

## Hunters Helping Farmers Program Status

A total of 7,332 deer hunters registered for the Hunters Helping Farmers program by the August 30, 2009 cut-off date. Now, those deer hunters are in a holding pattern, hoping to be contacted by a landowner that is looking for deer hunters to help reduce the number of antlerless deer on that property. The Division of Fish and Wildlife is encouraging landowners that are experiencing deer damage to increase the number of deer hunters hunting on their land during the upcoming deer seasons with a focus on removing antlerless deer. Landowners can contact their District Wildlife Biologist beginning September 15 to obtain a list of hunters who registered with the Hunters Helping Farmers program in their county. The Division does not pair any particular hunter with a farmer, but rather it's up to the farmer to choose hunters from the list and contact the hunters directly.

The Division is recommending that landowners with unacceptable levels of deer damage have at least one hunter hunting specifically for antlerless deer during the firearm season for every 5 acres of deer habitat on their property. Example: If a farmer had 40 acres of deer habitat, he should attempt to have at least 8 deer hunters, spread evenly across the firearm season, hunting the property specifically for antlerless deer. Furthermore, the Division encourages those same farmers to have hunters hunting specifically for antlerless deer during the archery season. Landowners should replace one antlerless firearm season hunter for every two antlerless archery season hunters. So in the above example, if a landowner had 6 antlerless archery season hunters, he should also have 5 antlerless firearm season hunters, for a total of 11 hunters hunting sometime during the deer hunting season hunting specifically for antlerless deer.

Since this is the first time this program has been attempted, the Division has no way of knowing what kind of response to expect from landowners. The Division will keep track of the number of landowners requesting a county Hunters Helping Farmers list and conduct an evaluation of the program this coming winter.