

Deer, Vegetation Study Launched By 3 Agencies

A cooperative study to determine the effect of deer on vegetation and food supplies on deer has been launched in northern Huntingdon County by the Pennsylvania Game Commission, the Pennsylvania Department of Forests and Waters and

Should You Buy, Rent Or Custom-Hire Farm Machinery?

One of the crucial problems the modern farmer faces is whether to buy, rent or custom-hire the machinery needed to do his work.

Because much specialized farming equipment carries a high price tag, Walter W. Hinz, University of Arizona, recommends that some close figuring be done before buying.

"Figure the per-acre or per-hour cost of using your own equipment. Then compare with the local rental or custom rates," suggests Hinz.

He offers these tips for figuring machinery costs:

- Estimate the cost of simply owning your own equipment. Include expenses for depreciation, taxes, shelter, insurance and interest on money invested. Each year, ownership costs are likely to add up to 15 or 20% of the original equipment cost.

- No determine the cost of operating your new machine. Estimate gasoline, oil and grease costs for each acre or for each hour of operation — then multiply by the total acres.

- Be sure to include the cost of repairs, which are proportional to use. They are low when a machine is new and increase as it grows older.

- Total repair costs during the life of equipment may be estimated as low as 60% of the original price. In the case of wheel tractors this may run as high as 120%.

- Since owning your own equipment requires an operator, value this labor at what it would be doing if you hired a custom operator for the job. Use simple addition and division to determine costs on a per-acre, per-ton or per bale basis.

- The cost of owning a piece of machinery should be balanced against possible losses in quality or quantity of a crop that might result from untimely custom work.

- Agricultural economists stress another point. Should that money be invested in machinery, fertilizer or livestock? Returns often are greater when it is invested in the business.

The Senate Ag Committee was reduced to 13 members, leaving 7 Democrats and 6 Republicans, compared to 10-5 last year. The House Ag Committee will stay at 35, with 20 Democrats and 15 Republicans. Democrats on the Senate committee are Allen Ellender (La), the chairman; Spessard Holland (Fla); James Eastland (Miss); Herman Talmadge (Ga); Everett Jordan (N.C.); George McGovern (S.D.) and James Allen (Ala), a new member. Republicans are George Aiken (Vt); Milton Young (N.D.); Jack Miller (Ia); Carl Curtis (Neb); Robert Dole (Kans) and Marlow Cook (Ky). New Democrats on the House committee are expected to include Bill Baulison (Mo); Bill Alexander (Ark); Allard Lowenstein (N.Y.) and Mrs. Shirley Chisholm (N.Y.). New Republicans will be Keith Sebelius (Kans); Wilmer Mizel (N.C.) and Martin McKneally (N.Y.).

have long been in need of better information on deer carrying capacity of forests at various stages of growth. Indirect determinations made in the past, such as through measuring the amount of available winter browse, have not been fully accurate in showing how many whitetails a range will support.

The project is unique in that the Pennsylvania State University.

Game managers and foresters

It is the first such known study in an oak-hickory forest type.

Knowledge expected to be gained in this research will be especially valuable to the wildlife manager in maintaining a deer herd in balance with available food supplies.

It is also expected to yield data which will be important at the time when a forest stand is to be regenerated.

Several tracts of clear-cut mature oak forest in Rothrock State Forest, Harry's Valley, Barree Township, are involved in the study.

All vegetation was catalogued before the cutting, and deer enclosure fences were erected around four study areas after the cutting. Two female deer

of the same age and known condition were placed in three of the four fenced units. The fourth tract will serve as a "control" area where there will be no browsing.

Periodic measurements of the condition of the deer and browse production will be made for a number of years.

The effect of small mammals

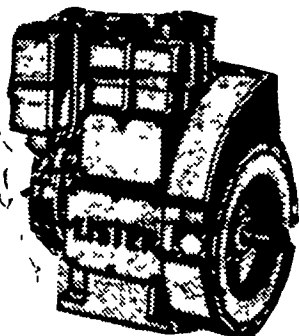
and birds on vegetation will also be studied by researchers involved in the experiments.

The research is only one in a series of similar studies planned to enable conservation agencies to better manage valuable resources for the benefit of all.

Results of the project which was launched in 1968 have been encouraging to date.

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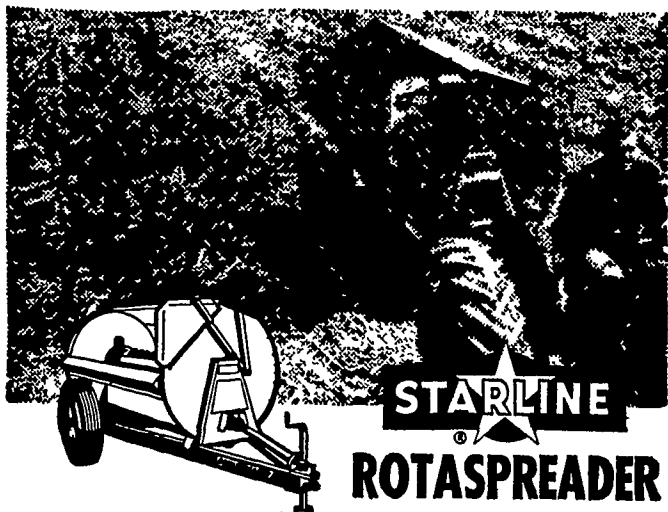
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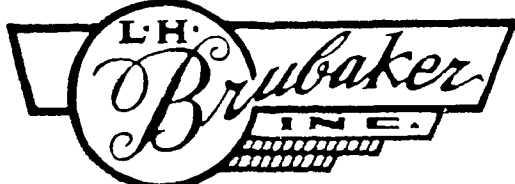
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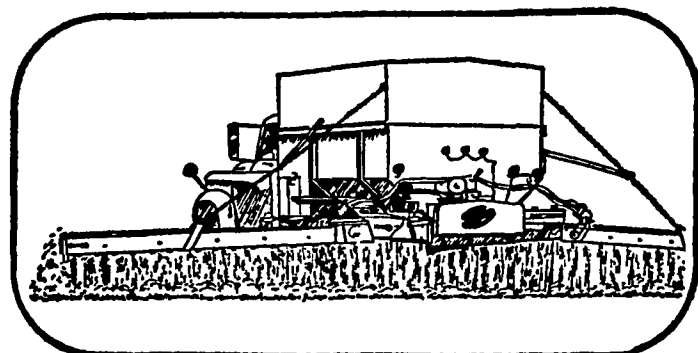
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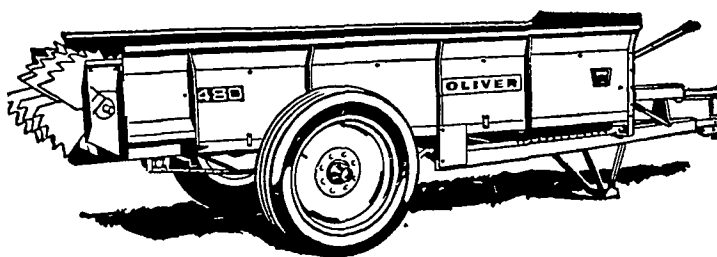
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