

Hunters Sharing Harvest Program Helps Hungry

ELIZABETHTOWN (Lancaster Co.) — Quite a few Pennsylvania residents are looking forward to deer hunting season — but not for the reasons one might expect.

The people do not plan to join in the hunt, but they look forward to sharing some of the bounty of deer season.

These individuals, in the past, have eaten venison donated through the "Hunters Sharing the Harvest" and look forward to again sharing the meat harvested by generous hunters.

The "Hunters Sharing the Harvest" (HSH) program, which channels donated venison to local food banks and soup kitchens, has been a hit with deer hunters and hungry Pennsylvanians alike.

Last year, more than 200,000 Pennsylvanians enjoyed meals from venison donated by local hunters.

Now entering the eighth year of the project, hunters across the state are expected to donate upwards of 80,000 pounds of venison.

HSH Coordinator Ken Brandt said, "With 7 million pounds of venison harvested in the state each year, the goal is within reach."

Licensing Agents, Processors Help

In an all-out effort to boost donations, license issuing agents have been invited to help HSH by making hunters aware of the program and to encourage them to give a portion of deer meat to help feed their hungry neighbors.

Participating agents will display posters and hand out fliers which give hunters information about getting their venison to a food bank in their area. Licensing agents will also be asked to get local conservation groups and hunting clubs involved in giving extra deer meat to the needy.

Pennsylvania meat processors and butchers have been contacted and will again be asked to participate in the voluntary sharing program. They play an important part in the donation project, as they butcher carcasses under sanitary conditions and provide cold storage until the meat is moved to the food bank.

Coordinators Needed

Two area coordinators have volunteered to organize hunters' donations with food banks and soup kitchens in western Pennsylvania.

Dr. Bill Choby, who participated in HSH in past years, said, "In an area like ours where unemployment is high, the venison program really makes a difference for people living on the edge. They appreciate it."

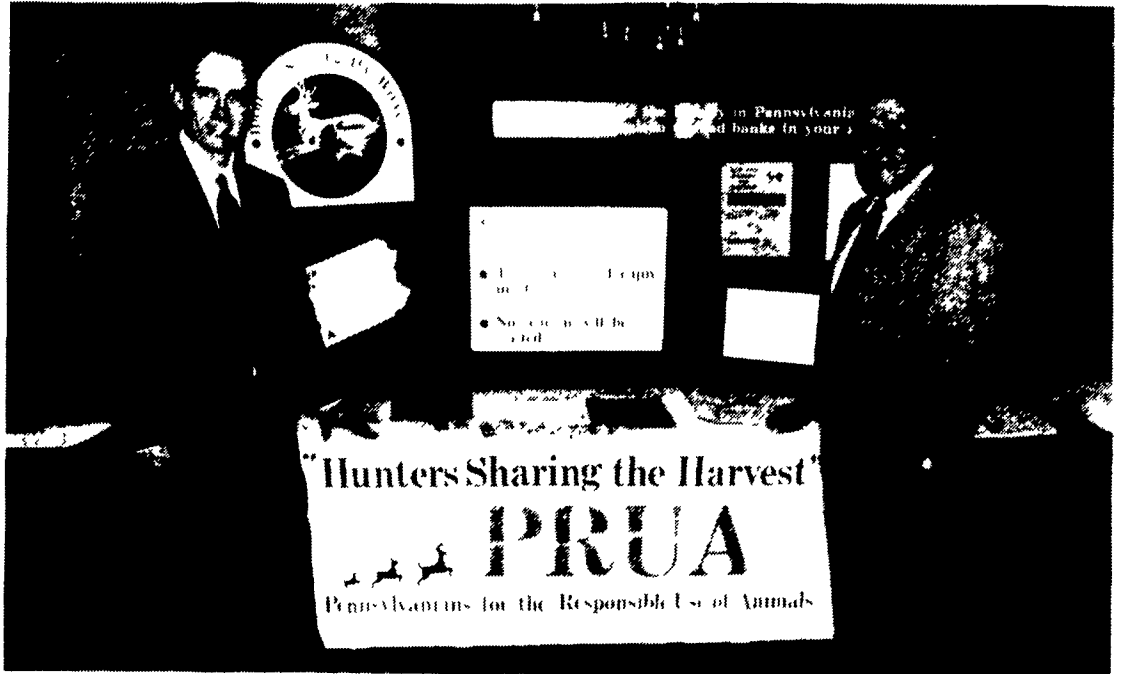
Dr. Choby can be contacted at 1905 Bates Drive, Johnstown, PA 15905 (Cambria County) Telephone: 814-255-7779.

Steve Loder will be the area coordinator for Allegheny County. He can be contacted at P.O. Box 1615, Cranberry Township, PA 16066. His telephone number is 724-779-8320.

To enhance everyone's enjoyment of venison, Steve and his wife Gail have written a cookbook *Quality Venison: Homemade Recipes & Homespun Deer Tales*. Though the Loders have over 150 recipes for preparing venison, a portion of their deer meat goes to the hunters' sharing project. Loders can be contacted directly to obtain copies of the cookbook or for information about HSH.

More area coordinators are needed, particularly in northern, central and eastern areas of the state.

Volunteer coordinators will be asked to contact their local meat processors, talk to food banks about receiving and distributing the venison, and to encourage area hunting clubs to participate in the "Hunters



The Hunters Sharing the Harvest program is in its eighth years as an organization designed to funnel venison donations from successful hunters of Pennsylvania whitetail into food kitchens across the state. The program is sponsored by Pennsylvanians for the Responsible Use of Animals, an advocacy group that promotes the humane and un wasteful use of animals. The program also receives support from several state agencies, including the Department of Agriculture and the state Game Commission. From the left, state Secretary of Agriculture Samuel E. Hayes Jr. stands with Kenneth Brandt, HSH coordinator, at the organization's booth in the state Capitol.

Sharing the Harvest."

Interested persons — individuals, clubs or informal groups — can contact coordinator Ken Brandt, 3317 Turnpike Road, Elizabethtown, PA 17022. Telephone: 717-367-5223. FAX: 717-367-4316. Ken can also be reached by e-mail: deer-sharing@aol.com.

Sponsors

The innovative HSH venison sharing project was initiated in 1991 by Pennsylvanians for the Responsible Use of Animals (PRUA). The program operates in cooperation with the Pa. Game Commission and the Pa. Department of Agriculture along with the Pa. Deer Association, Pa. Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs and the Pennsylvania chapters of the Safari Clubs International.

During its first year, the success of HSH attracted the attention of United States Tobacco Company, which has supported the program since that time.

PRUA is a coalition of Pennsylvania associations and individuals representing agriculture, biomedicine, entertainment, sports, and hunting groups. The umbrella organization encourages humane treatment of animals used for food, clothing and biomedical research, sport and entertainment.

At the same time, PRUA strongly supports the right to use animals in a responsible way.

Gettysburg Hunt On Hold

Due to a dispute now in the courts, the National Park Service has temporarily shelved

this year's project to continue thinning the burgeoning deer population on 8,000 acres of national park land at Gettysburg.

When the herd reduction program resumes, "Hunters Sharing the Harvest" will continue its role in helping Park Service with distribution of venison.

Plans are ready to solicit funds as soon as the issue is resolved in the courts. Cash contributions will enable HSH and the Park Service to have the venison processed and donated to food banks and soup kitchens.

A Park Service spokesman said, "One of the most important aspects of the reduction of deer on parkland is the ability to utilize the meat."

Penn State Researchers Look To Make Livestock Better Travelers

UNIVERSITY PARK (Centre Co.) — Want to make sure that your livestock weather a trip with less weight loss? Make sure they have plenty of "Gatorade," according to researchers in Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences.

Lowell Wilson, professor of animal science, teamed with project assistant Darron Smith to combat the significant weight loss that occurs in calves, pigs and lambs when they are transported from farm to livestock auction to the farm of the new owners.

"All animals will lose weight when transported—that's known as shrinkage," Smith said. "Weight loss can approach 10 percent in transported animals, due to numerous environmental and physiological factors. We want to minimize this shrinkage, which results from the stress of being handled and transported."

Smith found that providing livestock with electrolyte-restoring liquids (similar to sports drinks for humans) before and during transportation can reduce shrinkage.

"Offering these liquids apparently increases the amount of fluid the animals consume while

they're waiting for sale at the auction, or even before they're loaded on the truck at their original farm," Smith said. "This may be because the animal has a nutritional requirement for some of the elements contained in the electrolyte mixture, or it may be because the mixture is flavored. But increased liquid consumption tends to cut down on stress and weight loss."

For the experiment, scientists transported the animals 50 miles in the morning, kept them for four hours in unfamiliar pens, then transported them another 50 miles. All animals were weighed immediately before and after their trips, and again 24 and 48 hours later. Other data were collected, including feed and liquid consumed, body temperature, heart rate and respiration.

Wilson and Smith also videotaped the animals during transport, tracking such behaviors as loss of balance, aggression and position changes. Researchers also kept track of eating, drinking and other behavior during the four-hour holding period.

The animals were divided into three groups: one group wasn't transported at all, a second was transported with access

to water and a third was transported with access to a standard electrolyte-enhanced liquid drink. While the water-fed animals spent more time lying or standing in the pen, the electrolyte-fed animals showed increased frequency of eating and drinking. And, while all animals lost weight during transport, electrolyte-fed animals tended to lose less weight than water-fed animals.

"We think that an increase in liquids and electrolyte consumption may promote feed consumption during stressful events like handling and transporting to auctions," Wilson said.

"Electrolyte-fed animals didn't demonstrate the fasting and binge-eating seen in water-fed animals, so they didn't have the large weight losses and subsequent large feed intakes that

water-fed animals did. This results in animals that maintain a more constant weight through the transportation process."

The monogastric animals (pigs) showed the greatest benefit from the electrolytes, losing even less weight than the ruminants (lambs and calves) after transportation. Wilson says the benefits were especially evident in hot weather.

Pitts Receives Friend Of Farm Bureau Award

WASHINGTON, D.C. — U.S. Congressman Joseph R. Pitts recently received the "Friend of Farm Bureau" Award, presented by the American Farm Bureau to Members of Congress who have been nominated by their state Farm Bureau and approved to the American Farm Bureau Federation Board of Directors for their dedication to policies which benefit regional farmers.

Congressman Pitts was presented the award at the farm of Duane and Marilyn Hershey, Cochranville.

As a representative of the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau and

the American Farm Bureau Federation, Duane Hershey presented the award to Congressman Pitts. Hershey said, "Farm Bureau recognizes those members of Congress who have demonstrated a high level of support for key issues of importance to Farm Bureau. Joe Pitts has proven to be a great asset to Pennsylvania agriculture through his dedicated service in Congress."

Hershey continued, "Congressman Pitts' support for key Farm Bureau issues includes fiscal responsibility through a balanced budget along with cuts in the capital gains tax, 100 percent health insur-

ance deductions for the self employed, higher exemptions from estate taxes, and tax deferred savings accounts for farmers — FARRM Accounts."

In receipt of the "Friend of Farm Bureau" Award, Congressman Pitts said, "In the 16th Congressional District of Pennsylvania, we have some of the most coveted farmland in the country. I am dedicated to continued service of the hard-working farmers, who, for generations, have made this region prosperous. I am honored to receive this award and pledge to continue my work on behalf of our farmers."