

Deer Farmer interview questions

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What to expect

Interviews for deer farmer roles typically focus on practical livestock management, safety and your ability to work independently. You may be interviewed by a farm owner or manager, often on-farm.

- **Technical knowledge:** Questions about deer nutrition, health, breeding cycles and velvet antler harvest.
- **Safety and handling:** Questions about low-stress handling, fencing and equipment safety.
- **Operational planning:** Questions about pasture management, budgeting and record-keeping.
- **Behavioural:** Questions about past experiences with animal health issues, teamwork and problem-solving.
- **Scenario-based:** Questions about disease outbreak, extreme weather or market shifts.

The interview usually starts with a conversation about your background and experience, then moves into specific technical and safety questions. You might be asked to walk through the farm or complete a practical task such as handling deer or inspecting fences. The interviewer will assess your practical knowledge and how you respond to unexpected situations.

1. Can you describe your experience with managing a deer herd through the breeding season?

Why they ask

This question checks your practical knowledge of deer reproduction and your ability to manage a herd through a critical period.

How to structure your answer

Use a chronological structure: describe the herd size, your role, the steps you took, and the outcome.

Example answer

"In my last role, I managed a herd of 250 deer through the breeding season. I started by selecting sires based on temperament and growth rates, then monitored the does closely for signs of oestrus. I kept detailed records of joining dates and expected calving. During calving, I checked the herd twice daily and intervened only when necessary. We achieved a high survival rate for fawns and maintained good body condition on the does."

2. What steps do you take to ensure the health and well-being of deer during velvet antler harvest?

Why they ask

This question probes your technical skills and commitment to animal welfare during a stressful procedure.

How to structure your answer

Walk through the process step by step, from planning to aftercare, highlighting safety and low-stress handling.

Example answer

"For velvet antler harvest, I work with a veterinarian to plan the timing. We use a purpose-built crush and head bail to restrain the deer safely. I ensure the area is quiet and clean, and I monitor the animal's breathing and behaviour throughout. After harvest, I apply antiseptic and monitor for any signs of infection. The key is to minimise stress and handle the deer calmly and efficiently."

3. Tell me about a time you had to handle a disease outbreak or health issue in a herd. How did you manage it?

Why they ask

This question assesses your problem-solving, biosecurity knowledge and ability to act under pressure.

How to structure your answer

Use STAR: Situation, Task, Action, Result. Be specific about the disease, your actions and the outcome.

Example answer

"We had an outbreak of Johne's disease in a small group of deer. I noticed weight loss and diarrhoea in two animals. I immediately isolated them and called the vet. We tested the herd and culled the affected animals. I then disinfected the pens and reviewed our biosecurity. We didn't have further cases that season. I learned the importance of early detection and strict quarantine for new arrivals."

4. How do you approach pasture management and feeding to maintain herd condition year-round?

Why they ask

This question tests your operational planning and understanding of seasonal nutrition.

How to structure your answer

Use a problem-solution structure: describe the challenge, your strategy, and the results you achieved.

Example answer

"I divide the farm into paddocks and rotate grazing to prevent parasite build-up and allow pasture recovery. I soil test each year and apply fertiliser based on results. In winter, I supplementary feed with hay and silage, and I monitor body condition scores monthly. I adjust the ration if deer are losing or gaining too much weight. This approach keeps the herd healthy and reduces feed costs."

5. Describe a situation where you had to deal with a broken fence or equipment failure. What did you do?

Why they ask

This question checks your practical resourcefulness and ability to respond to urgent farm maintenance issues.

How to structure your answer

Use a judgement-under-pressure structure: state the problem, the immediate action, the follow-up, and what you learned.

Example answer

"One storm brought down a fence line and a water trough was knocked over. I grabbed tools and temporary posts and repaired the fence within a few hours to keep the deer contained. I then fixed the trough and checked the water supply. I also walked the rest of the boundary to make sure there was no other damage. I keep a repair kit in the ute for emergencies."

6. Why do you want to work on a deer farm, and what do you think are the biggest challenges in this industry?

Why they ask

This question explores your motivation and understanding of the sector's unique demands.

How to structure your answer

Combine personal motivation with industry insight: state your interest, then discuss one or two real challenges and how you would handle them.

Example answer

"I grew up on a mixed farm and always enjoyed working with livestock. Deer farming appealed to me because it's specialised and the meat is a premium product. The biggest challenges are the small scale of the industry and the need for strict biosecurity. But I see opportunities in velvet antler and venison markets. I want to work on a farm that values animal welfare and sustainable practices."