

Elk Ranching

History of Elk Ranching

Started 15-20 years ago in US and Canada

Has been one of the most profitable agricultural businesses in New Zealand for the past 20-30 years

Raising of domestic deer and elk has been done for thousands of years

How is income produced from elk?

Breeding stock

Velvet production

Meat production

Mature bulls sold for hunting on private property

Regulatory Agency

Utah Department of Agriculture and Food, Brands Bureau

(801) 538-7137

Land Requirements

Rule of thumb is two elk for every beef cow

Irrigated land appears to run two elk per acre

Startup Costs

Fencing:	\$0.67 per foot for 8' high tensile wire 2 3/8" pipe costs \$0.75 - \$0.80 per foot, round off at \$10 per post every 20'
Gates:	16' gate - \$75 - \$100 each
Barn/Working Facility:	\$3,000 - \$25,000

Feed

Hay 3/4 ton per mature animal and 1/2 ton for calves

Good pasture conditions and rotation will need less hay

Vet Care

Worm like cattle, 7 way shot

Diseases

TB and Scours are main two diseases

Associations

NAEBA (North American Elk Breeders Association)

\$150 membership dues annually

Registry, breeding data, magazine, velvet competition, video auction

UEBA (Utah Elk Breeders Association)

\$100 membership dues annually
Founded 1996, newsletter, public education program

Sales

Off farm, several nationwide live auctions, video auction sponsored by NAEBA

Financing

Look at elk like any other livestock business, 100% financing seldom works

Observations

Get started by sharecropping; furnish land and investor buys elk (or vice versa)

Start small and build herd with outside income

Build only as much fence as needed for startup, with planned expansion later

Elk ranching is not a get-rich-quick scheme; the same rules apply with it as other agricultural businesses

Remember: good genetics + good management + good marketing = profitability