



Sharon Phillip and Douglas C MacMillan, Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology, University of Kent, UK.

## **BACKGROUND**

Deer numbers in Scotland are widely regarded as too high. Some potential solutions discussed to stimulate culling include collaborative management and increased venison revenues for landowners.

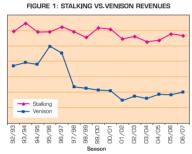
A key aim of this project is to establish the role played by venison price in deer management by considering the following questions:

- How important is venison to the economics of landownership?
- How does the market for wild venison influence deer management?
- Can collaboration between landowners improve venison economics?

A range of economic and cultural data was required, some of which was difficult to acquire being sensitive, discontinuous and unpublished.

Anthropological methods were adopted to gain trust and greater depth of understanding of the economics of wild venison production and deer management.





wouldn't be worth getting out of bed to go and shoot them!"

### MAIN DRIVER "A hind you're getting £30 for the carcass and the day would be costing you nothing herd management High cost of venison production Hind season relative to returns (£) ... Health of herd ... and in comparison to farmed (Oct-Feb) 3.00 alternatives/substitutes Close Stag season Demand season (Jul-Oct) MAIN DRIVER SEASONALITY Higher price offered - sport shooting ... consistency for early stags (Jul/Aug) Driven by tradition Sporting revenues far greater than venison Natural quality (gap widening) of venison at it's lowest 50% of venison (during rut)

"If you weren't having guests... it processed during Sep/Oct

less than £50.

FIGURE 2: VENISON PRICE CHANGE

"We shoot stags early ... they are getting top quality venison, we should get a top quality price but we don't.

- Sport shooting has high economic value
- Venison income insignificant in comparison (figure 1)

Venison is a by-product of sport

- Stalker no longer has incentive to increase venison revenues
- Costs of collaboration perceived to be higher than benefits

# Market pressures

- Downward pressure on price
- Price of venison now 1/3 of it's value in 1980's
- Farmed venison and cheap imports from New
- Processing dominated by 3 key firms
- Consumer demand for wild venison historically low

### CONCLUSIONS

Increased venison price is unlikely to lead to more deer being culled because:

- Venison production is economically unimportant to estates
- Estates lack influence in market
- Collaboration among estates adds to costs for little gain



























Acknowledgements: The authors would like to thank the RELU programme for its financial support and all of the stakeholders who made this an interesting and enjoyable project.