



ALABAMA

Summer 2024 | Volume 2 | Issue 2



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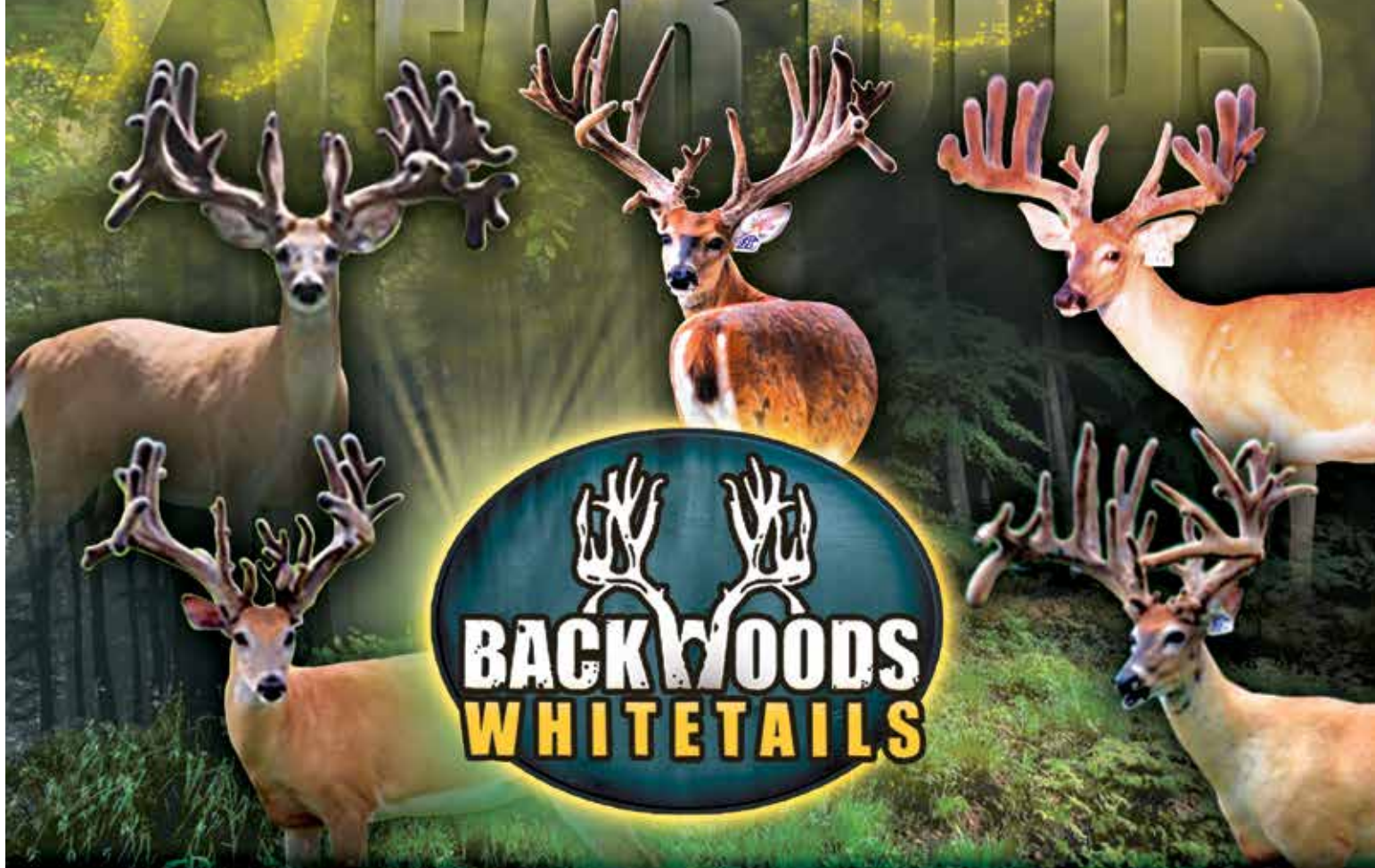
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PICTURED AT 1

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Magazine Deadlines / Event Calendar

Provided by D&K Design, Publisher for State Association Magazines • VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR MORE EVENT DETAILS: DEERSITES.COM

July 2024

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|--------|---------|---|--|--------|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 <small>Louisiana Summer Deadline</small> |  | 5 | 6 |
| 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 <small>Alabama Summer Deadline</small> | 11 | 12 | 13 <small>KEDA Summer Picnic</small> |
| 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 <small>Ohio Summer Deadline</small> | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 <small>Michigan Summer Deadline</small> | 25 | 26 | 27 |
|  | 29 | 30 | 31 <small>Upper MW Summer Deadline</small> | | | |
| | | | | | | |

August 2024

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---|--------|---------|--|---|---|---|
| | | | | FALL DEADLINE ADVERTISERS IN PACKAGE CONTRACTS | 2 <small>IDEFA Summer Picnic</small> | 3 <small>IDEFA Summer Picnic</small> |
| 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 <small>Pennsylvania Fall Deadline</small> | 8 | 9 | 10 <small>KALA Summer Showcase & Auction Missouri Deer Association Summer Picnic</small> |
| 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 <small>NY & WV Summer Deadline</small> | 15 <small>OH Convention & Buckeye Auction</small> | 16 <small>OH Convention & Buckeye Auction TDA Conference</small> | 17 <small>TDA Conference</small> |
| 18  | | 20 | SUMMER AD SPECIAL ENDS TODAY! | 22 | 23 <small>Southern Top 30 & WOL Expo</small> | 24 <small>Southern Top 30 & WOL Expo</small> |
| 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 <small>IDEFA Fall Deadline</small> | 29 | 30 | 31 |

September 2024

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|---|---------|--|----------|-------------------------------------|--|
| 1 |  | 3 | 4 <small>Tri-State Fall Deadline</small> | 5 | 6 <small>PDFA Fall Event</small> | 7 <small>PDFA Fall Event</small> |
|  | 9 | 10 | 11 <small>Louisiana Fall Deadline</small> | 12 | 13 | 14 <small>West Virginia Deer Farmers Annual Event</small> |
| 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 <small>Kentucky Fall Deadline</small> | 19 | 20 | 21 |
| 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 |
| 29 | 30 | | | | | |

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CODE OF ETHICS

I hereby make application for membership in the ALABAMA DEER ASSOCIATION agreeing to conform to the ALABAMA DEER ASSOCIATION CODE OF ETHICS and BYLAWS governing this Association.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

CLASSIFICATIONS (Please check one)

☐ Silver Member: Annual Dues Amount: \$50.00

Each Silver Member is understood to provide goods and/or services to the industry. Silver Members shall be entitled to receive quarterly ADA magazine. Silver Memberships renew every year at the Annual Membership Meeting. NO VOTING RIGHTS.

☐ Gold Member: Annual Dues Amount: \$100.00

Each Gold Member shall be entitled to attend all ADA meetings and receive quarterly ADA magazine. Gold Memberships renew every year at the Annual Membership Meeting. VOTING RIGHTS IN STATE MEMBERS ONLY.

☐ Diamond Member: 5 YEAR MEMBERSHIP Dues for 5 Years Amount: \$500.00

Each Diamond Member shall be entitled to attend all ADA meetings and receive quarterly ADA magazine. VOTING RIGHTS IN STATE MEMBERS ONLY. DIAMOND MEMBERS WILL BE RECOGNIZED ON THE ADA WEBSITE AND IN ALL MAGAZINES FOR 5 YEARS.

☐ Lifetime Member: LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP One-Time Dues Amount: \$1,000.00

Each Platinum Member shall be entitled to attend all ADA meetings and receive quarterly ADA magazine. VOTING RIGHTS IN STATE MEMBERS ONLY. PLATINUM MEMBERS WILL BE RECOGNIZED ON THE ADA WEBSITE AND IN ALL MAGAZINES AND TRADESHOWS FOR THE LIFE OF THE MEMBER.

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Prefer to sign up online?
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you to our membership registration page automatically!





OFFERS DREAM TRIPS AND FULFILLS WISHES

By: Gail Veley This article was sponsored by Swamp Whitetails

SUMMER SPOTLIGHT:



Carol Clark and her husband Rick average a mere six weekends a year at their very own house in Hueytown, Alabama. The rest of the year is spent fulfilling dream trips and wishes for terminally ill, disabled or handicapped children through their organization, Kidz Outdoors, L.L.C. As a result, they are on the road travelling to states such as Colorado, Mississippi and several others for fun times and lasting memories.

"We help between 40 and 100 children a year fulfill what is often their last wishes," Carol, 70, explained. From hunting whitetails, to going on fishing trips, turkey hunts, visiting dude ranches or attending rodeos, Kidz Outdoors pays for every aspect of the entire trip including covering the cost for parents and siblings. Begun in 2013, Carol and Rick wanted to start an organization specifically to help children. Funding for the adventures they provide comes from private donations, live and silent auctions as well as The Alabama Deer Association (ADA).

"We participate in the breeding side and donate a deer to our annual auction," said ADA President Rodney Ragon. "All proceeds go to Kidz Outdoors. We started doing this two years ago. It's a great organization." Perhaps one of the most anticipated Kidz Outdoors event takes place every year the same weekend as Veterans Day, at Pleasant Hill United Methodist Church in McCalla, Alabama. Children who participated in hunts throughout the year are presented with their "mounts," often times by the very owners of the hunting location they visited. "It means so much to the kids," Carol said. "They get so excited."

Although it is very fulfilling to develop relationships with each child and family they help, "there are times I don't think I can do it anymore," Carol said, reflecting back upon children with terminal cancer, spina bifida, severe physical handicaps or genetic disorders. "When Rick and I get depressed, we start going through pictures and when we see the smiles on the kid's faces, you realize why you put up with the hurt. We even attend the funerals of those children who have passed. Working together with Rick on this has definitely made our marriage stronger. I'm always on the phone with families who are asking about trips. After a certain time of day he takes the phone away from me and tells me it's time to relax."

However, the word "relax" is not in their vocabulary, as the two intend to operate Kidz Outdoors until the day they die. "We feel honored to be able to help these children and enhance their lives," Carol said. For more information call or text Carol Clark at 205-410-3779 or email her at rcclark107@yahoo.com.

Our two featured hunts from Swamp Whitetails in this issue are Nolen and Jack. Both boys are diagnosed with cancer. Nolan is in remission and Jack is diagnosed with Ewing's Sarcoma. These boys give you a real sense of what joy was brought to them by getting into the outdoors and experiencing harvesting a buck.

Donations can be submitted at:
kidzoutdoors.org

CONTACT: CAROL CLARK

205-410-3779 • RCCLARK107@YAHOO.COM

FROM THE KIDZ...



I went to Swamp white tails to hunt deer. We waited 3 days before we were able to take a shot. On Sunday morning, I shot a 22 Point deer. God was able to teach me patience through this amazing hunt.

-Nolan

Hi, my name is Jack Plowman, I am 16 years old, and I am from Gordo, Alabama. I was invited to Swamp Whitetail in Brent, Alabama by Kidz Outdoors.



I was diagnosed with Ewing's Sarcoma when I was 9 and relapsed in 2021. I would like to tell you about my trip to Swamp Whitetails.

It started off when we got there on Friday, I was amazed at how big the lodge was. When we made it inside, the first thing I recognized was the biggest set of antlers, they scared me. The first night was a blast, I got to know everyone, played some cornhole, and hung out. The next morning, we got up and I was ready to hunt, we got on the rangers and rolled out. We got to the stand and sat down and waited. Nothing came out but we still had a good time, once we made it back to camp we had lunch, and then we made our way back to the stand.

We saw a lot of does and a couple of small bucks, so held off and packed up and went back to the lodge. We ate dinner and played corn hole and just had a good time. We went to bed, and I had a dream about killing the biggest deer ever!!

I woke up the next morning just ready to head out. I had a couple of pop tarts, and then we headed to the stand. I was waiting for something to come out, and some does walked out into the field, and they stayed in the field for about hour. Then about 15 minutes later two bucks came down the road to the left of us. One of the bucks looked good and the other one only had half a rack, so while we waited on the deer to come in the field, I looked to the left and my jaw just dropped, here came the deer that we had been waiting on.

He was walking slow, he made it in the field, and I tell you what, that whole blind was shaking, so I already had the gun out the window. When the deer got into my crosshairs, I was ready to shoot. Once he gave me the go ahead, I shot. Boom!!

He went about 30-35 yards into the woods. We waited for about an hour, then we went out and looked for him. When we finally found him, everybody was amazed at how big he was, and we drug him to the field. He was the biggest deer I ever killed. I was just so happy that I had an opportunity to come out here. We took a ton of photos with then we loaded up the rangers. The deer was heavy, and we got the deer in the back of the side by side, and headed back to the lodge where everyone was waiting on us, and then we took more pictures, which was cool, because I like taking pictures.

Once everyone got settled me and Nolan went down to the lake and caught a couple of bass. One of the coolest things was an otter, it just kept swimming right beside us. Nolan killed his deer that afternoon, once it was dinner time, I was ready to eat, it was delicious and I was full. I went to bed right after, and the next morning they made a great breakfast.

Thank you to everyone who made this hunting trip successful.

Jack Plowman

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GENERATIONAL FARMING

PASSING DOWN THE LOVE OF AGRICULTURE AND THE OUTDOORS

By: Gail Veley • Sponsored by The Indiana Deer and Elk Farmers Association

Every summer in the late 80's, as a young teenaged boy, Eddie Ray Borkholder would put out a sign at the front of his Nappanee, Indiana home. It read "Fawns for Sale. \$100." He never had to wait long for interested customers. Turns out, no one can resist a fawn. In 1999, Jim Davidson was on his tractor one early June morning in Marshall, Illinois, when he saw an adult doe get hit and killed by a car. He quickly discovered she had a doe fawn. He made two or three rounds near the road to check on it, worried it would suffer the same fate as it's mother.

Pretty soon, the little bleating fawn started following him. Concerned for her welfare, Jim, now 80, climbed down from his tractor, scooped up the precocious new life in his arms, and put her in the tractor with him. He rode all day with the tiny fawn either in his lap or right next to him. When daylight began to fade, he wasn't sure what to do, although he was certain he couldn't let her go out on her own. That night, as a gift he gave her to his very young grandchildren Derrick and Taylor, who shrieked with love for their new

pet and named her Bambi. When their father Rick Davidson (who would later own Illinois Dominant Bucks) got home, he was initially not pleased with what his father had done. At all. However, it turned out to be the best thing that ever happened to their family. And what began as just a love for deer, later turned into a full-blown business after buying 200 acres in 2005 from his Aunt Francie.

Like Davidson, Borkholder's simple love of deer took a more serious turn in the 1990's when he started his unique Patrick line and Pine Creek Deer Farm. However, a love for agriculture and all that came with it started much earlier for Borkholder and Davidson by the generations of family members before them, who knew what it was like to be up every morning before sunrise, work long hard hours in the sting of the cold or burning of the sun (along with

working up a hearty appetite) and later drop in bed grateful, tired and ready to start all over again the next day. Eddie Ray, the first is his family to farm deer, grew up learning the art of crop and dairy farming from his father, grandfather and great grandfather. His son Josie, in learning the art of raising deer, felt in his younger years that farming itself was, honestly, just a lot of hard, hard work. "Looking back, I see it now as more of a luxury and bonding time with Dad," reflected Josie, who now owns Lone Pine Deer Farm with James Slaubaugh. "Today, farming is getting lost. We need to look at creative ways to continue, and deer farming is one way to do that. Dairy farming has become so



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commercial and there aren't many new dairy farms starting up. If we don't take the opportunity now to carry farming forward it will be lost."

Davidson, the first is his family to raise deer, is a 5th generation farmer, who comes from a long line of long-lived farmers who raised dairy cows and grew corn, soybeans and alfalfa. When most

children were learning to ride bikes, Davidson was learning to drive a tractor. As age six he sat behind the wheel for the first time, his great great grandfather Richard "Dick" Davidson patiently walking beside him, teaching him the skill needed to drive the now long outdated Ford 8N stick shift two-wheel drive metal seated tractor. "It took a while for me to catch on," Davidson said. However, he learned along with that experience what drove his grandfather to farm his land. "Farming gets in your blood," he said. "At first, I wasn't sure I wanted to farm and work as hard as my Dad. It was only after going away to college and being away from it, that I realized how much I missed it. It's critical to keep family farms going. Farming is the backbone of our country. We are always going

to need to eat. Without farming, we lose valuable land and the love of the outdoors. Deer farming is an extension of that love and something we need to continue to pass down."



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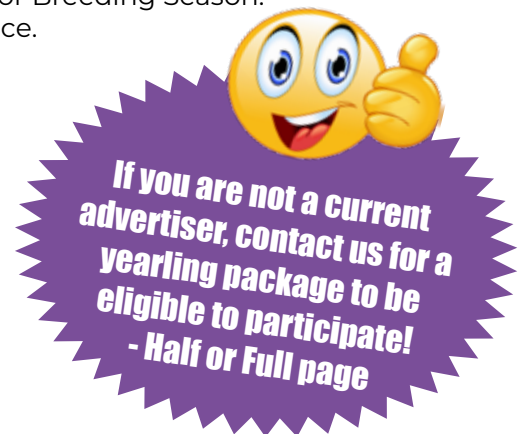


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Reservation for space and buck info will be due no later than **August 14th, 2024**. If you have an existing picture ready to go, that will also be due at that time. If you would like to send in a last minute photo of your buck, the cutoff date is **Monday, September 2nd by 9am CST**. Placement will be in order of first come first serve. **Printing and mailing will start September 4th and be in hand between September 16th-20th**. Just in time for semen sales getting ready for Breeding Season. These will be mailed to members of the 19 state associations we service. (More information will be mailed out to all current advertisers closer to the date)

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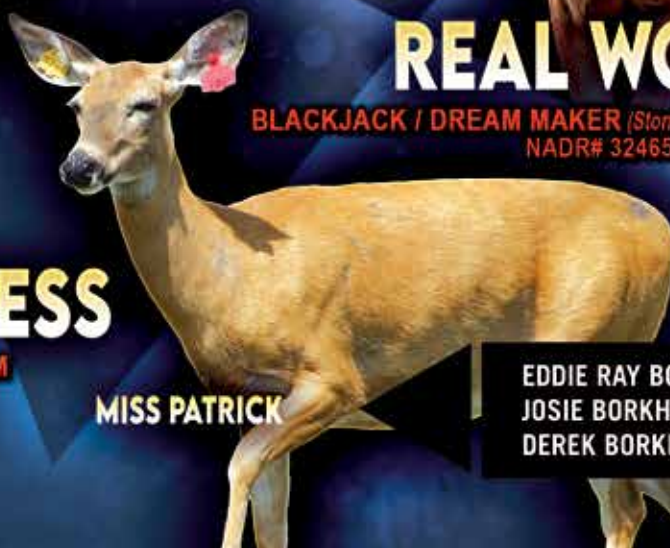
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N A D e F A F L Y - I N

ADVOCATES FOR CWD RESEARCH FUNDING IN D.C.

APRIL 2024 | Washington, D.C.



This year, the NADeFA fly-in to Washington, D.C. happened between April 8-10th. Members from North Dakota, South Dakota, Missouri, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Alabama, Michigan, and New York joined together to represent NADeFA in our nation's capital. The group had the opportunity to talk to lawmakers about the key issues that affect them, specifically the adverse effects of chronic wasting disease (CWD), the need for a cure, and the importance of indemnity money for deer farmers and ranchers nation-wide.

The Congressional meetings were focused on two sets of asks for FY 2025. The first one, is for the Chronic Wasting Disease Research and Management Act to be funded at \$15 million. For context, the bill was passed in the last Congress by efforts from Capitol Hill Consulting Group, in collaboration with the NADeFA fly-in, and was authorized \$70 million a year for research and development efforts aimed at finding a cure. Of that amount, half will go to State Agriculture and Wildlife agencies to manage CWD activity within their states, while the other half will be used to improve the science surrounding the disease. However, NADeFA is asking for a fifth of the authorized dollars due to the limited funds in FY2025, and are seeking to use it as seed money to get the program started. The second request was for Congress to appropriate \$18.5 million for the Animal and Plant Health Inspection (APHIS) to fund the Cervid Health Program, a \$1 million increase over FY24, and ensure that indemnity money is set aside for those farms affected by CWD.

One of the main priorities for the visit this year was to characterize CWD as a national issue and emphasize that with increasing Congressional support focused on live testing and genetic resistance research efforts, an answer for this disease is on the horizon. Key meetings included Chairman of the House Agriculture Committee Congressman GT Thompson (R-PA), Congressman Brian Babin (R-TX), and Senator John Hoeven (R-ND). Additionally, NADeFA members were able to meet with APHIS Administrator Dr. Michael Watson in USDA and Taylor Schmitz from the Congressional Sportsman Foundation.

In their free time, the group had the opportunity to visit Arlington Cemetery and closed the successful trip with the yearly tradition of dinner at Fogo de Chao, an internationally-renowned Brazilian steakhouse. The impact of those who took time out of their schedules to come to D.C. is incredibly valued and noted. Fly-ins are an essential component in Congressional communication, especially when discussing issues affecting you and your community. The meetings have a proven record of securing policy changes as seen with the Chronic Wasting Disease Research and Management Act. It was a pleasure having NADeFA visit us here in D.C. last month and we are excited for next year's trip!

By Caroline Herrera
Capitol Hill Consulting



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AN ACT

ENROLLED HOUSE
BILL NO. 3462

By: **Archer, Moore, and Pfeiffer of the House**
and
Green and Bullard of the Senate

An Act relating to live game; creating the Chronic Wasting Disease Genetic Improvement Act; requiring creation of certain pilot program by certain date; establishing program's purpose to enhance genetic durability of Oklahoma deer against chronic wasting disease; establishing program at the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food, and Forestry; requiring certain assistance of the Department of Wildlife Conservation; requiring collection of DNA samples; requiring certain procedures and determinations; allowing for the establishment of testing locations; limiting participation in program; providing for certain timeline of program activity; authorizing the promulgation of rules; providing for a one-time permit fee; providing for codification; and providing an effective date.

SUBJECT: Live game

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

SECTION 1. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 6-520 of Title 2, unless there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

- A. This section shall be known and may be cited as the "Chronic Wasting Disease Genetic Improvement Act".
- B. No later than November 1, 2024, the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food, and Forestry shall establish a pilot program to enhance the genetic durability of Oklahoma deer against chronic wasting disease. Such pilot program shall include, but not be limited to, the following program characteristics:
 - 1. The Department of Wildlife Conservation will begin collecting DNA samples to establish a baseline of average genetic codon markers and genomic breeding values for native, free-ranging Oklahoma white-tailed deer. For establishing testing locations in the state, the Department shall use Interstates 35 and 40 as dividing lines or established Department deer management zones as published in the current hunting regulations guide;
 - 2. Limit participation in the program to native white-tailed deer, born and raised in Oklahoma with genetic resistance breeding, including the SS allele at codon 96, and that surpass the genomic estimated breeding value cutoff established for the program by the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food, and Forestry; and
 - 3. Beginning in 2026, during the months of February and March and through the fifteenth of April, bred female and male deer may be released.
- C. The Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food, and Forestry and the Department of Wildlife Conservation may promulgate rules as needed to implement the provisions of this act.
- D. The Department of Wildlife Conservation may charge a one-time permit fee, which shall not exceed Five Hundred Dollars (\$500.00), for citizens purchasing deer as a result of criteria established in the pilot program.

SECTION 2. This act shall become effective October 1, 2024.

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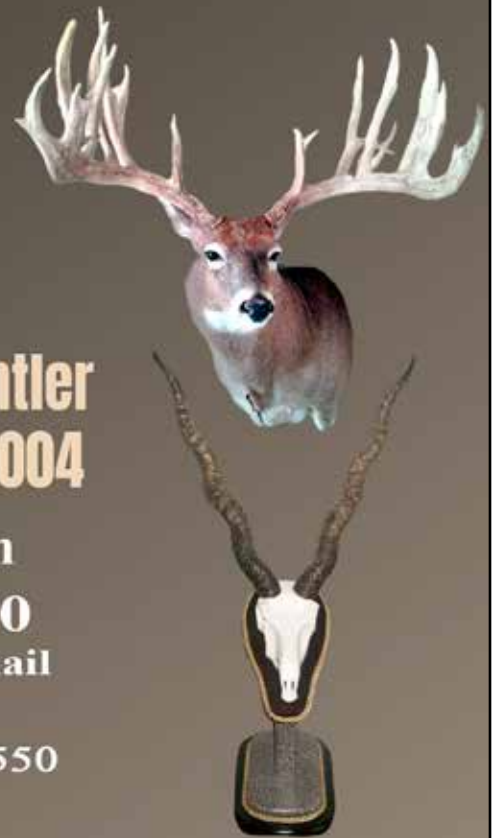
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CONTROLLING PARASITES IN HUMID CLIMATES

HELPFUL TIPS AND ADVICE

By: Gail Veley • Sponsored by SETDA

Maintaining an environment non-conducive for attracting parasites while knowing how to spot and effectively treat whitetail deer presenting symptoms of parasite infestation, is the key to having the healthiest herd possible. In humid climates such as those found in Florida, Louisiana and other parts of more humid deer-raising country, parasites such as worms, flies and mosquitoes can live for longer periods of time, creating an ever-present need to be vigilant. "One of the most obvious preventative measures is to not have standing water or mud in your pens, and to keep them clean," said Daniel Bontrager of Bontrager Whitetails in Marianna, Florida. "Rake up old hay and keep manure to a minimum and cultivate the dirt three times a year."

At his farm, Bontrager cultivates the dirt in the spring before fawning season, in late summer to replant new grass and again in the fall to plant crops such as soybeans or peas, in an effort to keep the land viable and less inviting to parasites.

These proactive measures, combined with dry pens and "always keeping eyes on your deer" can help deer farmers stay ahead of problems, offer Susan and Ian Hall, owners of Oak Island Whitetails in Okeechobee, Florida. They also believe that using natural water sources can help deer build up immunities to parasites.

According to internet research, there are close to 80 species of mosquitoes

and 18 species of flies that are native to Florida. "That is probably right with the actual real numbers," said University of Florida Veterinarian Dr. Juan Campos, who works in the Department of Large Animal Clinical Sciences as well as the Department of Wildlife and Ecology. "There are 47 subspecies of the culicoides midge fly but only three that transmit EHD. Quite often we see more parasites like these year-round and farther down south in central and southern Florida where the weather is warmer." Treating deer for parasite infestation is not always a clear-cut endeavor and Dr. Campos, 48, fears that some parasites may become resistant to traditional methods of treatment. "One of our biggest parasites, *Haemonchus contortus*, is getting resistant to treatment," Dr. Campos explained. Found in their infective stage known as Larva Three on the tips of leaves or grass after defecation from an infected animal, once ingested, the worm migrates directly to the fourth stomach or abomasum of a deer, where it attaches itself to and resides in. There, it is able to produce thousands of eggs a day. These worms feed off the blood of deer, causing anemia, weight loss, scours and an overall unhealthy appearance.

Two classes of drugs are commonly used to combat parasites, one to kill internal parasites such as fenbendazole and one to first paralyze and then kill parasites such as ivermectin. Fecal samples taken and evaluated by a veterinarian before and one week after

treatment will reveal how successful the treatment was, Dr. Campos emphasized.

He also advises to not automatically treat your whole herd, but rather only those presenting symptoms such as droopy ears or reluctance to eat, as treating healthy animals may cause them to ultimately develop resistance. "More is not always better," he said. "We have found that most of the time only 10% of a herd might be affected by a heavy load. The others may have a few parasites, but they don't cause them problems." And while administering medication can prove effective in controlling or treating parasitic infections, spraying insecticides such as broad-based Permethrin inside deer pens (but not on shade cloth) is also a common preventative practice. However, "remember when you are killing bad insects you might also be killing good ones," Dr. Campos said. "And be mindful of where you are spraying. Anything on the outer edge of where you sprayed could develop resistance."



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INGREDIENTS

- 2 teaspoons seasoned salt
- ¼ teaspoon garlic salt
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- ½ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1 ½ pounds venison, cut into 2 inch strips
- 4 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 medium red bell pepper, cut into 2 inch strips
- 1 medium yellow bell pepper, cut into 2 inch strips
- 1 medium onion, cut into 1/2-inch wedges
- 12 fajita size flour tortillas, warmed



INSTRUCTIONS

1. Combine seasoned salt, garlic salt, black pepper, cayenne pepper, and oregano to make the fajita seasoning. Sprinkle two teaspoons of the seasoning over the sliced venison. Mix well, cover, and refrigerate for 30 minutes.
2. Heat 2 tablespoons of oil in a heavy frying pan. Cook bell peppers and onion until starting to soften, then remove. Pour in remaining oil, then cook venison until browned. Return pepper mixture to the pan, season with remaining fajita seasoning, and reheat. Served with the warmed tortillas.



Do you have a favorite recipe? Email it to deerassociations@gmail.com for a chance to be featured in one of our magazines!

Please list the ingredients, instructions, and include a photo or two!
(Recipes don't need to include venison!)

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INCREASING FAWN SUCCESS

ADVICE FROM EXPERIENCED EXPERTS

By: Gail Veley • Sponsored by WOO

Jodi Ezell quietly pauses outside one of her deer pens in the spring twilight, watching and waiting for signs of does ready to deliver fawns. A few does have already started pacing and instinctively creating a safe haven by chasing off other does. However, Ezell is looking for one specific thing as she shares the cool evening with the herd she and her husband Chris raise at Dangerous Whitetails of Oklahoma in Adair, Oklahoma. She is looking for any does with tails lifted and actively pushing, as this starts the countdown for safe fawn arrival. "I give them about an hour of active pushing," Ezell explained. "If nothing has happened by then, I go in to assist." Assisting means reaching deep inside the womb, feeling for fawns and helping to pull them out. While an inevitable set of twins is usually the norm, a doe's history may point to the potential for triplets or quads or perhaps the rare arrival of quintuplets and the necessity to not stop investigating after two.

As these delicate lives receive their first breath of earthly air, Jodi and Chris, who have been through at least 12 fawning seasons, are already taking stock of each fawn and keeping a watchful eye. After 12 hours next to their mother's

side to ensure colostrum intake, each fawn has hair pulled for a DNA sample, is tagged and given medication. Afterwards, doe fawns and struggling buck fawns are brought inside the Ezell's bedroom, placed in baby pens and given additional goat colostrum. They will spend the next week receiving a bottle three times a day before being moved to the farm's fawning facility. Once there, they are introduced to grain as a supplement to their regular schedule of pasteurized goat's milk, although other farms may opt to bottle feed formula instead. "Around week three we start to feel like their survival rate is more guaranteed," Ezell said. "By watching them this close for the first three weeks, we are eliminating some of the potential for Mother Nature to do them harm." This could include the development of scours or even the failure early on to intake enough colostrum to ensure survival.

While fawn arrival may be one of the most rewarding times of the year for deer farmers, it can also be a time when farmers collectively hold their breath as they work to safeguard their health and survival. Although born precocial and able to ambulate practically from the moment they arrive, fawns can also be extremely fragile and may require dedicated care in order to grow into thriving and healthy adult deer.

In addition to proactive fawn care from the moment they arrive, ensuring fawns get the best head start begins with the care of the expecting doe, explains Matt Owens, owner of After Shock deer supplements and Rack Star Whitetails in Sullivan, Missouri. After having been through nine fawning seasons on his farm, his first preparations involve vaccinating all expectant does on March 15th for pneumonia, fusobacterium and clostridium C and D, common cervid



diseases known to cause herd and fawn mortality. A booster shot given on April 5th for each is another safeguard to increase doe antibody levels and allow for the passive transfer of antibodies from mother to baby, he emphasized. "The most important part of preparing for healthy fawns is to have a proven vaccine program and proven feed program for your expectant does," Owens emphasized. While these measures certainly point to an increase in fawning success "some fawns are still born sick," Owens said. "Another measure to decrease these odds is to make sure pregnant does also have a good vitamin and mineral program. When you do, fawns are generally born bigger and healthier. Fawns are born with no immune system and not until the 90-day mark do they really develop one. They need all the protection you can give them, including vaccines, until that 90-day mark."





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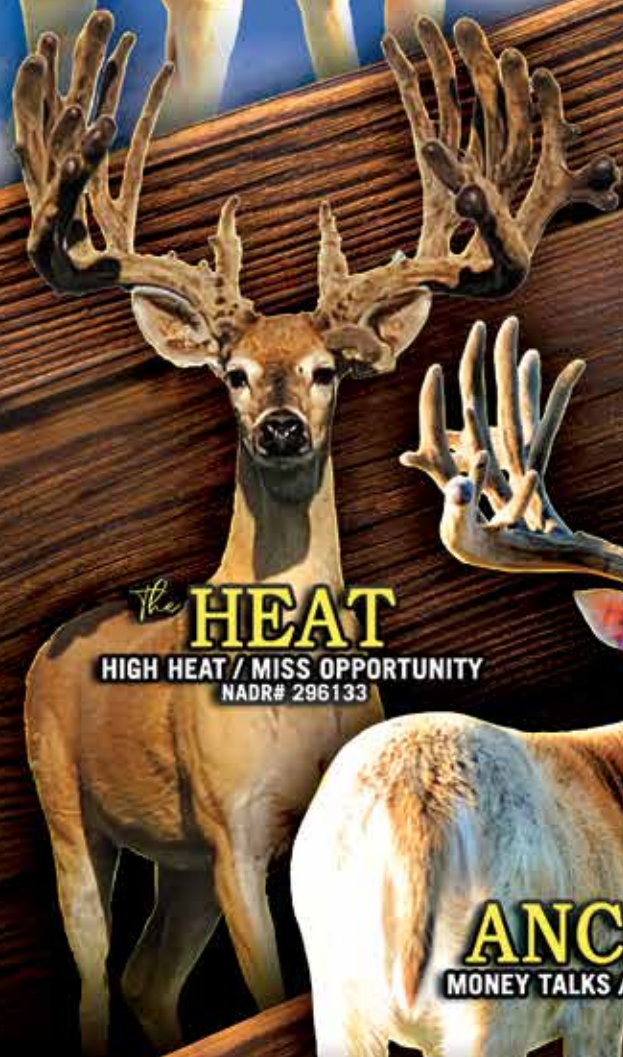
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For the deer farmer (or the rural property owner who just wants to give deer herds a fighting chance), mitigating the predation of fawns to the greatest degree possible is an ongoing concern. Given the ongoing concern and intervention of wildlife biologists, starvation and disease are seldom the concerns they were in years past, which leaves predation as the most prevalent cause of fawn mortality. This is particularly true in the case of whitetail deer, which live in close proximity to humans in large numbers, even when we don't consider farming operations.

Here, we'll look at a few key areas that deer farmers and property owners can effectively address to reduce the predation of deer fawns, as well as supporting herd health overall.

Predator control. Protecting fawns is obviously crucial to herd development. While bobcats, bears, eagles and feral dogs do kill their share of fawns, this is usually not in sufficient numbers to have a substantial impact on herds. Thus, most control efforts are directed toward coyotes which, statistically-speaking, are the leading cause of fawn mortality.

Most sportsmen and deer farmers agree that a healthy population of predators is good for ecosystems however, opportunistic coyote packs picking off fawns on a farm is far less than ideal. Like deer and other game animals, predators also need managing.

Those with experience in these areas agree that the most effective way to control predators is to hunt or trap them. Unfortunately, killing coyotes outright doesn't do much to significantly reduce their numbers over the long-term, and they can be difficult to hunt—so keeping on top of them is an ongoing proposition.

Herd management. Managing herd sizes and ratios of sex and age are also essential components to ensuring the survival of more fawns. A high population density can lead to stress on all of the animals in a herd, and it disrupts their natural behavior. Keeping sex ratios balanced and ensuring that the carrying capacity of the land can support all of the deer is essential. This may mean relocating or removing a certain number of does periodically. The available research suggests that mature does produce more fawns; thus, removing younger does is more likely to improve fawn survival within a herd.

Habitat management and cover. Most of the evidence suggests that farmers and landowners who've been successful at reducing fawn mortality have taken a cue from wildlife biologists and wildlife managers. In order to reduce predation, one of the chief areas these experts advocate keeping on top of is that of habitat management. One of the ways this can be accomplished is by exploiting the natural behavior of deer (specifically, does and fawns) and managing your property in ways that enhance a fawn's chances for survival organically.

The available literature maintains that providing cover is the single most important factor in reducing the predation of fawns. One thing to remember is that does and their fawns naturally seek cover. Whitetail deer in particular prefer the ecotone (forest

fringe). This is partly because these areas receive more sunlight, which promotes the growth of vegetation. More importantly, this zone typically provides more cover than open areas, but doesn't have the predator density of the deep forest. One study revealed that fawns in areas with the little edge habitat were more than twice as likely to be eaten by a coyote than those in areas with more edge availability.¹

Does have evolved to be protective of their fawns, and will seek out safe areas for them to rest. Providing places on your property/farm that are attractive in this regard can improve the odds for fawns. Cutting down small trees and placing brush areas for does to hide their fawns is a great idea. These will resemble the natural deadfall that does are accustomed to using for this purpose. Creating spaces like these will help to better protect them from predator animals in the area.

As mentioned earlier, we've learned a lot from the wildlife biologists who've dedicated many years toward refining the population management of deer—and among what we've learned is that responsible predator management supports both ecosystems and deer populations. Obviously, predator management is even more critical when we're talking about deer farming. Wherever you happen to live, and whatever your predator problems are, addressing the three basic areas we've discussed will go a long way toward reducing the predation of deer fawns, as well as reducing overall fawn mortality and supporting a healthy herd.

¹Gulsby, W. D., J. C. Kilgo, M. Vukovich, and J. A. Martin. 2017. Landscape heterogeneity reduces coyote predation on white-tailed deer fawns. *Journal of Wildlife Management* 81:601-609.



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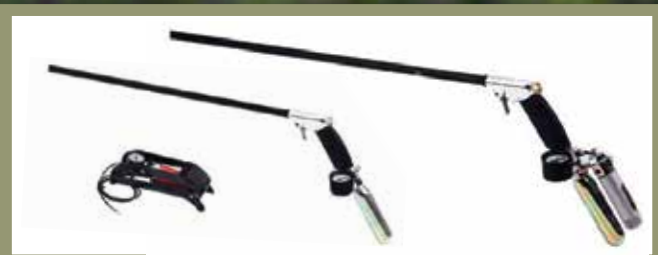


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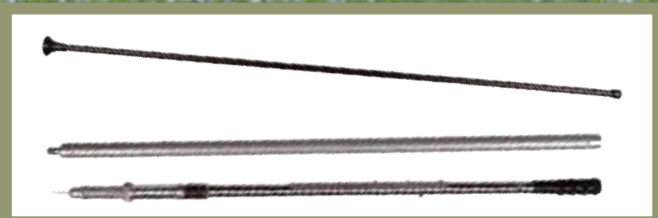
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NORTH DAKOTA DEER FARMERS SHARE – IF I KNEW THEN WHAT I KNOW NOW, WHAT I MAY HAVE DONE DIFFERENTLY STARTING MY FARM

By: Gail Veley • Sponsored by NDDRA

Mike Ryckman knows he couldn't be in a better place than his home state of North Dakota to raise whitetail deer. Drawing in a full breath of fresh morning air in a place nestled interiorly between the Rocky and Appalachian Mountains, he cherishes the start to his day as he works in this peaceful and picturesque setting. However, the trouble is, Ryckman doesn't have one truly flat spot on his property. His current deer handling facility, located on one of the highest points of his property, has required him to "chase" his deer uphill during every past vaccine, antler trimming or A.I. season. This year, he's changing all that by moving his facility to one of the lowest points of his property, while staying out of a flood zone.

Before starting his farm, Ryckman Whitetails, in 2014, "I had seen a couple deer farms but not enough in reference to handling facilities," Ryckman, 40, said. While he focused initially on genetics and designing handy alley ways, looking back he realized he needed more knowledge regarding how deer react to

the actual handling facility itself. "Our first handling facility, the original one, had gaps or holes that were too big, and we had to reconstruct it and seal those gaps up," he explained. "I should have spent more time understanding how deer respond to certain situations like seeing daylight."

After revising the original facility to be completely deer safe and foolproof, Ryckman, through working with his deer and studying their behavior, became very keen on one subject. Deer have a very strong flight instinct, and as such, need to feel as though they've gotten away from you. Using that pretense, Ryckman installed guillotine (dropping) gates on his property to move deer from one location to another, and also determined that sending deer downhill would be far easier than sending them uphill. "I would say Number One when you start your deer farm, study the lay of your land and consider all the variables before deciding where to put your handling facility," he emphasized. Ryckman, with the help of his wife Kristy and three children, hopes to have his third (and final) facility moved and ready for deer by July of this year. "There is also a lot of cost savings doing it right the first time," he added.

Understanding the lay of the land and winter weather patterns better, would have been very useful when Clark Schafer and his younger brother Shawn started their deer farm, Schafer Whitetail Ranch, in 1998 in Turtle Lake. "We would have put a little more thought into the snow part of it and made easier access inside the alleyway leading to the deer barn, so we could clean it out with the toolcat and snow blower," Clark Schafer said. "Instead of



permanent walls, we might have made gates on hinges to make things easier when it comes to clearing snow out of the way." Although times were different back then and superior genetics weren't fully developed, producing quality deer was always at the forefront of their operation.

In addition to breeding quality deer and the desire to more easily clear snow out of the way, Clark Schafer, 56, feels they may have constructed more pens from the very beginning, had they more accurately predicted how quickly deer multiply and that separating them becomes a necessity, to practice efficient animal husbandry by having less deer per acre/pen. Ryckman, as with all conscientious deer farmers, agrees and is grateful for the mentoring and good examples set by farms like Schafer Whitetail Ranch. "At the end of the day, we love our deer and are infatuated with them," Ryckman said. "We realize our obligation to practice great animal husbandry and to treat them the best we can and whether that's more adequate space or a properly located handling facility, we are committed to caring for them and raising the best deer we possibly can."



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| | 6 | | 4 | | | 1 | 8 | 9 |
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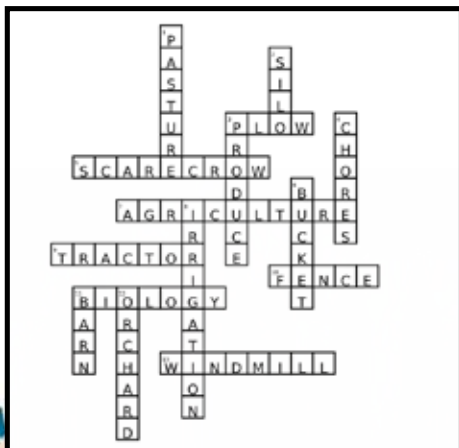


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