



DEER INDUSTRY ADVANCE PARTY

Guidelines for Facilitators

22/08/2017

Contents

Abbreviations:.....	3-2
1. Making things better	3-3
2. Passion2Profit (P2P).....	3-4
2.1. Advance Party concept.....	3-4
3 Advance Parties.....	3-5
3.1 The Deer Industry New Zealand Role	3-5
3.2 The Chair's role	3-5
3.3 The Facilitator's role	3-5
4 The Mechanics of an Advance Party.....	4-7
4.1 Forming an Advance Party	4-7
4.2 What an Advance Party looks like	4-7
4.3 Requirements for Advance Party Members	4-8
4.4 Requirements for an Advance Party Chair	4-9
4.5 Requirements to be a Deer Industry Advance Party Facilitator (Job Description)	4-10
4.5.1 Facilitator Training.....	4-11
4.5.2 Funding Advance Parties.....	4-11
5 Tools, Resources and Data.....	5-13
5.1 Using Templates	5-15
5.2 Collecting Information	5-15
6 Running the Group and Meetings.....	6-17
6.1 The first meeting.....	6-17
6.2 Through the Advance Party process	6-18
7 Communication to the wider community (& other Stakeholders)	7-21
8 Advance Party Success.....	8-22
9 Appendix 1: Templates	23
10 Appendix 2: Advance Party Meeting Guidelines.....	26
10.1 Part 1: Diagnosis and planning.....	26
10.2 Part 2: Starting the Advance Party on farm.....	27
10.3 Successive Advance Party Meetings	29

Abbreviations:

AgR	AgResearch Limited
AH Plan	Animal Health Plan
AI	Artificial Insemination
AP	Advance Party
BCS	Body Condition Score
CBA	Cost Benefit Analysis
DINZ	Deer Industry New Zealand
DFA or NZDFA	New Zealand Deer Farmers Association
EID	Electronic Identification device
ID	Identification
ITO	Industry Training Organisation
JD	Johne's disease or Paratuberculosis
KPI	Key Performance Indicators
P2P	Passion to Profit
P2P AG	Passion to Profit Advisory Group
PGP	Primary Growth Partnership
PM	Project Manager
R&D	Research and Development
RFID	Radio Frequency Identification Device
LEP	Land and Environment Plan
SFF	Sustainable Farming Fund

1. Making things better

The New Zealand agricultural industry has a long history of helping to make people better farmers, using tech-transfer, extension and discussion groups to motivate and inform farmers. While these groups are good at bringing people together and have helped make progress in the industry, they have seldom provided the tailor-made suggestions needed to make significant changes on individual farms.

Deer farmers know that there are things that can be done to improve deer performance. And deer farmers are also the best people to work together to come up with the practical solutions to the issues individual farmers have.

That is why, as part of a broader productivity push call Passion2Profit (P2P), Deer Industry New Zealand (DINZ) is funding and encouraging practice change groups which we're calling **Advance Parties**.

Advance Parties are small groups of farmers working together to share their productivity challenges and come up with the answers to apply on individual farms. A Facilitator is used to organise these groups and to make sure each participant gets value out of their attendance.

This booklet has been designed to provide the guidance needed for the group Chair and Facilitator to run a successful Advance Party.

The Chair will be member of the group who has been given the responsibility of leading meetings, while the job of the Facilitator is to provide guidance to the group, but not direct leadership. Advance Party leadership and ideas for change should come from the group itself as the responsibility for change lies with the participants.

[By being part of an advance party a farmer will have the opportunity to get "More deer, heavier, earlier".]

Being part of an Advance Party gives deer farmers the opportunity to get "More deer, heavier, earlier".

2. Passion2Profit (P2P)

The 'P2P' Programme, "Passion to Profit", is a deer industry initiative aimed at improving profitability for farmer with deer and therefore improving the sustainability of the industry for generations to come.

The deer industry core principles are to produce high quality deer products with integrity, based on good farming, good processing, good marketing and good science. The industry is working hard to grow and recognises the need to lift productivity across the sector. The P2P program is about the business of unlocking the potential for increasing the revenue achieved per animal, through better effectiveness at all steps in the chain. From June 2015 Passion2Profit is co-funded by Deer Industry New Zealand and the Ministry for Primary Industries Primary Growth Partnership.

2.1. Advance Party concept

When the deer industry considers why many aspects of its productivity have not changed, most agree that it is not due to lack of research & development, new technology opportunities or unintelligent farmers and marketers.

In a large part, it is simply that, despite what we now know about farming, the way the deer industry produces deer and deer products has not changed much since the systems for deer farming were developed in the 1980s. There has been insufficient use of the knowledge we have to bring about 'practice change'.

The challenge is to do something different that will mean the information we have will be used to bring about real change on farm.

Experience and research shows that on-farm profit can be increased by optimising deer health, feeding for deer growth and improving the genetic make-up of deer herds. We also have a network of highly skilled people in the deer industry that mean given the tools and support they need, our people will work out the best way to get the job done well.

Advance Parties are a new way of working together with these resources to bring about change on individual farms. They will use the skills of people in the deer industry to develop and demonstrate new or different ways of doing things which add value and profit. The groups will also share what they have learnt with those in their wider deer industry community so that everyone should benefit. Deer Industry New Zealand believes that this initiative has the potential to bring about the level of practice change the industry needs at this time.

From Mid-2014 to mid-2017 an Advance Party development project is funded by Deer Industry New Zealand and The Ministry for Primary Industries Sustainable Farming Fund.

3 Advance Parties

Advance Parties are a well-supported, small group of motivated farmers who are committed to working together to share their productivity challenges and come up with the practical solutions for their own farms. They are catalysts for change focussed on identifying and implementing opportunities to lift profit on individual farms, consistent with the P2P and its mission of “*More deer, heavier, earlier & better*”. Advance Party members demonstrate gains they have made to their wider community and nationally which in turn will encourage wider adoption to increase profit.

Advance Parties can be project focussed, with defined goals and objectives to be achieved in a fixed time period (e.g. 6 months, or 3years).

An Advance Party should:

- Identify what is possible
- Demonstrate what can be achieved
- Explain how to “get there” and assist the group to do so
- Instil confidence in the group and the wider community
- Provide the majority of farmers with the means to adopt the change on their own properties which collectively will create a national lift in profitability.

An Advance Party is not a traditional discussion group. Group members must be committed to shared personal and farm business development, sharing their data, methods, plans, results, problems and successes. They are not for the group alone, but are a means to test and refine opportunities for profit; and demonstrate those methods (and their limitations) to the wider deer farming community.

Advance Parties will be supported by DINZ and run collaboratively by a Chair nominated from within the group members and an independent Facilitator.

3.1 The Deer Industry New Zealand Role

The role of Deer Industry New Zealand is to provide financial and physical resources and practical support for the management of Advance Parties. DINZ Project Manager(s) will provide oversight and monitoring of the Advance Party Initiative. They are the first point of contact for the Advance Party Facilitators and Chairs who are seeking answers to questions or guidance.

3.2 The Chair’s role

Each Advance Party will appoint a Chair from within their members to lead their group. The Chair will lead meetings and work with the Facilitator to organise meetings and resources. The Chair will also be an active member of the Advance Party who should be working to implement improvements on their own farm. The Chair will provide feedback to Deer Industry New Zealand on the Facilitator’s performance.

3.3 The Facilitator’s role

A Facilitator will be used to organise the Advance Party. Good communication and time management skills are key. They will be an independent person, chosen for their skill in the agricultural sector, who is able to work with a group of individuals to guide them through a

process of implementing change on their farm. It is expected that Facilitators will be paid for their time and expertise. It is expected that the group will agree on the best person to be their Facilitator; DINZ is also available to provide advice and direction regarding suitable expertise for this role.

The Facilitator's role is to coordinate the group by following a well-structured process. A Facilitator is not to advise a group where their focus should be or to give direct answers to questions, but rather to create an atmosphere where the group members collectively develop and brainstorm potential issues and solutions themselves to assist other group members. It is the role of the Facilitator to provide guidance to a group that is struggling to define or solve issues by giving the group the structure and encouragement it needs to find the answers from within and provide access to resource available from the wider community.

All successful rural programmes have a key individual who maintains the drive or focus within any group. The Facilitator is there to act as this motivator for the group. A good Facilitator will encourage all participants to speak up and participate in a positive way. They must be able to monitor the feeling in the group and balance personality types to ensure everyone is heard and can contribute so that desired outcomes are achieved. They should be someone who is not afraid to pull people back into line when it is required.

The Facilitator will keep a record of key objectives, issues and statements made within Advance Party meetings to ensure that discussions can be tailored around topics that are relevant to the member/s in question. This is also kept as a record of the Advance Party meeting and provided to DINZ and circulated to group members post meeting.

Given the key objective is to support the group members to make changes and report on the effect of the changes, another task for the Facilitator is to assist with the 'project' setting process and to ensure group members are aware of their responsibilities to capture information about the changes individuals make.

Alongside the guidance found in this handbook, training will be available for Facilitators to ensure that they have the tools and understanding they need to make their groups successful. This includes information about the P2P programme and technical training required to ensure the Facilitator is competent and confident in aspects of P2P (e.g. using the deer growth curves, familiar with DeerSelect or other tools that will be developed by the P2P programme) that could be used to support the group members.

4 The Mechanics of an Advance Party

4.1 Forming an Advance Party

An Advance Party starts with a group of farmers who have a common interest (e.g. profitability, a certain breed of deer or an interest in improved deer health) and who are motivated to bring change about for themselves and share what they learn with others.

Groups can either 'self-form' or they can be brought together by someone within the deer industry (e.g. local DFA Branch Chairman, venison marketer; veterinary practice), who recognises the opportunity for change. In the latter case it is likely that a champion or mentor would be identified by the deer industry and who would encourage a group to form with their assistance. Champions or mentors are likely to be someone who is renowned as a good farmer by their peers or someone who others look to as a leader in their community.

The optimum number of properties in an Advance Party is 8-10 (membership should include business partners –Father/Sons/Daughters, Husband/Wife, Owner/Manager).

4.2 What an Advance Party looks like

Advance Parties are a new initiative and the concept will be tested and refined over time to ensure they are doing the job we need them to do. No two will be the same and they will need to be flexible enough to ensure that they are owned by group members and to allow members to express themselves, but also sufficiently coordinated so there is some consistency between all Advance Parties and the opportunity to learn from each other without causing confusion, e.g. everyone should be using the same metrics or definitions.

There are some basic ground rules for all groups:

- Advance Parties need to be supportive of P2P and working toward improved profitability through better feeding, health, genetics and/or environmental management.
- Advance Parties will form around common areas of interest or similar business types (e.g. breeders, finishers, velvetters), those with similar problems/opportunities who are located in the same district or those who have similar geophysical attributes.
- All group members will work constructively to develop trust and a high level of comfort with each other.
- Advance Party members and the group must be willing to freely share data and information and agree to work with common tools to assist in sharing data between groups.
- Advance Parties will work with their local Deer Farmers Association (DFA). The DFA are a critical link between the Advance Party, wider community and DINZ.
- Advance Parties should be taking advantage of the support and expertise of other deer industry groups and should work with these groups to develop strong relationships; e.g. producer groups working with processing and exporting companies, specialist breed societies (e.g. EWSNZ), high country discussion groups, deer improvement networks, venison marketing company initiated groups, existing local discussion groups running via DFA branches etc.

4.3 Requirements for Advance Party Members

To ensure Advance Parties are fair and given the chance to be successful, we have set some key requirements for group members who will participate. Individual Advance Parties will discuss and agree how they will work together when they form, but from an industry perspective, the following commitments by individuals are important:

REQUIREMENTS FOR PARTICIPATION	The why or what
Willingness to share information (production and financial) on time with other members of the Advance Party	It is unfair if some group members are not supplying information when others are.
Willingness to share what is learned (both positive and negative) with the wider community and nationally.	<p>Unless what is learned is shared and picked up more widely than the Advance Party, the initiative will have failed.</p> <p>Communicating to the wider community does not necessarily mean making speeches. It's about being willing to share wins, losses and limitations</p>
Willing to establish rules of participation, and enforce the rules.	Agree on level of participation in order to ensure active membership, and be prepared to ask members to leave who are not active.
Commitment to participate in an annual event that shows the community what the Advance Party is working on.	Community engagement is an essential component of encouraging practise change among farmers – allowing others to see observe practical change on Advance Party members properties will encourage change amongst others.
Commitment to attend & participate in meetings	Estimated to be up to 10 per year
Preparedness to move towards monitoring & recording animal ID and assessing pastures	Initially measurement is envisaged to be simple so that group members can 'walk before they run'.
Commitment to report on time	Timely measurement is important otherwise progress cannot be quantified

REQUIREMENTS FOR PARTICIPATION	The why or what
Spend some time on-farm with the Facilitator	
Willing and motivated to engage and be open to change, constructive criticism and trying new concepts	Group members need to have some motivation to change in a well-supported environment
Enjoy the journey	Advance Parties are about positive, creative change. They should have elements of fun and enjoyment.

4.4 Requirements for an Advance Party Chair

The Chair will open the meetings and work with the Facilitator to ensure the group works together to develop their own ideas and solutions.

The Chair will be chosen by the group themselves.

The Key responsibilities for the Chairman are:

- To work with the Facilitator to provide an environment where group members commit to seeking practice change in line with the strategic priorities identified in P2P.
- To organise the meeting schedule and arrange for facilities/catering to support meetings.
- To work with facilitator to ensure adequate records are kept at meetings to track group activities and hold everyone accountable.
- To ensure costs for the running the group are being managed
- It is expected that as the group develops over time the Advance Party members will begin to run their own meetings as the process is understood, with reducing input from a facilitator. The Chair at this time will take a take a leading role in this, with facilitator still present to support when required.
- To report to DINZ on the performance of the Facilitator.

The Chairman should:

- Be able and available to attend all group meetings.
- Be familiar with and supportive of the objectives of P2P

4.5 Requirements to be a Deer Industry Advance Party Facilitator (Job Description)

A Facilitator is employed to organise and coordinate Advance Parties following a well-structured process.

The Facilitator must not lead the Advance Party but must create an atmosphere and provide access to resources so that the group members can collectively develop and brainstorm potential issues and solutions themselves to assist other group members.

A Facilitator is chosen by the Advance Party members with the assistance of DINZ.

The Advance Party Project Manager will be the first point of contact for Facilitators at DINZ.

The Key responsibilities for an Advance Party Facilitator are:

- To provide an environment where group members commit to seeking practice change in line with the strategic priorities identified in P2P.
- To facilitate discussions among the group to allow group members to identify relevant production issues and the solution to the issues.
- To keep notes of the Advance Party sessions and provide to DINZ and circulate to members within 10 days of last meeting.
- To assist with the collection of information on the changes made on individual properties and feed this through to the designated collection point.
- To work with individual group members to implement the practice change recommended by the Advance Party.
- To share analysis of the performance records with the group.
- To identify relevant expertise that can be brought into the group to assist with productivity solutions.
- To liaise with Deer Industry New Zealand and report on the Advance Party progress and issues.
- To provide assistance with publicising the groups' endeavours, suggesting media stories that could be produced for circulation.

As a minimum a Facilitator must:

- Be able to attend up to 6 group meetings per annum.
- Be a good communicator and efficient time management skills to keep all informed well in advance of sessions.
- Be able to visit individual producers as required by the group
- Be familiar with and supportive of the objectives of P2P
- Have relevant experience in farm management/animal health/or related disciplines.
- Have a good network of contacts amongst agricultural service providers.
- Be familiar with the requirements of productivity measurement and recording.

4.5.1 Facilitator Training

Training is available for Facilitator's to ensure that they have the tools and understanding they need to make their groups successful. As a minimum requirement all Facilitators will receive:

Training	Description
P2P Background training	<p>To ensure that Facilitators are familiar with the objectives and purpose of the P2P programme</p> <p>A half-day session with a P2P AG representative on the background of the 'Profit 2 Passion' programme and key objectives</p>
Overview of Deer Industry tools	<p>Facilitators should be adept at handling Excel and Word to ensure meeting notes and projects are recorded from each Advance Party session and able to be displayed/written up on the Advance Party website at www.ap.org.nz</p> <p>Ap.org.nz – Is a central repository for Advance Party members' 'projects'.</p> <p>Projects and individual production records can be displayed on this website for other Advance Party members to view if the individuals agree.</p>
Deer Industry Website tools	<p>The Productivity Improvement “Deer Hub” is accessible through the DINZ website and provides free access to all DINZ held resources for improving productivity (including deer health/genetics/nutrition, herd management, regulatory obligations) www.deernz.org/deerhub. These tools include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deerfeedapp • Growth charts • Growth calculators • Performance Analysis Sheets • Deer Facts <p>Deerresearch.co.nz is a repository of historical deer industry research papers for those who wish to study the background science on production topics.</p>
Health and Safety	<p>Deer Industry New Zealand will provide appropriate guidance for health and safety procedures for events. Facilitators as contractors for DINZ will have duties that they will have to discharge as organisers of an event.</p>

4.5.2 Funding Advance Parties

DINZ is providing funding to support a number of Advance Parties each year. Other groups can seek alternative sources of funding for sponsorship. The funding is provided to support

employing the group Facilitator, meeting expenses and accessing expertise and tools for the group.

Deer Industry New Zealand and The Ministry for Primary Industries Sustainable Farming Fund co-funded Advance Parties from mid 2014 to mid 2017.

The P2P Primary Growth Partnership funds Advance Parties from Mid 2017 to mid 2022.

5 Tools, Resources and Data

The deer industry has an extensive array of resources for members of Advance Parties to use to improve the profitability of their deer farm. The Facilitator should be familiar with these resources tools and know how to access them.

Knowledge	Specifics	Description
Industry tools	The Deer Hub	DINZ website www.deernz.org/deerhub
	DINZ personnel and experts	Producer Manager, DEERSelect Manager, Deer Health Project Manager, etc
	DeerSelect	DINZ sire stag BV reference selection tool deernz.org/deerselect
	DeerPro	Advice on the management of Johne's disease (JD) in farmed deer http://www.johnes.org.nz/ Plus individual venison production reports.
Industry Publications	Deer Industry Manual	Guide to deer farming in New Zealand (Hard copy available)
	JD-one Manual and booklet	Understanding Johne's Disease (JD) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a technical manual for JD control in farmed deer under NZ Pastoral Conditions - A farmer manual to aid in the control of JD in farmed deer
	Deer Facts	A folder of fact sheets prepared with information on recommended practice for the wide array for farm management decisions.
	Landcare Manual	Minimising and mitigating the effect of deer farming on the environment (hard copy available)
	Body Condition Scoring Sheet	Copies available from DINZ and on www.deernz.org
	Venison Growth Curves	Hard copies available from DINZ. On-line calculator for venison growth curves available here: http://apps.deernz.org.nz/VenisonGrowthCurves/ Young hind curves here: http://deernz.org/deer-growth-curves
	Deer Industry News	Industry bi-monthly magazine full of industry information. www.deernz.org/publications
Third Party tools	Farm	Data management tools for recording individual

Knowledge	Specifics	Description
	Management Software	animal and production data are becoming increasingly common, the deer industry will be working alongside service providers to ensure standardisation of terminology and key performance indicators across the various services available.
Advance Party specifics	DINZ Project manager(s) (PM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PM oversees the programme. - The PM has expertise in P2P and the operation of Advance Parties and can explain how to get the best out of the process. - Data collation and analysis support. DINZ will provide data/project templates and formats for recording to ensure standardisation.
Specialist knowledge	Veterinarians, Agronomist, EID specialist, genetics specialist, or skilled farmer	Specialists should be accessed for focussed areas of need for the whole group. They should attend meetings to inform and provide support. DINZ can provide contact details for specialists
Research and Development	DEEResearch	<p>DEEResearch funds scientific research into deer specific activities specifically from AgResearch, Universities and Consortium's.</p> <p>Farmers have access to the latest science developments either directly from the research teams or via science reports/releases: www.deeresearch.org</p>
Industry Best Practice Information	Land and Environment Planning (LEP)	On farm review of at risk areas. Professional assistance is provided to offer suggestions for mitigation. The goal is to complete the full Industry LEP plan (level 1-3)
	Animal Health Planning	Annual Health Review. An individually tailored, annually reviewed plan is developed for the specific farm operation with professional assistance on-line workbook available at www.deernz.org/annual-health-review
	Hazards & Farm Risk Assessment	Identification, assessment and management of farm business risk. This includes completion of an on-farm hazards register in line with MBIE requirements
	Genetics	Analysis of current genetics of herds/stock within the business. This includes a review of objectives and the opportunity for improved genetics to assist in achieving farm objectives. Support from DEERSelect manager is also provided to review existing plans and

Knowledge	Specifics	Description
		to aid development moving forward
	Feeding	Analysis of farm feed curve through Farmax or similar programme as programme develops or as required by individual objectives Identification of growth rate targets for various genotypes-hard copy tool
	Technology	On farm analysis of the business opportunities through technology adoptions. E.g. RFID, scales, drafting systems. This includes a cost/benefit analysis for the business.

More resources will be added as they become available.

5.1 Using Templates

All Advance Parties will be encouraged to use common templates for the recording and analysis of data so that there is consistent approach to data management within and between Advance Parties. Using common templates will ensure some consistency for and between Advance Party members. These can be found at ap.org.nz

In principle a project record will need to include:

- A description of what's required to be measured (i.e. the must haves)
- The format around how and when measurements will be taken
- The tools needed to achieve efficient measurement (best practice measurement)
- A calculation of profitability
- An analysis to evaluate the measurements; asking questions like:
 - Did I make the right management call?
 - Was the timing right?
 - Was it effective and did it fit with the plan?
 - Have I covered off potential future risks?
 - What have I learnt from this?
 - Can it be applied consistently and was it cost effective?
 - Has my profitability been enhanced?

A table has been developed to help the group formulate their own templates and is given in Appendix 1. A series of templates can be developed from this table depending on the specific objectives of the Advance Party. The table is divided into; Plan development, Measurement, Evaluation, Planning, Tools, KPIs and Other.

This information will provide the basic template for the group. The Facilitator should then work with the group to add extra information to the template to ensure that all of the data needed to monitor the group's objectives is recorded.

5.2 Collecting Information

All members of an Advance Party will need to provide and share the information about their farms during the Advance Party process. Different data can be recorded for all farms at the start of the process, using the forms given in appendix 2:

1. **Level 1 Data:** This is base data about the farm that should be easy to collate. This information should be collected prior to the first meeting of the group and needs to include data on farm area, stock numbers (including sheep, cattle, deer), staff numbers, farm system type (breeding, velvet ,finishing etc), kill numbers, base hind breeding (stags), on farm production data, weaning rates, scanning, etc. This should be updated annually to provide DINZ with records of change on AP farms.
www.ap.org.nz/templates

2. **Project template:** This is more detailed data related directly to the Advance Party members' objective and specific change that will be measured on each farms. Group members may require assistance to gather this data and the Facilitator should work with each member, either by visiting the farm or by phone, after the group has collectively determined what their focus will be. There will also be an on-going need to monitor this data to track on-farm progress and ensure the member still is confident enough to make the change. www.ap.org.nz/templates

3. **Performance Analysis Sheets:** Forms have been designed allow the collection of information important to the monitoring, analysis and management of deer farms. They have been designed by a group of deer farmers where the number of staff etc make the central recording of information critical. It is acknowledged that the will be over specified for many in the industry, it is up to individuals to use then to the extent they find useful. www.ap.org.nz/templates

These forms are designed to collect sufficient information to identify areas of opportunity and weakness within a business. Areas of opportunity/weakness may then require further analysis on an individual basis, these forms were not designed to go to that level of detail. At present the spreadsheets are for individual farm use. The spreadsheets include a summary of the KPI (Key Production Indicators) in a table, below the data inputting sections. The spreadsheets also include some analysis as information is collected throughout the year.

- Reproductive Performance Analysis
- Replacement Performance Analysis
- Finishing Performance Analysis
- Velvet Performance Analysis

6 Running the Group and Meetings

An Advance Party will need to meet together regularly, both on and off farm, to plan, track progress and report on progress. They will also be involved, as a group, sharing their work with their community, both locally and on a national scale.

While the group is getting going, the first few meetings should be well facilitated and key points to cover in these early sessions are -why the group is meeting?, what they will focus on and how the group will run?.

It's important that the group agrees how they will work together and how they will engage the local community right at the outset. What the commitment level or expectation is, if members miss multiple meetings what the strike rule is. i.e. *"three strikes and you're out."*

DINZ will run the first meeting and will assist the group to appoint a Chair and identify a suitable Facilitator that could be employed to support the Advance Party towards their agreed goal.

At this first meeting every group member should be given the chance to share what they want to have happen as a result of working together and what they believe will make a difference to increase the profitability on their farm. Each member will have worked through the goal setting questionnaire given in Appendix 2 to help prioritise their issues and concerns and in subsequent meetings will work with the group members to help determine likely solutions.

By the end of each individual on-farm meeting each group member should have a plan that shows what they are going to do to achieve change on their own farm. It is important these tasks are completed in this time frame so that everyone is working on the change right from the beginning, not just discussing it. Confirmation by each participant is very important to ensure there is buy in.

After the first meeting it will be up to the group to decide where and how frequently it meets, but it is recommended that a group meets up to 10 times per year and uses a model that suits its own needs, which may include on and/or off-farm sessions, face to face meetings and teleconferences. A mixture of discussion sessions, presentations from invited experts as required and farm tours should be used to stimulate discussion at meetings.

A guideline for the specific format/agenda of Advance Party meetings is given in Appendix 3.

6.1 The first meeting

- DINZ will support the group through the process of ensuring they have a structure in place and have appointed a Chairman/leader and identified a suitable facilitator
- DINZ will provide an introduction to the Advance Party Concept and P2P; including the role of the facilitator, requirements for group members and what resources are available to them.
- This meeting should be used to help the group define why they are meeting and what they will focus on. Individuals will be given time to discuss they what they

want to have happen as a result of working together and what they believe will make a difference to increase the profitability on their farm. They will be encouraged to discuss and refine what will be tested by discussing the current practise and identifying alternatives.

- In this initial 'proof of concept' stage, members will be encouraged towards change initiatives, at least in the first instance, which can demonstrate 'quick wins'.
- Whatever targets that the group chooses it is critical that progress can be measured and monitored to demonstrate change (or lack of it).
- Due to the objectives of the P2P initiative DINZ has a preference for improving productivity via animal health, feeding or genetics, but the group is free to choose their own focus areas.
- The group should agree how they will work together and how they will actively engage their local community. This should include details of how data will be shared, what reporting commitments are required, how often they will meet and for how long the advance party will need to run to achieve their objectives.
- The group should also discuss how long they need to work together to complete their objectives. The projects should have specific objectives and be completed in a defined time-frame.
- DINZ will explain the requirements for data collection. As noted previously information will be collected from Advance Party members and related back to DINZ.

6.2 Through the Advance Party process

- DINZ will provide coordination support to Advance Parties and assist with data collation and analysis if requested.
- The Facilitator should encourage the group to discuss and communicate about what works well and what didn't work well in the individual farm situations within the theme contexts, e.g.:
 - Did the animal health plan have an impact?
 - Would a vet or specialist advice in the programme have helped?
 - Is there difference across genetic lines - do we understand the genetic potential?
 - Was the feeding/ nutrition level adequate?
- The group should continue to develop and implement actions to improve, test, measure and monitor and value in dollar terms the change and improvement. The Facilitator should ensure the group is:
 - monitoring baseline performance and understand the reasons for differences and extent of impact
 - Quantify the differences (physical and in dollar terms) and the impact on profitability
- Facilitators should encourage all farmers in the group to have a go - based on a common approach and ensure that all are measuring the impact

- Advance Parties should be encouraged to actively communicate to their local community so that they understand what is being done and how it is going.
- At the earliest point possible (with the help of DINZ), the Advance Parties should be planning to support wider community participation by running field days to show the changes, provide summarised bulletins of their work, assist other groups which want to form and meeting 1-on-1 with other farmers to share experiences.
- It is the responsibility of the Facilitator to ensure that Individual group members are not left on their own to describe changes and 'wins'. It is the job of all Advance Party members to describe what the group has learned.
- With the coordination of DINZ, help collate learning at the national level so that it is recorded, described and a body of knowledge then rolled out with supporting statements for others to make changes in their own businesses.

- Advance Parties are required to participate in Regional Workshops organised in conjunction with Deer Farmers' Association branches. These will be single topic workshops, using Advance Party members' projects as topics for further discussion. Facilitator's will be expected to assist with the organisation and running of these days, however this will be in addition to the contracted requirements for facilitating an Advance Party.

How Advance Parties will work

(with examples)

FINISHING Advance Party	BREEDING Advance Party	ALLIANCE Advance Party
SCNO Advance Party	Mackenzie A/Party	Otago Advance Party
Finishing weaner's	Finishing weaner's	Finishing weaner's
Stag Genetics	Johnes/AH Plan	Hind Conception
Parasites/AH Plan	Winter cropping	Parasites/AH Plan

A.	Individual Advance Party members learn & improve	By: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industry support & resources • Determining & focusing on specific topics & collectively working together to learn how to do things better • Making those changes and monitoring what you changed & the effect • Being supported to make those changes by outside resources • Working collectively with others in the group 	To: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grow profitability • Achieve other objectives important to them as individuals
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B.	Advance Party members have what they have learnt with their communities	By doing such things as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being part of a field day • Having magazine articles written • Providing updates • 1 on 1 mentor roles
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C.	What Advance Parties learn is shared at National level	DINZ/DFA coordinate communications between- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industry-farmers, processors • Other Advance Party groups • Industry partners • Writing info sheets for 1-1 use by consultants • Develop other learning resource's e.g. online
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7 Communication to the wider community (& other Stakeholders)

If the Advance Party does not successfully engage the wider community of deer farmers, it will have failed. To support achieving wider engagement, the following needs to be done:

- The group should develop a culture of strong local community engagement. This can't be passive and should use both DFA branches and DINZ support as required
- Learning from the Advance Parties must be collated, recorded and readily available
- All groups should develop a strong formal communication strategy for within the Advance Party and at the community and national levels:
 - Linked to company market information and support
 - Linked to key change agencies and individuals (AgR, Deer Branch, advisory networks)
 - Banks and financial advisors updates and involvement at key events
 - Updates given to field based reps (fertiliser companies, seeds, pastures, stock agents)
- On farm annual review of progress, issues and challenges.

Advance Party activities can be communicated by a variety of mechanisms; including:

- Reports at industry meetings
- 1-on-1 meetings
- DINZ publications demonstrating the issues, changes made, profit advantages and production outcomes (e.g. Deer Industry News, short topical reports and farm case studies)
- Stagline Online and DINZ enews (e-newsletters)
- DINZ Website including video clips
- Advance Party website

- Advance Parties are required to participate in Regional Workshops organised in conjunction with Deer Farmers' Association branches. These will be single topic workshops, using Advance Party members' projects as topics for further discussion. Facilitator's will be expected to assist with the organisation and running of these days, however this will be in addition to the contracted requirements for facilitating an Advance Party.

There is also potential for the development of an annual Advance Party open technical conference for participants and interested farmers.

8 Advance Party Success

An Advance Party will have been successful if the actions of the group have made a significant difference, both for the farmers involved and their community. We expect that group members should see a measureable improvement in their bottom line, supporting the P2P goal of “More deer, heavier, earlier”. We also expect that the deer industry and wider community will see changes too, as we always benefit when motivated and skilled deer farmers work together to transform their own industry.

At the completion of the Advance Party process group members will be asked to report on the results of the Advance party activities, both the successes and failures and should be encouraged to celebrate their efforts and continue working to achieve increased profitability; either alone or in collaboration with other farmers (e.g. through another Advance Party like initiative).

9 Appendix 1: Templates

A series of templates can be developed from this table depending on the specific objectives of the Advance Party. The table used here is divided into; Plan development, Measurement, Evaluation, Planning, Tools, KPIs and Other.

Template discussion table of key points and areas to consider for the operation of Advance Parties within the P2P theme areas

THEME	Genetics	Nutrition/growth	Animal health
Key principles The Plan	Define what your enterprise is about (Breeding, Finishing, venison, velvet, trophy, or combinations)	Defining the standard growth curves and key trigger points for intervention	Know your health status
	What's your on-going plan (Breeding Objective)	Identify risks to current growth performance and feeding plan	Risk assessment analysis of top 10 Health risks specific to each operation
	What animals are you using?	Do you have a standard growth curve and historical records	Understanding the management and financial advantages of maintain animal health
	What are their traits of significance		Defining and prioritising the animal health actions and costs
	National breeding objective		
Measurement	ID Traits: Std measurement time and format	How much being fed? What does it cost?	Define the economic differences of treating preventing disease vs not
	Knowledge of market requirements	Key measures Weight at specific	

THEME	Genetics	Nutrition/growth	Animal health
	Weight Carcase quality Timing	trigger points on growth curve BCS	
	Risk people focus on the Trait progress itself not its added economic value	Material cost of feed Include labour costs Standard format in reporting	
Evaluation and analysis	Implication of better genetics on weaning performance slaughter time lines, growth rates, conception dates fawn survival carcase traits	Is the feeding programme production & performance effective? Is it cost effective?	Value of investment in an AH plan
	Evidence that investment in objective genetics is worthwhile Fit with breeding objective (self and national)		Evaluate and understand what makes a healthy herd Define the health maintenance costs Quantify the advantages of reduced loss
Planning	Establish genetic objectives and identify how you will get there	What do I want to achieve within my ability to grow? Utilize the reality of the Growth Curve	Develop a specific response plan for key priority disease challenges
	Regular review of breeding objective and progress being made Promotion of the benefits gained		Define the economics of doing or not doing
Tools	AI/ET Wider use of BV's	Feed budgeting Crop measurement	Animal health reports DeerPro

THEME	Genetics	Nutrition/growth	Animal health
		Weight and BCS	Slaughter sheets and inspection
	Establishing a breeding objective Assess against national objectives and market needs	Guidelines for weighing sentinel animals or random sample weights (30 animals at random covers 3 standard deviations)	Opti grow Vet consultation PM and lab reports
KPIs	Quantified benefits of key trait improvement Physical and \$ gain	Return c/kgDM Profit per ha Material cost of feed type kg/DM	CBA of intervention Quantify losses
Other factors			

10 Appendix 2: Advance Party Meeting Guidelines

10.1 Part 1: Diagnosis and planning

	Location	DINZ	Chair	Facilitator	Members
Meeting 1- Advance Party opener	OFF-farm	Meeting run by DINZ	Appointed by members	Options for nominee discussed and finalised by group in consultation with DINZ	Group members to appoint Chair & Facilitator and decide on how the group will run High level goal and objective setting - agreement on 3-4 key objectives required Set next meeting date

The key task of meeting 1 is to identify the individual's farm business issue/s that needs addressing. The objectives may overlap amongst members, but the ability to identify areas of focus ensures that everyone in the party is engaged and all can benefit from collective learning/support that is relevant to their business.

1. Advance Party Intro

- a. Ice breaker session
- b. P2P background, Industry objectives & objectives of the Advance Parties
- c. What is an Advance party

2. Rationale behind individuals needs for an Advance Party

- a. Individuals identify key farm business goals, objectives and issues that need addressing using provided templates
- b. Report back to group
- c. White board session to discuss common areas of interest and issues

3. Monitoring these objectives & Data discussion.

- a. Post objectives review; discuss data requirements for Advance Party Programme. (data form to be provided to members for completion pre-meeting)
- b. Advise of data collection process (email to DINZ)

4. Facilitator discussions-potential Facilitator to be discussed/agreed upon. The Facilitator should be someone who can inspire communication, not someone who will control discussions and offer solutions.

- If meeting attendees wish to drop out between #4-6 because they don't feel that the model is right for them or that they cannot adhere to the requirements for participation, this is ok, the group can seek more members if need be.

5. Identify guidelines for participation in an Advance Party

- a. Party members agree on AP guidelines and sets rules of engagement
- b. Develop group ownership and schedule meetings
- c. Nominations and agreement of a farmer Chair
- d. Agree on format of upcoming meetings and set next meeting date.
- e. Clarification of group confidentiality.

6. Q & A session

HOMEWORK: POST MEETING

- Members go back to their businesses with their brainstormed objectives and review them
- Members complete level one data sheet

	DINZ	Chair	Facilitator	Members
After Meeting 1	Appoints Facilitator Circulates notes Chair/Facilitator briefings	Briefing from DINZ Organise meeting venue, etc	Appointed and briefed by DINZ	Review brainstormed objectives Complete data sheet

10.2 Part 2: Starting the Advance Party on farm

	Location	DINZ	Chair	Facilitator	Members
Meeting 2 – Development of objectives and measures	Off or On-farm (up to group members)	DINZ representative attends	Facilitator with Chairman's support leads meeting Ensure notes are taken	Supports group members to identify the issue they will address on farm and potential solutions Ensure, if on farm, that individual in question has clear direction on what they are to focus on post session, ensure there is group input	Review and confirm goal and objective setting for group and individuals with Facilitator Agree next meeting schedule/s. –Having more locked in early is better than one each time.

1. Assessing current farm situation

- Party members have completed the basic farm data (to be collected prior to meeting)-options for peer review with Facilitator prior to the meeting
- Level 1 data that is collated is provided to all members to understand basics of each members business models prior to the Advance Party session by email and provided on the day in hard copy.
- Introduction to the property –history, staff etc

2. Developing a vision and goal for the farm business

- a. Individual highlights their 'goal' for their business, a goal is a generally a medium or long term target e.g. to move from a breeding only operation to also incorporate finishing weaners.
- b. **Farm tour** – It is important to look around the property and specifically at key areas that directly relate to the 'prior issues' identified for the business in question. Also any areas of importance to the member (e.g. point he/she is proud of, deer shed). The farm tour must be kept to no more than half of the session time to ensure there is plenty of time to review the objectives and offer solutions-project development in the house post tour. If total time allocated is 4 hours, it is important to allow at least 90mins for a cuppa and the important feedback session**.

**This time allocation will become more important as the meetings progress. As the Advance Party format includes a review of past visits in this session to ensure people who might be stuck with their projects have time to discuss this in the post farm session with the group. This is where good facilitation & notes are key

3. Review session

- a. All members are to meet in a warm location (house or insulated shed) with seating and it is good practise for facilitator to have a flip chart or white board to record key points and have this at the front of the room for all to see.
- b. Session begins with review of the previously identified 'issues' as identified by the member. And then it is opened up to floor for suggestions from the Advance Party members who would have seen the issue on the farm tour.
- c. Facilitator is to ensure that all members are involved in the discussion and that one or two don't sit back and let others do all the talking.
- d. Key points are recorded on the board and then reviewed by the owner and agreement reached by all for action plan. Not all suggestions from this meeting need to be developed into a 'project' only one is needed to take priority. But the group can still offer their advice.
- e. Agreement made by all on what key area or action is to be and documents it with detail around the "How to", "timeframes" and "recording parameters" for success.
- f. Finally once all issues have been discussed it is good practise to ask some leading questions to get all involved and ensure everyone offers something to the day. This question has been well used in early Advance Parties. *"If you owned this farm tomorrow what would you change or do differently, or investigate further?"*

4. Review of the day

- a. Group discussion on what could be done better, or what worked well.
- b. Set next meeting times/location

HOMWORK: POST MEETING

- Facilitator and member re-visit 'project session' to ensure clarity around what will be measured to assess progress.
- Facilitator send out meeting notes to members and loads onto ap.org.nz (sends to DINZ)
- Facilitator/Chair to send out email reminder of next meeting and get confirmation of attendance
- If further assistance is required because the group members could not identify solutions then the Facilitator should bring in suitable expert to assist on farm and feedback information from this session with group via email. The farmer should also report back to group at next meeting or teleconference on progress. It is even better if someone else in the group has a similar issue to get the expert along to that meeting to assist all members, so all can hear.

10.3 Successive Advance Party Meetings

	Location	DINZ	Chair	Facilitator	Members
Post Meeting 2	Either on or off farm as required	Review of meeting with Facilitator/Chair Ensure all Level 1 data collated	Organise ongoing meetings (venue, timetable, etc) Ensure notes are taken	Report back to DINZ- Notes Follow up with individual farmers including on-farm visits, aid in gathering level 2 data Arrange for topic matter experts as required Formulate communications strategy Reporting and feedback on implementation	Preparation of project templates Determining action plans/solutions Working with Facilitator as required

Advance Party Meeting One

Agenda:

- 1. Passion2Profit - the deer industry productivity improvement programme.**
- 2. Discuss the purpose of Advance Parties**
 - a. Including the feeding, genetics, animal health and environmental stewardship themes.**
- 3. Roles and Responsibilities of Chair and Facilitator**
- 4. Confirm obligations of participation**
- 5. Discuss recording evidence of change, monitoring performance.**
- 6. Invite discussion of productivity issues, discuss setting goals and objectives.**
- 7. Election of Chair**
- 8. Discuss suitable Facilitator for your Advance Party**
- 9. Date of meeting two.**

What is an Advance Party? And what does this programme entail?

The profitability of deer farming has to stay competitive with other land use options.

Market and exchange rate fluctuations provide peaks and troughs to income beyond individual's control. But industry wide productivity has lagged other sectors due to a lack of systems in place to drive national change. The Passion2Profit programme has been developed to drive change across the value chain.

One initiative that Deer Industry New Zealand is using to encourage change is the "Advance Party", which centres on farmers collaborating and sharing experiences to further their own businesses. This programme is aimed at people, or business partners (father/son, husband/wife) who want to make deer a more profitable part of their operations.

Advance Parties are different from other industry initiatives like discussion groups or monitor farms because being a member requires a commitment to make changes and to share the results of the changes. Being in an Advanced Party is not just about discussion and it is not only about those in the group either, it is also about passing on your experiences to your deer farming community, to motivate them to change based on the group learning's.

Deer Industry New Zealand will provide guidance and expertise to help implement the changes you and your group decide upon. But we aren't telling you what to do, that will come from you and your group members after reviewing current practises and identifying opportunities.

The Advance Parties will meet when the group decides it can meet, it will be predominantly driven by group members with outside support and facilitation provided. Members will discuss and agree upon changes that they could make to their deer farming operations that should result in an improvement in performance.

As a member of an Advanced Party you will be asked to make changes to specific area of opportunity in your businesses, and the group will help you decide upon the changes you will be making. The process is not prescriptive and has to meet the needs of your group and the mix of its members. Most importantly you all must find value for it to be a success. You will also be expected to share the outcomes of the changes you made with the wider deer farming community.

Funding: Deer Industry New Zealand provides funding up to the following per Advance Party per annum:

Meeting facilitation and recording		\$10,000
Facilitator travel expenses		\$1,500
Meeting costs		\$500
Expert support		\$2,000

Advance Party Farm Information – Level One.

please complete prior to the meeting

Business description		
Your name		
Property name		
Phone		
Email		
Address		
Primary Business Purpose		
Farm vet (company or individual name)		
Do you weight your animals? (circle one)	Yes	No
Do you Body Condition Score your deer?	Yes	No
Do you use a consultant?	Yes	No
Do you scan some or all of your hinds?	Yes	No
What is your current recording system on farm e.g. Notebook, FarmIQ etc	Yes	No

Property Description	
Total Property Area (ha)	
Area Deer Fenced (ha)	
Land Class (1-8)-refer to back page for detail	
Rainfall (mm)	
Altitude (in metres above SL)	

Stock numbers (totals) as at 1 June 20__				
Breed	Hinds (number)	Stags -velvet	Breeding stag/trophy	Weaners
Red				
Eastern				
Hybrid (ElkX)				
Wapiti				
Fallow/Other				
Total Deer Numbers				
Sheep numbers				
Beef numbers				
Other/arable (ha)				

Deer for the Year ending 30 June 20__		(fill in applicable information)	
1. How many hinds mated			
2. Average MA hind weight			
3. How many fawns weaned			
4. Average weaner weight at 1 March			
5. How many deer slaughtered (Total)			
6. Number of Young Deer Slaughtered (Under 2yrs old)	Stags		
	Hinds		
7. Avg Carcass weight (Under 2yrs old)	Stags:	Kg	
	Hinds:	Kg	
8. Est. average age at slaughter of young deer e.g. 384 days (or avg time on ppty before killed?)			#days on farm (the average)
9. Number older deer slaughtered (over 2yrs old)	Stags	Kg	
	Hinds	Kg	
10. Average Carcass weight (Deer over 2 years old)	Stags		
	Hinds		

Velvet Herd (numbers)	Tally Numbers	Average kgs cut across age-groups (if known)
Spiker		
2yr		
3yr		
4yr		
5yr		
6yr+		

Velvet Grades	kgs	Average \$/kg (NET figures after costs)
Wapiti Supreme		
EW1		
EW2		
EW3		
Spiker		
Regrowth		
Other		
Damaged		
Total	kgs	\$ /kg overall

Advance Party Goal Setting



Describe Farming Goals:

1.
2.
3.

Describe Specific Deer Objectives:

1.
2.
3.

Describe issues getting in the way of production objectives:

1.
2.
3.
4.

Refine to the 3 that are your priority production issues:

1.
2.
3.

Deer Stock Units Equivalentents According to Age, Sex and Breed

Breed	R1		R2		R3		M/A		
	Hind	Stag	Hind	Stag	Hind	Stag	Hinds	Velveting Stags	Breeding Stags
Fallow	1.0	1.2	1.6	1.6	1.7	1.9	1.7	1.9	2.1
NZ Red	1.5	1.7	2.0	2.3	2.0	3.0	2.2	3.2	3.5
European Red	1.6	1.8	1.9	2.5	2.2	3.2	2.4	3.5	3.8
Hybrid (Red x Wapiti)	Same As European type								
Fiordland Wapiti	1.8	2.0	2.1	2.7	2.4	3.5	2.6	3.8	4.0
Canadian Wapiti	2.0	2.2	2.4	2.9	2.7	3.9	2.8	4.2	4.8

Sheep su – equivalent to 1 su

Beef su – (+ 2yr age group) = 5.5su

Land Class Classifications

<i>LUC Class code</i>	<i>Description</i>
1	Land with virtually no limitations for arable use and suitable for cultivated crops, pasture or forestry
2	Land with slight limitations for arable use and suitable for cultivated crops, pasture or forestry
3	Land with moderate limitations for arable use, but suitable for cultivated crops, pasture or forestry
4	Land with moderate limitations for arable use, but suitable for occasional cropping, pasture or forestry
5	High producing land unsuitable for arable use, but only slight limitations for pastoral or forestry use
6	Non-arable land with moderate limitations for use under perennial vegetation such as pasture or forest
7	Non-arable land with severe limitations to use under perennial vegetation such as pasture or forest
8	Land with very severe to extreme limitations or hazards that make it unsuitable for cropping, pasture or forestry