

MEDIA RELEASE

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ENCOURAGING SIGNS FROM EUROPEAN VENISON TRIAL

A campaign designed to encourage Europeans to eat venison in the summer shows there is potential to sell more high-quality product at a premium price out of the game season.

Alliance Group has just completed a trial with Belgium retail giant Metro Cash & Carry to promote Alliance Cervena™ venison as a summer product to Europe's food service sector.

The co-operative dispatched weekly shipments of chilled venison processed at its Makarewa and Smithfield plants to Belgium from April through until August this year.

Metro partnered with Belgium's Jeunes Restaurateurs (JRE), a network of young and upcoming chefs, who tried venison on their menus and promoted and endorsed the product.

Terry O'Connell, Marketing Manager at Alliance, said the co-operative was encouraged by the programme's progress and planned to repeat the exercise next year.

"There was enthusiasm from the chefs to try out new and interesting menu ideas featuring Alliance Cervena, particularly as a summer option and the feedback was positive.

"It demonstrated that there is potential to position Alliance Cervena away from the European game season, to being a premium meat that is consumed year-round."

The programme targeted the food service sector, including chefs, hotels and restaurants, with demonstrations and tastings. There were also in-store displays, advertising, mail-outs, special offers, social media activity and a two-day farm-themed workshop, which showcased selected products to 80 chefs in June.

The trial shipment to Belgium included legs, French rack and tenderloins.

Mr O'Connell said the trial represented an important first step in the co-operative's plan to generate additional value for farmer-shareholders by promoting Alliance Cervena to customers as a summer meat.

"Supply is not currently aligned with the peak-demand opportunity and there is a limited window for peak returns so this trial is a vital part of our venison programme."

The venison marketing initiative is part of the \$16 million seven-year Passion2Profit (P2P) programme. P2P is a joint venture between the New Zealand deer industry and the Ministry for Primary Industries under the Primary Growth Partnership (PGP). P2P is intended to be a major shift in terms of product innovation and market development.

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NOTES TO EDITOR

Alliance Group is a co-operative owned by approximately 5000 farmer shareholders and is the world's largest processor and exporter of sheepmeat and a leading supplier of farm raised venison to world markets.

The Ministry for Primary Industries Primary Growth Partnership aims to boost the productivity, value and profitability of our primary sector through investment between government and industry. It provides an essential springboard to enable New Zealand to stay at the forefront of primary sector innovation. Government and industry have committed \$727 million into 21 PGP programmes (19 underway and 2 completed).



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