

Hill Country Management

Group discussions and advice on hill country management

1 Controlling livestock

Subdivision of gullies

Fencing

Paddock size for pasture management
Fencing is expensive but valuable for controlling pasture quality and mob size.
If can get local council help with finances, put in to benefit stock management
Utilise for laneways where possible, consider flow from fawning blocks to late lactation
higher quality specialist feed.

Flood gates and waterways

Needed to fence off gullies that flood/wash out. Flood gates got washed away letting deer escape.
fencing waterways can lead to decreased size of the deer block.
Often not feasible to fence off all waterways.

Fence line pacing and erosion

less mobs side by side
Fence design - double skin
Enviro wands - electrified wires that stick out perpendicular from the fence

Feeding

Feeding hinds on hills during lactation.
Feeding at specific times one of the main challenges - hot/dry summers and cold winters.
Many farms with sheep, cattle and deer have not made deer a high priority so not fed adequately all year round. Advance Party has helped change focus so that more special feeds are being put in for deer now.
Better summer nutrition for hinds leads to better fawn weights and better, more compact mating.
Specialist lactation/weaning forages (lucerne/chicory/plantain/clovers)
Get good advice from the right people with local knowledge.

Pasture management and feed quality

Cattle with fawning hinds to maintain pasture quality.
Livestock integration important.
Hard to maintain quality in December-Feb during peak lactation and fawn starting to eat grass.
Cropping and integration with cattle may help with this.
Strategic use of fert on more manageable areas.
Right species of clover and manage grazing and fert to support clovers.

Regrassing

Spray and pray.
Use of crops in grass renewal programme

Rye corn

Rape

Use of mixed species forages including herbs and clovers in spray and pray programme. -

Not perfect but a lot better than what was there before.

Regulations/Perceptions

Perceptions

Landscapes (e.g. Mackenzie Country)

Representation on decision making panels, influencing attitudes and behaviours.

Not able to develop new areas for deer or make improvements to home farm due to changing the aesthetics of the landscape. (DoC and Forest and Bird wouldn't allow it).

Needs more robust science and public education

Industry support and workshops

Environmental

Regulation, Plan Change 6

Nutrient budgets, Erosion control

Land Environment plans, Whole Farm plan

Work with local regional bodies and utilise free tools that are available along with financial assistance for fencing and planting

Nutrient transfer on hills (sediment, water flow, camping) - targeted fert placement, e.g. ridges only.

Poaching

Check fencing - proof of exit

Work with police boss

Cameras

Offer rewards

Health and safety

Contractors working on steeper country

Helicopter operators

Staff

Animal Health

Eczema

Ticks

Ryegrass Staggers

Animal Handling

"Haven't weighed a deer in 20 years and can't see any benefit in doing it"

Deer get brought in maybe 3 times a year. As long as the hinds are in reasonable condition and good conformation they will be retained.

Stock movement

On some farms there is EID recorded movement of hinds between paddocks. especially during fawning.

Fencing can be a major challenge for both hinds and fawns

Some paddocks have higher weaning percent than others but difficult to identify the causes.