

MDC And CFM Encourage Deer Hunters To Share The Harvest

The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) and the Conservation Federation of Missouri (CFM) encourage deer hunters around the state to share their harvests through the state's Share the Harvest program. Administered by MDC and CFM, Share the Harvest coordinates the efforts of thousands of deer hunters, numerous participating meat processors, many local supporting organizations, and a handful of statewide sponsors to help feed hungry Missourians.

The program works by deer hunters donating their extra venison -- from several pounds to whole deer -- to participating meat processors throughout the state who grind and package the deer meat. The packaged venison is then given to food banks and food pantries for distribution to Missourians in need of food assistance.

"Hunters started Share the Harvest because they saw a need in their communities," said MDC Director Sara Pauley. "And hunters remain the driving force behind this popular program that helps feed our fellow Missourians who are in need. We sincerely thank the thousands of deer hunters who support Share the Harvest, along with the many participating meat processors and sponsors."

Processing fees are covered entirely or in part by numerous local sponsors, along with statewide sponsors that include: MDC, CFM, Shelter Insurance, Bass Pro Shops, Missouri Chapter Safari Club International, Missouri Chapter National Wild Turkey Federation, Midway USA Inc., Missouri Food Banks Association, and United Bowhunters of Missouri

Hunters should contact individual processors to determine what funds are available. The cost of processing is the hunter's responsibility when funds to help cover the full cost of processing are not available.

"Share the Harvest is a partnership of citizens, agencies, organizations, and corporations working together to provide healthy, protein-rich meat to those who may otherwise go without," said CFM Executive Director Brandon Butler. "Hunters across Missouri should be proud of this outstanding program."

Nearly 4,300 Missouri deer hunters donated more than 198,000 pounds of venison to the program last deer season. Since the program was started in 1992, Share the Harvest has provided more than 3.6 million pounds of lean, healthy venison to help feed hungry Missourians.

Find participating processors in MDC's "2017 Fall Deer & Turkey Hunting Regulations and Information" booklet, online at huntfish.mdc.mo.gov/hunting-trapping/species/deer/deer-share-harvest, or by calling MDC at 573-751-4115 or CFM at 573-634-2322.

INFORMATION ABOUT DONATING DEER FROM CWD COUNTIES

Share the Harvest is committed to providing healthy venison to help feed hungry Missourians.

Deer donated to Share the Harvest that were harvested in the seven Missouri counties where chronic wasting disease (CWD) has been found will be tested for the deer disease. Deer that test positive for CWD will not be used and will be properly disposed of. The seven counties are: Adair, Cole, Franklin, Jefferson, Linn, Macon, and St. Clair.

CWD is a deadly illness for white-tailed deer and other members of the deer family, called cervids. MDC is working with conservation partners to find cases and limit the spread of CWD. Based on CWD testing MDC has conducted, the disease appears to be relatively rare in the state at this time with only 42 cases found in seven counties out of more than 76,000 deer tested around the state.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), there have been no documented cases of CWD in humans. As a safeguard, the CDC recommends hunters strongly consider having their harvested deer tested for CWD before eating the meat if the animal was harvested from an area where CWD has been found. The CDC also recommends not consuming an animal that tests positive for the disease. For more information on CWD, visit mdc.mo.gov/cwd.