



# LEE COUNTY WILDLIFE ASSOCIATION



## Deer Nutrition And Supplementation

October 2002

### So you want more wildlife on your property!

REPRINTED FROM LAST YEAR

Lets start with the basics: what do animals need to survive? In general wildlife require three basic items: food, shelter and water. The quantity of wildlife that your property is able to support is directly proportional to the quantity of shelter and food sources. Both of these items are in your control. In this article we will address the importance of nutrition.



Deer generally consume 2 – 3 pounds of forage (air dried wt.) per 100 lb. of body weight/day. However most native forages available to deer furnish less than 50% of the protein and energy reportedly needed for maximum body and antler growth on a year-round basis. In general and on average, deer of all age and sex classes need at least 16-17 percent crude protein year-round in there diet to fully express their genetic potential for body and antler growth. While in east Texas protein levels might be as high as 20% or more in the spring, during late summer and winter the protein levels may fall below 4%. So, if nutrition is the problem, how do we attempt to solve it?

There are numerous ways to improve the overall nutritional plane of free ranging deer including cultivation of both annual and perennial year-round food plots containing high protein and high energy plants and fertilization of natural forages. Other methods include free choice access to high protein pelted feeds, or high-energy seeds and grains. In most instances, deer with

access to supplemental feed will still eat mostly natural forage. The better the condition (more plant diversity) and the amount of usable habitat the better the chance of natural forage containing the protein and energy that deer need.

If you choose to provide supplementation out of a bag, you should consider the following: In order to bring a diet averaging 8+% protein up to 17+%, you need a concentrated supplement. If the supplement contains less than 20% protein you could never boost the deer's protein intake to + 17% without the supplement replacing natural forage completely. On the other hand, if the supplement contained 30-40 percent crude protein, only about ¾ lb of this supplement per 100 lb deer per day along with natural forage could provide the total daily requirements of white-tail. The bottom line is you could provide what the deer need and buy and hall less feed. Deer will consume twice as much corn but would only receive one-fourth the protein.

One possible source as a supplement is soybeans. Raw whole soybeans contain up to 40 percent crude protein, 18 – 20 percent fat, and are high in digestible energy.

Whether you choose food plots or a feeder

corn is low in crude protein (only 7 to 9 percent) and deficient in certain important amino acids.

you should have realistic objectives. It takes time to condition deer to eat high protein

feeds. The entire herd needs to be consuming the supplement before an improvement in condition should be expected. This can take up to three generations to achieve. Supplementation should be available year round. Studies have shown that competition at feeders limit which animals

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receive benefits of the feed. For this reason free choice feeders, placed at one per one hundred acres, should be used instead of timed spin feeders.

The greatest influence on deer nutrition can be achieved by managing forage quantity. Landowners can influence the quality of deer forage by manipulating vegetation and encouraging plant diversity. Understanding the nutritional requirements and the nutritional value of deer food plants is important so that informed decisions on brush, weed and grazing management can be made.

Supplements are not cure-alls for poor deer management practices. Without proper habitat management and population control, food plot establishment and supplemental feeds are a waste of time and money for the landowner. However, food plots can be an important part of the overall management of deer in East Central Texas. Properly established food plots can increase the production capacity of deer habitat by enhancing the nutritional level of white-tails throughout the year.

**Lost Pines Groundwater Conservation District**

On November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2002 voters will decide whether to confirm the Lost Pines Groundwater District, which is dedicated to protecting our groundwater supply from over pumping.

The need for this water district is because there are serious threats to the Carrizo-Wilcox Aquifer, which is the main source of clean, usable water for our area.

As other areas of the state anticipate water shortages, they are looking to our aquifer. Several large interests have announced or are expecting to announce plans to build large pumping stations and pipelines to move water to

**SOUTH LEE WILDLIFE COOP MEETING**

The South Lee County Wildlife Coop held their regular meeting and social on August 17th at the St. Paul Lutheran Church Picnic Grounds in Serbin. After a delicious hamburger meal, members and guests were given a training session on the new antler restriction regulations for Austin, Colorado, Fayette, Lavaca, Lee and Washington Counties. Guest speaker Greg Pleasant utilized a slide show to help explain what is considered a legal buck. A legal buck deer is defined as having a hardened antler protruding through the skin and at least one unbranched antler; or an inside spread of 13 inches or greater; or six points or more on one antler. South Lee member and Game Warden Victor Gonzales was also on hand to an-

other regions of the state.

If large volumes are pumped over an extended time and no action is taken, there is likely to be a significant decline in the water levels.

A comprehensive study by the University of Texas Bureau of Economic Geology concluded that if all of the new water uses occurred as projected, well water levels could decline from current levels by 129 to 250 feet by the year 2050. Many rural wells could go dry across hundreds of square miles. Many homes, farms and ranches would lose their water. Without water, our region would be economically devastated. The greatest concern is that more water will be pumped than can be replenished naturally. Unlike the limestone Edwards Aquifer, the Carrizo-Wilcox Aquifer is composed of sand, sandstone, silt and clay, so recharge occurs more slowly as water seeps into the ground. Once the Carrizo-Wilcox Aquifer is damaged, it could take decades for water levels to recover.

The Lost Pines Groundwater Conservation District cannot prevent outside interests from exporting water away from our area. However, the District will have the power necessary to prevent any large user from over pumping and causing damage to our water supply.

The Lee County Wildlife Management Association Directors support the Lost Pines Groundwater District and ask that you exercise your right to vote on November 5<sup>th</sup>.

**There will be a water board meeting on October 21st at the Woodson Building in Lexington at 7:00pm**

Senator Robby Cook, John Burk from the Lost Pines Water District, and others will be on hand. So come and learn more so you can make an informed decision about this important issue .

swer questions. When asked specific questions as to how strict he would be regarding these regulations, Mr. Gonzales said he would decide each occurrence case by case. Mr. Gonzales said it is important to study the deer you see and if there is any doubt, don't shoot. This is an experimental regulation that will last 3 years.

The meeting concluded with questions from the floor and a drawing for door prizes.

The directors would like to express appreciation to our members for donating door prizes and providing delicious desserts. We would also like to thank M & S Distributing and Mr. Mark Srubar for donating the beer, as well as some door prizes.

## Coyote Contest Winners

Winners were announced for this year's annual coyote contest. Hunters accumulated points for the contest based on the number of coyotes they killed from October 1 through June 1 in Lee County. The contest was started to encourage Association members to help control numbers of the one predator on wildlife species in this area. The Association appreciates all who participated in this contest.

Wildlife Association Winners who took the most sets of coyote ears to their directors to be recorded are pictured from left to right. Donald Herklotz – third place winner receiving a \$300.00 gift certificate at Feller's Taxidermy, Joseph Kalbas – first place, the winner of a nice black Powder Rifle valued at \$550.00, and Louis Schatte, Jr. won a 12ga. Shot gun valued at \$300.00 for third place.



## Food Plots For Wildlife

The planting of supplemental food plots for wildlife seems to be a practice that is welcomed by most landowners and land managers who are interested in wildlife management. A well-planned food plot can provide as much as 4 to 5 tons of forage per acre. However, the maximum benefits can only be obtained if the food plot is a compliment to the native vegetation. Food plots should be available when native vegetation is lacking or is low in nutritional value. These "stress periods" normally occur in late summer and late winter.

September is the time to start preparing to plant cool season plots. The success of the plot depends on the land managers ability to correctly choose an appropriate seed variety, plant in a suitable site and use the correct planting procedures. Some considerations before you plant may include: Where should I plant? What should I plant? When should I plant? How should I plant?

**Where:** Best if plots are located adjacent to some type of escape cover and in good soils. If possible, use separate areas for warm season and cool season food plots. The size of the plots should be one to five acres for every hundred acres of habitat. Several smaller plots spread throughout an area is better than one large plot. Long narrow plots are better than wide ones. Food plots should be fenced to exclude cattle with the bottom wire eighteen inches from the ground. It is not recommended to plant plots near public roads since they might encourage illegal hunting.

**What:** A combination of Wheat and Austrian winter peas works very well. Wheat is preferred over oats only because of its seed producing capability. Wheat tends to have a longer lasting erect stubble that will hold the seed longer into the summer. This seed is consumed throughout the year by many different bird and wildlife species. Many times in a dry summer condition, wheat can be left to stand all year and resprouting will occur by shredding and lightly disking each September.

Clover plots are some of the most preferred, however special care should be taken in selecting the proper variety of

*Robert Lehmann, TPWD*

clover to coincide with your soils pH. Many varieties of clover will reseed and have extended growing seasons that can possibly extend into the summer months. There are many commercially produced specialty mixes available that will work well, but often at a much higher price.

**When:** Planting of cool season plots should be planted September 15<sup>th</sup> through October 15<sup>th</sup> depending on available soil moisture.

**How:** Wheat and winter peas are fairly simple to plant; the site should be shredded and disking or tilled to create a clean seedbed. Approximately 25 lbs of wheat and 25 lbs of winter peas should be planted per acre. The seed should be evenly spread over the area by a commercial seeder or even by hand depending on the size of area to be planted. Seeds should then be lightly covered with a disk or some type of drag to insure ground to seed contact. The end results should be a planting depth around 1 inch deep. One of the most common mistakes in planting is getting the seed in too deep. Clovers should never be disking or planted deeper than ½ inch deep. On well-prepared seedbeds or loose sandy soils, clovers can be planted directly on top of the soil without dragging or redisking to cover the seed. Clovers should be inoculated to increase nitrogen fixation that will aid in improving soil quality over time. Plots will need to be fertilized correctly to realize the full benefit. Soil test should be taken to determine the lime and fertilizer requirements. If you have limited equipment perennial clovers might be the best choice, because the plot doesn't have to be redone each year

**Finally:** Food plots are no way a cure-all for poor habitat management. Without consideration of the native food source and cover requirements for wildlife, food plots will not provide the adequate nutrition needed by most wildlife species on a daily basis.

If you have any questions about habitat management on your property please feel free to contact me: Greg Pleasant, Texas Parks and Wildlife (979) 773-9043 or come by my office in the Wilson Boyd Building in Lexington on Hwy 77.

<b>Wildlife Association Annual meeting</b>	<b>West Yegua Co-op Meeting</b>
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**Reminder**

The Lee County Wildlife Association's Annual meeting will be held on **February 7<sup>th</sup>** at the Giddings Sons of Herman Hall. We plan on having vendors, items for Raffle, and door prizes. If anyone would like to contribute items or help the Association purchase items (WE COULD USE YOUR HELP) please call your co-op directors, Greg Pleasant, the Ext. office or Mickey Wachsmann. We thank you for the continued support that you give the Wildlife Association.

The West Yegua Co-op will have their fall get together on Saturday, Oct. 19, 2002 at 6:30 pm. so come out for a fish fry supper at Bobby Zochs Ranch on FM1624. There will be an educational program on how to determining what bucks can be harvested under the new regulation.

**WE NEED YOUR 911 ADDRESS NOW**

If you have been issued a 911 address in recent months please let us know about it. Each posting is a significant expense and the post office will not deliver your mail with your old Address. We do not want to miss you with any mail. Thank you for your help.

**New Experimental Antler Restriction Regulation**



<b>LEGAL</b> at least one unbranched antler	<b>LEGAL</b> at least one unbranched antler	<b>LEGAL</b> inside spread of 13 inches or greater	<b>LEGAL</b> six points or more on one side	<b>ILLEGAL</b> This buck meets none of the criteria
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The success of the new buck regulation is now in the hands of the land-owners and hunters. Texas Parks and Wildlife Department will evaluate the effectiveness of the new harvest strategy based on data collected from deer harvested in these six counties. We need to collect information from as many deer as possible harvested in the participating counties. There will be three voluntary check stations in Lee County.

Please bring your deer in so we can collect age and antler information.

- Doug's Grocery in Dime Box
- H. W. Doyle Processing Plant, Giddings
- U-WAG-M in Lexington.

By registering any legally harvested bucks taken in one of the six participating counties you will be entered in a drawing for one of ten valuable prizes, including a lifetime hunting and fishing license.

**How do you determine if a buck has an inside spread measurement of 13 inches or greater?**

The distance from ear-tip to ear-tip on a buck with ears in the alert position is approximately 13 inches.

Every deer comes with it's own measuring stick **IF YOU JUST KNOW HOW TO USE IT!**