

MEMO TO: Midwest Directors
FROM: Midwest Deer and Wild Turkey Study Group
DATE: August 24, 2010
RE: Feeding and Baiting Resolution

Attached is a resolution adopted by the Midwest Deer and Wild Turkey Study Group at their annual meeting in Devils Lake, North Dakota, August 23-24, 2010. Additional supporting documentation and references are provided below.

Dr. William R. Davidson, assistant director of the Southeastern Center for Wildlife Disease Study (SCWDS) at the University of Georgia has stated "...science knows more than enough about the transmissible disease to realize we must not concentrate wildlife." "A key to prevention is to reduce or eliminate those risk factors that are controllable, and live animal importation, supplemental feeding, baiting, and other highly artificial practices are controllable risk factors." "Based on experience gained over several decades of work in the wildlife disease field at SCWDS, we believe that such actions are imperative if wildlife, domestic livestock and poultry, and human populations are to be safeguarded from unnecessary disease risks (Davidson and Fischer 2003)."

USDA research has shown that the bacteria responsible for causing TB can remain infectious for more than 17 weeks in frozen feed. This study terminated at 120-days with *M.bovis* bacteria still viable (Whipple and Palmer 2000). The prions that cause CWD will bind with soil particles (Johnson et al. 2007) and have been shown to infect mule deer at least two years later (Miller et al. 2004). Anthrax is believed to remain dormant in the soil for decades. Researchers believe that some areas of the country near historic cattle trails have a higher incidence of anthrax due to soils being infected from cattle drives in the late 1800s (Parker et al. 2007).

Repeated placement of food, minerals or attractants to a site to be consumed by deer and wild turkeys distinguishes these practices from any natural food source or feeding behavior. The practice of baiting congregates deer and wild turkeys, thus changing their distribution. These concentrations generally equate to the loss of opportunity and harvest by the general public since deer and wild turkey are restricted to a few properties rather than more evenly distributed based on quality habitats. By artificially altering the distribution and behavior of deer and wild turkey, the ability of state and provincial agencies to effectively manage deer populations is also impacted. A study in Wisconsin revealed that deer harvest success during the gun season increased when baiting was banned (Van Deelen et al. 2006). Deer returned to natural distribution and movements that allowed the general public to harvest.

Bait and feed piles provide a situation where partially consumed feed, contaminated with saliva or nasal secretions from diseased animals, can be consumed and spread the disease to other deer (Miller et al. 2003). The TB bacterium can also be spread to humans through contact with saliva, urine, feces, milk, and improperly cooked meat of infected animals (Wiltkins et al. 2008). Blackhead and many other parasitic diseases affecting wild turkeys are spread via infected feces. Mortality rates of turkeys infected with blackhead disease usually exceeds 75%. In some instances concerns over disease by agricultural producers have resulted in the removal of the surviving turkeys after the disease has taken its toll on the flock. Grain used for bait or feeding can mold and be infected with aflatoxins or ergot toxins that can sicken and kill deer, turkeys, and a variety of other wildlife.

Once disease is established in wildlife populations, the cost to hunters and taxpayers quickly escalates. Between 1994 and 2002, Michigan spent in excess of \$150 million in an effort to control bovine tuberculosis (TB) in their deer herd, with an estimated annual cost to producers of \$15 million for testing (Toso 2002). In Wisconsin, efforts to control Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) have topped well over \$32 million since 2001. Since 2005, the estimated cost of controlling TB in the northwestern Minnesota cattle and deer herd has now exceeded \$10 million for testing cattle and another \$3 to \$5 million for testing and removal of deer.

Exceptions. Our resolution does not include feed that is:

- A. present solely as a result of normal agricultural, forest management, orchard management, wildlife food planting or other similar land management practices; or
- B. used for scientific purposes such as but not limited to population control or capture and handling of wildlife under written authorization from the responsible fish and wildlife agency. This section shall not be construed to limit employees of agencies of the state or province, or local animal control officers in the performance of their official duties related to public health, wildlife management, or wildlife removal; or
- C. for the purpose of luring coyotes or furbearing animals for trapping as permitted by law.

Definitions. "Baiting" is defined as the placement and/or use of bait(s) for attracting deer, wild turkey and other game to a specific location for the purpose of hunting. Baits include but are not limited to grains, minerals, salts, fruits, vegetables, hay or any other natural or manufactured foods. This designation does not apply to the use of scents and lures, water, standing crops, or livestock feeds being used in standard farming practices. "Baited area" means any area where any "feed" is intentionally placed, deposited, distributed or scattered so as to lure, attract or entice wildlife to, on, or over a specific location. Such area shall remain a "baited area" for thirty days following complete removal of all "feed", except for salt, minerals, or any other "feed" that will dissolve and leach into the soil; in which case such area shall be considered as a permanently "baited area" until such time as all contaminated soil is either removed or covered in such a manner that the area no longer serves to artificially attract wildlife.

"Feeds" include but are not limited to grains, minerals, salts, fruits, vegetables, hay or any other natural or manufactured foods that are capable of luring, attracting or enticing wildlife.

"Feeding" means the intentional placement of food for deer, wild turkey, and other game animals to a specific location for any purpose (e.g. photographing or viewing, taming, providing nutritional supplements). This designation does not apply to the use of scents and lures, water, standing crops, or livestock feeds being used in standard farming practices.

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