Deer Permits For Farmers

(Continued from Page A33)

sympathies and anti-hunting by nonhunting landowners.

Ironically, at the same time some farmers surrounded by private woodlands report seeing a hundred or more deer in their crop fields at night, hunters have been complaining about low numbers of deer on public lands and blaming liberal deer harvesting rules and a perceived lack of proper gamelands management for deer.

Farmer frustration over deer

UNITED STATES

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damage has come from the fact that their crops have been feeding deer, and they have had no easy recourse.

A fact about crop-damaging deer is that they are mostly active at night, preventing effective control.

They also can quickly become accustomed to devices intended to scare them away from crops.

Further, some farmers who have destroyed deer in their crop fields have reported that following such

kills, there have been significant incidents of vandalism to their equipment, such as slashed tractor tires.

Though mostly unable to name individuals responsible for the acts, the farmers have said they suspect local deer hunting enthusiasts as most likely to have done the vandalism. The suspicion is that the acts are done as a sort of terrorism to dissuade the farmer from killing additional cropdamaging deer.

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Another problem for the farmer - especially today with economic pressures forcing many to utilize idle land - is that most of the crop-damaging deer spend most of their time in adjacent woodlands, not on the farm.

In many cases, those adjacent woodlands are not open to public hunting, and the deer population is little affected by public hunting on the crop-damaged farm.

Also, regular deer hunting seasons are held when crops are at harvest stage and fields either provide the deer with dense concealement and food from a mature crop. or offer nothing to attract or hold the deer on the farm.

Thus the opportunity for a regular season deer h inter to kill cropdamaging deer is limited.

From the hunter's point of view, hunting deer-damaged farms is generally best during the early archery season, before general season hunting pressures force the deer to seek refuge on non-public woodlands.

A little more than two years ago the Game Commission attempted to better resolve the problem of farmers by instituting a Deer Damage Area Program, also referred to as the commission's "Hot Spot" program.

Under that program, farmers must allow public deer hunting on their land. Signs are posted along the perimeter of the property, and, upon request by a hunter, the regional headquarters of the Game Commission also directs hunters to

program lands.

According to some farmers enrolled in the program, success has been limited.

Generally the complaint from farmers has been that the general hunting public has not had much success in killing deer because the deer take refuge on surrounding private lands.

Last year, hunters on Hot Spot farms were allowed to harvest deer during extended seasons.

This year, during the regular antlered season, hunters with anterless deer licenses will be allowed to fill that tag.

The new permitting program is different. It targets a period of time when hunting and crop protection effectiveness can coincide.

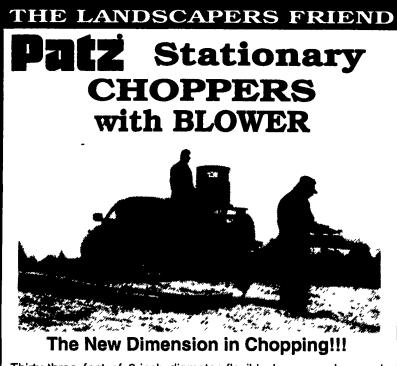
As as a prerequisite to eligibility to participate, farmers must have their farms enrolled in the Commission's Hot Spot program for two years.

After that condition has been met, the farmer can make an application for a deer control permit. (Can be made throught a district wildlife conservation officer (WCO) on a Game Commission form.)

At the time of application, the applicant is to provide a copy of a deed or lease that shows the applicant to either be the owner of the land or have control of the hunting rights on the land.

In addition to the state's general ban on Sunday hunting, on general

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