

WHY DEER?

Given that deer mature faster than some other cervids, the turn around time from start-up to profit can be much quicker.

A deer operation requires less land than other cervid farms. Deer farming has been a well-established industry for nearly a century. This industry provides an important contribution to the economic growth and stability of many rural communities.

The deer industry has exciting growth opportunities and is a welcoming industry with a spike in interest within the last 10 years. The industry NEEDS more producers!



ECONOMICS OF DEER FARMING

If you are interested in learning more about and exciting livestock diversification opportunity, please reach out to the SCA – Saskatchewan Cervid Alliance.

www.saskcervid.com

saskcervidalliance@gmail.com



Deer farming is almost entirely focused on the trophy hunt industry. Occasionally a deer ranch will venture into the meat market, but this pamphlet will focus on the trophy hunt industry. The production side of the industry is represented by operations involved in breeding and raising deer to provide trophy bucks for the hunt preserves. Does can be bred at 1.5 years of age and have a reproductive life of 10 years. The average ratio of bucks to does is 1:15. Does often have twins and the average weaning rate is 1.5 fawns per doe per year. Bucks are regularly replaced with new and better genetics meaning that often a buck is only used for 1-3 seasons



COST OF PRODUCTION

Feed Rations

Winter rations are typically a mixture of hay and pellets. Current pellet costs start at approximately \$200-\$300 per animal per year, depending on the product purchased.

Hay:

- Bucks typically require 4 lbs of hay per day [4 lbs of hay x 180 days = 720 lbs of hay per winter]
- Does typically require 3 lbs of hay per day [3 lbs of hay x 180 days = 540 lbs of hay per winter]

Land Requirement

- The average deer farm is 20-30 acres, and good quality pasture can sustain 4-7 deer per acre

Water

- Deer need access to clean water like any other animal, however, even a lactating doe drinks 1/10th of the amount of a beef cow.

Fencing, Facilities, Stock

The greatest cost of raising deer is fencing and handling facilities.

- The fence needs to be page wire and 8 feet tall
- Fencing costs are approximately \$3.00-\$3.50 a foot
- A good quality handling system can cost \$4,000 to \$20,000

(Often you can find used fence and systems that are half these costs)

The cost of breeding stock, like all industries, will vary greatly.

- Does can be purchased for \$2,500 up to \$12,000 if looking for top producing genetics
- Breeding buck prices will range from \$6,000 to \$25,000



SAMPLE FARM

For the purposes of this sample farm, we will look at a farm that annually has 18 bucks, 40 does and 58 calves. We will take the average of 29 M and 29 F calves and retain all male calves for trophy stock. We will assume 26 does culled annually.

Revenue

Trophy Buck Revenue (18 bucks x \$7,000 (avg price/buck)	\$135,000.00
TOTAL ANNUAL DEER FARM REVENUE	\$135,000.00

Expenses

Hay	\$1,800.00
Pelleted Ration	\$45,000.00
Veterinarian	\$2,000.00
TOTAL ANNUAL DEER FARM EXPENSES	\$48,800.00

TOTAL NET INCOME FROM DEER

FARM:

\$86,200.00

*This is an example only, and while the numbers used were taken from real deer farms, production income and costs may vary for a number of reasons. There are whitetail farms that exceed these numbers. Good farm management plays a instrumental role in a profitable whitetail deer farm.