

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — The Pennsylvania Farmers' Association (PFA) has raised questions about

the PA Game Commission's system for reducing the size of the state's deer herd. PFA questioned deer

herd management efforts during a Game Commission hearing in Harrisburg on Sunday, Jan. 6. PFA is a volun-

tary, statewide farm organization which represents over 23,000 families. PFA spokesman

Logan Bower of Blain, Perry County, noted that the Commission's antlerless deer license allocation for last year

was supposed to reduce deer populations in 51 counties, but only succeeded in 24 counties. "PFA believes that

the Commission seriously needs to question the formula used to determine how many antlerless licenses are required to bring about desired results," said Bower who serves on PFA's Wildlife Damage Control Committee. "We believe the system may be flawed."

Bower noted that over the last five years the number of counties with deer herds at or below Game Commission goals has decreased from 16 to six. "How long will it take before populations of antlerless deer equal the established goals?" he asked. "We are told this will happen within five years under the current formula for reduction. However, when looking at the progress made, or lack thereof, over the last five years, one has to question how serious we are in bringing populations in line with goals."

Explaining why PFA wants the Commission's goals reached, Bower said, "We are concerned because we believe that when a county is over goal, there is a greater chance for deer to move out of the woodlands, and cause more extensive crop damage."

Bower told the Commission that, based on a survey of the boards of directors in its 54 county associations, PFA estimates deer caused about \$36.4 million worth of crop damage to its members last year.

"Farmers are finding it increasingly difficult to make a living from farming due to wildlife damage they are experiencing," Bower testified, "The year 1991 will be even more of a problem, as farm income in the state is projected to drop significantly due to lower commodity prices."

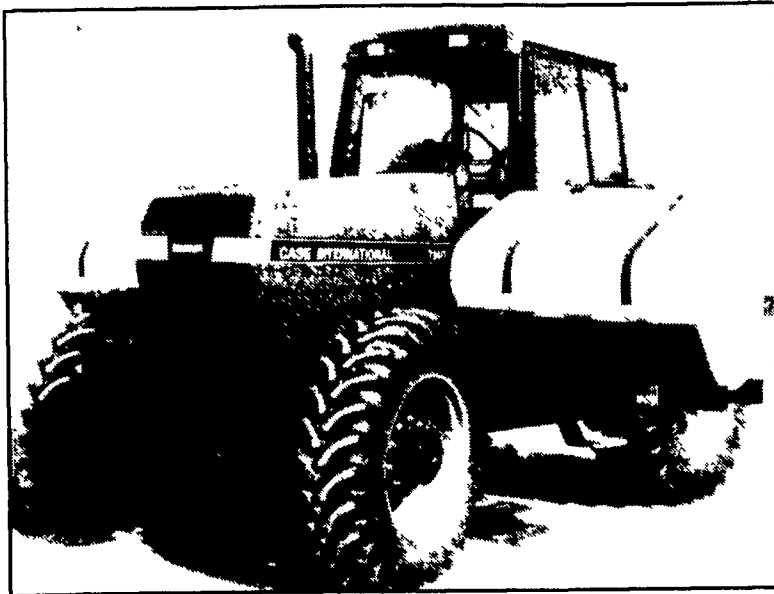
Farms going out of business due to low prices is a fact of life in a free enterprise system, Bower indicated. But, he added, "Farms going out of business due to wildlife damage is intolerable."

PFA believes crop damage problems need to be addressed on two fronts. "First," Bower said, "A better job needs to be done to bring the deer population in line with the carrying capacity of the woodlands, and second, more needs to be done to help the individual farmer deal with the damage on his farm."



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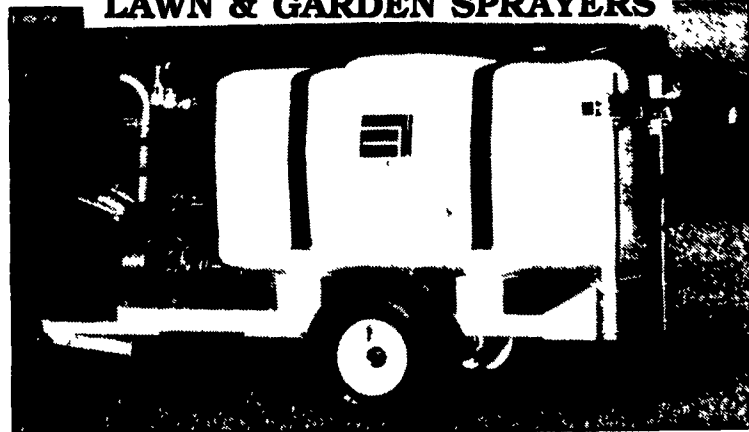


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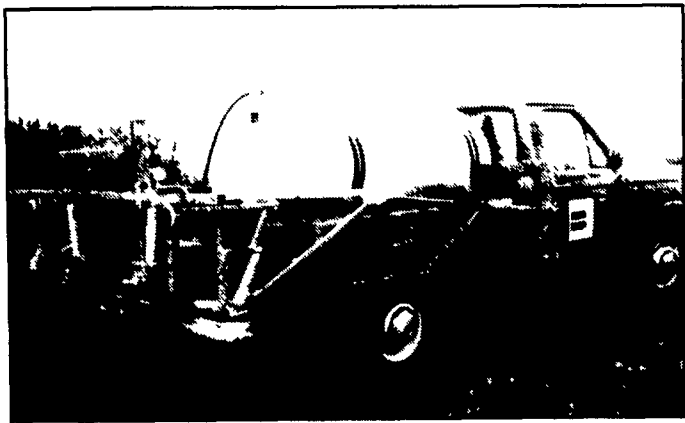
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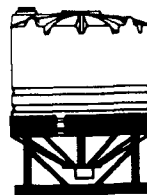
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