

# Cervena gains ground in European summer

market forces.

THE push to encourage Europeans to eat New Zealand Cervena venison in summer appears to be gaining ground.

Last northern hemisphere summer 50 tonnes of chilled NZ Cervena was sold in the Netherlands and Belgium at a Euro\$2.50 kg premium over frozen cuts, with the result enough to encourage the five NZ marketers involved to continue the trial into a third year.

Deer Industry NZ venison marketing manager Marianne Wilson said the venison was sold chilled and chefs surveyed commented on its quality and suitability for summer dining. "It was fantastic to see the chefs consistently mentioning that Cervena suits summer cuisine and works perfectly as a summer dining option. They really identified with our approach.

"This is a positive indicator as the vast majority of European chefs have traditionally insisted that venison could be cooked only in the winter game season," Wilson said. The Passion2Profit trial, a Primary Growth Partnership between DINZ and MPI, had two goals. The first was to develop a marketing model for Cervena as a summer grill food that could

be adapted to other regions in Europe. The second was to explore opportunities for collaboration between marketers. Wilson said in the coming year the project would focus on communicating that Cervena was now on-season and educating chefs on the qualities that made the venison special. "We want to ensure that when diners are presented with a

Cervena dish in summer that chefs can satisfactorily explain what it is. "We don't have the resources to educate consumers so we need to work alongside chefs and use their influence to help get the message out." The marketers involved in the trial were Alliance Group, Duncan NZ, Mountain River, First Light Foods and Silver Fern Farms.

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