

Deer Damage Deadline Sept. 1

CAMP HILL (Cumberland Co.) — The Pennsylvania Farmers' Association (PFA) is urging farmers suffering deer damage to crops to enroll in a special Game Commission program before the Sept. 1st deadline.

For the third consecutive year the Pennsylvania Game Commission will permit properly licensed hunters to hunt antlerless deer on so-called hotspot farms. This year's hunt has been scheduled from Dec. 26, 1992 through Jan. 23, 1993.

In a new pilot project, hotspot hunting will be allowed in four counties during regular buck season from Nov. 30 through Dec. 12. The four counties selected for the trial program are Indiana, Schuylkill, Bedford and Craw-

ford. All four had high enrollment in past hotspot hunts.

PFA State Board director Ellis Crowl of Airville, York County said PFA's Wildlife Damage Control Committee endorses the Game Commission's pilot program. Crowl, who chairs the committee, said, "Deer eat and destroy millions of dollars worth of farm crops every year. Previous hotspot hunts have been too limited. All the deer have to do is leave the area. Scheduling hotspot hunts in four counties for the same time as the largest number of deer hunters are in the field should make the program more effective. We hope the pilot program is successful and can be expanded next year."

Crowl also urged farmers with deer damage in the rest of Penn-

sylvania to sign up for the regularly scheduled hotspot hunt. Two weeks of the statewide hunt will coincide with late archery and muzzleloader deer seasons. "While the program has not been as effective as it could be, it's the only thing we have at the present time," Crowl said. "It's also worth noting that the four counties with the highest hotspot enrollment during the two years of the hotspot program were selected for the pilot program."

Interested farmers should contact their regional Game Commission office by Sept 1. According to the Game Commission, a wildlife conservation officer will visit the farms before Sept. 26 to conduct the enrollment and distribute special signs. Hunters would be

able to get listings of hotspot farms by sending a self-addressed, stamped, business-size envelope to the proper regional office of the county for which they hold an antlerless license.

Toll-free numbers for Game Commission regional offices are: Northwest -- 1-800-533-6764;

Southwest -- 1-800-243-8519; Northcentral -- 1-800-422-7551; Southcentral -- 1-800-422-7554; Northeast -- 1-800-228-0789; and Southeast -- 1-800-228-0791.

PFA is a voluntary, statewide organization which represents 23,187 families in 54 local associations.

No Sale Of BST Milk

(Continued from Page A1)

The FDA has been expected to approve BST for commercial use this fall. Milk and meat from BST-treated cattle has been approved for human consumption for some time.

Though there is no evidence to suggest that BST-milk or meat is of any concern for human consumption, the GAO said that there

could possibly be a higher use of antibiotics to treat BST-injected cows suffering from mastitis.

Research has shown a slight rise in mastitis in some test herds using BST.

Consequently, opponents have called for the rejection of milk and meat from BST-treated animals, because they say a connection exists — more infections in cows, more antibiotic therapy and more antibiotics getting into milk and meat products.

This reasoning is despite existing prohibitions on antibiotic residues in milk and meat, USDA meat inspections, and despite strict testing of milk and meat for antibiotics.

It has been shown that American dairy products are the safest in the world.

Jeremy Rifkin, president of the anti-BST, anti-biotechnology group, Foundation on Economic Trends, is generally associated with helping to create the perception that there may be a link between BST and antibiotics. He was quoted in the Wall Street Journal article by reporter Bruce Ingersoll.

"I think the product may be dead in the U.S. If it is, it's dead in the (European Community) too," Rifkin was quoted as saying.

The BST product is created using biotechnology, similar to the production of insulin for humans.

BST is a naturally occurring protein hormone in dairy cows and when injected into the cow, stimulates the animal's system to produce about 10 pounds of additional milk per day.

(Reporting increased production by percent is misleading because all cows respond to BST with about the same increase in pounds of milk produced, but not all are producing the same base amounts.)

Research has shown that, while BST may be linked to an increase in the occurrence of mastitis or reproductive problems in a herd undergoing BST treatment, there is no human health link at all — human digestive processes destroy the protein chain in its BST form.

A number of protests over the use of BST have been based on personal distaste for injections, animal rights sympathies, and on the hypothesis that increased milk yields from cows will flood the milk market and drive small dairy-men out of business.

On one hand, the GAO report did concur with the FDA's finding that BST is apparently safe for human consumption.

However the GAO still calls for additional studies into what extent allowing the commercial use of BST will lead to antibiotic-tainted milk and meat.

And, according to the article, the GAO is calling for a ban of sales of milk and meat from BST cows until the studies can be completed.

However, Gerald Guest, director of the FDA Center for Veterinary Medicine is quoted as saying, "We will review what the GAO has found, but we haven't seen anything to cause us to see a danger."

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