

Alternative breakthrough aids green fodder making

HYDROPONICS wasn't a word that sat easily with deer farmer Peter Ryan — but now it's part of his everyday vocabulary.

Drought-stricken country and costly fodder prompted Mr Ryan to venture into hydroponics about 15 months ago — to produce relief green feed for his 135 red deer and Canadian Elk on his Bobin Creek property near Taree in NSW.

His cattle and Angora goats are also being sustained with the fodder.

Initially, he thought hydroponics was too complex in his pursuit of drought relief fodder production, but the simplicity of the concept soon became apparent.

Now, Mr Ryan has a revolutionary hydroponic product titled the Fodder Factory, which is set for launching on to the commercial market, after proving itself in drought conditions on his 200ha property.

At a weekly running cost of about \$100, Mr Ryan's Fodder Factory is producing about 2.4 tonne of fodder every seven days.

With higher yielding seed this production has the potential to be increased dramatically, he said.

The system works on a staggered rotational basis, providing green stock feed on a daily basis

By GRANT COCHRANE



The brain sends commands dictating watering and nutrient feeding, along with messages to the system's heating facilities, exhaust and oscillating fans, to maintain the enclosed environment at an optimum air temperature and required carbon dioxide level for fodder growth.

A series of 400 nipples sends a fine mist of water and

nutrients throughout the Fodder Factory ensuring that the shooting grain is properly fed.

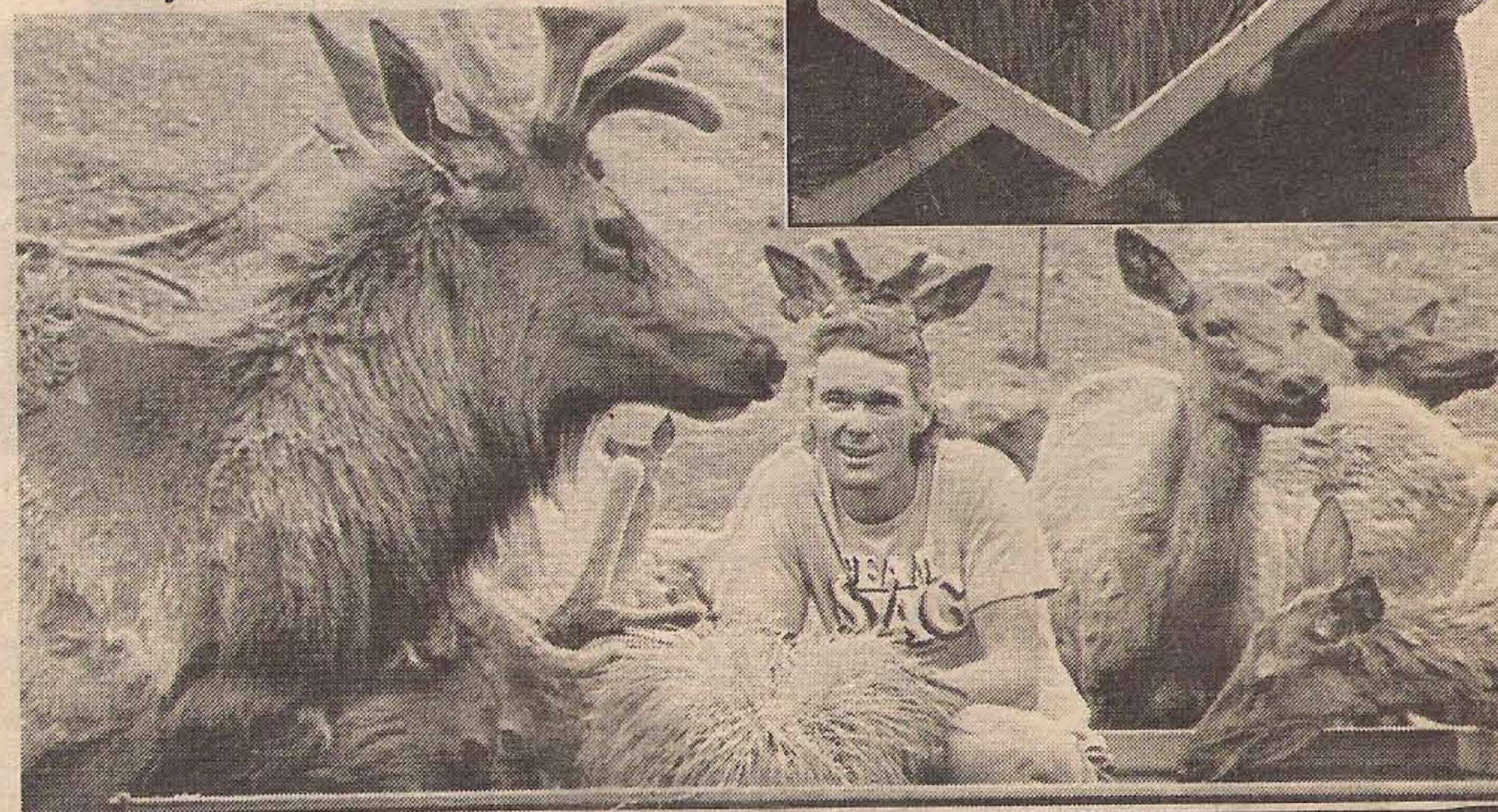
Mr Ryan is committed to the product and believes it has a place in industries such as dairying, Thoroughbreds, deer farming, stud cattle, and general grazing.

Currently he has sold two Fodder Factories. The unit retails at \$19,800.

Included in the price is a 3000 gallon nutrient tank capable of running the operation

► Peter Ryan, Bobin Creek via Taree, inside his Fodder Factory, displays the condition of eight day-old oats grown by hydroponics.

▼ Red Deer and Canadian Elk on Peter Ryan's Bobin Creek deer farm.



Tick vaccine for Americas

TICK fever vaccines and foothold in the region in the Primary Industries veterinary