



Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation
PO Box 5550
Madison, WI 53705-0550

WEB SITE: wbf.com

Contact: Tom Thieding
Executive Director, Communications
(608) 828-5709

WISCONSIN FARM BUREAU FEDERATION

CONTACT: PAUL ZIMMERMAN (608) 828-5708

Control white-tailed deer population, ban feeding to protect animal health security

MARCH 21, 2002-MADISON—The state must drastically reduce its white-tailed deer population and ban feeding and baiting of deer to protect the health of the wild animals and domestic livestock, according to the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation.

Paul Zimmerman, director of Governmental Relations with the Farm Bureau, said the discovery of chronic wasting disease found in deer located in western Dane County shows that reducing the deer herd and banning feeding should be a major part of the state's health surveillance and protection system.

"We have to reduce deer herd numbers. We can't have over-winter deer populations of 40 animals per square mile," Zimmerman said. "This number must be cut in half. In addition, we can't have large concentrated feeding areas where you artificially draw high numbers of deer together, which increases the likelihood of a disease outbreak."

Zimmerman said the Farm Bureau has been pushing to reduce the deer population for many years, mainly due to concerns over increased crop damage. But in recent years farmers have become more worried about the spread of disease from large concentrations of white-tailed deer to cattle, hogs, and now domestic deer and elk.

"The state's natural resources can't continue to support such an enormous deer herd, whether it's 1.2 million or 1.8 million," said Zimmerman. "There are just too many animals in the wild herd. Common-sense biology says that disease becomes more prevalent when there is an overpopulation of deer in a small area.

Zimmerman added the Department of Natural Resources and the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection should be commended for being very proactive by testing white-tailed deer shot during the hunting season for chronic wasting disease.