eastern** sires as **light blue** while all the **dark blue** are **wapiti sires**.

## Live weight traits – 12 month weight

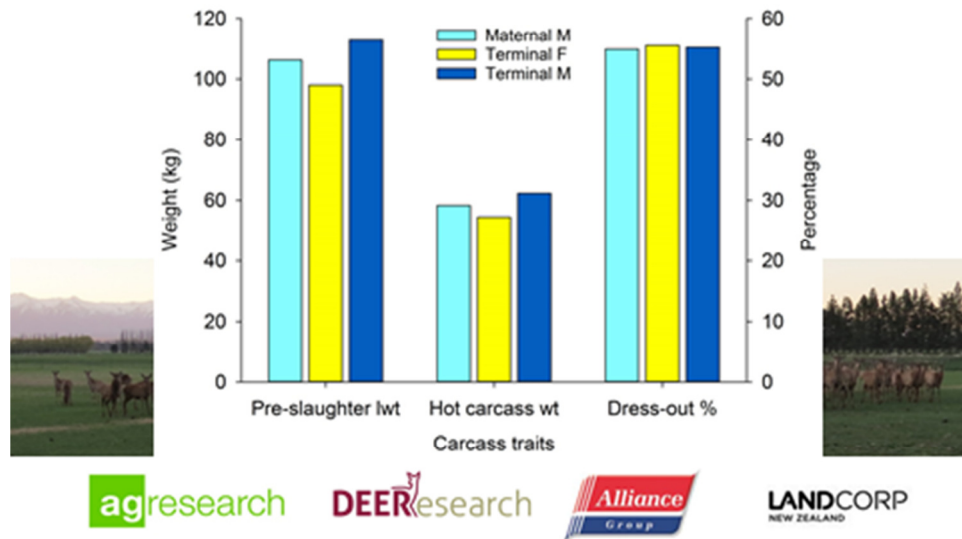


Note that the slowest growing Wapiti progeny were still better than the fastest growing Eastern red progeny. While most of you will say that this is no surprise to you these results provide a powerful independent evaluation which is based on sound science. As a breed the above table also highlights an exciting point for us. The scope for us to improve is huge as seen by the variation in range of 12month weights within the terminal progeny. There are some breeders within the red fraternity that have spent millions of dollars in recent years to improve red deer growth rates. In comparison Wapiti breeders are only just starting to use selection pressure to improve growth rates.

The very real on farm data of Landcorp's Stuart farm that is published on our website puts more weight behind the DPT data. A commercial deer farm finishing over 1700 weaners (mixture of red and wapiti cross) - 80% of the Wapiti cross stags processed in the chilled season compared to just 38% of the Red stags, 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.

A large part of the DPT data focused around venison and carcass composition. There has been a perception develop/been promoted in recent years that “lanky” Wapiti cross fawns are “all bone”. The DPT involved hundreds of the progeny being boned out at slaughter to look at the yield or dress-out %. The results are presented in the table below.

## Whole carcass traits by sex & sire-type



Clearly there is no difference in yield based on dressed-out percentage. This was once again supported by the boned out yield of Landcorp Stuart’s 1700 weaners where the Wapiti cross progeny had 1% more meat than the straight reds.

In terms of carcass composition the data analysed from the DPT gives breeders a very practical and useful tool to use in selection. Eye Muscle Area (EMA) is not only a heritable trait but has a good correlation with the proportion of venison in the higher value primals. Hence ultrasound scanning for EMA provides a very good measure for breeders to select for more loin and more venison overall.

There is much more information yet to be analysed from the DPT data set but certainly the information to date is very positive for our Wapiti breed.