

# Game Commission receives honor for hunter ed. program

HARRISBURG — The Pennsylvania Game Commission has again been recognized for having one of the best hunter education programs in the nation.

Each year the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies evaluates hunter education programs in terms of student and instructor training, training aid, program development and promotion.

For 1982, the Pennsylvania program was designated AAA, the highest that can be achieved in the IAFWA ratings. The program also earned the Award of Merit certificate.

Nearly one million persons have been trained in Pennsylvania since the Game Commission inaugurated its program. About 150,000 Pennsylvania students completed the hunter education course on a voluntary basis prior to 1969, when it became mandatory for all first-time hunters, under 16, to complete a hunter education course before being eligible to purchase a license.

Today, each first-time hunter, regardless of age, must complete a hunter education course before purchasing his or her initial hunting license.

Results of the program can be clearly seen when reviewing 1982 safety records. Preliminary hunting accident figures indicate only nine fatalities were recorded. According to Game Commission Hunter Education Coordinator Jim Filkosky, last year's total was the second lowest ever reported. Just seven were recorded in 1980.

Of the nine most serious accidents last year, one involved woodchuck hunting, one occurred in regular small game season, five happened in regular deer season,

one was recorded in flintlock deer season, and the last took place during the late small game season.

Four fatal injuries were self-inflicted, and in each instance, the firearm apparently discharged accidentally.

Of the remaining five fatalities, two took place when a firearm discharged accidentally, two involved persons mistaken for game, and the final mishap occurred with the victim in line of fire between hunter and deer.

According to Filkosky, those who

might wish for a return to the "good old days" probably don't realize how much safer hunting is in the '80s, compared to yesteryear.

He points out that fifty years ago, in 1932, there were 54 fatal hunting accidents. In 1931, there were 54 fatal hunting accidents. But in 1932, there were only half a million licensed hunters in the Commonwealth, compared to the 1.35 million licensed today.

Filkosky said, "From 1920

through 1929, there were 467 fatal hunting accidents. In the decade of the 1930s, 461 died. By the '40s, the total had dropped to 288, and in the '50s there were just 227 fatal mishaps.

"From 1960 through 1969, there were 223 fatal hunting mishaps in the Keystone State, and in the '70s the number dropped to 171. If the 1980-82 fatality rate is maintained for the remainder of this decade, there will be fewer than 100 fatal accidents recorded in the 1980's.

Filkosky attributes the steady

decrease in Pennsylvania hunting accidents to hunter education courses and the increased use of fluorescent orange clothing.

In 1969, the first year of mandatory hunter education training for youths under 16, there were 530 hunting accidents, including 25 fatalities. Mishaps have been declining steadily since then.

While final figures on 1982 hunting accidents won't be compiled until later this year, it's believed the total will be less than 200 mishaps.

## PFU sets legislative priorities

HARRISBURG — The Legislative and Milk Marketing advisory committees of Pennsylvania Farmers' Union recently elected officers for 1983 and established working legislative priorities at their quarterly meeting.

William Sturges was elected to chair the organization's Milk Marketing advisory committee. Sturges also serves as president of the recently organized Northern Tier dairy producers cooperative. He also is Tioga-Potter counties Farmers Union president and is a member of the statewide Farmers Union executive committee.

Walter Jordan, president of Jefferson County Farmers Union was elected vice chairman and Naomi Spahr, Lancaster County was elected secretary of the Milk Marketing committee.

The committee's top legislative priority for 1983, according to Sturges, is getting Congress to repeal the "confiscatory USDA tax

on dairy farmers' gross receipts." Federal legislation will also be sought to limit imports of dairy products. Sturges claims much of the dairy surplus problem is the direct result of excessive imports of casein, cheese, and other dairy products.

Officers elected by PFU's legislative committee were Jack Philson (Mercer Co.), chairman;

Sam Reed (president of Clinton-Centre Co.), vice chairman, and Naomi Spahr (Lancaster Co.), secretary.

Priority issues selected by the legislative committee were: inadequate funds in Pa. Milk Marketing Security Fund to cover claims filed by producers against insolvent dealers; inequities in farm property tax assessment

laws; game law problems; defects in commodity referendum laws in respect to producer voting procedures; improving protection for landowners in oil and gas drilling safety legislation; and participation in public commentary on Sunset review of several state agencies, including the Pa. Milk Marketing Board.

## REC's publish stray voltage brochures

HARRISBURG — Neutral-to-earth voltage, tingle voltage, stray voltage — regardless of what this phenomenon is called, it means only one thing to farmers whose animals are affected: problems.

To help farmers and electricians identify these problems and work to solve them, the Pennsylvania Rural Electric Cooperatives are offering a set of brochures.

Copies of "The Farmer's Guide to Stray Voltage" and "The Electrician's Guide to Stray Voltage" can be obtained from local rural electric cooperatives or from the Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association, P.O. Box 1266, Harrisburg, Pa. 17108. Both publications are available free of charge.

By drinking from metal water cups, eating from metal feed troughs, or brushing up against

other metal objects in and around barns, animals can "ground out" any electrical current that is flowing through these objects.

In effect, the animals' bodies complete the electrical circuit, providing a convenient path for the electricity, which is always seeking the most readily available ground.

"Problems associated with stray voltage have been around as long as I've been associated with rural electrification," said William Matson, Executive Vice President and General Manager of the Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association.

Matson, a 30-year-veteran of the rural electric program, added that "there's a greater stray voltage problem perceived today for

several reasons: farmers are better educated about the potential problems that can affect their animals; there are greater numbers of complex electrical equipment used in barns today; there are more metal buildings in service, and water tables are dropping, causing grounding problems for farmers."

The solutions to stray voltage problems can usually be found on the farm itself. The recommended technique for solving the problem is "bonding" all metal surfaces in the barn together to form an "equipotential plane." Drinking cups, feed troughs, milking equipment, milk coolers, water heaters, drains and all other metal surfaces are connected by wire to provide for a common ground.

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