

Addresses Deer Controversies

UNIVERSITY PARK (Centre Co.) — The problems and benefits attributed to the white-tailed deer and the challenges of managing Pennsylvania's exploding deer population are discussed in a new video produced by Penn State's College of Agriculture.

Entitled "White-tailed Deer: Pennsylvania's Most Controversial Animal," the video explores the economic, social and environmental impact of deer on agriculture, tourism, and conservation. Farmers, hunters, foresters, game commissioners, educators and environmentalists will find useful and thought-provoking information in the video.

The abundance of deer in the Keystone State has led to the development of a thriving, hunting-based tourism economy in many rural areas. In 1989, about 1.25 million Pennsylvania hunters killed nearly 400,000 deer and spent an average of \$500 each on their sport. Hunting also is a cultural tradition strong enough in many counties to prompt the closing of schools on the first day of deer season.

But what hunters and hunting-related businesses consider a bounty can be a major headache

for farmers and foresters.

Mel Eckhaus, wildlife specialist with the Pennsylvania Farmers Association, says 38 percent of farmers surveyed have suffered heavy or extensive crop damage from deer. Another 58 percent say they have sustained moderate or slight damage. State officials estimate annual crop loss to deer at about \$30 million.

State and federal forestry officials say deer also hamper regeneration of woodlands. In some forested areas of Pennsylvania, deer are suspected of wiping out virtually all new tree growth and underbrush.

"The controversy surrounding deer has polarized groups on both sides of this complicated issue," said Dr. Margaret Brittingham, assistant professor of wildlife resources, who helped develop the video. "We hope to foster a better understanding of the different viewpoints."

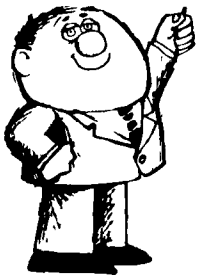
Dr. William Sharpe, professor of forest hydrology, worked with Brittingham to develop the video. He says the production offers suggestions for reducing the damage and conflict caused by deer in Pennsylvania. "We try to propose solutions to the problem — what's been done, what has worked and what could be done in the future."

Peter S. Duncan, executive director of the Pennsylvania Game Commission, also appears on the video to discuss state efforts to control the deer population and assist farmers with deer-related damage control.

The video was funded by Penn State's College of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Agricul-

ture, Renewable Resources Extension Act.

The 34-minute video is in VHS format, and is available for \$35 (postage paid) from Ag Information Services, 119 Ag Administration Building, University Park, PA 16802, (814) 865-6309. Make checks payable to Penn State.



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ASC Elections Held

LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.) — The ASC Community Elections, to select farmer representatives, were held this year from November 23 to December 3. Paul B. Kline, Chairman of the Lancaster Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Committee reminds farmers to exercise their right to choose who they want to represent them.

Kline said that selected representatives will serve a three year term.

Chairman Kline suggests that anyone who did not receive a ballot or anyone who has questions concerning eligibility to vote should contact the ASCS Office at (717) 397-6235. Farm owners and operators are eligible to vote.

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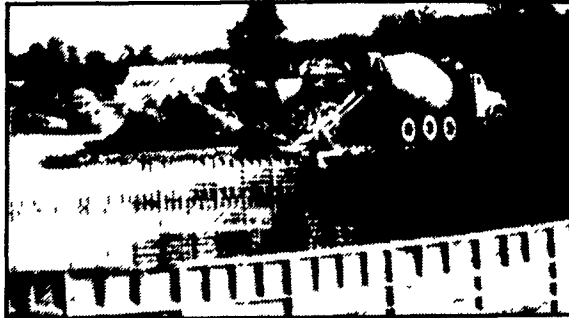
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