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Can Venison Be Eco-Friendly?

By [Sheila Shaigany](#)

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Recently at the [StarChefs International Chef Congress](#) in NYC, I got the chance to attend Cervena Farmer [Lyndon Matthews'](#) presentation on [Cervena Venison](#)—New Zealand's premiere deer meat. While the rest of the world just recently discovered the benefits to [Green Food](#), New Zealand farmers have long understood the relationship between a sustainable, environmentally friendly operation and superb taste. The eco-friendly farming methods employed by local farmers throughout New Zealand have helped Cervena Venison live up to its long-standing reputation as the world's best red meat.

After a brief [history lesson](#), Lyndon Matthews gave us a picture slide show of his farm, **Puketira Deer Farm**. Located near the foothills of the Southern Alps, it houses 800 deer and 1500 sheep on over 600 acres of land. "Ooohs" and "Aaahs" filled the room as Lyndon switched from one breathtaking photo of rolling hill country, to the next. It's no wonder that *Puketira* derives from the native Maori word for "hill with outstanding view."

We were all equally impressed to learn about the superior conditions that Lyndon maintains for both his animals and farmland. Despite challenges with his locale—a naturally dry climate and resistance to traditional irrigation practices—he runs a fully sustainable operation under even the most unlikely conditions. In fact, his revolutionary pasture management skills and methods of [maximizing rainfall](#) helped him win the 2008 New Zealand Deer Industry award.

Lyndon attributes his success to a [simple philosophy](#): "Allow the animals to be raised naturally in an open pasture environment while feeding them very well. Well fed deer are happy and healthy. They grow quickly, with no stress. And that produces a tender, quality product."

I was lucky enough to taste some of the cooked venison later that day, and I can definitely vouch for its taste. Now I get why it's called **Natural Tender Venison**.

Read more about green meat:

[How to Be a Compassionate Carnivore](#)

[Emeril's Garlic Schmear'd Rosemary Chicken](#)

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