

Farmers Helping Farmers: Advance Parties in Action

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Background

- **Two properties**
 - Deer finishing, velveting and sheep block; Gillespie Road
 - Deer breeding and cattle block; Dunrobin
- **Stock**
 - 850 hinds
 - Finish all offspring
 - 170 velvetting stags
 - 2300 ewes
 - 700 hoggets
 - 44 breeding cows
 - 80 finishing cattle

Opportunities

- Improve weaning percentage
- Improve weaner growth rates
- Lift velvet weights



Changes Made

- Increased proportion of hinds mated to Wapiti; from 150 to 230-250, and reduced hind numbers by 50 animals
- Brought weaning date forward from 20th March to 10th March
- More frequent weighing of young stock
- Break feed weaners on winter crop rather than block graze
- Reduced target slaughter weight from 100 to 95kg to ensure all yearlings killed by end of March
- Increased the target 2 year old velvet weight needed to be retained in the herd. From 2.5 to 2.8kg

Benefits Gained

Scanning percentage of first calvers:

- 2015; 83%
- 2016; 84%
- 2017; 88%

Now weigh the yearling hinds mid January; need to be over 87kg to be retained in breeding herd

Benefits Gained

Break Feeding Crop and Provision of Lucerne Baleage:

- Better Utilisation
- Weaners in better condition at end of winter



Benefits Gained

Improved Weaner Growth Rates:

- **2015/16 Season;**
 - 21% killed before Christmas
 - Ave carcass weight = 55kg
 - Still had over 10% to kill after end of March
- **2016/17 Season**
 - 37% killed before Christmas
 - Ave carcass weight = 53.5kg
 - All killed by end of March